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God Our Refuge Our Year Text for 1943

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change, and though the mountains be moved in the heart of the seas." - Psalm 46:1, 2, R. V.

PRAISE FROM thankful hearts to the great Giver of all good should be the sentiments of all the Lord's people at the dawn of the New Year, 1943. Our praise should be for mercies past, as well as for the exceeding great and precious promises of the future-promises which have to do not only with the life beyond, but with the present and the immediate future. As we look about us and "behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He is making upon the earth," how comforting to realize that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," and to have our trust so implicitly in Him that we will not fear "though the earth do change, and though the mountains be moved into the heart of the seas." These words of the Psalmist, describing conditions of our own day, seem most fitting for a year text for 1943.

"The succeeding words of this Psalm indicate a time of great and wide-spread trouble and distress, which is here very graphically described in symbolic language; the earth is removed, the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, the waters thereof roar and are troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

"These things were not true, either in a symbolic or in a literal sense, in the day in which it was written, nor is it yet fully accomplished. The writer spoke as moved by the Spirit of God, and, like the other Prophets, uttered many things which he did not understand, they being written for our admonition and instruction, in whose day only the application is due.

"We find that earth, in symbol, signifies human society as at present organized; that sea is a symbol of the unrestrained and uncontrolled masses of mankind not submissive to either civil or religious control; that mountains symbolize the great ruling powers of earth-the kingdoms of this

world. We find that this interpretation of these symbols is applicable throughout the Scriptures wherever these terms are used symbolically.

"If a literal mountain were cast into the midst of the sea, it would quickly be swallowed by the sea; so will it be with the kingdoms of earth when overthrown by the turbulent masses of discontented people who are now mustering their hosts and disseminating their revolutionary principles.

"This revolutionary spirit has not yet reached its climax; the earth is not yet removed; nor are the mountains yet carried thus into the midst of the sea; but the events of verse 3 of this Psalm have come to pass. The waters of the sea (the discontented peoples) roar and are troubled. We hear the roaring of the troubled waters from every quarter of the globe, and truly the mountains (kingdoms) shake with the swelling thereof. There is not a government on earth that does not realize that these are perilous times and in consequence of this fact, each is taking special precautions to protect itself against the rising power of its own subjects—the roaring, troubled waves of the sea.

"But who is it that finds a refuge of peace and safety in the very midst of the shaking and dissolving kingdoms? Evidently it is the class spoken of in verse 4 as 'the city of God,' dwelling in 'the holy' of the tabernacle of the Most High. In symbol we find that city represents a church, an ecclesiastical kingdom, true or false. The city of God, then, means the Kingdom of God—the Church. As referred to here, it is not the kingdom set up and glorified, else it would be represented as in the Most Holy. 'There is a river,' a river of truth, the blessed streams whereof make glad this city of God.

"How many of us have been refreshed by these blessed streams of truth! Though we hear the roaring of the troubled sea, the murmuring and threatening of discontented and oppressed people, and feel the shaking of the kingdoms with the swellings thereof, yet we fear not, for 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.'

"But our peace and composure, in view of these things, is not a selfish condition which rejoices in its own security regardless of the woes of others. Ah, no; for the streams of truth have brought to us the blessed assurance that,

"Sweet accord shall grow at length
From out this clash of earthly discords.'

"Men fear and tremble as the storm approaches, and will be in utter dismay when it bursts, yet the Church (all truly consecrated saints) shall not be moved. 'God shall help her, and that right early.' Even now she is being strongly fortified with the truth which shall protect her.

"The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

"With joy we have seen the light of truth breaking, and with joy it is our privilege to view prophetic fulfilment, whether it be in the advancement of the truth, or in the culmination or culmination of the troubles of this evil day; for every step of the Lord's great work brings us nearer the glorious outcome of everlasting peace not many days hence, when 'the desire of all nations shall come. - R686, R1489.

"Standing at the portal of the opening year,
Words of comfort meet us, hushing every fear;
Spoken through the silence by our Father's voice,
Tender, strong and faithful, making us rejoice.

Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His word shall never, never pass away.

"I, the Lord, am with thee, be thou not afraid;
I will help and strengthen, be thou not dismayed.
Yes, I will uphold thee with My own right hand;
Thou art called and chosen in My sight to stand.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His word shall never, never pass away.

"He will never fail us, He will not forsake;
His eternal covenant **He** will never break;
Resting on His promise, what have we to fear?
God is all sufficient for the coming year.
Onward, then, and fear not, children of the day;
For His word shall never, never pass away."

"Behold I Make All Things New"

REVELATION 21:5

THE NEW year is properly considered as a time for studying the past year, to note our progress, to study our real heart intentions in past experiences, especially in the mistakes and stumblings; to note any waywardness, to see if the ear has willingly listened to the enchanting calls of other voices than our beloved Master's; to note if any event shows an awakening and struggle of the old nature, and how best we can overcome it. For the new creature lives in a dangerous world. -The forces of darkness are never asleep, never let up their assault on the castle of the new creature-the new mind, the new will. But if we heed the voice of our Captain, the Prince Immanuel, we need have no fear, for He knows all their wiles and how to overcome them. He withstood similar assaults and drew His strength from the Fountain of life. In our Captain, as in our Heavenly Father, the great King Shaddai (Almighty) dwells all the riches of wisdom and knowledge, "for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." - Col. 1:19.

In days gone by, as we progressed in the school of Christ, we learned thus to glean lessons from our mistakes, and to make of them stepping stones instead of stumbling stones. But we have also learned that it is even more encouraging to look forward, to envision the promised making of all things' new. As the Apostle says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. 15:19.) It is the certainty of better things that makes us rejoice, not merely in the fact that pain and want and sorrow and death will pass away and the powers of evil be destroyed, but when the new order is well established, wonders of beauty, of knowledge and wisdom, of happiness, and every delight of heart and mind will then open up to us, which now we cannot even envision, but which our Heavenly Father "will delight to show us that we may share their' joy with Him. "For since the beginning of the ' world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him." - Isa. 64:4.

FORMER THINGS FORGOTTEN

"Behold, I make all things new." Note how the Prophet invites us to rejoice in contemplation of them. "Behold I create new heaven and a new earth"-so much better than the present one that the "former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." (Isa. 65:17.) So completely will the new arrangement satisfy all the longings of heart and mind, so completely absorb all our attention and thought, that the old order of sin will be gladly forgotten. "But be ye glad and rejoice forever in.

that which I create, for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." (Isa. 65:18.) Not merely a rejoicing to those who compose the new Jerusalem, but a rejoicing to the great Creator. "For the Lord hath chosen Zion: He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." (Psa. 132:14.) So the new Jerusalem, the Church glorified with her Lord, shall be called, "Jehovah is there." (Ezek. 48:35.) But the new Jerusalem will be the joy of the world also-"Glorious things are spoken of thee," Zion, the city of the great King. (Psa. 87:3.) "The joy of the whole earth" shall she be called. (Psa. 48:2.) Also "Her people shall be a joy.", What a change!-the people of the world to become noble and lifted up again to the image of God, perfect not only in body, but in- mind also; their hearts filled with kindness, tenderness, love and sympathy-a delight to God, to the Church, and to each other; their faculties keen and quick,, and habituated' so thoroughly in righteousness as to, love and practice it, so that their Creator can once more entrust them with the management of earth and all its creatures.

