

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXVI February, 1943 No. 2

Let Us Offer the Sacrifice of Praise

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." - Psa. 103:2; 23:6.

THE HISTORY of ancient Israel abounds with sad illustrations of their forgetfulness of God and His many benefits. The human heart is prone to forget the loving kindness of God. If it seems strange that though He sends the rain and sunshine on the worldly and sinful, they should forget their Benefactor, how much more strange that among those brought into relationship with Him any should ever forget to be grateful. Yet this is the implication of our first text. How often their faithful God must have lamented the failure of His chosen people to remember His special acts on their behalf. Again and again through their Prophets He reproved them for their ingratitude. They were continually failing to show a thankful regard for His law, or to reciprocate His love and faithfulness. Of such laments spoken through His Prophets none seem more pathetic than the one by the mouth of Isaiah in the very beginning of his prophecy: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel cloth not know, My people cloth not consider." (Isa. 1:2, 3.) Thus it continues until their last Prophet, Malachi, closes the canon of Old Testament prophecy with his severe indictment against them. Considering all that God had wanted to do for them had they been properly appreciative of His favors, it would seem that every voice among them should have been raised in unison with their Psalmist in saying, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men." - Psa. 107:8.

But all were not unmindful of God's loving kindness. Some there were in those former days who felt as did the Psalmist, and who said with him, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." These are they whose record has been preserved for our encouragement in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews; and what a "cloud of witnesses" they are, urging us to run with diligence and gratitude the race set before us. These men and women never lost the retrospective vision, neither did they lose the forward look; for of all of them it could be said, "They looked for a city whose builder and maker is God." Recalling the blessings poured out when His commands were obeyed, and His corrective discipline when they wandered out of His way, with a warmth of gratitude

these true Israelites would confess, "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." - Psa. 36:5.

So by these records of the past we of today are both warned and encouraged. We are warned by the failures of Israel, but encouraged by the faithfulness exhibited by the few. The fact that these things were our ensamples, as the Apostle tells us, makes it clear that a like favorable or unfavorable story may be the history of our faith, or of our blindness and ingratitude. Being then thus encouraged to a proper response to God's rich blessings, shall we not heed the inspired admonition, and recognizing the greatness of our favors through Christ, rejoice accordingly,' and "by Him offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." - Heb. 13:15.

GIVING THANKS FOR MERCIES PAST

Is it not a fact proved by experience that when the habit is formed of looking back over all the way the Lord has led, calling to mind His unceasing favors, there comes with such recollections a new impetus to render to Him the praise due to His name? Is it not just such reviews by which the heart is stirred to ask, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" And is it not such recollections we need to start us "Speaking to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." - Eph. 5:19, 20.

Where, then, shall we begin to count our blessings? Their number surprises us into a realization of how incapable we are of rendering adequate praise. But then, are we not shown in God's own loving manner that this very keenly felt realization of our inability to praise Him as He deserves, is in reality praise per. fumed with an incense of love, sweet and precious in His sight; and through Christ it rises to Him a volume of perfect gratitude. He who "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has perfected praise," makes our thanksgiving a perfect harmony of praise with which He is well pleased; because "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." - Psa. 103:13, 14.

His is indeed a father's perfect understanding. In our best but imperfect response to Him, how benevolently He looks upon our efforts. This is well illustrated by a story of a family made up of several strong, healthy children and one born an imbecile. One day this poor child saw her sisters gathering flowers to present to their father for his birthday, and, following her feeble impulse and understanding, she, too, wanted to gather a bouquet for him. The others collected beautiful specimens from the garden, while she gathered a mixture of flowers, straws, and sticks to present along with the other collections. When the father came home and saw the whole collection, he was specially moved by the one presented to him by his afflicted child, and taking hers, he put it in the most beautiful vase in the room and set it in the most conspicuous place, but the more carefully selected bouquets of the other children were given lesser prominence.

How like the pity of God toward us, His imperfect children! Holy angels may worship Him in perfection, and offer Him gifts of rare beauty and sweetness far beyond anything we can bring, yet, He lovingly understands the imperfections under which we struggle to show our devotion to Him. Like the father's sympathy for his afflicted child, God in His wonderful grace feels compassionate toward us, interprets our motives so tenderly that our very feebleness gives a sweetness to our gifts, making them dear to the heart of God. All of this is our joy and comfort, knowing we are accepted in Christ.

