

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## Thirsting After the Living God

HOW MARVELOUS and how harmonious are the great creative works of God! He said, "Let there be light, and there was light," and then He gave to man eyes of wonderful construction to behold and enjoy the light of sun, moon, and stars. In creating light, divine love was but anticipating and preparing for one of humanity's greatest joys. When God spread a universe over unbounded expansions in space, he endowed man with an inherent spirit of exploration and adventure so that he might "trace creation's wonders o'er," and bow in adoration before the endless display and grand designs of the great First Cause. The Infinite mind conceived in all their unlimited operations Nature's wondrous laws, and then imparted to finite minds the ceaseless longing to search out the deep-laid wisdom that multitudinous creations make manifest. What fascinating power grips the mind of one who turns his telescope toward the heavens, seeing a pageantry of revolving worlds moving with precision and incredible speed through succeeding centuries, and then with microscopic lens turns to the infinitesimal forms of life to see equally mysterious and amazing, gripping, and fascinating traces of God's wonder working. How close, how marvelous the affinity between the mind of the Creator, and His creature, the perfect man made in His likeness, and endowed with powers of mind to seek after God and find Him; to mount higher and higher in the knowledge of Him, which is life eternal.

In all realms of His creative power, God's revelation of Himself should draw out man's adoring worship; but it is in the sphere of His redeeming love we read His character in fairest lines. His glory may indeed be seen in the heavens decked with myriad stars, and seen in numberless ways in earthly creations, but it is with eyes of the heart He may be seen in more unclouded beauty. It is when God quickens a soul with a vision, unseen and unknowable to the natural mind, that the soul yearns for Him, as the hart pants for the water brook.

In all ages of human history hearts have cried out for a more perfect knowledge of God, and in many instances this thirst of soul has been most pronounced in those who knew Him best. Hearken to the testimony of the Psalmist, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." "As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." (Psa. 84:2; 42:1.) It was Job, upright, "and none like him in all the earth," who cried, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat." (Job. 23:3.) It was

he with whom God conversed "as a man speaketh unto his friend" who pleaded, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory, inspired to ask for this by the very boldness created by God's presence and word, "Thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name." - Exod. 33:17, 18.

So it has ever been through the long line of prophets, apostles, outstanding and obscure saints, even to our own day. To these there has come the blessing promised in the beatitude of Jesus, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6.) For these spirits a disciple of early days spoke the fitting word, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Higher ideal or aspiration no man can entertain, and blessed indeed is he who has been awakened to an unquenchable longing after all possible knowledge of God, for, as one has truly said, "The soul which has once seen God, yearns for fuller vision; for vision means knowledge, and knowledge means bliss." This is the vision for which every Christian heart should know a continuous growing thirst. Was it not for those already enlightened and seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus for whom Paul prayed, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power." (Eph. 1:17-19.) May the Spirit of God by which this prayer was inspired, impart to us an over-powering yearning for its fullest possible answer *in* our own experience.

### **The Pure in Heart See God**

The lips fitted to speak God's truth must know the touch of the live, burning coal from the sanctifying altar fire, that in the mouth there may be found no guile. So too, the eyes fitted to see God must be eyes washed in the tears of repentance, and sanctified by the healing touch of the Great Physician. Of God it is written, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." (Hab. 1:13.) If, therefore, we would be guided by His eye, how needful it is that we too must turn our eyes away from all iniquity, and have them ever directed toward the perfect holiness of God. He can require no less from us than this high aim, yet here, where our undone condition is made so painfully apparent to us, and our need revealed most fully, comes the opportunity that meets extremity--where sin abounds through inherent weakness, grace does the more abound in "the working of His mighty power," "according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." - Eph. 1:19; Phil. 3:21.

High aims are not from ourselves. Of this the Apostle gays, "For it is God who energizeth within you, both the desiring and the energizing, in behalf of His good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13, Rotherham.) From Him comes the desire breathed out in the prayer, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold **wondrous** things out of Thy law" (Psa. 119: 18); then, that the prayer may have its fullest answer He cleanses our sight from *all* that would hinder us from seeing, as Paul declares we should see, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. 4:6.) So He did with job, humbling him to dust and ashes, then leading him out into a prosperity greater than before known. In like manner He must deal with us now. If we would know the genuine thirst after God, and eventually find ourselves led out into "a large place" according to promise, our innate pride must be humbled, that there be no blinding veil to hide His, glory from our eyes. Then indeed shall experience verify the inspired Word, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." - Hosea 6:3.

"That I might know Him" -- this was the heart cry of Paul, he to whom revelations and visions of a special and unique character had been so particularly given, he who knew by experience a transport into realms so akin to the invisible spiritual world, that "whether in the body or out of the body" while there, he could not determine. Yet not in this experience, transcendent and sublime though it was, did he find the ultimate vision and goal he sought:.. Nay, it served only to create the greater objective --

"That I might **know Him** and the power of His resurrection." To know God and Jesus Christ whom He had sent, was in Paul's conception of Christian experience, the very substance of eternal life, and for this knowledge he never ceased to hunger. With every added revelation given him, and with every added experience of Christ's presence and power granted to him, there came to Paul a more intense yearning to follow on to know Him in a more perfect manner. It cannot be otherwise in any heart where the reception of God's love and grace is true and consistently responsive. Where "the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" is permitted to shine as it should, there will be known the joyous experience of the Master's promise fulfilled, "My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." - John 14:23.

## **In Thy Presence is Fulness of Joy**

What must it be to stand in the august presence of Him whose holy character is so vividly portrayed in the prophetic question and answer: "Who may ascend the Eternal's hill? Who may stand within His sacred shrine? He only who has clean hands and a heart unstained, who never sets his mind on what is false, who never breaks his word: he gains a blessing from the Eternal, a boon from God his Savior. Such are the men who **are in quest of Him**, who seek the presence of the God of Jacob." - Psalm 24:3-6, Moffatt's translation.

Is this our "quest of Him"? Beholding the perfections of His all-comprehensive attributes of wisdom, justice, love, and power, are we consumed with an unquenchable thirst for a likeness to Him in these excellencies of character? Is it in a transport of joy, a buoyant, accelerated hope, we say, "I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness"? As these wonderful, co-ordinating, perfect attributes of the divine character of God are contemplated by us, is there a responsive yearning within the deeper regions of our being crying out for these as needful to complete our satisfaction, and our ultimate happiness? As we add up the joys set before us as incentives to run with patience the race appointed to us, letting our computations attempt a survey of what it will mean to see our God and our Savior face to face, and what those "ages of glory to follow" may bring to us of never-ending bliss, do we yet, for all of these, come back to a sense of unspeakable joy to revel in the thought of possessing at last in a divine glory and perfection those admirable attributes of God? Truly, "Such are the men who are in quest of Him, who seek the presence of the God of Jacob."

