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A New Year Contemplation **Our Year Text for 1939**

"What doth the Lord require of thee?" - Micah 6:6-8

IN TAKING inventory of our lives and adjusting our outlook for the New Year, what can we do that will be of greater benefit to us, or redound more to the glory of God, than to set ourselves to understand just what the Lord requires of us. Surely in no other way can we be pleasing to Him or keep ourselves in His love. To this end, then, let us consider the words of the Prophet Micah in the sixth chapter, verses six to eight

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:6-8)

Micah here speaks directly to the children of Israel. But many of the lessons intended for the upbuilding of spiritual Israel were pictured for us in God's dealings with natural Israel. In her experiences and religious rites she was a typical people, foreshadowing spiritual Israel in all her experiences. The Law Covenant, so Paul tells us, was a shadow of good things to come, and where the shadow ended, the reality began. By this means God has not only shown His foreknowledge of all that pertains to us, but has made many things clear that would otherwise have been more or less beclouded in our minds. - Heb. 8:5; 10:1; Col. 2:17.

God not Partial

God, through the Prophet Amos (Amos 3:2), says "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Natural Israel was the only nation with whom God dealt as a whole during that period; and because of this, they took undue unction to themselves and thought themselves better than other people. But this was not true: for it is recorded of them that they were hard-hearted, unthankful, ungrateful, a stiff-necked generation. God tells them that they were not the greatest

nation of earth at the time He chose them, but that they were the least of all people; and that it was not because of any merit on their part, but because of His word of promise to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that they were favored.

Neither was the Jew any more amenable to instruction and grace than were those about him. Jesus told the Jews of His day that the mighty works wrought in their day would have induced Sodom and Gomorrah to repent in sackcloth and ashes. Sodom and Gomorrah would more readily have received and profited by the grace of the Lord than did the Jews. Did God then show partiality or injustice in favoring the Jew, who was no more worthy than were those about him? If the theories of both Protestant and Catholic beliefs respecting the time of salvation are correct, then of a truth did God show partiality; for if in this life only there is hope of salvation, as stated by the creeds, then God was partial in His dealings. But how could a God who is declared to be all-wise and all-powerful restrict His favor to the Jews, when He knew, ;as is proved by the words of Jesus respecting Sodom and Gomorrah, that others would have repented and would have benefited by His grace, whereas the Jew, with but few exceptions, scoffed and rejected Him? Such a course would prove God foolish.

Viewing God's Plan in the light of His Word, we see that nothing could be further from the truth than is this distorted view of His plan of salvation. God has never yet tried to save the world; His dealings with people in the past have not been with the necessity of saving them at the time or else of subjecting them to the danger of being eternally lost; His time for the salvation of the world of mankind as a whole is still future.

It is a mistake to speak of God as trying or attempting to do something, for He tells us that all His purposes are accomplished, and that His will is never thwarted. (Isa. 46:10; 55:11.) His dealings with mankind in the past have always fulfilled the purpose He had in view. A part of that purpose was to show through prophecy, type, and shadow, His own foreknowledge of the events of history, that eventually we might gain an appreciation of His absolute mastery of every situation and every trend in the affairs of men. Another thing He purposed was that mankind as a whole should be taught certain lessons respecting the outworking of Divine Law, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and so be prepared to benefit when the opportunity for salvation would be made known to man under more favorable conditions.

The lessons we have learned in the hard school of experience will ultimately profit both Jew and Gentile; and the destruction of those nations whose iniquity, like that of the Sodomites, had "reached the full," served not only to picture the ultimate end of sin, but also to hinder those nations in their downward course, that thereby their opportunity for salvation in the time of judgment might not be endangered. In reality, the experiences of mankind constitute a kind of purgatory that will eventually, under the reign and judgments of the Christ, purge and fit all the willing and obedient for life eternal. God is not partial in His dealings. The choosing of the children of Abraham, both natural and spiritual, and the fitting of them through instruction and discipline to be the blessers of the rest of mankind, as He promised (Gen. 22:15-18), is not partiality.

The Blessers in Preparation

It was a wonderful opportunity, a great privilege, that the Jews enjoyed. Other nations all about them were left to their own devices, to follow their own inclinations without restraint except as it came upon them through violation of natural law and its consequences. But because of the promises God had made to their fathers, the Jews were instructed, guided, protected, hedged about, and disciplined of the Lord.

We may gain some idea of what this means when we consider what a difference it makes to a child whether it is left to follow its own devices or whether it has parents who are wise in the way they encourage, guide, and discipline it. We ourselves stand in this relationship as children of God. Could we but realize what this means to us, that so, as dear children, we would be always ready to heed our Heavenly Father's guidance, whether it be given through the written Word, or through discipline, or through the pictures of natural Israel's experiences, what a difference it would make in the way we grow.

Through Moses God entered into a covenant of agreement with natural Israel. His Word reveals several reasons for this: One was to show that an imperfect people could not hope to keep the perfect Law of God. Paul makes this clear when he declares that "By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in His [God's] sight." This is true in spite of the fact that Jesus, as a man, did keep the Law and won thereby the right to eternal life which the Law guaranteed to the one who would keep it; for Jesus was not of Adam's loins, and so was not the flesh to which Paul referred.

The second great lesson demonstrated by the experiences of the Jew under the Law, was the need of a redeemer "able to save unto the uttermost"; and so Paul says, "The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." It did this in two ways first by proving that they could not save themselves, hence must look to God for a redeemer; and second, by pointing out the One who would redeem them through the sacrifice of Himself, as shown by the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement. Thus God prepared them, or at least a remnant of them, to receive Christ.

God knew that the Jews could not keep the Law and therefore would be unable to gain the life promised to those who would keep it. He also knew that because of their inability to keep the agreement which they had made, they would be under an additional curse imposed by the terms of the Law upon those who failed in being obedient to its commands. This placed the Jew at a seeming disadvantage; and so Paul asks the question: "What advantage then hath the Jew?" He answers his own question by saying, "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." They will advantage also in that they will be the first nation of earth to come under the rule of Messiah, and will then be used of God to help uplift and instruct the rest of mankind.

God Never Breaks a Promise

Being called of God, the Jews were highly favored, and this favor has not been removed from them; for Paul tells us in Romans that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." "As touching the election," he says, "they are beloved for the fathers' sakes"; and in due time the "blindness in part" which has affected all Israel, from the time of their rejection as a nation until now, will be removed; "And so all Israel shall be saved."

The covenant or contract entered into by Israel was conditional. They were promised certain blessings by God provided they would do their part. From a worldly standpoint it is foolish to enter into an agreement unless we are sure of being able to perform our part; but this is precisely what Israel did. They were fully instructed by Moses as to what would be required of them, but they failed to take into account their own weakness. Due to God's mercy, however, the agreement was not a foolish one, for He foreknew their inability to perform their part, and instead of taking advantage of their weakness, He greatly blessed them.

In these experiences of the Jews we have a picture of the Church during this Gospel Age. As then only a remnant of natural Israel were found worthy of being transferred from Moses into Christ,

so now only a few of those who enter into covenant relationship with the Lord by sacrifice finish their course with joy. Out of the millions who have been called and have started in the race for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, only a few, comparatively speaking, finish their course with joy and are found worthy of a place in the Bride of Christ. Only 144,000, according to Revelation, will prove themselves sufficiently faithful to occupy that position.