But the wonders and delights unfold even more. "I will make a covenant Or them with the beasts of the field, and with the owls of heaven, and with the creeping things of th ground; and they shall dwell safely in the wild mess, and sleep in the woods." (Hosea 2:18; Ezeic. 34:25.) The calf, and the fatling, the young lion and the leopard shall lie down together, and a little child shall lead : them. (Isa. 11:6-9.) "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy Kingdom, saith the Lord." - Isa. 65:25.

The land also shall rejoice -- for, there shall be no more curse, no more thorns, no more thistles. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree"- back to its primeval freshness and beauty God will creation triumphantly bring. (Isa: 55:13.) He will plant in the wilderness the fir tree and the pine and the cedar. In the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert. "I will make the place of My feet glorious." (Isa. 60:13.) "The earth shall yield its increase."

A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

Do men need. a new, heaven-a new spiritual authority to enlighten the minds of men? How beggarly have been even the noblest concepts of the Creator by the poor blinded world, and how often just a personification of their own blinded reason, their loves and hates, their longings and passions. Has not man made God in the image of himself and often worse?; "'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether :such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." (Psa. 50:21.) How cruel have been the demons worshiped -demanding human sacrifices-with worship obscene and degrading, corrupting and destroying the worshipers. How the human race needs to know the truth about God, not only His exact justice, but His love, His sympathy, His patience, His kindness, and His holiness! When they begin to know Him, they will despise their former selves, and in learning to love Him will love righteousness and hate evil. Under the present heavens men have often blinded their flocks and made merchandise of the poor. But when the goodness of God shall lead men to repentance, under the new heavens, they shall become ashamed of their evil behavior, and learn to do right and to love righteousness. How grand will be the liberty for. all'.. The whole creation groaneth in hope that the creature also (the world of mankind, or as many of them as will accept the liberty) shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty 'of the sons of God. The knowledge of God. shall cover the whole earth as the waters cover the sea: All shall know Him from the lease to the greatest. He that blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth, and delight in the *abundance of peace*. - Rom. 8:21; Isa. 11:9 Jer. 31:34; Isa. 65:16; Psa. 37:11.

Do men need a new earth, a new social, economic. civil and'financial arrangement? Most men now recognize the fact that mankind will never be willing to go back to the old order. They will

sooner tear up the present order. Selfishness has long ruled society in all its phases and motives-to gather plenty about 'oneself and often rob one's fellows to obtain it to 'crush "those who desire liberty and freedom because they want a more proportionate share of the bounties of earth, and also time to enjoy it. No wonder that in the Lord's Word the governments of earth have been symbolized as wild beasts. In the new order, however, justice shall be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet. The hail of truth shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters destroy the hiding place. Every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, and something else will be certain instead of death and taxes, even the stability and justice of the new order under God, Isa. 28:17; Micah 4:4.

"BEHOLD I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW"

In Ecclesiastes 7:29, Solomon states "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Many things God gave man have been corrupted and twisted, until often darkness appears light and evil appears good. It is easier to do wrong than to do right, and he who seeks to do the will of God exposes himself to ridicule and persecution. But how different it will be in the new order! With evil influences bound and restrained, man shall be led slowly and patiently up the Highway of Holiness. "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and the crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." (Isa. 42:16.) "In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness." "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that innmured shall learn doctrine." (Isa. 29:18, 24.) How wonderfully patient is our God—slow to anger, full of great mercy. "Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you. For the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for Him." - Isa. 30:18.

With such hopes and prospects before us shall we not with even greater joy and earnest resolve enter into the experiences of the new year? With thankful hearts praising God that He has so patiently led us thus far, let us watch and pray that we may humbly and obediently obey His voice and follow His leadership, and so be found with Him when our course here shall be finished.

The Jews celebrated their New Year with the feast of trumpets. (Num. 29:1.) "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month ye shall have an holy convocation." This was and is yet the beginning of their civil year, concerning earthly things. This was arranged for them by the Lord and so was typical of the better things of the Kingdom, when the trumpets, the messages of truth, will call the people to abstain from their own efforts and plans, to rest and rejoice in the freedom and happiness God has provided for them, the feast of fat things God has on His table for their minds and hearts, that will restore them to health of mind and body, and to everlasting life. Let us heartily rejoice and help to ring out the old, ring in the new. - Contributed.

The Covenants of God

PART I

THE DISAGREEMENT that exists in the ranks of Bible Students respecting the Covenants evidences the fact that they are not as clearly understood as might be expected, particularly when we consider the prominence given them in the Scriptures. This, we feel, is ample justification for a reconsideration of the Scriptures that pertain to the subject. It has truly been said that "The Word of God is infallible, but the conclusions we reach are not infallible." We shall endeavor, therefore, to present the subject with a minimum of our own conclusions.

The Covenants in which we are most interested are the God-given arrangements whereby men become His children -- God being the father, the covenant the mother, and those blessed under the covenant, the children.

A covenant, testament, or promise (used inter changeably in our Common Version Bible) may be either unilateral or bilateral-unconditional or contingent upon certain terms agreed upon. A unilateral (unconditional) covenant requires no mediator, since but one party is obligated. (Gal. 3:20.) A bilateral (conditional) covenant may or may not require a mediator, depending upon the relationship of the parties involved. If they are friends and are agreed, then a mediator is not required; but if they are enemies and not in agreement, a mediator becomes necessary.

There are many covenants mentioned in the Scriptures, but only three that operate to bring forth seed or children. It would seem, therefore, that the children of these covenants would recognize the one that constitutes their own mother. Nevertheless, we find a difference of opinion: one group believing that the Church are the children of God through the original promise made to Abraham, and that we receive the adoption as sons through faith and consecration, just as Abraham received the promise. This class believes that the office of a mediator is not required to bring this about, but that the privileges now enjoyed are granted because of personal vows of consecration and sacrifice, and that this sacrifice is made acceptable unto God by reason of the imputed righteousness of Christ. The other group believes that our relationship with God is under the New Covenant arrangement, requiring the office of Jesus as Mediator to make us acceptable. This, they believe is the outworking of the Abrahamic promise in our case.

Both groups believe that the blessings and privileges we enjoy are made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus, and that to reach the goal of our heavenly hopes, we must walk in His footsteps and be transformed into His image. The difference between the two, therefore, is not a matter of faith in God and Christ, nor of the object of our Christian walk, but has to do with our ability to rightly understand the Scriptures that set forth these two Covenants.

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Our discussion properly begins with the Promise or Covenant which God gave to Abraham, saying, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This Covenant states the basic will or purpose of God; and it constitutes the foundation both for the redemption provided through Jesus, and the blessings that men will receive. The first intimation we have of God's purpose to eventually bless all mankind is the statement that "The seed" of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." This, in *substance*, was an unconditional promise, and no doubt the all but perfect minds of Adam and Eve could see hope therein for the future. The next time this

promise is brought to our attention is when it is renewed by God to Noah in giving instructions respecting the coming flood: here God calls it a covenant. (Gen. 6:18.) But it is not until the promise is restated to Abraham, that we see it begin to assume definite form and proportion.