Our thinking about God, right or wrong, does not affect God, any more than our correct or incorrect thinking concerning the sun would affect it. But true or false thoughts about God can affect us tremendously. God is immeasurable, infinite, holy, perfect in the possession and exercise of wisdom, justice, love, and power, and any conception of Him we may hold by which any of these grandeurs of His character are distorted, must be deplored. Such untrue thoughts harm us in proportion to the degree of misrepresentation they contain-inevitably so, since they distort the ideal God's perfections should keep ever before us, that beholding and admiring them, we may undergo the change of which the Apostle writes, "We all with unveiled face **receiving and reflecting the glory of the Lord** into the same image **are being** transformed from glory into glory -- even as from a spirit that is Lord." - 2 Cor. 3:18, Rotherham.

Here is the secret, then, of spiritual growth into the likeness of God's dear Son. Against all human tendencies to misrepresent God, let there be raised tip the true beauty of the Lord, and let the eyes of the heart be fixed steadfastly on that perfect character from which perfect wisdom, justice, love, and power radiate unceasingly. Then by the very law of magnetic attraction, that same beauty becomes stamped upon the admiring, enchanted, and hungry heart. Yea, and by the same rule the influence and operations of the Spirit spread out into all the happy relationships embraced in the family of God. To take on the character of God is to be filled with the **love** of God, to partake of the **wisdom** that comes down from God, pure, peaceable, gentle, and full of mercy. It means the possession of more pronounced qualities of **justice**, a delight in dealing justly with all with whom we have to do, and thus is the **power** of God displayed in the life. Out of the hunger for God, and because enchanted and attracted by the beauties of His character, there comes the soul-satisfying realization that the heart and mind so created and endowed to receive Him, now possesses Him as a personal treasure, and He, the Master-workman, will complete the work begun, for by His own Spirit the prayer is ever in our heart, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with Thy likeness." "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." - Psalm 17:15; 42:2; 73:25. - *Contributed.*

## Acquirements Necessary for Christian Fellowship

Strongly as we feel the need and blessing of fellowship, we cannot disguise the fact that we are often disappointed in our communion with Christians. The society and conversation of Christians has at times proved insipid, and has failed to help and encourage us in our inner life. We have spoken and listened, and though the words have been of divine things, and probably scriptural and true, yet the soul has received no sustenance nor refreshment. We do not find that we go to the throne of grace with intenser faith and love, or to the performance of our duty with a steadier step and more courageous heart.

Or we have tried to influence, and failed. Our words made no impression; instead of stimulating a languid believer, we have only offended him; we are active and laborious, and we produce only discontent (and criticism). It may not be profitable to describe still further the failings of Christian intercourse; it will be more useful to think of the causes of these disappointments and their remedies.

Notice, then, that we must be very near to God if we wish to get near our brother's heart. Christian communion must be the result -of true, deep communings with God. The lamp is not nourished by the flame; it is nourished by oil, which has constantly to be renewed; and our intercourse will,, soon lose all power and blessing unless we dwell much in the presence of the Lord.

Lastly, bear in mind that love is the soul of communion; and love means self-sacrifice. Christian fellowship without love is but a shadow without the substance, and there can be no true happiness in it. It is in seasons of affliction, of persecution and suffering, Christian fellowship prospers. And why? It is then that Christians, in their intercourse, are enriched because prayer prospers. Their words are living, their thoughts varied, their hearts enlarged. Then they build one another up in their most holy faith.

The conversation of disciples brings no light and encouragement, unless Jesus draws near and opens the Scriptures. It is only then that light cheers our fainting souls. And the heart begins to burn in love and joyous hope. - *Selected*.

## Three Thoughts

I met a Thought serene and high,  
His stature almost reached the sky;  
He caught the golden light of day,  
Reflecting it along life's way.  
He glimpsed a bright futurity,  
Because a thought of Hope was he.

I met a Thought; he'd traveled long;  
He bore himself composed and strong;  
He shook the symbols of his might,  
And gloom was chased away by light.  
Fair fingers pointed up because  
A thought of living Faith he was.

And then a Thought of regal grace  
Came up to me and took his place,  
His mien was calm, his smile was true,  
He seemed to warm me through and through;  
He drew my mind to things above,  
Because he was a thought of Love.

- *Walter Sargeant.*

# The Seven Key Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation

## A Meditation in two parts-Part I

*"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." - Rev. 19:10.*

IN THE opening chapter of "The Divine Plan of the Ages," after stating that among the subjects he intended to consider therein was that of prophecy, the author goes on to say: "No work is more noble and ennobling than the reverent study of the revealed purposes of God -- 'which things the angels desire to look into.' (1 Pet. 1:12.) Nor should we suppose that prophecy was given merely to satisfy curiosity concerning the future. Its object evidently is to make the consecrated child of God acquainted with his Father's plans, thus to enlist his interest and sympathy in the same plans, and to enable him to regard both the present and the future from God's standpoint. When thus interested in the Lord's work, he may serve with the spirit and with the understanding also; not as a servant merely, but as a child and heir. Revealing to such what, shall be, counteracts the influence of what now is. The effect of careful study cannot be otherwise than strengthening to faith and stimulating to holiness."

Today most people who are at all disposed to faith and godliness freely confess their belief that the circumstances and events taking place throughout the world are in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. But such beliefs are usually hazy. As a result they do not yield their possessors the strong confidence and peace of mind which should be the consecrated believer's portion in this stormy time.

Then, too, we ourselves, unless we are frequently reminded of the things we have learned and have been assured of, are not only apt to let them slip, but also are likely to get into a condition of mind in which we are unable to distinguish foolish, speculative ideas from, conclusions based on the sure word of God. To quote again from "The Divine Plan": "We trust that a wide distinction will be recognized between the earnest, sober, and reverent study of prophecy and other Scriptures in the light of accomplished historic facts, to obtain conclusions which sanctified common sense can approve, and a too common practice of general speculation, which, when applied to divine prophecy, is too apt to give loose rein to wild theory and vague fancy. Those who fall into this dangerous habit generally develop into prophets (?) instead of prophetic students."

In secular education the elemental, basic, principles are reading, writing, and arithmetic. Nothing that is properly taught in the centers of higher education later is ever found to be in conflict with these "3-R's" taught in the kindergarten and grade schools.

So it is in the school of Christ, the school of salvation. Here also 3-R's are first taught namely Ransom, Reconciliation, and Restitution. Nothing that the most advanced student learns in this school is ever found to be out of harmony with these basic, fundamental, saving truths.