What a deep sense of shame and humiliation must eventually come to each one who, having responded to the call of God to follow in Jesus' footsteps, fails to make good. Every one whose consecration is accepted of God could win a place in the Body of the Christ in glory, for victory has not depended upon our ability, but upon God's power and grace to help in every time of need those who through faith and obedience come to Him and rely upon that grace. God's power and grace are guaranteed to every one that trusts in Him and the provision He has made.

The First Great Commandment

In Deuteronomy 10:12 where the words of our text first occur, Moses speaks directly to the children of Israel and says: "And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good."

The word "require" here is used in the sense of that which the Lord exacts or demands as His right in accordance with the contract they had made. Included in the things required by God was, first, that they should fear (reverence) the Lord. Moses would have them understand that they must recognize God's right and authority over them; that they must be careful to be obedient to God's behests, realizing that they were just and right, and that they must have no other god, but must accord Him all their worship. Furthermore, he would have them see that they must not take their covenant lightly, but know that God, in fulfilling His part of the covenant, would expect them to do likewise.

The Scriptures say that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. This fear is engendered, to a large extent at least, through coming to some appreciation of the attributes of God, and is part of the process of coming "to know God," "whom to know is life eternal." This fear or reverence of the Lord (the beginning of wisdom) leads to a second thing in the attaining of wisdom, which is, "that we walk in His ways": that our daily lives, our conduct in words and actions conform to justice and righteousness and the covenant which we have made. But this requirement, so the text shows, is not fulfilled by any mere outward manifestation of obedience; it is also required that we love and serve the Lord our God "with all our heart and with all our soul." Here, stated in few words, is the heart of the matter; and our Lord Jesus, in answer to the Pharisees who questioned Him, declared this to be the greatest commandment, the thing most essential. The outward form, while good, is not sufficient; the affections and all the powers of our beings must be included in our service. God is not pleased with ritualistic or mechanical worship, but desires the heart appreciation of His creatures; He says, "My son, give Me thine heart."

We note here that the commandments given to Israel were given to them "for their good." Often the commands and statutes of earthly governments are not designed for the good of the people, but for the pleasure and advantage of those in power and authority. But all that God requires of us is for our good, and He is glorified when His servants hearken and obey.

The Second Great Commandment

The second Scripture (Micah 6:8) in which our text is found is also addressed to the Jews but is stated more in the sense or meaning of the second great commandment as given by our Lord, which was, "to love thy neighbor as thyself." The first two points of the text, as recorded in Micah, have to do particularly with our brethren, neighbors, and friends. Micah says, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." It is possible, of course, to manifest both justice and injustice in our dealings with God, but the quality of mercy cannot be manifested toward Him. Our brethren and all our fellow creatures are the ones who need mercy and can benefit by just dealings.

Righteousness and justice, we are told, are the foundation of God's throne. All His acts are first considered in the light of justice. When in love and mercy God planned to redeem man, He had first to make provision for the satisfaction of His justice, for God cannot violate His own justice. If then we hope to copy the divine example, and "be holy even as our Father in heaven is holy," justice and righteousness must be our first consideration also, and the character of our words and actions, and even our thoughts must be determined thereby.

God has ordained the matter in such a way that love and appreciation for Him, and obedience to His behests, must be demonstrated by our dealings with our brethren. The way, then, to determine the degree of our love for God is to examine our dealings with one another; for the degree of our justice and mercy to one another is the measure of our love for God. Naturally we are so self-centered that justice and mercy are more or less obscured to our vision, and even when seen are often withheld. Every lapse into sin is injustice; and injury to others is not confined to the grosser forms of evil, such as murder, robbery and slander, but is possible in the thousands of little things that we do and say every day. The very laws we enact, in order to compel justice, often work injustice because of our inability to know and to take into account all the conditions and circumstances of another's act.

There has been a saying extant that "If a man steals a loaf of bread, he is put in jail; but if he steals a railroad, he is put in congress." This may be an exaggerated statement, but it often happens that the poor man is made to suffer for his misdeeds (committed because of want or some other reason equally compelling) whereas the rich and powerful may not only escape punishment for having wronged the people to the extent of millions, but through pull and the influence of wealth, may even be placed in positions of power and trust.

Admittedly, under the present conditions of sin, weakness, and ignorance, it is often impossible to be just, no matter how much justice may be desired; but the child of God will recognize it as his sacred duty to follow after justice and righteousness to the full extent of his ability. The fervency of the heart desire to do this will be measured by the degree of effort put forth.

The reign of Christ will make it possible for mankind to be actually just; for the Word tells us that "He will lay justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies." It is the present condition of earth, under the reign of Satan, that forms this refuge of lies, making it impossible to do right. "But the Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness," and will establish a government over earth that will have the wisdom to rule in righteousness, the power to enforce its decrees, and the ability to judge the people in equity. This will be the most favorable time man has ever known, because they will get justice tempered with mercy until such time as they are able to do perfect works; or else, being incorrigible, will be found fit only for destruction.

As the fear of want and suffering are lifted from mankind, and as knowledge increases, the true condition of each heart and mind will be revealed. They will experience in actuality that which the Lord's true people have apprehended through faith during this Gospel Age. Through faith the veil of ignorance and superstition that is over all mankind has been more or less lifted from our minds, and in proportion to our faith the fear of conditions has been removed. The degree of faith we exercise in the promises of God is the measure of liberty we have from fear; and so our hearts and minds stand revealed, not only to God, but to ourselves and to one another to quite an extent.

Faithful in That Which is Least

God requires of us the exercise of justice, the love of mercy, and in the performance of our covenant, obedience, faithfulness, and loyalty. Manifestly, justice demands that our actions will be such as will not bring sorrow, want, suffering, or injury to others; also, we should not cause them inconvenience, annoyance, and hardship. While the Lord's people are admonished to be hospitable, this in no way justifies any of us in imposing on that hospitality and thereby causing annoyance and inconvenience. Justice demands that we be thoughtful for the interests of others, and especially should we strive to show consideration in little things, for the big things, being so manifest, are not so apt to trip us.

The Lord's people, having their sense of right and wrong exercised by the Holy Spirit, should have a keener appreciation for the niceties of justice than do the people of the world; but not many of us can look back over the week that is past and not regret the injustice of some deed, word, or thought; not many of us are so free from uncharitable, selfish, and unholy thoughts that we would be willing to have all our meditations blazoned forth on a screen for every one to see. While no one expects perfection of the flesh in these things, yet we are expected to have the spirit of justice and mercy. The Apostle did not say that we have sound minds, but that if we are truly the Lord's followers, we have the spirit of a sound mind.

The Jews, laboring under the letter of the Law, had no possible chance to live thereby, because of the weaknesses of their flesh. But we, who have experienced God's mercy through Christ, being judged not according to the letter, but according to the intents and desires of our hearts, are counted righteous in God's sight; for, as the Apostle says, "The spirit giveth life." If we truly have the Lord's Spirit motivating us in thought, as well as in word and deed, we can be sure of attaining to the goal of Christlikeness; "for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

"Forgive and Ye Shall be Forgiven"

Besides having the spirit of justice, God requires of us that we "love mercy." The love of mercy is a beautiful characteristic wherever found. Our Lord said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." If it were not for God's mercy, we would all be without God and without hope. Could we truly realize what this would mean, we would have a deeper appreciation of the grace wherein we stand. And when we think of the quality of God's mercy, and the extent to which that mercy reaches, it should fill our hearts with thankfulness and our mouths with praise; for so long as there is any hope that we may be benefited or saved, that mercy will find a way to encourage and assist us. We must remember, however, that God expects mercy from us also; not for Himself -- He does not need our mercy -- but for those with whom we come in contact, both in the world and in the faith, for they do need consideration and mercy.