We know nothing of Abraham's early life, but evidently God saw in him possibilities of faith and devotion that were acceptable, and so offered him the privilege of being the channel of intended blessings to mankind. In so far as the world is concerned this promise was unconditional; but in order to become the channel of blessing, Abraham had to prove his faith and consecration unto the utmost; and so it was not until after he had offered up his son Isaac, that God ratified the promise with His oath.

God does not covenant with sinners. Abraham must first become a *just* man in God's sight. This was accomplished through faith (Rom. 4), and his consecration or setting apart was shown by the ordinance of circumcision. Thus far only two have been able to enter into covenant relationship with God on the basis of their own perfection and ability—Adam and Jesus. The rest of us have been reckonedly justified by faith as was Abraham. "We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and do His will, him He heareth." - John 9:31.

In Romans the fourth chapter, Paul discusses the question of our relationship with God as sons and shows that acceptance is the result of His grace through faith; and he emphasizes the fact that just as favor came to Abraham through faith, so favor comes to us through faith. The importance of faith is reiterated again and again in this chapter, but never a word as to any necessity for the office of a mediator under the New Covenant, although this would have been pertinent to the subject were our acceptance with the Father dependent thereon. In summing up the matter, Paul says:

"Therefore being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have *access by faith* into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Here, as always, Paul recognizes the ransom provided through the sacrifice of Jesus as being the basis for acceptance with God. This is true regardless of whether the one justified by faith lived before or after Christ died; for God, knowing the end from the beginning, is able to base His acts upon "things that be not [existent] as though they were." (Rom. 4:17.) Furthermore, in the great test placed upon Abraham in the offering up of his son Isaac, there was enacted a graphic picture of the sacrifice of Jesus -- "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Thus we have proof that God's action in justifying Abraham by faith was based upon the coming sacrifice of the Son of God.

PAUL'S EXPLANATION IGNORES NEW COVENANT

The Epistle to the Galatians affords the clearest exposition of the Church's covenant relationship to the Father that is contained in the Scriptures, yet there is not one word of reference to the New Covenant to be found there. Likewise, the only reference made to a mediator is to show that the promise made to Abraham, unlike the Law Covenant, needed no mediator. (Gal. 3:19, 20.) Furthermore, along with the complete ignoring of the New Covenant, there is a complete ignoring of Hagar, the third wife of Abraham, who would very aptly picture the New Covenant, if the allegory Paul gives us in chapter four were carried out to completion.

It will be of help in our discussion if we keep these facts in mind, and also if we remember that Paul is writing to show up *the value of faith as compared to the Law*. We, down at this end of the

Gospel Age, can scarcely appreciate the difficulty experienced by the early Church in ridding itself of observances to the Law and of teachers who sought to bring Christians back into the Law's bondage. Even Peter and the other Apostles at Jerusalem were led astray to such an extent that Paul felt it incumbent upon him to rebuke them. (Gal. 2:11-14.) In his reproof to Peter he says:

"You and I, though we are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, know that it is not through obedience to Law that a man can be declared free from guilt, but *only through faith* in Jesus Christ. We have therefore believed in Christ Jesus, for the purpose of being declared free from guilt, through faith in Christ and not through obedience to the Law. For through obedience to Law no human being shall be declared free from guilt." - Gal. 2:15, 16, Weymouth.

The first two chapters of the Epistle show that the Galatians were greatly hampered because of this bondage, and that even the Gentiles in their midst were being persuaded to become circumcised, and to observe days, months, and seasons. (Chap. 4:10, 11; 5:1-6.) Paul, much exercised in the matter, exclaims (3:3-6)

"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now going to reach perfection through what is external? He [God] who gives you His Spirit and works miracles among you—does He do so on the ground of your obedience to the Law, or is it the result of your having heard and believed: *even as Abraham believed God, and his faith was placed to his account as-righteousness.*" - Weymouth.

SARAH-THE FAITH COVENANT

Here we have the gist of Paul's argument—*faith versus the Law*. It was not by circumcision, but by *faith* that Abraham received the covenant; it was by *faith* that he was justified. It was *by faith* that Sarah conceived and brought forth *the child of promise* long after she had passed the child-bearing stage of her life. On the other hand, the Law justified no one; it brought forth only to bondage.

Then (Chap. 4:21-31) Paul proceeds to show that Sarah, the *original* and true wife of Abraham, pictured the *original promise* (Covenant) God had given him—the Covenant that promised the seed and the blessings to come through that seed. But, as that covenant *remained unproductive* for a period of approximately two thousand years, so Sarah *remained childless* until it seemed that no child could be born to her.

HAGAR-THE LAW COVENANT

In the meantime, Sarah gave her bondmaid, Hagar, to Abraham as wife, in order that she might have a child by her. But Paul points out that even though this arrangement brought forth a child, it could not be the child *of promise*, and could not inherit Abraham's goods; for, being the child of Hagar, it was a bond-servant "born in the common course of nature," and not in "fulfilment of the promise."

This episode of Hagar and her child, Paul says, *lured the Law Covenant*, which, though it operated to bring forth a seed, could not bring forth the *royal Seed of Promise*; for the Law, rendered powerless because of the weakness of the flesh, could bring forth only to bondage. It is also made clear here that the Law did not abrogate (set aside) the original promise, but was a temporary expedient—"added until the Seed of Promise should come": just as Hagar occupied the position of wife *only until God was ready to fulfil His promise through Sarah*.

It is further shown that the true Seed, the great antitypical Isaac, is Christ -- "To thy seed which is Christ." (Gal. 3:16.) But, lest his hearers should fail to grasp his full meaning and think that he referred only to Jesus, Paul says (ver. 29) "And if ye be Christ's, *then are ye Abraham's Seed and heirs* according to the promise."

Christ, Head and Body, is but *one Seed*; together they constitute the Child' of Promise, and are the offspring of the *same mother* (Covenant). In the realm of nature we know that a child could not have one mother for its head and a different mother for its body; Paul shows that the same is true in the realm of the spirit as respects the covenants, for he declares that both Jesus and the Church are the Seed of Abraham through the promise, represented in Sarah. As Isaac was the child of promise through Sarah, so "Ye brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise"- "For both; He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified *are all of one* (Promise, Covenant, Spirit) for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." - Heb. 2:11.

So, being *one*, children of the *same Father* through the *same Mother* (Covenant) and begotten of the *same Spirit*, these share with the Head in the same baptism-drink of the same cup -- die the same death -- partake of the same sufferings and are crucified together. And because they follow Jesus in all these earthly experiences, they are also promised a share in His glory, made partakers of His inheritance, they rejoice in the same hope-have part in the same resurrection-are raised to the same degree of life (immortality on the divine plane of existence), and when Jesus is manifested, they also will be manifested with Him in' glory, to share with Him the office of judge, Priest, and King.

In Hebrews 11:11 we read that "It was by faith that Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age since she counted Him faithful who had promised." Likewise we have seen that faith was the basis of God's dealings with Abraham, and that it was not until he had demonstrated his faith to the utmost that God ratified the promise with His oath. It follows, therefore, that the Seed also, must be developed in' response to faith; for it is not as human beings that we become the Seed, but only when begotten of the Father by His Holy Spirit in the womb of the Promise. Even Jesus, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" though He was, could not be of that Seed as a man, and could not take the honor unto Himself: He must needs be called and set apart by God. In His position as the Head of that Seed through whom the blessings will come, He will be the world's High Priest; but "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but He that is called of God as was Aaron. - Heb. 5:4.