That this is true in the realm of **saving** truth *liar* consecrated believer will question. Does the analogy hold good in the realm of **prophetic** truth? We answer: Yes, we think it does. When we turn to the study of prophecy, while we do not find any "3-R's" in that branch of Bible study, we do, nevertheless, find certain basic, elemental, prophecies, the meaning of which, being divinely given, cannot be mistaken.

In all there are seven of these prophecies, and together they might well be called the ABC of Bible prophecy; and it is important to remember that none of the lessons we may learn as we progress in our studies in the school of **prophecy** will ever be found to conflict with these basic ones. Moreover, as from time to time various interpretations of current events are suggested as fulfilling certain Bible prophecies, we shall find it helpful if we ask ourselves: "How do these views fit in? -- how do they harmonize with the key prophecies?--and their divinely given interpretations? Simple though they are, when once their meaning has been revealed to us, these key prophecies, with their divinely given interpretations, present such a comprehensive outline of God's great Plan of Salvation for the human family as to beget and nourish a calm faith in God and in the ultimate triumph of good over evil, even while we live in the midst of today's chaos.

### **Seven Prophecies-One Subject**

In this meditation we propose to briefly review all seven. Since they have been read and studied by us many times before, we are not suggesting anything new. It may, however, be a new thought to some of our readers, as it was to us when it was - first brought to our attention, to consider them together as a group, as **the** group, the "key" prophecies, the ABC group. If so, it may well prove that these old truths, cast in a somewhat new light, together with new experiences which all of us are having, may be used to refresh and encourage us again.

All seven of these "key" prophecies are found in the Books of Daniel and the Revelation-five in Daniel and two in the Revelation. While they are seven in number, they have to do with one main subject. In his observations on the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, Sir Isaac Newton, the man who is recognized as one of the world's great mathematicians, if not the greatest of them, says :

"The Apocalypse of John is written in the same style and language with the prophecies of Daniel, and hath the same relation to them which they have to one another, so that all of them together make but one complete prophecy."

The Book of Revelation should thus be regarded as the New Testament sequel to the Book of Daniel. The Books of Daniel and Revelation may be considered as parts- one and two of a single prophecy, a prophecy relating to the same subject, and presenting that subject in the same symbolic form. They unfold earlier and later portions of the same great story. All the events foretold in the Apocalypse belong to that order of things and to that course of ages predicted in the Book of Daniel. The introductory vision in Daniel, that of the Image, the Stone, and the Mountain, sketches the complete course of the five great kingdoms of History and Prophecy. The grand outline given in this introductory vision is filled in by later prophecies. Each succeeding prophecy adds further details, **but no fresh outline is presented**. The sublime framework of the five empires remains unaltered. All the visions of both Daniel and the Apocalypse belong to this one outline. They cannot be properly understood until they are fitted into it, and take their place in it as part of a great symbolic revelation of the course and succession of earthly empires and the rise and establishment of the Kingdom of God.

As we review these seven "key" prophecies, let us bear in mind that in each case not only the prophecy itself, but its meaning, has been divinely interpreted. In building on these interpretations, therefore, as another has said. "we build not on the shifting sands of human opinion, but on the stable rock of revealed truth."



## No. 1-The Great Image

The first is recorded in the second chapter of Daniel, and is the interpretation of the great Image.

Five verses contain the description of the Image, Stone, and Mountain (Dan. 2:31-35) followed by ten verses giving the interpretation (Dan. 2:36-45). Mark the introductory words: "This is the dream; and we will tell the **interpretation** thereof before the king." Note also the concluding words: "The dream is certain, and the **interpretation** thereof sure." It has been suggested that we would do well to underline in our Bibles the word "interpretation" that we may note and remember the important fact that we are furnished here in the prophecy with an infallible guide to its meaning.

The interpretation of the vision of the Image given to Daniel by the God of heaven, in answer to prayer, and conveyed by Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar is as follows:

(1) "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

(2) "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee,

(3) "And another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

(4) "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken [fragile]. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

(5) "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the **interpretation** thereof sure."

In this divinely given interpretation the four different metallic parts of the Image represent four successive kingdoms, of which the first is Babylon; while the Stone cut out without hands which destroys the Image, becomes a Mountain, and fills the earth, represents the Kingdom of the God of heaven, universal in its range, and everlasting in its duration. Five kingdoms in all, of which the first is Babylon and the fifth the Kingdom of God.

Let us note that the four kingdoms follow each other without any gap, as represented by the four parts of a single image; that the second is inferior to the first; that the third is characterized by worldwide extent, and the fourth by resistless strength and all-subduing conquests. Observe especially that the fourth kingdom is in its later stage "divided," that it consists partly of iron and partly of clay, and that the attempts to reunite its broken fragments prove vain and futile. Contrast

the great Colossus of human sovereignty standing on feeble fragile feet of iron mixed with clay with the stable and everlasting Mountain of the Kingdom of God. Observe the superhuman origin of the final Kingdom represented by a Stone cut out without hands-a Kingdom founded by no sword or sceptre of man, built by no human will or wisdom, but by the invisible power of the Creator of heaven and earth. Note also the two stages of the Kingdom represented by the Stone and the Mountain, and that before the Stone becomes the Mountain, it falls on the Image in its finally divided clay and iron state, and utterly annihilates it.

The first and the last of the five kingdoms are clearly and authoritatively interpreted as the Kingdom of Babylon and the Kingdom of the God of heaven; while the second, third and fourth are the intervening kingdoms which fill up the course of Gentile rule between these two well marked termini. Later visions plainly show what these intervening kingdoms are.

## **No. 2-The Great Tree**

So much for the first of the seven "key" prophecies. Let us turn next to the second. It is found in the fourth chapter of Daniel, and is the interpretation of the great Tree.

Observe once again the words of Daniel: "This is **the interpretation, O king**, and this is the decree of the Most High."

Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream a great Tree, reaching to heaven, under whose shadow dwelt the birds and beasts of the earth. He had heard a voice from heaven proclaim the decree "Hew down the tree" but "leave the stump of his roots in the earth," and "let seven times pass over him."

Daniel thus interprets the dream: "It is thou, O king." (Ver. 22.) As in the former vision Daniel had said to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art this head of gold," so here he boldly tells the monarch that the vision concerns himself. He, Nebuchadnezzar, was symbolized by the great Tree; his far reaching dominion by its widely extending branches; and his temporary abasement during the period of seven times was represented by the cutting down of the Tree, whose stump was left bound with iron and brass in the soil during this predicted period. "They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field . . . and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. The rest of the chapter relates the historical fulfillment of the vision: "All this came upon the King Nebuchadnezzar."