Included in His instructions to His disciples respecting the conduct of a child of God (Luke 6:36), Jesus says, "Be ye therefore merciful, even as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall

not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."

One would naturally think that any disciple of the Lord would be **eager** to take advantage of these promises; but strange to say, such is not the case. There is one here and there that does so, but not many are there who will merit unlimited mercy, forgiveness, and judgment because of a like attitude exercised toward their brethren. Here we have the Lord's promise stated as definitely as can be that unlimited mercy, forgiveness, and freedom from condemnation will be ours if we will exercise these qualities toward our brethren and friends.

Jesus, in order to emphasize this lesson, recited a parable in which there was a servant who owed his master a great debt, more than he could ever hope to pay; and when he pleaded his inability, his master freely forgave him his debt. But later on, learning that this servant had been unmerciful and unforgiving to a fellow servant who owed him but a trifling debt, the Master was wroth, and severely rebuked the hard-hearted servant, and caused him to be imprisoned until such a time as he could meet the requirements of exact justice as he himself had demanded of his fellow servant.

We, ourselves, stand in the position of this first servant; we owe a debt to our Heavenly Father that we can never hope to pay. But He, in His love and mercy, has freely forgiven us our sins and has restored us to His favor. He expects, however, that we, in appreciation for the grace He has bestowed upon us, will manifest mercy and forgiveness toward our brethren; and He gives us the solemn warning that if we do not from the heart freely forgive our brethren their trespasses, neither will our Heavenly Father forgive us our trespasses.

It will be noticed that both here and in the text that bases these remarks, the Lord requires more of us than merely the outward act or word: we must love mercy; it is from the heart that we must forgive our brethren. Our judgment of one another is limited to the outward act or word, and therefore we cannot know the desires of the heart or read its intent; hence must not judge.

The third point mentioned in our text is, that we "walk humbly with our God." This means that in -all the affairs of life we must put God first; that we must consider everything from the standpoint of being pleasing unto Him. The wise man says "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." In this walk God has been pleased to make us stewards not only of our time, influence, possessions and abilities, but also of His Word of truth. It is incumbent upon us, there

fore, to so live that the truth of God's Word will shine out from us and give light to all with whom we come in contact. "Moreover [says Paul], it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

We each and all stand to be judged of the Lord and not one of another; or even of our own selves. Paul says, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self. He that judgeth me is the Lord." Paul was unconcerned respecting the judgment he received from others, and he even felt incompetent to judge himself; he was concerned, however, that his life should be such as would have the approval of the Father, and so he says, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts : and then shall every man have praise of God."

"What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

The year upon which we are now entering will be momentous: we see in the travail of earth the signs of the birth of a new order. Just how long it will be ere the new King will consummate the destruction of Satan's kingdom and establish His righteous rule, we are not informed; but before

that is accomplished the Bride must have made herself ready and have entered into joint-heirship with her Lord. If we would participate in this union it behooves us to give careful heed to the instructions of our Maker that our robes may be embroidered according to the pattern given us in the character of our Lord. May God help us to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

The Vision Glorious

"That ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." - Eph. 1:18.

OF GRACE divine, so wonderful, the half was never told." In these words of familiar verse what a truth is expressed. Many gifted tongues and numerous able pens have portrayed in prose, in speech, and in poetry much of the glory of God's character, and much of the loveliness of our Lord Jesus, as their divine attributes are seen operating in the redemption of both the Church and the world. But though so much has been written and spoken in praise of God's loving kindness, ages more might come and go while tongue and pen continue to extol His goodness, to set forth inspiring reviews of how Jesus "loved the Church and gave Himself for it," and to tell of how in the divine purposes of God this Church is to be as a special treasure to God Himself, "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" and sharer in the divine and eternal life and glory of His Son, yet there would still be the same great truth in the words, "The half was never told." This is true for the reason that the highest reach of vision attained by "holy men of old," or the clearest insight possessed by inspired Apostles, could carry them only to that, as yet, fixed boundary line—"Now we see through a glass darkly." Prophets in profound interest "searched diligently" to comprehend the favor awaiting those to be chosen of God in this Age of grace for the Bride of Christ; and ardent, Spirit-enlightened believers thus called have not been wanting who have "meditated day and night" over the pages of God's Word, desiring to understand the deep things pertaining to our high calling of God in Christ Jesus; and though great indeed has been the gathered treasures of knowledge—things new and old—revealing how great is "the inheritance of the saints in light, yet, "we know in part" is still the ultimate of attainment thus far reached.

True, God reveals to the spiritually minded things not to be known by the natural man, giving reality to "things not seen" by the natural eye, but fair and beautiful to the eye of faith. Nevertheless it is still a truth even as regards those possessed of spiritual vision, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, [all] the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1 Cor. 2:9.) Even in the matter of our future body, how very limited is our knowledge. Paul tells us we shall, when changed in the resurrection, "bear the image of the heavenly," as we have borne the image of the earthly here. He tells us also that we will be "fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. (1 Cor. 15:49; Phil. 3:21.) But what can we now know of that new body, "a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens" awaiting us

when "our earthly house of this tabernacle" in which we groan, is "dissolved"? The answer is an inspired one, "It doth not yet appear **what we shall be**" when we see Him as He is and possess His divine likeness and nature. Thus with all that we have had given us of knowledge concerning our future heritage-and how priceless we consider what we have! -- yet of "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and of "the love of Christ which surpasseth knowledge" how much there is still to explore! Of "ages to come" comparatively little is known by us. We know the saints will be highly honored in unnumbered future ages. Such we are told is a part of God's plans for those times, "in order that He might exhibit, in those ages which are approaching, the surpassing wealth of His favor, by kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:7, Diaglott.) But who can begin to tell what shall be the character and scope of those future favors and glories to be enjoyed by Christ and His Bride? Boundless the possibilities, and impossible of utterance by tongue or pen are those delights yet to be the inheritance of the "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." Truly we know only in part, knowing nothing yet as we shall know when perfected, and in His likeness, and as ages to come unfold the diversified wisdom of God.

Visions of the Love that Saved and Called Us

As in the natural life so in the spiritual, a clear vision is a great boon. The eye of the body may be injured and clearness of sight be destroyed, so "the eyes of the heart may be injured even to complete blindness. In the spiritual realm of things the boast may be of sight when in reality the need of clear vision may be painfully apparent. The eye-salve of meekness and love is a constant necessity if spiritual vision is to be strong and clear.