Thinking then of mercies past, we place first before all else the supreme gift of God's love, His own beloved Son. Having been brought nigh through the blood of Christ Jesus, made heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, a relationship has been established wherein all future good is assured us, for "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32.) What riches of His grace, what fellowship with the Father and the Son, what light upon our pathway, and what a blessed future hope may be reckoned as our heritage through the redemption that is in Christ our Savior -- our All in all. From day to day, He, the "great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," has been working in us and for us to make us perfect in every good work to do His will; therefore in thankful remembrance of His past faithfulness we are made strong in faith to say of all the past, All things *have* worked together for our good, and looking into the future we say confidently, thankfully, and humbly, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." - Rom. 8:38, 39.

THANKFUL FOR VEILED ANGELS GUARDING OUR WAY

Precious to every child of God is the faithful promise of His protecting care. How comforting to remember that "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever." (Psa. 125:2.) Amid dangers seen and unseen His hand has guided, and His love protected us. How many Ebenezer memorials we have had opportunity to raise over special manifestations of God's patient watch-care over our interests: Surely we may say, "Goodness and mercy have followed me *all* the days of my life." And even beyond our knowledge of pitfalls laid for our feet, and dangers unseen by our side, God's veiled ministering angel spirits have shielded our way. Here is cause for great thankfulness.

We call to mind the numerous times wherein the Scriptures tell of the peculiar besetments of this day in which we live, when it is said a thousand, yea, ten thousand shall fall ere the evil day is over. Who will they be? Will they be only those who turn again to the beggarly elements of earth, or only of those who let first love die out, and zeal grow cold? Of such there shall be many no doubt; but many will be of the number who, because they verily thought they could keep themselves from falling, forgot the under lying and special meaning contained in the warning, "Wherefore let him that *thinketh he standeth* take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10: 12.) The self assurance of spiritual pride, how deceptive it is.

Who then shall stand? Only those who "are kept by the power of God through faith" - only such as have Christ formed in them, and in whom His spirit abides. Only He can keep us from falling, and "present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." (Jude 24.) And can we know we have been thus kept by power divine? Yes, the true child of the Lord may know he has been kept in the love of God; kept from the strife of tongues; kept in the true communion of saints; kept in' a humble acknowledgment of his own inability to keep himself; therefore privileged to join with the Apostle in his rejoicing, and say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." - 1 Cor. 15:57.

The same Word by which we are taught to cultivate lively recollections of mercies past, also urges upon us the vital importance of keeping future joys and benefits before our vision. In fact the keeping of such future prospects before the mind is shown to be a matter of supreme moment. Was it not by the keeping of future possibilities before his eyes that the Apostle Paul was so wonderfully sustained in his day of trial? He it is who has taught us to look beyond present afflictions and say, "For I reckon that. the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be

compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." And again, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17.) Likewise the beloved John shows the beneficial effect on mind and heart when the future inheritance is thought upon, saying, "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." - 1 John 3:3.

GREATER THINGS THAN THESE SHALL YE SEE

A day of days is ours now. In respect to this present evil Age, "We are facing the west with the sunset in our eyes," but as children of the morning in respect to the incoming new day, when righteousness and peace shall kiss each other, we see "the gleams of the golden morning that will burst the tomb." True, the darkness gathers over all the earth in ever increasing gloom, but a gleam of brightness penetrates the gathering clouds, and out of the storm and tempest comes an assuring voice, saying to us, "It is I, be not afraid." Then pointing to the gathering storm clouds, He says, "When you shall see all these things, know that He is nigh at the doors." - Matt. 24:33, see Diaglott and Rotherham.

For God's enlightened children even the darkening shadows may give cause for thankfulness. They remember the Star of Bethlehem came in a darkest hour in human history, heralding the birth of One through whom all such darkness would at last be banished from the earth. So once again, the shadows of the long foretold night are spreading over all lands, even as it is written, "The morning cometh, and a night also." (Isa. 21:11.) But out of the din and confusion which betokens the passing out of the old order and the coming in of the new, the awakened watchers in Zion find comfort and cause for praise in the "sure word of prophecy," shining as a light in a dark place. Who but the God of all comfort could speak above the earth shaking and mountain removing tumult of this time such a word of comfort to the remaining remnant of the Church as this: "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." (Psa. 91:11.) How "like apples of gold in pictures of silver" are all such promises made to His people! And who but God could speak so needed a message for the whole groaning world destined to wait yet a little longer for Christ's reign of righteousness and peace, saying of that coming day, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. . . . And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." - Isa. 2:2, 4.