That is as far as the divine interpretation goes. "It is thou, Nebuchadnezzar." Daniel's interpretation of the dream relates only to its fulfillment upon Nebuchadnezzar; but the fact that the dream and the interpretation and the fulfillment are all so carefully related here is evidence of an object in its narration. And its remarkable fitness as an illustration of the divine purpose in subjecting the whole race to the dominion of evil for its punishment and correction, that in due time God might restore and establish it in righteousness and everlasting life, warrants us in accepting it as an intended type.

Commenting on its typical significance, another has observed:

"Unless it was to foreshadow the degradation and the duration of Gentile Times, we know of no reason for the recording of this scrap of history of a heathen king. That his seven years of degradation fitly illustrated human debasement is a fact; that God has promised a restitution of earth's dominion after humanity has learned certain great lessons is also a fact; and that the seven

symbolic Gentile Times (2520 years) end at the exact point when mankind will have learned its own degradation and present inability to rule the world to advantage and will be ready for God's Kingdom and dominion, is a third fact. And the fitness of the illustration forces the conviction that Nebuchadnezzar's seven years, while literally fulfilled on him personally, had a yet greater and broader significance as a figure of the seven symbolic times of Gentile dominion, which he represented. The seven times of Nebuchadnezzar's degradation proved to be seven literal years, when actually so fulfilled; and so the humiliation of Israel and the world under the 'powers that be' has proved to be seven symbolic times-2520 years. This period has now ended, and agencies are at work on every hand pointing to a termination of Gentile dominion, and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness and all the blessings of the New Covenant to Israel and to all the groaning creation."

We may conclude, then, that this second "key" prophecy is in complete harmony with the first; that it does not introduce another subject, but treats of the same subject from another point of view. It supplies the additional information as to the length of the period during which the four worldly kingdoms would have dominion. The first prophecy showed this dominion would last from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the time of the Kingdom of the Stone which became a Mountain. The second prophecy shows this period to be one of seven symbolic times -- 2520 years.

## The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 2:4-7.

*"This I say that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech." - Col. 2:4, R. V.*

WITH CONSUMMATE skill, from the apostolic greeting of verse one to the warnings that begin with the verses which we are about to consider, every word has been used to prepare the minds of these far away brethren for the advice their dangers make necessary. The Apostle realizes he must use great care, for warnings may easily be mistaken for scoldings. He has the interests of his brethren at heart, and his words are apt to take on such a solemn tone that they will feel he is at least exaggerating their danger. In fact they are not aware that they are in any danger; and they will not be safe until made aware of it.

Even the false teachers were doubtless ignorant of the fallacies in their reasonings; for with imperfect brains they could not reason perfectly. On the other hand, if the Colossians had had perfect brains, they would have been quite safe in listening to these philosophers, accepting the truths they taught, and discarding the errors. The question is not raised as to the honesty of either the teachers or the hearers; but, though he does not directly say here what he has said in other places, his politely phrased warning is directly implying that neither they nor their teachers are able to "reason anything" of themselves. - 2 Cor. 3:5, Diaglott.

The danger which had come upon our brethren of this Colossian ecclesia was not peculiar to their day. There are at all times philosophies so-called offering themselves as a substitute for the true philosophy to be found no where except in God's Word. Our being able to discover some of the errors in the world's philosophizings is no safeguard, but rather a danger; for if we become convinced of our ability to "reason anything" of ourselves, the errors which our imperfect brains do not discover will be gladly accepted and stored away as precious truths. Apparently Paul's warning is as much needed today as when given, for one still hears of teachers who are accepted and blindly followed because of their "great brains." Such expressions are heard as, "one of the greatest minds in the truth," "deep thinker," etc. Fine brains are good, just as "persuasiveness of speech" (R. V.) is, when used by an Apostle Paul, or any one who is under the influence of the Spirit of God; but the greater the brain and the more powerful the "persuasiveness," the greater the danger; especially when error is bated, as it always is, with a thousand truths.

Must we then reject all teachers, since we have never found one who did not sometime in his life teach some error? Even the Apostles would have taught a mixture of truth and error without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God in His Word, answers that it is He who has set the teachers in the Body. Manifestly a teacher cannot be accepted as "good" merely because he teaches only what we already believe (he would then have nothing to teach us), nor because he teaches some truth. Neither can he be rejected as "bad" because he makes some mistakes. What then shall be our rule to safeguard ourselves and the brethren against false teachers? Not only through the great logician, the one we would have selected for giving the answer, but also through the loving John (1 John 3:23-4:8) we are told what the final test on the teachers must be. It is presupposed that they must have something to teach us and some ability in teaching. Then, Brother John says, "Try the **spirits**, whether they are of God." The first evidence he gives that they are led of the spirit is their belief in the ransom, confessing that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." Next, if they are "of God" they will be guided by the teachings of the Apostles, God's messengers. Lastly, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God," and therefore can never teach us to know Him; and this is the knowledge through which everlasting life is gained. If with persuasiveness of speech some one,

even one in whom we have great confidence, offers some other standard, in that teaching he is not being guided of the Spirit of the Lord and to that degree must be rejected. But especially "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." (Matt. 7:15, 16.) This is our Master's warning.

### **"There Must be Heresies Among You"**

Truth is actually more fascinating than error; but error must be to some degree fascinating in order to deceive. The natural mind is attracted by natural reasonings; the spiritual mind by sanctifying truths. Therefore the process of introducing error is usually quite simple. The truth-loving mind with some trace of the human still left in it is first attracted and left bewildered by the suggestion of apparently deep and unanswerable questions, made to sound very important even though there would not be a grain of sanctifying power in the answer if ever it were discovered. Then they are induced to accept the teacher's answer because of its speciousness, without seeing all its bearings, or even knowing its real meaning. "So error ever creeps into the Church. Men are caught by something fascinating in some popular teaching, and follow it without knowing where it will lead them. By slow degrees its tendencies are disclosed, and at last the followers of the heresiarch wake to find that everything which they once believed and prized" has been dropped.

It was not human wisdom that taught the Apostle his method of safe-guarding the brethren of Colosse. The human method is to exalt human reasonings with the resulting partial or even total eclipse of the Scriptures; but the one who is being deceived will go away saying, "He had Scripture for it" - for of course Scriptures, some of them misapplied, were intertwined with the human reasoning. "Paul knows that he can best fortify these disciples against all harmful teaching by exalting his Master and urging the inexhaustible significance of His person and message. To learn the full meaning and preciousness of Christ is to be armed against error. The positive truth concerning Him, by preoccupying mind and heart, guards beforehand against the most specious teachings. If you fill the coffer with gold, nobody will lack, and there will be no room for pinchbeck [anything spurious or pretentious]. A living grasp of Christ will keep us from being swept away by the current of prevailing popular opinion, which is always much more likely to be wrong than right, and is sure to be exaggerated and one-sided at the best. A personal consciousness of His power and sweetness will give an instinctive repugnance to teaching that would lower His dignity and debase His work. If He be the center and anchorage of all our thoughts, we shall not be tempted to go elsewhere in search of the 'treasures of wisdom and knowledge' which 'are hid in Him.' He who has found the priceless One, needs no more to go seeking, but only day by day more completely to lose self, and give up all else, that he may win more and more of Christ, his All. If we keep our hearts and minds in communion with our Lord, and have experience of His preciousness, that will preserve us from many a snare, will give us a wisdom beyond human logic, will solve for us many of the questions fervently debated today, and will show us that many more are unimportant and uninteresting to us" as new creatures.