It is important to remember that in our approach to God, and in our desire to enjoy the light of His countenance, there are true and false motivating factors. There is need of the single eye that the Whole body may be full of light. "Light is sown for the **righteous** and gladness for the **upright** in heart." "Walking in the light as He is in the light" therefore represents a heart established in righteousness, and filled with gratitude for the light and favors enjoyed. And the underlying principle of the love and gratitude with which we please and honor God is well illustrated in the simple but profound statement of the Apostle John in his first epistle (1 John 4:19) "**We love Him, because He first loved us.**" Love for God is recognized by all as a consistent and essential attitude of mind on the part of any believer. But it is "love out of a pure heart fervently" that alone meets the condition on which the glorious vision we need may be had. Self-interest often so mars the spiritual vision that the genuine fervency of love to God is wanting. Many have outwardly served God largely because of a fear taught by the precepts. of men, be it that invention of men, eternal torment, or any other man-made instrument of slavish fear. And even among those who have escaped from such delusions and are no longer governed thereby, there is still the old self-life tendency to fear and destroy. The danger is ever present of giving far more thought to what it is hoped the goodness of God will yet reward our efforts with, than being so overwhelmed with what He has done for us that we could not but love Him "with a pure heart fervently." "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His mercies toward me?" represents the proper attitude of heart.

How great is the danger of thinking more often of "our little all on the altar" than of the redeeming love of Christ, which should ever make the whole realm of nature a paltry offering by which to show our devotion. If we would realize "the vision glorious" by which gratitude becomes the sweet incense of true worship, we must never lose sight of the fact that we were once sinners even as others and have been "purged from our old sins" by a love and a sacrifice we by no means merited. Never can we afford to lose a deep sense of wonderment over being loved and cleansed by redeeming grace. If true love and thankfulness be our spirit and the motivating force in our response to God, there will never come a time when we would cease to sing with joyful gratitude:

"Guilty, vile, and helpless, we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He.
'Full Atonement!' Can it be?
Hallelujah! what a Savior!"

And again --
"Gethsemane can I forget?
Or there Thy conflict see,
Thine agony and bloody sweat,
And not remember Thee?"

"Remember Thee and all Thy pains,
And all Thy love to me;
Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
I will remember Thee."

Glorious vision indeed! a vision calculated to dissolve even a heart seared by self-interest, or circumscribed by any misconceptions of God's abounding mercy—a vision "shedding the love of God abroad" in the heart, and filling it with "the love wherewith He loved us" until it flows out in the same wide circles into which His love reaches; and when His grace has well refined the heart, ah,

"Then of grace I'll know the sum,
And in Thy likeness be,
When Thou hast in Thy Kingdom come
And dost remember me."

Not alone has grace redeemed us, saving us from condemnation and death, but we have a calling to "a station we could ne'er by merit win." A "**high** calling of God in Christ Jesus" it is indeed. If the vision of this grace toward us has grown dim, or the time seems long before our expectation of being with Him passes into the actual realization of so great salvation, we should take time again to ponder over that soul-stirring first chapter of Ephesians. What a sweep of vision it presents! By that vision we are carried far back into the eternity that is past and behold God choosing and predestinating us in Christ Jesus. We are carried through intervening time until all things are under the feet of our Lord and Head. For this place of closest intimacy with Him we have been "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," the "earnest of our inheritance." We, His Bride-to-be, are to become "the full development of Him who is filling all things with all." (Diaglott.) Stupendous vision! Forever with the Lord! Angels, all heavenly beings "made **subject**" to Him, but His Bride made one with Him in all His glory and power! The veil still intervenes between us and that in which our hope, love, and faith are anchored, but the vision granted us even now is gloriously bright and blessed, transcending all we can ask or think. May we ere long enter into the reality.

As we have just seen, there lies before the elect Church a marvelous day of cooperation with her Lord in the blessings of His reign. And it is our confidence that it will not now be long

"Till with the vision glorious,
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest."

A Church at rest indeed—at rest from the weariness of toil such as known in the days of her pilgrimage, and at rest from all that is faulty and unprofitable in a service joyfully undertaken for Him now but imperfectly performed. But in another important sense she will not be at rest. Of Him who associates her with Himself in that glad day it is written, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law." (Isa. 42:4.) Not until earth's remotest bounds are covered with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, ocean deep, will He rest from the service of restoring man and his appointed paradise to their designed place in God's mighty universe. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." He whose "delights were with the sons of men" in that far-off creative day, can be satisfied only when He sees those creative purposes completed, and, praise His name, He will not be discouraged nor hindered in the attainment of that great objective. In all of this His beloved Bride is to share!

Perhaps there is much of truth in the statement credited to some one, that the greatest conceptions we could weave together now of what heaven itself will be to those whom God will gather there, would fall far short of even being an accurate picture of man's earthly paradise -restored, so limited are our conceptions of heaven's realities. Be that as it may, yet it remains beyond our power to describe it in all that it will display of glory and beauty, peace and righteousness.

Beautiful Vision of the Finished Work of God's Elect

Think of just a few of the glories of that finished work, when "Mine Elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." (Isa. 65:22.) There the will of God will be done throughout the earth, and peace and everlasting joy abide for ever. There every man will bear the stamp of the original image of his Creator, and love pervade all the relationships of man with man. "Iniquity shall not arise the second time." The tabernacle of God will be with men, and heaven and earth be joined in perpetual praise to Him. What a vision of rest and peace may be gathered from the sacred Book as it reveals this much of earth's coming glory. Joyful fellowship, deathless love, uncontaminated purity, unending bliss, our vision beholds. And yet, of the fulness of blessing that day will bring to man, and of the joy the divine family of heaven will have in its accomplishment and perpetuation, we can only repeat again, "The half was never told."

Let us consider this picture a little further. We are specially concerned now to observe how this vision glorious" affects our lives today. It is well enough to be informed about the purposes of God respecting the multitudes of men to be the subjects of His Kingdom rule, and of its ultimate consummation, but there is something else in this vision we cannot afford to miss. The lives of all who profess to hold the hope of being sharers with Christ in so great a work as awaits the overcoming Church, ought to be filled and profoundly influenced by this vision; but are there many who are thus affected? The ones who are, may be readily recognized. If, as is indicated in the Scriptures, the test to be applied when "the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory" will be the possession of a spirit of loving thoughtfulness and unselfish interest in others, is it not apparent that the beginning of such character development will be manifested here and now? Surely so! If so be that we are to reign with Him over a sadly degraded race, our characters must be "conformed to the image of God's dear Son." Our spirit will need to be such as will be moved with the deepest compassion for every human wreck, and of longsuffering patience toward the weak, until they, climbing perhaps slowly up the "highway of holiness," shall have reached the goal of **life**, or until sin and sinner have proved finally and utterly inseparable. Manifestly such must be the disposition of earth's future judges, for God would never entrust the destiny of a race so dearly purchased to any but such as possess His own heart love.

What then is the real test of our fitness for so great a responsibility in future days? The test is likeness to Jesus, who came not to condemn the world but to save it, and who has redeemed His Church, once sinners even as others, "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Saviors these, who shall come up with Christ on Mount. Zion to rule the earth in equity and love, having themselves been schooled in love for so great a task.

The Far-flung Vista of Ages to Come

Brethren, beloved, have we come to rejoice in God's goodness **in its wideness as the sea**, and feel its mighty influences enlarging our sympathies and giving us **greater love** for all? Have we come to know a love for the groaning creation so deep and fervent that we cultivate the hope that by far the greater number of earth's inhabitants will yet attain to everlasting life, and in anticipation we seem even now to be singing the joy we shall have in the consummation of the great work we shall be privileged to share if we are faithful? Ah, then, ours is the blessed and precious assurance **in the present hour** that we have passed from death unto life, **because we love** the brethren. Because we are now tasting of the powers, the joys, the love of that Age to come, we shall no longer by false reasoning of our own make the love of God too narrow to enfold a brother loyal at heart, nor rob him of that smile of the Master we so covet for ourselves. Lest we hear these words spoken to us when the Lord rises up to close the door, "Inasmuch as ye failed to love the least of these My brethren, ye failed to love Me," let us ever live within the spirit of the vision and under the influence of the undiscouraged love that will yet fill the earth with a happy human family in full accord with their benevolent Creator, who willeth not the death of any. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God; he receives and reflects His Spirit.