Now we submit that this *original Promise of Seed*, represented in Sarah, which was unproductive for so many centuries, *could not be the New Covenant*. *since* that Covenant is called *new* to distinguish it from the *Old Law Covenant* which was added 430 years *after, the Promise of Seed*. (Jer. 31:31, 32.) And neither could Jesus be the Mediator of the Covenant *that gave Him Birth*. And since Paul shows that the Church is also the offspring of that same Covenant, then manifestly, we, likewise, can not be born of the New Covenant. "We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." No one will question Paul's understanding or ability to' set forth the truth in the matter, and so it is not speculation to say that the *Promise* here meant is the original Promise made to Abraham, since this is the subject of his argument.

Paul also makes it clear that whereas the Law had a mediator, the Promise through which we become children did not have a mediator. Note again his words in Galatians 3:19, 20. In the context he has declared that the Law could not possibly save or bring forth seed unto life; and so, knowing the question this statement would raise in their minds, he asks, "Why then was the Law given?" And in answer he says: "It was imposed [added] later on for the sake of defining,

[manifesting] sin, *until the Seed should come* to whom God had made the promise; and its [the Law's] details were laid down *by a mediator* with the help of angels.. But *there cannot be a mediator where only one individual is concerned*. God, however, *is only one*." (Weymouth.) Thus Paul makes it clear that the Promise by which we become seed, *did not need a mediator*.

Therefore, as Isaac was brought forth through faith, by the grace of God in the exercise of His power to make the birth possible, so the anti typical Isaac, Christ, Head and Body, are the Seed of Promise through faith, and through the exercise of God's grace in begetting them by His Holy Spirit. And as we become "the Seed" of Abraham in fulfilment of the promise which God originally made him, there was no mediator required; a mediator would be out of place.

PARALLELS OF THE ALLEGORY-Gal. 3:6-29; 4:21-31

<p>ABRAHAM-Called "Father of the faithful" "Father of the multitude" Husband of three wives Results - One servant One heir-Child of Promise Six natural sons-free men-Gen. 25:1,2.</p> <p>SARAH-"Princess" First wife-free Through whom child was promised Barren until past child-bearing age Proposed bondmaid as temporary expedient Conceived when old in response to faith Gave birth to heir child of promise When Isaac came, induced Abraham to cast out bondmaid and son-No more a wife.</p> <p>HAGAR-Bondmaid Servant of Sarah Expedient wife-gave birth according to nature Gave birth to servant child subject to bondage Cast off with child when Isaac came.</p> <p>ISAAC-Child of promise Conceived through faith-Heb. 11:11 Child of original wife Heir of Abraham's goods Born after Ishmael, the slave-son Offered up as a sacrifice-willingly-Gen. 22 Received back from death in a figure Heb. 11:19.</p> <p>ISHMAEL-Child of bondmaid "Born in common course of nature" Subject to bondage Cast off when Isaac was born Was still subject too mother in cast off condition.</p>	<p>GOD -Heavenly Father of the faithful Father (Creator) of all Maker of three (child-bearing) Covenants Results-Fleshly Israel. One heir -- Christ (Head and Body) Restored mankind -- free men.</p> <p>ABRAHAMIC COVENANT-The Royal Promise First Covenant-unconditional Through which "seed" was predetermined Unproductive until seemingly ineffective Permitted the Law, an expediency of works Became operative through faith when 2000 years old Brought forth Heir-the "Seed" of Promise In becoming effective, caused God to cast off Law Covenant and natural Israel.</p> <p>LAW COVENANT-Conditional promise A servant tutor (Strong's Concordance)-Gal. 3:24 Temporary arrangement, producing according to works Brought forth children unto bondage, subject to death Cast off with natural Israel when Christ came.</p> <p>CHRIST (HEAD AND BODY)-"Seed of Promise Begotten through faith-Jas 1:18; Rom. 5:1 Seed of original (Abrahamic) Covenant "Heirs of God" Brought forth after natural Israel, servant class Was yielded up in sacrifice-Psa. 50:5; John 10:18 Resurrected to life-Acts 2:24; Rev. 20:6.</p> <p>NATURAL ISRAEL :Children of the Law Covenant A result of the works of the Law Subject to death Cast off when Christ came Still subject to Law in their disregarded state.</p>
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- J. T. Read.

The Second Psalm

"Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." - Psalm 72:11.

THIS MAJESTIC Psalm celebrates the dignity, power, and ultimate triumph of the Anointed One; the world-dominion of a king who is a son of David and a Son of God. One King and His reign are distinguished from all kings and reigns before Him. His is a universal Kingdom; the whole earth is His inheritance; all nations are subject to Him, and under His sway righteousness and peace everywhere prevail. It is a Kingdom- in permanent form and without end. Jehovah has found One who can be in the highest sense His King and His Priest; and this One, by whom He acts, in all His works, both of judgment and of blessing, is thus distinguished from and lifted up above all His predecessors.

Undoubtedly there were local circumstances which called forth these glorious words. However the occurrences of his time, which determined the mood of the Psalmist, are no longer, clear to us. From these occurrences, he is transported in thought into the very middle of, those commotions among the nations, which issue in their. becoming the Kingdoms of God and of His Christ. Hence this Psalm is of the nature of a prophecy, and. still waits for its final accomplishment. It had a real, fulfilment, no doubt, in the banding together of Herod and Pontius Pilate against Christ, and was thus applied by some in the early Church (Acts 4:25-27) although this application is not corroborated by the testimony of any of the Apostles. But this was not a literal fulfilment. Only in a partial sense-rather in the way of application -- did the words of this Psalm correspond to, that event. But it may he said to have an ever-repeated fulfilment in the history of the Church, which in all ages has the power of the world arrayed against it, and in all ages with the same disastrous result to those who have risen "against the Lord and. against His Anointed." And so it shall be in the end, when that hostility will be manifested in a yet deadlier form, only to be overthrown forever, that the kingdoms of this world may become the Kingdoms of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The Psalm divides naturally into four parts of three verses each. In the first, the presumptuous rebellion of the princes of the earth is mentioned, Psa. 2:1-3. In the second, the Lord Jehovah expresses His contempt for the rebels, and announces His purpose to over throw them by the agency of His Anointed One, Psa. 2:4-6. In the third, the Anointed One declares His office, and His resolve to carry out Jehovah's will, and execute vengeance, Psa. 2:7-9. In the fourth, a practical and solemn warning and admonition is given to the princes and people of the earth. In this order let us consider the prophecy in detail, using Darby's translation for clarity.

THE MADNESS OF NATIONS

Psa. 2:1-3. "Why are the nations in tumultuous agitation, and why do, the peoples meditate a vain thing, The kings of the earth set themselves, and the princes plot together, against Jehovah and against His Anointed: Let us break Their bonds asunder, and cast away Their cords from us."

The Psalm opens abruptly; it is an utterance of amazement, breaking from the lips of one who looks out upon the nations and generations of men. He discerns in his widespread view a rebellion against God which in the vast ignorant masses of the world is half unconscious, and in their leaders finds utterance, assumes shape and formula. It is Jehovah Himself who is assailed in the person of the King whom He has set on the throne. How can they succeed who set themselves

against Jehovah and against His Christ. Such an enterprise cannot but fail. In its very nature it is a "vain thing."