"For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ Jesus." (Col. 2:5.) For many years Paul had served the Church through the length and breadth of the known world. If now in his prison cell his shoulders were bowed and his hair gray, it was not because of the burden he had borne. These were the toll of years, not of worry. His habit had been one of "joying and beholding." Note that the joy is first. It is for that reason that Paul can see much that is good in these brethren of Colosse. He knew of the errors that were being taught and believed, but with a heart filled with joy he could look beyond their errors and see much in which to rejoice in their "order" and "steadfastness."

Without exception the prison epistles are masterpieces of "rejoicing in the Lord." He who would sympathize with this prisoner of the Lord must draw on his imagination to discover any mournful prospect for him, for he looked not on barren walls but on, a vision of his glorified Lord ever with him. It is not the damp air of a prison cell he breathes, but heaven's own atmosphere. And not only his Lord is with him there, but into that little square is crowded every saint, living and dead, known and unknown; for Paul is ever rejoicing with those who have gone to their rest to await the victor's crown, and struggling side by side with those who are valiantly stretching forth toward the mark of the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

If Paul's preference had been to know his brethren "after the flesh," his astute mind would probably have been able to uncover more unlovely things in his brethren than the less active brains would. He, however, does not find pleasure in talking about the failings of which he has of necessity been made aware that he may write the Colossians this epistle for their blessing and for ours. He who counseled others to think on things that are lovely, gives little more than bare mention to these weaknesses, in his haste to take up the theme of which he never wearies—the beauties of true holiness as exemplified in his Lord.

It is a military figure the Apostle uses to portray the thing of worth in the Colossian ecclesia which he mentions first -- "your order." Paul was living in a Pretorian camp and if he could not so much as see the soldiers from between the bars of his little window, he could hear the feet in perfect accord, a proof that heads that differ and hearts that once were set on widely differing ideals need not interfere with the beautiful oneness that makes effective soldiers, and that can make the soldiers of the cross move as one man under the direction of the Captain of their salvation.

The translation which Weymouth gives the next phrase is also a military metaphor: "the solid front presented by your faith in Christ" -- your closed phalanx, in other words. This designation should perhaps be taken as referring to the inward condition, and the former to the outward discipline of the Church in Colosse. This is an excellent ideal for every congregation to have set before it: military precision in the orderly array of their activities; and, within, a steadfast, unwavering faith. Paul, it must be borne in mind, is not recommending discipline merely for display; but precision resulting from a faith in our Captain so great that, at His command, following where He has gone before, any foe however numerous, and any danger however great, will be faced shoulder to shoulder and without a suspicion of wavering. It was another, well acquainted with the requirements of a good soldier, who centuries earlier wrote of the company that came to make their captain king in Israel: "All these, men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel." (1 Chron. 12:38.) May it not be that a, test more subtle than many suspect is, in this day of divisions, determining who are worthy of heart to be present at the crowning of the King of kings, and Lord of lords? How foolish to be making a great to-do over the fact that some people are hard to keep step with, when the discipline preparatory to our great battle and victory depends much on our accommodating ourselves to our comrade's stride. Not in the sense of making missteps with him, but in bearing with his "infirmities" to his "edification."

Courage, devotion to the cause and to our Captain, and whole-hearted enthusiasm are needed to make a "good soldier" even in the days of training. It is better that "Faint heart" have his weakness revealed in the dust and heat of the drill-field than be exposed to humiliating defeat when the battle is on. Let us ask ourselves whether through the dust of the drill-field we can see the face of our Captain 'joying and beholding" **our** orderly rank and steadfast faith in Him? If

there is any disorder in our ranks, is the whole company out of step with me, or am I out of step with them?

### **The Christian's Walk**

"As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, (a) rooted and (b) builded up in Him, and (c) stablished in your faith, even as ye were taught, (d) abounding in thanksgiving." - R. V.

A truth so important as this cannot be too often reiterated: knowledge is imparted only that it may be put into practice—in view of the fact that you have taken Jesus, the **Man** who died for us, and who was anointed as the long expected Messiah, the Christ, as your **Lord**, your exalted Head, of course you must mold your life, down to the smallest detail, to His will. This is the life, the walk, of faith which will be manifested in the four ways outlined by the Apostle.

(a) "Rooted . . . in Him," the oft repeated "in Him" of this epistle and the one to the Ephesians reveals the never-failing source of life from which the Christian may draw nourishment, the antitype of the Rock that followed the children of Israel through all their wilderness journey with its refreshing, life-sustaining water. The figure forcefully represents the real, the vital indwelling of the believer in Christ. But "Paul drives his fiery chariot through rhetorical proprieties, and never shrinks from 'mixed metaphors' if they more vigorously express his thought. Here we have three incongruous ones close to each other's heels. The Christian is to walk, to be rooted like a tree, to be built up like a house. What does the incongruity matter to Paul as the stream of thought and feeling hurries him along?"

"The tenses of the verbs, too, are studiously and significantly varied. Fully rendered they would be 'having been rooted and being builded up.' The one is a past act done once for all, the effects of which are permanent; the other is a continuous re= suiting process which is going on now. The Chris= tian has been rooted in Jesus Christ at the beginning of his Christian course. His faith has brought him into living contact with the Savior, who has become as the fruitful soil into which the believer sends his roots, and both feeds and anchors there. The familiar image of the First Psalm may have been in the writer's mind, and naturally recurs to ours. If we draw nourishment and stability from Christ, round whom the roots of our being twine and cling, we shall flourish and grow and bear fruit. No man can do without some person beyond himself on whom to repose, nor can any of us find in ourselves or on earth the sufficient soil for our growth. We are seedlings dropped on some great rock, which send their rootlets down the hard stone and are stunted till they reach the rich leaf-mold at its base. We blindly feel through all the barrenness of the world for something into which our roots may plunge that we may be nourished and firm. In Christ we may be 'like a tree planted by the river of water'; out of Him we are 'as the chaff,' rootless, lifeless, profitless, and swept at last by the wind from the threshing floor. The choice is before every man -- either to be rooted in Christ by faith, or to be rootless."