As previously suggested, our knowledge of what shall be the order of the "Ages to come" is limited. The Bible takes us onward to the complete overthrow of all evil, and to the time when man and his home shall be as God had purposed; beyond that a few suggestions only are given. We have, nevertheless, plenty of foundation for the thought that eternal ages will see wonderful exhibitions of God's designs for other portions of His dominion. When this earth, like the "lost sheep" among the worlds of the universe, has been reclaimed and made glorious as God's footstool, and filled with perfected beings just a little lower than the angels, then what shall be the portion of the Church? Shall there still be great and transcendent things to undertake and enjoy? Among the promises contained in the Ninety-first Psalm there is one of those suggestions by which we may peer into eternal ages yet to be. The promise is "With **long life** will I satisfy him, and show him **My** salvation." (Ver. 16.) Be showing him My salvation, is said to be the thought intended. To the ones for whom this Psalm contains so much of comfort, "long life" cannot have reference to the brief span of earthly life, be it "threescore years and ten" or more, but rather to that "eternal life" Jesus promised those who became identified with Him. So the statement of the Psalmist seems to convey the thought of a continuous revealing of His salvation on the part of God to those who attain to glory, honor, and immortality. It suggests that God will be opening up to us through the Ages an ever-unfolding exhibition of His grace in His lovingkindness to us.

In this connection may we not reason from things known as principles in God's operations and thereby form proper conclusions as to the future joys and privileges of the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. Is it not manifest that all stages of experience through which we pass are intended to be preparatory in character? Has it not been so in the case of the Son Himself? The very fact that He was the creative instrument whereby the earth and man had existence, made it fitting that He should thereafter have the still greater privilege of redeeming the lost inheritance. Then by His higher privilege as the One who redeemed the world, He was fitted for the still higher station He now holds at the Father's right hand. Have we any reason to believe that there are for Him no further heights of delightful cooperation with the Father, whose universe embraces perhaps a

hundred thousand million other worlds? Has He exhausted all the possibilities of an infinite Creator who delights to give, and give, and give again? And will it not be so with the redeemed Church? The rich possessions God gives us even now, are by their faithful use made to fit us for still greater things. New faculties and powers are developed, and each new fitness prepares us for a still higher sphere. May it not be then that "the inheritance of the saints in light" will ever be a progressive possession, each new inheritance bringing to light the unthought of and untiring activities of God in His delight to give overflowing joy to His creatures, and each age-task completed, prepare us for other and endless undertakings throughout the "ages to come"?

This far-flung vista of the ages, though as yet dimly seen "through a glass darkly," must be intended to inspire and purify our hearts. And blessed indeed are we to whom such visions are given. How can we be otherwise than drawn to God in a complete devotion, and because of the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" spread before us in His grace, be enabled to finish our course with joy, and no more be cast down amid present conditions. Surely "the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and ours is a goodly heritage" of the most precious hopes.

Shall we not, then, in these last hours remember that what has been for so long a time our faith vision, will soon be a realized possession. For long we have asked in wonderment, "Face to face-what will it be? when with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ who died for me." Now it is possible that we shall ere long in the undimmed light of heaven behold the One who loved us so. And what shall it be to see Him in all His glory, and receive from Him that measure of joy and blessedness which only a spirit body like unto His own could have the capacity to receive! How blessed the thought that this happiness is not merely for a swiftly passing hour, but for eternity unto those whom He redeemed from among men to share His glory. All the pleasures that await us in heaven when we "enter into the joy of our Lord" will bear the same momentous stamp-"Eternal." Earth has been the place of fleeting joys, of transitory pain and pleasure, but "for ever and ever" is the span of every treasured gift of the heavenly Lover to the Bride of His heart.

As we view this "vision glorious" now by faith, but on which soon our "longing eyes" will feast. what more can we say than that which seems to have been given us by inspiration to say, "Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!" - Psa. 31:19. - *Contributed.*

One Lord and His Name One

"This is My name forever, and this is My memorial unto all generations." - Exod. 3:15.

RECENTLY AN astonishing news dispatch from Germany stated that an order eliminating the word "Jehova" -- the German spelling for Jehovah -- was issued by President Friedrich Werner of the Supreme Evangelical Church Council, who has authority only in North Germany. It provided that the name of the God of Israel and the names of the Jewish Prophets must be erased wherever displayed in Protestant churches. It was said Dr. Werner's action followed Nazi threats in parts of Saxony that Christian churches permitting such Jewish names to remain would be set afire as were Jewish synagogues in the recent anti-Jewish violence. Some theologians said the order lacked legal force and it was expected a large part of the clergy would not obey it, although there was a possibility that Dr. Werner could punish recalcitrant clergymen by canceling their salaries. The news contained in this dispatch has a far-reaching significance and the action proposed is almost unparalleled in history. Even in the terrible persecution which the Jewish people endured through the mediaeval times there was nothing to compare with this, for the persecuting, so-called "Christian" people rightly recognized that the Christian God is the Jewish God. The order to eradicate the divine name as referring to a Jewish tribal deity, however, is especially ironical inasmuch as Jehovah has never been a Jewish name for God. It arose during the Middle Ages through a Christian misunderstanding of a feature of Old Testament manuscripts. A fuller explanation may be timely and reveal the seriousness of this latest action in Germany.

In the Old Testament there are several terms used in reference to the Deity. A name or title is expressive of nature and character. Each separate title of God may be regarded as one letter, complete indeed in itself, yet, when arranged and combined together, spelling out in full the one grand and wondrous name of the God of the Bible. There are ten such terms which we shall list, giving the Hebrew and its English equivalent on the authority of the Newberry Bible.

1. **EI** (God, singular) occurs about 250 times, with the first occurrence in Gen. 14:18, 19,, 20, 22. The word signifies "strong," "first." It is the title which shows God to be the Mighty One, the First Great Cause of all.

The title is generally connected with some one or more of the divine attributes or perfections as:

"Almighty God"-Gen. 17:1

"The living God"-Josh. 3:10

"A merciful God"-Deut. 4:31

"A faithful God"-Deut. 7:9

2. **Eloah** (God, singular, from Ahlah, to worship, to adore, presents God as the one supreme object of worship, the Adorable One. It occurs about 56 times: first in Deut. 32:15: "Then he forsook Eloah, which made him"; again, verse 17, "They sacrificed to devils, not to Eloah." It is very frequently used in the Book of Job.

3. **Elah**, or **Elahah**. The corresponding title to the Hebrew word Eloah is in the Chaldee language **Elah** (God, singular) or **Elahah**, emphatic. It is found in the Books of Ezra and Daniel 77 times, and always in the singular. The Chaldee portions of the Scriptures occur in Ezra and Daniel, with one verse in Jeremiah 10:11. Thus the record of Israel's captivity is inwrought in the sacred Word.

4. **Elohim** (God, plural of **Eloah**) occurs about 2500 times; first in Gen. 1:1. Though most frequently referring to the All-mighty it is also used with propriety in referring to angels (Psa. 8:5), to men (Gen. 23:6; Exod. 7:1; 22:28) and to saints (Psa. 82:6). This same word is also used 196 times in referring to the false gods of the heathen. To these latter also applies the Chaldee form **Elahhayah** in Jer. 10:11.