The scene of the first act of this drama is laid on earth; the scene of the second is laid in heaven. The transition here is a sublime one, from the noise and agitation of earth to the safety and tranquillity of heaven. As we pass onward we pass upward. Watching all the turmoil and rebellion below, and calmly surveying the most turbulent outbreaks of the nations as they rage, there sits the King against whose rule this revolt is made. He reposes far above them and beyond their reach, in undisturbed majesty.

The Psalmist sees the utter futility of revolt against God; he discerns the strength of the Almighty; the pillars of the eternal throne are before his soul; he can find no other words to express the vanity of man's revolt than to say, "The Lord shall laugh." There is something very awful in the representation here given of God. First, as if in calm contempt, "He laughs," then there is a bitter derision which in its effects brings their counsels to nought, and baffles their purposes—"He mocks them"; "then", at last, with the thunder of His word He discomfits them. "Who thought," says Luther, "when Christ suffered and the Jews triumphed, that God was laughing all the time?" Beneath this bold expression there is hidden a profound truth, namely, that to all superior beings, and above all to God Himself, there is something in sin not only odious, but absurd, something which cannot possibly escape the contempt of higher, much less of the highest intelligence.

It may be asked, Why should the attempt of struggling humanity to set up a world order be thus so displeasing to the Almighty? Is not such an arrangement highly desirable, yea, one for which all men should exert their entire energy? Is not the present global conflict a natural prelude to a global order? Yea, should not such an ambitious undertaking, with its promises of a surcease from all the terrible sufferings of a groaning creation, receive instead the bounteous blessings of a gracious Creator?

At first glance, such would appear to be the case and such a proposed happy arrangement be prospered by a loving God to the blessing of the nations. But as we look deeper into the provisions of the Lord for the ultimate welfare of all people, we discern that this human-instituted arrangement is actually a direct expression of resistance against God's will. For though a beneficent world-wide government is the logical solution to the problems of mankind, no strength or wisdom of man can ever bring such a solution to completion. On the contrary, the inherited burden of individual sin, plus the hatreds and prejudices engendered by the present conflict of nations, are recognized even now by hard-headed practical men as insuperable obstacles to the realization of such a Utopian scheme. But whether man realizes this truth regarding his own weakness or not, God does, and has wisely provided His own arrangement for the welfare of mankind. Consequently He has set definite bounds to the course of human history, and as of the literal sea, so also of the raging sea of humanity, God says,

As we consider the present state of human affairs and the terrible agitation of nations, we find the Psalmist's words amazingly describing the world picture. By all Scriptural indications, we stand at the threshold of the Kingdom of God. "It is near, even at the doors." (Matt. 24:33.) The "shaking of nations" which commenced in 1914, has progressively increased to a fury unprecedented in the annals of history, and, will yet continue to that terrible climax when, but for the grace of God, "no flesh should be saved." (Matt 24:22.) Yes, "the morning cometh," but, "*a night* also." (Isa. 21:12.) The "morning" is as yet undiscerned by the nations, but there is a gradual apprehension of a steadily increasing "night" descending on all the earth. As "men's hearts fail them for fear" in expectation of the things coming upon them,

from all sides is heard the cry that the present "dis-tress of nations" *must* result in a new order of things,

a world-wide collaboration in human affairs. Mankind is finally beginning to realize that their safety and well-being depend on cooperation with one another, despite race, creed, color, or language barriers. For the first time in history plans are being proposed for such a new order to embrace all the nations, with peace and liberty to be the portion of all.

With this hope every Christian is in sympathy, for not only the creation, but "we ourselves groan within ourselves" at the appalling spectacle of human suffering throughout the earth. We cannot, however, ignore the inspired record, which plainly teaches that all human efforts to establish a just and equitable arrangement of society are foredoomed to failure. The "desire of all nations" will not be brought about by human ability. Every such hope, commendable as it may be, is a "vain thing." Man must learn his weakness and dependency upon his Creator. Such has been God's purpose in the permission of evil. The present generation is but reaping the consequences of six thousand years of sowing contrary to the law of God, which requires (as requisite for well being, happiness and prosperity) first, love supreme for the Creator, and second, love for one's fellow men. Any violation of this law is sin, whether individual or national. And the wages of sin is death, for "God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The time has approached for the establishment of Christ's Kingdom and all things that can be "shaken" (that will not be able to stand up under the present fire-testing period) will be removed. - Gal. 6:7; Heb. 12:26, 27.

"BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD"

And now, as we return to the Psalm, the scene abruptly changes-verses 4-6. "He that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Then will He speak to them in His anger, and in His fierce displeasure will He terrify them: And I have anointed my King upon Zion, the hill of My holiness."

"Hitherto shalt thou come and no further." (Job 38:8-11; see also Psa. 104:5-9.) "Vain" shall be any attempts to "break the bonds and cast away the cords" of restriction set up by divine omniscience as limits to the unhindered exercise of human ingenuity. To permit man to go further in his social experiments would be to endanger his very existence.

So the Lord speaks, and here in the sixth verse we have God's own answer to those that oppose Him. I [the pronoun is emphatic in the Hebrew], the "King of heaven and earth, have set My own King, My Son and My Vicegerent, on the throne. His, and His alone, shall be earth's world dominion, and he who dares to attempt accomplishing this through human ability is setting himself against Me and My unalterable purpose. I have constituted My King upon Zion, My holy hill, and He, and none other, shall work My sovereign will, for He alone is worthy.

In the light of the above expression of the divine counsel, verse five of this Psalm, which speaks of an outpouring of wrath, is immediately linked with the judgments of Revelation 16 which terminate at Armageddon. And what a wealth of other Scriptures comes to mind. "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought. . . . Say ye not, a confederacy." "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the

horn of His Anointed." "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought; He maketh the devices of the people of none effect." "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, and the earth melted." "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come." - Isa. 8:9-12; 1 Sam. 2:10; Psa. 33:10; Psa. 46:6; Rev. 11:18.

"O EARTH, RECEIVE THY KING"

And now with inimitable beauty the Messiah Himself appears and speaks, witnessing to His sonship and kingship, and to the constitution -- the grand charter of rights-under which this fallen world is given to Him as His empire.

Psa. 2:7-9. "I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; I this day have begotten Thee [brought Thee forth.-Young's Literal translation]. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee nations for an inheritance, and for Thy possessions the ends of the earth: Thou shalt break them with a sceptre of iron, as a potter's vessel Thou shalt dash them to pieces."

No word of transition, no formula of introduction, marks this sudden passage from the words of Jehovah to those of His Christ. Just as Jehovah in opposition to the rebels acknowledges the King upon Zion, so in opposition to the same rebels the King upon Zion appeals to Him. He pronounces the Father's counsel concerning Himself, a decree which like that of the Medes and Persians cannot be changed. He reigns not by the will of man, but by the grace of God; not by right only as the Son of Jehovah, but by covenant and promise likewise. (Note the force of Hebrews 5:5.) The plain thought of the decree is: This day, by anointing Thee as King on My hill of Zion, I have recognized Thee as My Son. This enthroning is My public and solemn recognition of this relation-a relation never brought forth to the knowledge of created minds till this momentous inauguration as King. So Paul understood this verse, for he finds it fulfilled in Christ's resurrection and consequent ascension and enthronement in heaven. - See Acts 13:33.