(b) "Being built up in Him." The gradual, continuous building up of the structure of a Christian character is doubly expressed in this word by the present tense which points to a process, and by the prefixed preposition represented by 'up,' which points to the successive laying of masonry course upon course. We are the architects of our own characters. If our lives are based on Jesus Christ as their foundation, and every deed is in vital connection with Him, as at once its motive, its pattern, its power, its aim, and its reward, then we shall build holy and fair lives, which will be temples. Men do not merely grow as a leaf which 'grows green and broad, and takes no care.' The other metaphor of a building needs to be taken into account, to complete the former. Effort, patient continuous labor must be put forth. More than 'forty and six years is this temple in

building.' A stone at a time is fitted into place, and so after much toil and many years, as in the case of some medieval cathedral unfinished for centuries, the topstone is brought forth at last. This choice, too, is before all men-to build on Christ and so to build for eternity, or on sand and so to be crushed below the ruins of their fallen houses."

(c) The Greek of the following phrase is, literally, "being established, and may be paraphrased either: "being established by your faith," or "being established as to your faith." "A progressive increase of our faith is the condition of all Christian progress. The faith which is already the firmest, and by its firmness may gladden an Apostle, is still capable of and needs strengthening. Its range can be enlarged, its tenacity increased, its power over heart and life reinforced. The eye of faith is never so keen but that it may become more Ion'-sighted; its grasp never so close but that it may be tightened; its realization never so solid but that it may be more substantial; its authority never so great but that it may be made more absolute. This continual strengthening of faith is the most essential form of a Christian's effort at self-improvement. Strengthen faith and you strengthen all graces; for it measures our conception of divine help.

"And the furthest development which faith can attain should ever be sedulously kept in harmony with the initial teaching -- 'even as ye were taught.' Progress does not consist in dropping the early truths of Jesus Christ the Lord for newer wisdom and more speculative religion, but in discovering ever deeper lessons and larger powers in these rudiments' which are likewise the last and highest lessons which men can learn."

(d) "Further, as the daily effort of the believing soul ought to be to strengthen the quality of his faith, so it should be to increase its amount -- abounding in it with thanksgiving.' . . . The main idea of the clause is that thanksgiving is an inseparable accompaniment of vigorous Christian life. It is to be called forth, of course, mainly by the great gift of Christ, in whom we are rooted and builded, and, in Paul's judgment it is the very spring of Christian progress."

The abounding in thanksgiving implies a habitual dwelling of the mind on the great mercies of God as expressed in His "unspeakable gift," a continual glow of heart as we look on Him, a continual laying hold of that gift for our very own, and a continual pouring of our heart's love to the One who was the embodiment of immortal love. Gratitude on this basis will bind us to glad obedience, will give swiftness to the messenger, and eagerness to the running in the way of God's commandments. It is this genial sunshine that imparts sweet perfume to the spiritual flower, lusciousness to the spiritual fruit. It is the coal that kindles the sacrificial fire from which arise the fragrant incense clouds, an acceptable offering to our God, the highest and noblest service to which we can here aspire.

The life which flows out of the fount of thanksgiving is first pure, and it will be therefore a life acceptable to Him who is its inspiration, an "acceptable sacrifice" "of sweet perfume," a life of joyful surrender. "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually."



## The Ninety and Nine

"There were ninety and nine that safely lay  
In the shelter of the fold,  
But one was out on the hills away,  
Far off from the gates of gold,  
Away on the mountains wild and bare,  
Away from the tender Shepherd's care."

The words are familiar to many Christians; but the story behind them is not well known. Elizabeth Clephane, a Scottish girl of twenty-one, was stricken with grief at the news of her ne'er-do-well brother's death after a drunken carousal in Canada. The tragedy occurred in the year 1851, when it was the general belief that such an one was hopelessly lost. Elizabeth accepted the belief of her times, but her heart told her that if she so loved her prodigal brother, then her Savior must love him in even greater degree. In the midst of her grief she penned the words of this hymn. Not thinking it to be of interest to others she kept it locked away, a secret between her Lord and herself, but after her death it was discovered and sent to a Scottish editor for publication.

"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." In the year 1874, twenty-three years after Elizabeth Clephane thus penned her heart's feelings, the two evangelists, Moody and Sankey, were waiting on the station platform at Glasgow. Ira Sankey had purchased a weekly newspaper in the hope of finding some news of his homeland, America. Disappointed in that expectation his eyes fell upon this little poem, published for the first time. Cutting it out, he placed it in his pocket book. 'At the end of the meeting, one which was the commencement of Moody's work in Scotland, the latter turned to his colleague and asked him to sing an appropriate solo. Somewhat troubled at having nothing immediately ready, Sankey bethought himself of the poem, and, crossing to the piano, improvised a tune as he sang. At the end of his singing a great sigh went up from the audience; some were in tears; and that night saw the birth of a great revival in Scotland.

- *Bible Students Monthly*, England.

## Changeless

"God will not change:  
The restless years may bring  
Sunlight and shade,  
The glories of the spring,  
The silent gloom of sunless winter hours,  
Joy mixed with grief --  
Sharp thorns with fragrant flowers,  
Earth's lights may shine awhile and then grow dim

"But God is true!  
There is no change in Him.  
Rest in the Lord today and all thy days,  
Let His unerring Hand direct thy ways  
Through the uncertainty, and hope and fear  
That meet thee on the threshold of the year;  
And find while all life's changing scenes pass by --  
Thy refuge in the Love that cannot die."

## **"The Secret Place"**

*"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! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." - Psa. 31:19, 20.*

THE SECRET place of the Most High is in no sense a literal building made with hands; nor is it a place which we may hire for a weekly or quarterly rent and for which we secure sole right of tenancy. It is not a place where occupation can be leased for a fixed term of years, and it is not a place to which the greatest earthly wealth can purchase admittance; nor can those who are very poor plead that their poverty may excuse them from paying and thus gain admission free.

No, the cost of entry is within the reach of the poorest as well as the richest, for it is the same to all; yet very few are willing to pay the price because it demands their all-"My son, give Me thine heart." And when we give our heart, it must be done willingly, gladly, sincerely, and there must be no qualification or reservation, for if there should be, then it would not be acceptable, and entry to the "secret place" will be denied to us. If we give only a part of our heart's warmest affection, then it will not be long ere we realize that we do not dwell in that secret place of retirement reserved exclusively for those who have loyally fulfilled the requirements.

But, having paid the price, to what peace of mind and joy of heart do those enter in who continue to faithfully keep their all upon the altar of sacrifice.