5. **El Shadday** (God Almighty, or God All-sufficient). This title combines the singular title El, with the plural title **Shadday**. It occurs in combination "God Almighty," or "the Almighty God," 7 times, and alone, "the Almighty," 41 times, and chiefly in the Book of Job. Its first occurrence is in Gen. 17:1.

6. **Adon** ("Lord," singular), Master, Possessor, or Proprietor. Occurring about 30 times with the first in Exod. 23:17.

7. **Adonahy** ("Lord," plural), Lord, or Master. In this form used only as a divine title; different from **Adonay**, plural of **Adon**. **Adonahy occurs** about 290 times, the first in Gen. 15:2, "And Abraham said, **Adonahy Jehovah**."

8. **Jah** (the Lord). This title occurs 49 times and only in the Book of Exodus, Psalms, and Isaiah with the first occurrence in Exod. 15:2. It is often associated with the words "Praise ye" in the word Hallelujah, "Praise ye **Jah**." It is evidently a contraction of the longer word Jehovah and is occasionally found together with it, as in Isa. 12:2 and Isa. 26:4. It is a title expressive of eternal existence, the title of God, as inhabiting eternity, to whom past, present, and future is one eternal **now**. It is a sublime title: see Psa. 68:4, "Extol Him that rideth upon the heavens [or the void spaces of infinitude] by His name Jah [the Eternal One] and rejoice before Him." The word for heavens here is not the usual word, but a word expressive of desolateness-space untenanted and void. Infinitude and eternity are indwelt by Him. The title **Jah** or Yah is at once one of the sublimest yet simplest of the divine names. "The simplest form of speech which infant lips can cry," yet expressive of God's infinitude.

9. **Ehyah Asher Ehyeh** -- literally, "I will be that I will be." (Exod. 3:14.) But as the so-called future or long tense expresses not simply the future, but also and especially continuance, the force is, "I continue to be, and will be, what I continue to be, and will be." **Ehyeh**, "I am," literally, "I will be." But in force and meaning, "I that ever will be"; "the Ever-existing One." Here we have God's own explanation of His Holy Name to Moses at the burning bush, which is translated in our Common Version, "I am that I am." In this connection we quote Prof. Bush from his "Notes on Exodus"

"This title properly denotes the underived, eternal, and unchangeable existence of the great Being to whom it is applied, carrying in it also the implication that He, in distinction from all others, is the one only true God, the God who really is, while all the pretended deities of the Egyptians and other nations were a vanity, a nonentity, a lie. It implies, moreover, as founded upon the immutability of the divine nature, the certain and faithful performance of every promise which He had uttered, so that whatever He had bound Himself to do for Abraham, for Isaac, and for Jacob, He pledges Himself by the annunciation of the august title to make the same good to their seed. 'I am that (which) I will be, and I will be that (which) I am; the same yesterday, today, and forever'."

10. Yhwh -- These four consonants, (to which scholars apply the technical term-tetragrammaton) form the Hebrew "incommunicable name" of the Supreme Being. They are variously written Ihvh, Jhvh, Jhwh, Yhvh, Yhwh. The Hebrew word, which occurs about 7000 times in the Old Testament, is rendered Jehovah 4 times, God about 800 times, Lord about 6800 times, and 7 times in combination with some other word as Jehovah-jireh (Gen. 22:14), etc. It first occurs in connection with Elohim in Gen. 2:4, and is used first alone in Gen. 4:1, 3. It is explained in Exod. 3:14, 15. Out of superstitious reverence for this name, or perhaps to safeguard the divine majesty in the minds of men -and prevent the inconsiderate mention of Him before whom seraphs veil their faces-whatever the motive---both Jews and Christians have caused this name to be almost completely suppressed by the substitution of other terms for the Deity. The name, in its four essential letters, was reverently transcribed by the Hebrew copyist, and therefore was necessarily placed before the eye of the Hebrew reader. The latter, however, was instructed **not to pronounce it**, but to utter a less sacred name -- **Adonay** or **Elohim**. The Septuagint version made the concealment complete by regularly substituting Kurios (Lord). The Vulgate, in like manner, employed **Dominus**. The sacred name was expressed in writing, as was the custom among the Jews in earlier times, without any signs indicating the vowels, simply by four consonants corresponding to our Yhwh. When vowel signs were added to the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible in the eighth century A. D., as a means of preserving the traditional pronunciation of the sacred literature, those of **Adonai** (my lord) were attached to the tetragrammaton as an indication that the name was to be pronounced as though it were Adonai, or those of Elohim (God) were attached if an **Adonai** preceded it; but the Masorites (Hebrew scholars) did not intend that it should ever be pronounced either Yehowah or Yehowih. By a misunderstanding mediaeval Christian scholars combined the vowels of **Adonai** with the consonantal frame, thus producing the hybrid form Jehova, Iehovah. The avoidance of the use of the original name led to the gradual loss of the true pronunciation. Some scholars, among them the translator Rotherham, have concluded that **Yahweh** most nearly corresponds to the original word. This seems to be borne out by the pronunciation as it has comedown to us through the Samaritans, who seem to have continued longer than the Jews to pronounce the holy name. Among other attempts to represent the original word are **Jahaveh, Jahvah, Jahve, Jahveh, Yahve, Yahveh, Yahwe**. Although both the pronunciation and full meaning of this sacred name are unknown, from the explanations given in Exod. 3:14, 15 and 34:6, it would appear that the God of the Patriarchs in revealing Himself to Moses under this awe-inspiring appellation, did so to reveal Himself as the unchangeable, ever-existing Deity, who both promises and fulfils His promises, a covenantkeeping God-One who will cause all His will to be done, and whose name **Yahweh** was to be the everlasting memorial of His changeless character. "This is My name forever, and this is My memorial unto all generations." - Exod. 3:15. See also Hos. 12:5 and Psa. 135:13.

This is the God of both the houses of Israel, fleshly and spiritual. And though the contemptuous words of Pharaoh of old, "Who is Yahweh, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?" *may* be repeated in the conduct of present day earthly rulers, the Arm of the Lord will again be made bare in the astonishing deliverance of His people, which will mean the deliverance of the world. Then shall be sung the song of thanksgiving recorded in Isaiah 12: "And the Lord [Yahweh] shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord [Yahweh] and His name one." - Zech. 14:9.

- *Contributed.*

Songs of the Pilgrims **A Meditation in Four Parts on Psalms 120, 121, and 122**

Part IV-Psalm 122

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

WE HAVE heard the Hebrew pilgrims bid farewell to their homes as they started for Jerusalem, with a sigh of peace, a prayer for divine protection. We have heard them sing their evening hymn each time the caravan halted for the night, as they looked toward the Mount of Succor and Benediction, and rejoiced in the Lord their Keeper. And now in Psalm 122 we rejoin them as they arrive in the Holy City, and with the perils of the journey behind them rejoice in the stately beauty of Jerusalem, in its pathetic memories, and in its sanctuary, which is its crown and pride.

"I was glad in those who said unto me,
Let us go up to the house of the Lord.
Our feet stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem,
Jerusalem, thou that art built up again
As a city that is compacted together!