He is the Son of God, and therefore dear to Him, His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased; and upon this account we are to receive Him as a King; for because the Father loveth the Son, He hath given all things into His hand. (John 3:35; 5:20.) Being a Son, He is Heir of all things, and since God hath said unto Him, "Thou art My Son," it becomes each individual to say to Him, "Thou art my Lord, my Sovereign." And since the nations are given for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, there yet awaits a great unveiling of the glory of earth's rightful King-the proclamation on earth of the decree of Heaven. This we believe will be accomplished at the time of the deliverance of natural Israel from "Jacob's Trouble," in a miraculous demonstration of divine power; the first *visible* evidence to an astonished world of the new heavenly arrangement for earth. Then shall every knee begin to bow to Him and every voice proclaim His right to suzerainty. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." (Psa. 110:3.) Then shall be revealed God's wonderful provision for the eternal welfare of the suffering creation; His answer to the longings, prayers, and groanings of poor humanity, and this at a time when evidently faith in a divine helper will be at its lowest ebb. Just when man will realize his necessity the most, when the consciousness of his own weakness will be well nigh overwhelming, yea, before he shall cry out in the fear and despair of his soul, God shall answer by the revelation of His chosen King, who with His associated saints, shall commence the reign of righteousness which will more than satisfy the needs of mankind. But first must come the divine judgment upon the institutions of man through this same righteous King, for "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." - Rev. 19:15.

"THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, HEAR YE HIM"

Finally, the poet who has heard the words of Jehovah and the words of His Anointed, seeks by wise counsel to dissuade the rebels from their mad enterprise -- Psa. 2:10-12: "And now, O kings, be ye wise, be admonished, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish in the way, though His anger burn but a little. Blessed are all who have Their trust in Him."

Thus closes this sublime and solemnly impressive Psalm. It will be observed that these last three verses of the Psalm correspond to the first three. The revolt against the Lord and His Anointed finds its parallel in the injunction to serve the Lord and to kiss the Son; for there can be no resisting His authority. For of Him Moses truly prophesied, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:22, 23.) Therefore "kiss the Son," do homage to the King, O ye mighty ones of earth "lest He be angry and ye perish, in the way." Be quick to obey, for His anger may easily be kindled. In His Kingdom nothing shall be permitted to hurt or destroy, and the slightest opposition to His authority shall be summarily dealt with. But trust Him, obey Him, confide in Him, and He shall bless you with a "feast of fat things," for He and those with Him are appointed to "bless all the families of the earth." For "He shall -come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the

moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him, and His enemies shall lick the dust. 'Yea. all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in His sight. Prayer also shall be made for Him continually, and daily shall He be praised. His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed." - Psa. 72:6-17.

What a glorious message does this second Psalm hold forth! Oh that men could see within its' beautiful and impressive words the lesson of submission to the divinely decreed arrangement! What -a' thrill of hope and joy would surge through the troublewacked earth! Praise God that men will yet see, and this in the not far distant future.

"Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,
Who only doeth wondrous things;
And blessed be His glorious name for ever;
And let the whole earth be filled with His glory!
Amen, and Amen.

-W.J. S.

Another Beloved Laborer Enters into Rest

ONE BY one beloved fellow-workers in the Lord's service- leave us, and pass to their reward. Now another name is added to the growing list of deceased co-workers who have served with us in our Institute ministry. On December 3rd, our greatly loved Brother S. D. Bennett, M.D., entered into rest. After long months of very great suffering, borne in patient submission to the divine will, deliverance came, and our confidence is that he finished his course approved of the Lord. To the members of his family we extend our heartfelt sympathy in the loss of so kind and devoted a father.

As a member of the Board of Directors of the "Pastoral Bible Institute" since 1935, he served with a correct understanding of the responsibility involved, and with a full measure of appreciation of the confidence in him shown by the membership at large through whom this privilege of service was yearly entrusted to him. He accepted the service as from the Lord, and it can be said by all who have co-labored with him that he endeavored always to clearly discern and faithfully follow the mind of the Lord in all matters requiring his decisions.

Being a physician with a considerable practice, and in addition holding other positions in medical activities beyond the care of his patients, his movements among- the brethren generally were necessarily limited in scope; hence only a small part of those to whom his name had become familiar had the pleasure of knowing him intimately. But to those who did have this privilege of personal acquaintance, Brother Bennett was truly "the beloved physician." In his spirit of quietness and confidence there' was seen deep spiritual strength, and the healing spirit of helpfulness he radiated can be readily testified to by those who knew him in this closer personal way. His memory will therefore remain as one of those sweet recollections by which higher ideals are always made so attractive and desirable.

Brother Bennett was born December. 9, 1870, in Millville, N. J. He was graduated from the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy February 7, 1893, and from Jefferson Medical College, July 3, 1896, when he began his practice of medicine in Millville. He was a member of the Staff of the Millville Hospital, also School Physician from 1912 to the time of his death, and at one time president of the Cumberland County Medical Society. He had a disposition, both natural and gracious, for the life of service as a physician and as a servant of the Lord, and this disposition made possible a career of exceptional devotion and service because of his complete self-surrender to the will of God and his childlike faith in His Word. Love was the great secret and lesson of his life. Love -- the principle of unselfishness -- the "love that seeketh not her own." His life was one long endeavor to bless others. He followed his Lord both in self-surrender to the will of God and in self-sacrifice in the welfare of man. He asked not, "Must I give?" but, "May I sacrifice?" His simplicity and his modesty, his fervor for the Truth, his love and devotion to the Lord, gained him a very warm place in the hearts of many.

Life for all true Christians is made up of a great variety of minor incidents, and with frequent outstanding experiences, all designed by the great Master builder to mold character according to His pattern. It follows therefore that crises must come in which the perfect workmanship wrought out by the Spirit may be revealed. Such times came to our beloved Brother. Then it: was that his spirit of calm consideration, with his noble principles and integrity of character, carried him safely through. He loved sincerity and purity of action in all matters. Truth he loved for its own sake, and therefore he ever sought to see all things in its light, and to walk progressively onward in that light. As a result, he possessed a very remarkable measure of that inestimable quality of calm openmindedness whereby the greater verities of belief and practice were seen in their true perspective, and the mantle of love and magnanimity readily thrown over all lesser things. In this he lived not in vain. His example was one of uncompromising fidelity to the principles and spirit of truth, and of sincere good will toward all with whom he must conscientiously differ. His was too noble a character to permit ignoble attitudes to dim the reflection of Christ in his life, or to becloud his vision of the underlying facts of relationship with all who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

Brother Bennett had his field of service appointed to him—a corner in the Lord's vineyard in which he served with unselfish devotion. By occasional articles in the "Herald" he ministered to the wider circle, and at conventions within easy reach of his home he frequently ministered to the comfort and encouragement of many. But his real field of helpful service was in the Millville company of brethren. Most of these have gone before him, among them our dear Brother Dr. S. N. Wiley and his beloved wife. Only two of that once rather large gathering now remain, and for these also we feel great sympathy, remembering that no more will this faithful Brother stop in passing, to offer a word of good cheer, or to give advice in physical ills. Treasures he laid up in heaven in this faithfulness to appointed tasks the Lord so manifestly gave him to do. Therefore in His book of remembrance the Lord, we may be sure, has not forgotten our Brother's work and labor of love, neither will it be forgotten by those whom he so greatly helped along the upward way.