## **"In Thy Presence is Fulness of Joy"**

What a blessed privilege it is to be able, under all conditions of life, when thronging duties and cares can be relinquished and the thoughts set free, to return to the place of our rest, to allow the mind to retire to the quiet confines of the "secret place." Indeed to cultivate this retirement to "the secret place of His tabernacle" as a habit of thought, so that the mind instinctively hastens there as to its permanent abiding place, its dwelling, its home, is the only way in which it is possible to receive that great legacy which our dear Redeemer left for all

His faithful followers-"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." As another has so beautifully expressed it "The Christian's habit of thought has much to do with his spiritual progress or retrogression, as it is also an index of his spiritual state; and good habits of thought need to be carefully cultivated. By 'habit of thought' we mean that normal condition to which the mind habitually returns in the moments of mental leisure. While engaged in the active duties of life we must of necessity bend our mental energies to the work in hand, for if we do anything merely mechanically and without concentrating thought upon it we cannot do it well: yet even here Christian principle, well established in the character, will unconsciously guide. But when the strain of labor and care are lifted for a time, the established habit of thought, like the needle to the pole, should quickly return to its rest in God."

**"He Shall Hide Me in His Pavilion: in the Secret  
of His Tabernacle Shall He Hide Me"**

If we do indeed habitually "dwell in the secret place of the Most High," then we might liken the home -of our thoughts, the dwelling place of our mind when at rest, to a lofty and spacious building containing a series of never-ending delights. In its quiet and calm precincts, where rush and bustle and all turmoil are unknown, we spend the happiest moments of our conscious existence. "In the secret of His presence, how my soul delights to hide," says the poet.

High up-indeed so very high as to require keen spiritual vision to discern clearly its beauties, is a dome flooded brilliantly with a glorious golden light, dazzling to behold.

Do we at times feel that it is too far away for us ever to reach? Or can we as it were rise on the wings of faith even to that apparently inaccessible height and with full confidence in the **"exceeding great** and precious promises realize that even now the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory has given unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may **know what is** the hope of His calling, and what the **riches of the glory** of His inheritance in the saints, and that He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places"? If our wings of faith are strong, the intervening space will be correspondingly less, for as our faith grows stronger, the Word will be like a telescope with an ever-increasing range of vision, making this exalted goal, so utterly impossible of attainment to the natural senses, more and more real to us "who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." In proportion to the clearness of our vision of those scenes of glory will our peace and joy in the Lord increase.

"I love by fait: to take a view  
Of brighter scenes beyond;  
The prospect doth my strength renew,  
And hence my songs abound."

Would we manifest such a limited trust in our Heavenly Father's power, such a lack of confidence in His promised grace, as not to take Him at His word? Have we not proved our God to be true to His promises! Would we dare say that our Father had invited us to a position impossible of attainment? Knowing full well the difficulties of the way He had invited us to walk, did He not at the same time promise an abundance of grace sufficient to lead us to the goal? Wherein then do we lack? Surely it is in that element of character which God appears to value so highly-faith. Ah yes! an unquestioning faith in our Heavenly Father will ever insure an undimmed spiritual vision and guard us against aspiring to reach a limited station to which He has never invited us. Let us ever seek to manifest our appreciation of the great honor God has bestowed upon us by fully availing ourselves of the grace He has promised and ever proving that our faith is strong enough to firmly hold on to that grace.

### **"And the Work of Righteousness Shall be Peace"**

No matter how our longing eyes may look to that lofty, distant, golden dome that seems so far away, we find ourselves, for the present, confined inexorably, to the marble floor. How thankful we are to be able to rest so confidently upon its crimson bosom where,

"Hidden here from all my foes,  
None can harm though all oppose;  
For though justice once condemned,  
Love did this blest shelter send."

But what a continual feast of beauty lies there for our eyes to behold! Treasures are there which, dimly lighted by the radiance from that far-away golden dome, provide a never-ending panorama of delight. Palms and graceful foliage charm the eye while vines with their luscious fruit vie with the many fragrant flowers to continually remind us of the ultimate grace and beauty and sweetness of all God's finished handiwork.

### **"Search We May for Many Years, Still Some New, Rich Gem Appears"**

And what an entrancing occupation it is, searching among the luxuriant foliage all around, for those beautiful pictures so skilfully hidden away that only the diligent searcher can find them. But what a reward when they are found! How exquisitely beautiful they are! And even those upon which we have gazed often and long, reveal fresh beauties each time we examine them. Their beauty of design, harmony of color and detail, all betoken the skill of the Master Artist. Only the mind that conceived the loveliness of nature with its sweet-smelling flowers, its butterflies, trees, fields, mountains and rivers, could produce such pictures. We never grow weary of the long-familiar ones, nor tire in our search for new ones.

### **"Salvation! O the joyful Sound!"**

Echoing throughout the lofty spaces of this "secret place" can ever be heard the sweet strains of an invisible organ. The deep pedal notes come reverberating through the corridors reminding us of the stately steppings of our God, while the sweet melodies of Jesus' sacrifice and faithfulness sound forth from the manuals; all the delightful harmony blending perfectly with the singing of the birds and the gentle rustling of the leaves.

As we become more and more domiciled to the "secret place"; as our thoughts become more and more accustomed to an instinctive retirement to that abode of rest, it will ever become more and more attractive to us, and the heavenly city, the longed-for goal and end of our journey, will become increasingly real to us until we can say, "I fancy but thinly the veil intervenes between that fair city and me."

## **"O Sometimes the Shadows are Deep"**

We may, nay probably will, experience a feeling of regret every time the duties of life call us to less harmonious surroundings. Although we have the promise that we shall be kept from "the strife of tongues," we shall not always be able to close our **ears** to such things. We may find that the proud philosopher will still endeavor to convince, by reason or logic, that he understands truth and **we** do not. We shall probably have to listen to those who would fain convince us that salvation is won by works. There will continue to be many cries and much confusion all around us, and many will be the times when, disturbed by these and other distressing elements, and pressed by the duties and cares of life, we will utter the Psalmist's cry, "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest."

## **"Return unto Thy Rest, O My Soul"**

It is at such times that the "secret place" proves our most sacred retreat. As we once more enter therein and review the promises for the future, and are reminded that "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace," we whole-heartedly praise and magnify our Heavenly Father's name. How quieting to the troubled soul to be able thus, even in the midst of life's battles, to be able to say, "I can be calm and free from care on any shore, since Thou art there."

"My God, the spring of all my joys,  
The source of my delights,  
The glory of my brightest days,  
And comfort of my nights."

'Tis in times of stress and strain, or when passing through the deep waters; when storms beat or the disciplines of life's experiences rest heavily upon us, that we find the greatest relief and calmest delight in reviewing the treasures of "His pavilion" and refreshing our thirsty souls with the "exceeding great and precious promises."