"Whither the tribes went up, the tribes of Jah --
A precept for Israel --
To give thanks to the name of Jehovah;
For there were set thrones of judgment,
Thrones for the house of David.

"O pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
Well may they fare who love thee!
Peace be within thy walls,
Prosperity within thy palaces!
For my brethren and my friends' sake
Let me now say, 'Peace to thee!'
For the sake of the house of the Lord, our God,
Will I seek thy good."

This Song Written for Pilgrims

No other Psalm in the group is so emphatically a pilgrim song as this. It was obviously written for the occasion, not merely adapted to it; its author intended it to be sung as the caravans passed through the streets of Jerusalem on their way to the Temple. It consists of three strophes, or stanzas, or divisions, and gathers into itself whatever could deepen and prolong the joy of the moment, from three sources: first, the personal experience of the pilgrims; second, their patriotic traditions; and finally, their prophetic hopes.

In the first strophe, consisting of verses 1-3, the poet draws themes from his personal experience. He recalls the day on which, dwelling in his distant country home, his friends and neighbors came to him with the invitation: "Let us go up to the house of the Lord," and 'how he rejoiced in them and in the welcome message they brought. He was glad to see them, and still more glad when he learned what their errand was. That gladness fills his heart now, as he and they stand within the gates of Jerusalem, and 'heightens the joy with which he gazes on the stately buildings therein.

How happy he is! "Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem!" The two features that impress him most as he passes along the streets are indicated by the words "built" or "builded," and "compact." "Jerusalem, thou that art builded -as a city that is compacted together." But why is such emphasis laid on the fact that Jerusalem is built? Are not all cities built?

Jerusalem, Thou that art Built

Three explanations have been offered, and we see no reason why we should not accept and blend all three of them. First, when a man from the country or a small town makes his first visit to a great city, he is profoundly impressed by the broad streets and lofty buildings. Accustomed only to the poor and scattered dwellings of a rural village he is struck with the compact lines of stately buildings which he finds in the nation's capital. Even we in modern times cannot look without emotion upon the skyline of New York, for instance, or the government buildings of Washington, or London. "This is something like a city," we exclaim, even though we have seen it many times before. "These buildings are really magnificent." The humble followers of Christ, peasants and fishermen, mostly, **were** thus struck and impressed when they were in Jerusalem; and they expected that even our Lord would share their admiration and astonishment. As they left the temple one day, they said, with a keen accent of wonder "O Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here !" - Mark 13:1.

Not only a villager, but even the most accomplished traveler might well have marveled at the stately magnificence of Jerusalem with its lofty massive walls, its sumptuous palaces, and the marble and gold of its sanctuary, which travelers tell us shone from the distance like snow with the sun upon it. The epithet "built" may therefore be taken in the sense of well built, stately, magnificent, and not only as expressing the simple wonder of an untraveled peasant.

But the probability is that the leading sense of the word as here used is "rebuilt" or "built again," and it is thus rendered by some translators. The singular turn and stress of the phrase, "Jerusalem thou that art built," seem to require this sense. And then the reference would, of course, be to the reconstruction of the city after the period of captivity, when the walls were rebuilt and the holy and beautiful temple that had been burned with fire was replaced by a smaller yet stately structure. There may have been a touch of surprise, as of a villager who gazes on a metropolis, in the word. There may be a touch of pride, as of a patriot rejoicing in the splendor of his capital. But in all probability the strongest feeling in the word is that of thankfulness-the thankfulness of an exile who finds that there are no more gaps, and waste places, and heaps of ruins left in the streets -- that at last the city has been built up again.

The other epithet, "compact" or "compact together, or "compact in itself," is explained by the peculiar conformation of the site on which the city stood. Travelers tell us that the hill of Zion is cut off by deep ravines from the rocky plateau of which it forms a part. The city could not extend beyond these ravines; its boundaries are fixed by nature itself. Hence, as always happens when a city has natural and somewhat narrow boundaries which it is impossible to overpass, Jerusalem was compactly built, every acre of ground, every foot of frontage was valuable.

In the first strophe, then, the poet recalls the joy with which he responded to the summons: "Let us go up to the house of the Lord," and tells with what patriotic pride he looked round on the stately city, now that, the journey over, he stands within its gates. So impressed were he and his neighbors by the marvelous improvements that had been made in it, by the noble buildings that ran on every side, by its growing beauty, that he exclaims exultingly: "Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem," the caravan being brought to an involuntary pause now and again, as the pilgrims lost themselves in admiration and astonishment.

And Our Fathers Before Us

In the second strophe, consisting of verses 4 and 5, the Psalmist goes beyond the limits of his personal experience, and draws new themes of praise from the past history of his race. We all know how any custom, and especially any national custom, grows more dear to us if it has been observed by our fathers for centuries, and comes to us weighted with patriotic traditions. Of this feeling the inspired poet avails himself. Jerusalem is *very* fair to him in its present beauty, and it is pleasant to him to keep the feast for its own sake. But both feast and city grow more fair and pleasant and attractive, as he remembers that from of old the tribes, the tribes of Jehovah, came up to the city in which he now stands, and kept the feast which he now attends. In a brief parenthesis he reminds us that the command to assemble at the annual feasts was a precept, or testimony, for Israel -- a precept dating even from the time of Moses. "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord thy God" (Exod. 23:17), and in the main current of his song he runs back to David, recalling how David, the "darling of Israel," as he has been called, had conquered Jerusalem, and dwelling on the fact that here, in this city, thrones had long been set for the house of David, that is, for David and his descendants, David and his dynasty.

We, in our annual celebration of such a season as Thanksgiving, for example, are able to appreciate a little of this sentiment. We take an additional satisfaction from the fact that it is not a new festival, but one that has existed in the nation almost from the beginning. Instituted, as it was, in 1621, proclaimed as a national holiday by President Lincoln in 1864, an example which has been followed by all his successors in the presidency, it means more to us than if it were commencing this year. Our fathers, the fathers of our country, so celebrated, we remind ourselves, and the thought is welcome to us. The custom, dear to us because good in itself, becomes still more so because of its connection with the past history of our nation, because it is hallowed in our thoughts by the memory of those who have gone on before. It was with some such emotion of heart-satisfaction that the Hebrew Psalmist, as he passed through the gates of Jerusalem, recalled the ancient precept of Moses, and the memory of the honored and beloved king, David, who had driven the Philistines from the central stronghold of the land, and converted a mere fort, the haunt of fierce heathen, into the capital and sanctuary of Israel.

Peace be Within Thy Walls

But the Psalmist is a man of God, as well as a man of Israel. The temple, the house of God, is dearer to him than even the city. He is moved by religious as well as by patriotic emotion. The fate of Israel is bound up with that of the palace of the great King. And so, in the third and final strophe of the Psalm, verses 6-9, looking to the future rather than to the past, he breaks out into a profusion of good wishes for Jerusalem, nay, more, into hearty, fervent prayer on her behalf, and for all who love her, not for her own sake, simply, but mainly "for the sake of the house of the Lord." One good wish hurries after another throughout the strophe; or rather, one and the same good wish or prayer, is cast into many varied forms, denoting the fervor of the spirit from which they proceed. He calls on all men to pray for the city of peace. He wishes prosperity to all who love her. He himself, for himself, wishes and prays, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." Not content with saying it for himself, he says on behalf of his brethren and friends, "Peace be to **thee**," saluting the city as though it were a person. He vows that because the house of God stands in the midst of her, he will never cease to seek the good of the city. In all this variety of form it is the fervor of the devout lover of his country and his God that speaks, and not merely the ingenuity of the poet. We feel that the man is possessed by his theme. He holds the sanctuary to be the center and support-the strength of the national life. He holds that all Israel

should exist for Jerusalem, and all Jerusalem for the temple, since the temple is the house and palace of the Most High.