Now our dear Brother has passed from our midst, but we are confident his influence will continue on among us. His kind ministrations both toward his patients, and so marked toward his brethren in Christ, can never die.: Such influences cannot cease to operate in the lives of his intimate friends and co-workers. He was dearly loved as one among us, and his passing leaves a vacancy deeply felt; but his being taken from us can serve only to increase our determination to emulate his sterling qualities, and to carry on in our appointed tasks until we too may enter into rest. He will live on in our hearts' affections through remaining days, and then in God's good time "we shall meet beyond the river."

A brief funeral service was held at the home of our Brother at 2 o'clock, Saturday, December 5th, at which a goodly number of friends and relatives were gathered. His beloved companion preceded him in death over three years, and there remains of his immediate family a son and a daughter. The beautiful - floral pieces, the number of letters and cards received during his illness, were a revelation of the love and esteem in which he was held.

We can rejoice with Brother Bennett that he has finished his course and been faithful unto death, and the rest of us looking forward can say:

"My days are gliding swiftly by,
And I, a pilgrim stranger,
Would not detain them as they fly,
Those hours of toil and danger.

"For, oh! we stand on Jordan's strand;
Our friends are passing over;
And, just before, the shining shore
We may almost discover.

"Should coming days be cold and dark,
We need not cease our singing;
That perfect rest naught can molest,
Where golden harps are ringing.

"Let sorrow's rudest tempest blow,
Each cord on earth to sever;
Our King says -- 'Come!' -- and there's our home,
For ever, oh! for ever!"

-- *J. J. Blackburn.*

Treasured Memories

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." - Psalm 103:2.

IF IT be correct to believe that when our life on earth has ended, "Looking back we'll praise the way" the loving hand of God led us all the way, can we not believe that such retrospection will be very intimately associated with those special and outstanding experiences when through individuals, or by incidents in special places, or perhaps by some marked angel-ministrations, we seemed brought near to God. Will it not be with us as it came to pass in Jacob's experience when he returned to Bethel-that place of hallowed memory where he had previously known such intimate contact with heaven. Could he ever forget Bethel, with its ladder reaching from earth to heaven, connecting both in the grand design God had planned for his after-life? Again and again in retrospective meditations he must have called to mind those angels ascending and descending that majestic stairway, and in such moments lived over again the blessed sense of God's presence granted to him there, and of which he had said, "Surely the Lord is in this place . . . this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." - Gen. 28:16, 17.

LIFE'S BETHEL JOYS

Such God-given impressions are most assuredly meant to abide forever as memorials of how truly "the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." During his years of service in the employ of Laban, the years of such varied experiences, how often Jacob's thoughts must have turned back to Bethel, calling to mind that scene and the words spoken to him there. What renewed faith and fresh encouragement every recollection of that wonderful night would bring to him, deepening his appreciation of the birthright hopes he valued so highly. But when the years of service with Laban were ended, and the fulfilment of God's promise had placed him again in the homeland, with Esau pacified, can we not feel assured there would be a strong impulse drawing him again to that particular spot of sacred memory? Surely so. Indeed the record shows that he did return, and in doing so there must have come to him again something of the former joyous realization of God's presence. There he raised a pillar of stone as a perpetual memorial of God's loving-kindness. But there must have been more in his thought than that visible emblem of his gratitude. Who can doubt that within the inner shrine of his heart a still more enduring Ebenezer was raised, an unfading memorial to remain with him until he fell asleep in death. This will certainly not be absent from his memory when he is awakened to possess in full the inheritance that God's promise still holds for him. When that day of awakening dawns for him, how can he fail to "look back" in fervent gratitude to Bethel, recalling the love that had continued with him through all his wanderings, or fail to remember the voice that had spoken to him on that memorable night.

Then, since we too have precious memories stored up where such treasures do not fade, and recollections preserved where nothing good is ever lost or forgotten, will it not be a part of our future joy to recall our Bethel places of vision, where God gave our faith and hope renewed vigor and assurance? How possible that there may be no little regret then that we had not followed God's leadings more faithfully, and more such Bethel places been our experience. But let us hope there will be for all of us many happy recollections to rejoice over "When we stand with Christ in glory, looking o'er life's finished story."

Is it conceivable that we should traverse the long, tedious, and often trying pathway of life on earth, meeting its inevitable fluctuating experiences, knowing much of the trial of faith through waiting long for the consummation of our cherished hopes, without knowing also some of the outstanding Bethel joys and ministrations along that tedious way? Is it not of such special

dispensations of grace we sing, "Here I raise my Ebenezer, thither by Thy grace I've come": Is it not true, as a writer of recent time has said, "Now and again there is a dash of sweetness poured into life's cup-some special deliverance-some undeserved and unusual benediction . . . sent apparently for no other reason than to satisfy God's passion for giving."

Some have known that experience in one way, some in another. Perhaps it has come to some in an hour of peculiar loneliness when none but God seemed near in understanding love, and when He gave comfort through a vision connecting a present trial with heaven's future joys, leaving the heart resting in the quietness of His peace. Or perhaps it came to another on one of those occasions when, in fellowship with others who had truly met in His name, by a song, a prayer, or by a message that was Spirit-inspired, He granted a deeper sense of His preciousness, bringing to the lips the words of Jacob, "Surely the Lord is in this place . . . this is the gate of heaven." Or was it with some of us, as when the two with kindred hearts burning within them, walked in sweet communion with Jesus on the way to Emmaus? Have we never known times when doubts came in to becloud our assurance of His presence with us, times when all we had cherished of heavenly hope seemed vain and beyond our reach, only to have Jesus come to speak of Himself and thereby establish our confidence in His faithfulness.

Such occasions can come into any true Christian life. Should we not say they are a fundamental part of true Christian experience? If not, why do we feel the urge to sing of times, when, "Heaven comes down our souls to greet, while glory crowns the mercy-seat"? No idle words are these. Saints of all the Age can verify them as true words. Surely, then, each of us can recall such times or places, and fain would we turn our steps that way again if only to know once more the particular joy and inspiration by which that Ebenezer spot is fixed in heart and mind as a treasured memory.

Oh, can it be that after years of spiritual enlightenment and fellowship, no such sacred hours and paths are written deep on memory's tablets? Can it be there are no such paths over which we can walk again in thought with the Master, or with some kindred spirit, some understanding heart answering in vision with our own in devotion to Christ, and sharing with us the same fadeless hopes? Blessed communion this, when kindred minds catch the same vision of Christ's altogether loveliness, and encompass the same wideness and fulness of His grace. Is there one among us who can not look back to such sublime hours, and looking back say of a truth, "Jesus Himself drew near"?