How true it is that the vine-dresser must of necessity be close to the vine when pruning, and at that time exercise special care in his attention lest the pruning knife should do harm rather than good. And how true it is, too, that the refiner gives close and careful attention to the gold as well as to the heat of the furnace, lest in seeking to remove the dross, the precious metal too should be lost.

And have we not proved that it is in our hours of deepest distress, in times of sickness, pain, or sorrow that our Heavenly Father is very near to us; that at such times the precious promises are made especially sweet; that pain, sorrow, and loss are but channels through which the comfort and consolation of our hope in Christ flow with concentrated blessings to our hungry soul, longing for a closer fellowship with Him.

It is surely then that our Heavenly Father draws us quietly into the "secret of His presence," and there responds to the deep yearning of our inmost being to draw nearer to *Him*. - *Contributed*.

## The Everlasting Arms

"I've a safe and sacred refuge  
In the midst of all life's cares,  
I've a Helper-tried and precious  
Who will all my sorrows share.  
I've a Comforter who dries my tears  
And soothes my deepest grief,  
Who stills my fears and gives to me  
A blessed, sweet relief.  
I know no fear or trouble  
In the whirl of life's alarms,  
For I am safely carried  
In the Everlasting Arms.

"God's love is like a canopy  
Above my weary head;  
His kindly hand replenishes  
My store of daily bread.  
His mercy forms a barrier  
To every howling blast,  
And wipes away the memory  
Of 'the waters that are past.'  
Here cradled in His tender love,  
Pin safe from life's alarms;  
No harm can pass the portals of  
The Everlasting Arms.

"What though my friends forsake me  
And loved ones wound me sore,  
He has prepared a mansion  
On the Eternal Shore.  
There flowers are always blooming,  
There I shall serve Him still,  
Where earth-born clouds shall not conceal  
The Heavenly Father's Will.  
When death shall write the 'finis'  
To life's page, I'll fear no harm;  
For I shall still be carried  
In the Everlasting Arms.

"This weary, worn-out garment  
I will lay aside at last;  
The pain and weakness and the grief  
Of life will all be past.  
Clothed in my house from Heaven  
I shall see the Father's face,  
And know at last the fulness  
Of His unchanging grace.  
There'll be no sorrow or regrets,  
No fears and no alarms,  
When I'm carried through Death's portals  
In the Everlasting Arms."

- L. K. Poole, Author of "Ten Camels."

## **Bible Readings**

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4.) If by reason of appropriating some small portion of the sanctifying power of the Scriptures one is convinced that any effort to make his knowledge of the Scriptures more complete will be well rewarded, that one will perhaps be appreciative of the method successfully used by many. By reading four chapters a day the entire Bible may be read through in a year. This is not recommended as a substitute for a careful study of the Word, but as a very helpful adjunct to it. Few can hope to have time for a detailed study of every portion of the Word, but if one is familiar with the entire range of Scripture, even the less studied portions will lend their measure of assistance while other portions are being more thoroughly considered. This cannot, of course, be true if one has not familiarized himself in a general way with the entire Bible.

Greater interest is given if the Bible is divided into three sections: Section No. 1, Genesis to Psalms; Section No. 2, Proverbs to Malachi; Section No. 3, the New Testament. In this third section the epistles by the same name, such as First and Second Corinthians, may be considered as one, and Titus and Philemon also read together. Beginning with the first book in Section 1, Genesis, follow with the first book in Section 2, Proverbs; then with the first book in Section 3, Matthew; and follow this order until the entire Bible is read.

Additional interest may be given if several brethren plan to read the same chapters each day, especially if they are brethren who contact each other frequently.

No reading can have the intended effect unless it is done with the Spirit and the understanding, but an earnest endeavor to know better the Author of the Word must inevitably result in blessings to one who searches the Scriptures with that object in view.

## God's Place of Blessing

"God's promises, exceeding great!" are expressions of His desire to shower blessings upon His people. They are assurances that He delights to give, and give, and give again. The fulfillment, therefore, in our experience of any of His exceeding great and precious promises becomes an encouraging evidence of our being in the line of His will -a witness of the Spirit that we are His. Jesus has promised that "where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst." Truly they who have met together in that Name and thereby found themselves blessed, according to this promise, may testify, "How sweet to leave the world awhile, and seek the presence of our Lord." God delights to keep tryst with His children and there command His blessing upon them, even as He promised His people of old. He is still the same God, ever ready to pour out of the abundance of His riches of grace on those who worship Him in spirit and in truth.

This was confirmed to those who were privileged to attend the two days of fellowship in Detroit over the weekend -of July Fourth. Surely none failed to carry away the happy assurance of having been "apart" with the Master, privileged indeed to leave the world awhile, and in His presence find a little time for relaxation from the conflicts of life, and gain strength for whatever experiences the coming days may bring. We believe these times "apart" are a gracious provision of the Lord, and that it is His purpose that we shall return to the routine of daily life strengthened in spirit to press forward toward the goal set before us in Christ Jesus.

The themes discussed by the speakers encouraged a consistent, sober outlook on life, which is greatly needed in these momentous days. The incorruptible crown held in reserve for those who so run as to obtain, was once again reviewed, to the end that we might be further encouraged to lay aside all hindering things and count all else

but loss and dross. The fast approaching darkness which, according to the prophetic Word, must precede the full dawn of the new day, also had attention, that we might remember we are favored children of the light, and should walk accordingly. The character of those who dwell in the secret place, and the consecration of those who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, were likewise considered, that the great truth might be reiterated, and constantly remembered, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

A discussion on "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God," refreshed our hearts with timely reminders of God's inexhaustibleness, and, in contrast, our own littleness. Truly, "the reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The blessed freedom of those in Christ-free, yet bound with cords of love to the will of God-was a word in season, and equally so the thoughts presented on the familiar text, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build." The closing session was a symposium on the three abiding qualities of Christian character, Faith, Hope, and Love.

The keynote of the fellowship, so well expressed in song, was, "Gladness has come to stay." As the time for departure drew near, it seemed that gladness had indeed come to stay, and would radiate into wider and wider circles embracing many not privileged to be personally present. The testimonies of the friends and their parting words gave evidence that we had met in God's place of blessing, in the peerless name of Jesus, and in the blessed unity of the Spirit. The words of a closing hymn fitly expressed the desire of one and all:

"Lord, give me grace to walk with Thee,  
Through pain, or loss, or shame.  
That every act may henceforth be  
An honor to Thy name."

## Recently Deceased

Mr. J. W. Knowlton, Clarington, O. - (June).

Mrs. Hillie L. Wallace, Bellingham, Wash. - (June).

Mr. William Grab, Junction City, Wis. - (July).