As he felt, so would the pilgrims feel. No song would be more suitable to their lips as they advanced through the lofty streets of Jerusalem, and went up the hill to the temple that crowned its summit, gazing as they went on the crowded stores of the city, or pausing in astonishment before the palace of some wealthy man, or some member of the royal house. In the wonder and gladness with which they looked on the compact, stately buildings that rose around them, they would recall the gladness they had felt when they were invited to join the caravan, and confess that their most confident hopes and anticipations were surpassed. As they paced the streets they would remember how all their fathers had trodden the selfsame streets before them, and how far back the hallowed custom ran-back to the time of David, the champion and chief singer, nay, even to the time of Moses the lawgiver, and, under God, the redeemer, the liberator, of their race. As they approached the temple, and saw it shining down upon them from lustrous marble wall and lofty pinnacle of gold, what marvel if even the profuse good wishes with which the poet closed his Psalm proved altho too few and weak to express the pride and joy and devotion which swelled within their breasts.

We are Approaching Mount Zion

And now, what lesson shall we learn from the Psalm? At the opening of this series of meditations we expressed the thought that these three Psalms might be regarded, respectively, as first, the song of the start; second, the song of the journey; and third, the song of the arrival; and that if our spirits were indeed in tune with that same Holy Spirit which inspired their authorship, we might share the heart sentiment, thought, and emotion of the Hebrew pilgrims who made such good use of them. But from our higher vantage point we may go far beyond those pilgrims. We may realize what the Psalmist and the pilgrims could not realize, that when our pilgrimage has ended there will be no long, tedious journey back again. When the Hebrew pilgrims had reached the Holy City, and had performed the services of the sanctuary for which they had come, they must needs start back again. But with us this will not be so. We are journeying, not to the typical, but to the antitypical Jerusalem. As the Apostle declares: "We are approaching Mount Zion, the city of the living God," that city which those of other days saw afar off-the heavenly Jerusalem. We are approaching also an innumerable company of angels, doubtless those faithful ones who have encamped round about us often, and delivered us. Yes, we are approaching the general assembly, the Church of the firstborn, who are enrolled, whose names are written in heaven. We are approaching God, the judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Let us pray and labor always for the peace and prosperity of the New Jerusalem, the true Church of Christ, and ever seek its good. And as in our journey, we lift up our eyes to the Mountain of the Lord-the Kingdom soon to be established under the whole heavens-and any should ask: "Whence cometh your help?" bet us from our highly privileged position as new creatures in Christ Jesus, with deep conviction, and with lives in harmony with our words, make answer and say "Our help cometh from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will keep us from all evil. He will keep our soul. He will keep our going out and our coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore."

Feasting with Jesus by the Seashore

"In the special ways in which Jesus revealed His loving care over His disciples in the days when He walked among them, He left lessons by which all His future disciples might know that He remains the same 'yesterday, today, and for ever' in His intimate knowledge of all the needs of His „own, and in His readiness to gird Himself and cause them to sit down while He serves them the food by which their spiritual strength is renewed.

"In those days of His flesh it was more than once on the shores of the sea that He revealed His never-failing care and power to provide for those whose needs were close to His heart. It was amid such surroundings He multiplied the loaves' and fishes until all the company had been fed and twelve baskets filled with the overflow. Who can doubt that in after days His immediate disciples frequently recalled these seaside occasions, and found in such recollections that which strengthened faith in His constant care over them, and that which gave assurance that He was ever ready to supply all their needs, according to His riches in glory.

"In like manner those of His present-day followers who were privileged to gather at Atlantic City over the weekend of November 19th and 20th, had occasion to believe that He came again to the seashore to meet with and feed His own. Here, as on one occasion long ago He was on the seashore before His disciples reached it, and had prepared a feast for their coming. The nature of spiritual refreshment the several speakers were guided in preparing for the occasion gave evidence of the Lord's providence. It was as though the ministering brethren had each felt the deep import of the Apostle's statement. 'Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,' and each in his own way was led to give emphasis to such things as are most vital to a full enjoyment of God's favor and final approval.

"Noticeable indeed was the concentration of thought on the qualities of mind and heart by which Christ is revealed as a living power in the life. Buying the Truth in all its vital and sanctifying features, and how to purchase its possession and its heart-changing effectiveness, was well presented. A helpful and timely examination of the brief Epistle of Jude was much enjoyed, and letting the Word be the sharp two-edged sword by which the heart is searched and the evil within slain by the power of the Word and Spirit, was again brought to mind. Turning again to the life of Abraham for lessons, helpful suggestions were drawn from that seemingly inexhaustible source of encouragement for all the children of Abraham in this age of faith-lessons, perhaps never more needed than now. Reviewing some of the mighty Lets of God in the calling and perfecting of His New Creation, created in Christ Jesus, and exhibiting 'the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, and a helpful discourse on our life of faith in God, brought to a close a program well in keeping with the Apostle Peter's familiar and conclusive statement, 'If ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.'

"Thus one more gathering in this place among the dear friends of Atlantic City will be remembered as a time of profitable fellowship, a place where, because gathered around Christ, He manifested His presence, and Pave His promised blessings. Shall there be another such gathering a year hence? And if so, who of those who feasted together this year will be among those present? This we cannot know, but may it be that the influences of this recent gathering will have given to all present a greater sense of the love and grace of our gracious heavenly Father, and a stronger determination to follow on to know Him, and to have it more and more sue as a personal experience. 'Christ liveth in me.'"

Dear Brethren:
Love and greetings in our Lord.

We want to tell you how rich were the spiritual blessings the dear Lord brought through the brethren in the convention. We had thought--because of the lateness of the season it would not be so large a gathering, but more came than we expected, and the convention proved a spiritual blessing to all, especially to our little Class. What a lesson we can learn by waiting on the Lord, for He can make all things work together for good to those that love Him. The members of the Class have said that it was the most spiritual convention we have ever had, and we thank all you dear ones.

We thank Thee, O Father, for songs and for feasts --
The harvest that glowed and the warmth that increased;
For never a blessing encompassed Thy child
But Thou, in Thy mercy, looked downward and smiled."

May the dear Lord send you all many blessings is our prayer.
Atlantic City Ecclesia,
Mrs. E. E. H., Sec.

Items of Interest **Bible Students Monthly**

The Bible Students' Committee, our English correspondents, write that they have "decided to issue the *'Bible Students Monthly'* in an enlarged and improved form beginning with the January issue. . . . The subscription price will be one dollar a year in America."

We wish our brethren overseas success in this endeavor to enlarge their privilege of service to the brethren, and thus to their Master. Subscriptions may be sent to us or to the Bible Students' Committee, 24 Darwin Road, Welling, Kent, Eng.

The Memorial Supper

According to the Jewish calendar, the 14th of Nisan falls this year on April 3, which in the Jewish reckoning begins after sundown the previous day, April 2. Since it was on the night corresponding with this latter date that our Lord instituted the Memorial Supper, we will at that time commemorate the death of the antitypical Lamb -- Sunday, April 2, after 6 p. m.