TREASURES LAID UP IN HEAVEN

How far short of what might have been our happy experience if there are no such purifying and faith strengthening . . . recollections of God's wondrous leadings. Just to remember that Jesus Himself had need to be alone with God will emphasize our greater need for this aloneness with Him. Such times of nearness to Him benefit us in many ways. Among other benefits they bring to us, they may serve as a witness of the Spirit that though in the world, we are not of it. They come to us as proof of how fellowship in the Spirit can lift us above exacting toils and duties, somehow carrying us out and away from the din of human voices full of mundane interests, or harsh with the impatience of fret and care. It is all so real and practical. It is not taking us literally out of the world and away from all that God has designed shall serve to work out our good in the development of true character; nor are these occasions only possible in some retreat far removed from immediate seemingly hindering circumstances. The secret place is denied to none who desire to know its reality. True, for some chosen ones, as for Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, there may yet be some exclusive favors granted because of special responsibilities they are called upon to assume. But God can bring that experience into any life

however environed it may be. No set of permitted circumstances need ever shut out those "sweet and glad surprises" God delights to give to His obedient children. He requires only that we be in line with all His will for us, and ready to say, "Where He leads me I will follow." Then, when He has thus been followed, has there ever been a true follower who has never heard the Savior say, "Come ye yourself apart and rest awhile"? He knows the need for such times apart, and He can be trusted to find a chosen place, some "gate of heaven" where a fragrance comes to cheer the heart and "steal the bitter from life's woes."

All the wealth of treasure we will find laid up in heaven will be forever associated with our life on earth, even here where we were privileged to be "called, chosen, and faithful." Is it, then, too earthbound a fancy to believe that all such precious memories will ever be bright in our mind in glory? It cannot be. If the ladder of Jacob linked earth and heaven for him, will they be less linked together for us? No indeed! Such Bethels can never be forgotten. The places where God came near, where angel-ministrations seemed to bring us close to the gates of glory, must ever remain as treasured memories. Only our sin will pass from memory when God has said, "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more. That alone is all God will forget of our earthly life. All that was good and holy, all that produced a greater purity in us, all that had its origin in the heart and character of God and was sent by Him into our life here below, He remembers, and He will hold it all for us in His treasure vaults where no moth can destroy, or rust can ever tarnish their beauty. Some glad day they will all come back to us in added measure to be held by us in everlasting remembrance of His goodness.

Will Mary ever forget that room where Jesus gave an enduring fragrance to her spikenard, sending it down through the Age wherever the Gospel is preached? Will Peter forget that secret spot where in such sympathetic consideration Jesus met him alone after His resurrection? Will the two disciples ever forget the Emmaus-road sermon when hope and joy returned in floods of blessedness, or lose the unspeakable sweetness of that hour? Surely not! Will it not be the joy of all true saints of all this Age of grace to look back and recall some "gate of heaven" granted in time of need, making the Savior dearer and bringing heaven nearer?

"FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS"

That there will be rejoicing in heaven over all such happy recollections we may feel assured. But we ourselves are not there yet. Not yet may we stand with Christ in glory and survey all the way from earth to heaven. But even now it can and should mean much to us to think on mercies past, surveying in gratitude the path already trod. All past blessings, more particularly whatever of special occasions God may have given us, are all intended to increase our joy in Him, and constrain us to have perpetuated the influence of such manifestations of His grace. True gratitude does not forget, but rather it serves to keep every benediction ever green in memory. Was not the story of Israel's deliverance from Egypt to be told and retold from generation to generation? When that story was forgotten, Israel ceased to know the impulse of praise and gratitude. Never should God's past mercies be, forgotten. His special blessings are never given just to create a passing thrill of emotional joy. They are very particularly given to be inherently permanent in their effect on mind and heart. By the vision given to Jacob, God meant to give him an abiding assurance of a present care, thus furnishing him with a definite pledge of his future inheritance. He intends our experiences to mean as much to us. Therefore as every remembrance of Bethel occurring to Jacob must have strengthened and assured him, so should it be with us. Yes, increasingly so as we draw nearer Home. Calling to mind God's providences, remembering how "goodness and mercy" have followed us all the way, shall we not experience a definite purifying influence at work on our deeper self? All these were intended to make His favor more precious to us, and advance our characters in the righteousness of His own perfections. By these God would

bring heaven more and more into our present life, keep us more intimately in fellowship with Jesus and Himself, and separate us from all beside.

Let us cultivate more of the spirit of grateful recollections, calling to mind more all the goodness poured into our lives since first we knew Him. Then with each remembrance' of His loving-kindness, with every recollection of times and places where He spoke in special ways to our hearts, we will be coming back, as Jacob did, and like him we too will raise our altars of praise. Thus our days will be more filled with the sacrifice of praise, be more of a psalm of joy over mercies past, more filled with a joyful confidence concerning what the coming days may hold for us. Such treasured memories of past benedictions will surely give us renewed faith and courage, and add increasingly to our anticipations of those joys to come when we shall see our God and Savior face to face.

- J. J. Blackburn.

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in the name of Him we love and serve. Ever since receiving my October number of the "Herald and reading "Our Heritage, of Knowledge" I have been wanting to write you to express my appreciation and thankfulness for the grouping of the various items of Scriptural knowledge that have so greatly blessed us. How thankful we should be to have such a simple and clear understanding of God's loving-dealings with the human race-the final outcome-the blessing of all the willing. And then what shall I say about the High Calling in Christ! How can we ever show our appreciation of having learned about that! . . . How we should rejoice, for our redemption is drawing nigh; and the groaning creation will soon be delivered and privileged to go up the Highway where none can make them afraid, and receive the blessings promised through the reign of Christ Jesus with His Bride, restoring -all that was lost in Adam. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all He has done for me?" "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord *now* in the presence of all His people."

Asking an interest in your prayers, and praying for all the dear ones,
Your brother in the one hope of our calling,
J. W. -- Texas.

Dear Friends:

The Vol. II of "The Revelation of Jesus Christ", which you so kindly loaned to me, I have just finished reading, and will gladly return it now if you so wish. It has taken me a long time to read it, as I can not read very *long* at a time. However, if it is not asking too much, I would like to read it once more, in order to get the thoughts presented more firmly fixed in my mind, as I find it to be the most reasonable and logical interpretation of the "Revelation" I have ever read. It has been the means of greatly strengthening my hope and faith in God's most wonderful Plan. So unless you tell me otherwise, I will keep it long enough to read it the second time, and -promise to return it to you as soon as possible.

Thanking you for past favors, and praying God's richest blessing 'upon you and your work, I remain,
Yours in the one Hope,
C. A. T. -- Cal.

"The Untried Year"

"If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up thence."

"Lord, go before and point the road,
I know not whither it may lead,
Nor what the work Thou hast decreed
Enough that Thou wilt bear the load!

"It is Thy hand that stirs the nest,
That sets these changeful tunes for **me**;
But, Lord, there is no change with Thee,
And Thou art my unfailing rest.

"Oh, help **me** through the toil and 'heat,
To follow closely by Thy side,
Ere yet the gracious dew has dried
From off the treadings of Thy feet.

"That which I see not, teach Thou me;
And that Thy wisdom still withholds,
Until Thy patient love unfolds,
In child-like trust I leave to Thee.

"Let Thy sweet presence light my way,
And hallow every cross I bear;
Transmuting duty, conflict, care,
Into love's service, day by day.

"Whatever future lot be mine,
My Savior, bless its good or ill;
And let Thy hand be with me still,
And turn the water into wine."