Praise His name for all these messages of comfort and hope. We often sing the glad refrain: "Oh! the prospect it is so transporting!" But do we fully realize that transporting influence as we should today? Are these prospects the gladdening, heart-cheering thing they ought to be in view of all the signs indicating that the vision cannot long be delayed now? Think of Abraham looking down the long corridors of three thousand years before the hopes set before him could have fulfillment. Yet he "rejoiced to see My day," Jesus said, "and was glad." We look not down over a long period of waiting time for the consummation of our hopes, but are perhaps nearer to that happy hour than - we think. The very nearness of the hour when Christ our Bridegroom will present His faultless Bride before the Father, should awaken hope and give greater reality to things not seen as yet. Our "blessed hope" should become more and more separating and purifying, separating us from all but Him "whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Pet. 1:8, 9.) The Word by which we have been guided and kept in the way hitherto, should be growing more precious than ever before, and studied more each day, to the end that we may behold the beauty of the Lord therein, and know it true of us, as Paul has said, "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.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand." O day of light and gladness, when a glorified Church shall begin a song of praise, the volume of which will grow wider and deeper until the choir embraces "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." (Rev. 5:13.) If we see these things, if we have thus far been kept within the charmed circle of God's protecting power and love, we *will* bless the Lord, and forget not all His multiplied benefits, while in a humble and grateful confidence we strengthen ourselves in Him for our remaining days by affirming to His praise, "Surely goodness and mercy *shall follow me all the days of my life: and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*" - Psa. 23:6.

-J. J. BLACKBURN

The Covenants of God

PART II

IN PART I of "The Covenants," we considered Paul's discussion of the Abrahamic and Law Covenants as they are set forth in his Epistle to the Galatians. We saw that the Covenant given to Abraham was wholly of God's grace, and that in accordance with the promise made therein, the Christ, Head and Body, is *the Seed* that will bring blessings to all the families of the earth.

We saw that this Covenant was represented in Sarah, Abraham's first wife; and that as she eventually gave birth to Isaac, so this original promise given to Abraham, eventually brought forth The Christ, "The Seed of Promise."

We saw too that the Law Covenant was represented in Hagar, and that as she, a bondmaid, gave birth to Ishmael, "in the common course of nature" (Weymouth), so the Law, working through the deeds of the flesh, could bring forth only to bondage.

We also noted that whereas the promise of seed and of blessing to come through that seed was unconditional, guaranteed solely by the Word and Oath of God, nevertheless the right or privilege of being the channel of blessing was conditional; Abraham had first to demonstrate both faith and obedience—he had to leave home and kindred and become a sojourner in a strange land; he had also to offer up the son in whom his hopes were centered; but, strong in faith, he never wavered. - Heb. 6:15.

A similar requirement is made of each one that becomes a part of "the Anointed." Following in the footsteps of Jesus, each one of this class must exercise faith and obedience; each must forsake all earthly prospects and become a pilgrim and a stranger in the earth; each must present his body "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." These steps constitute individual vows or covenants which, if faithfully performed, will make "sure" our calling and election to a place in the Body of Christ, vouchsafed to us through begetting and sealing of the Holy Spirit. It is these individual covenants that the Psalmist speaks of when he says, "Gather My saints together unto Me, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." - Psa. 50:5.

THE NEW COVENANT

In this article we will examine the Scriptures that give answer to the following questions respecting the New Covenant: 1. What is the New Covenant? 2. Why is it called a New Covenant? 3. With whom is it made? 4. Why is it given? 5. What does it guarantee? 6. Why is it 'a better covenant'? 7. Why does it need a mediator? 8. When was it established? 9. When does it go into operation?

The first definite statement of the New Covenant in the Scriptures occurs in Jeremiah 31:27-34. In verse 31 we read:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."

There are times when the name Israel is used to refer to spiritual Israel, but here the application is definitely to the natural house of Israel; for, in the next verse we read:

"Not according to the covenant that *I made with their fathers* in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they break, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord."

In these two verses we have the positive assertion that Jehovah will, *at some future time*, make a new covenant with natural Israel to *replace the old Law Covenant* made with *their fathers* at the time He delivered them from Egypt, which covenant they had violated.

Obviously, the covenant made with Abraham could not be violated by men, since the fulfilling of its provisions depended wholly upon the Word and Oath of Almighty God. But the Law Covenant being bilateral and dependent upon man's obedience as well as God's word, was violated by Israel. Jesus, of course, was the one exception and so became heir of all the rights and privileges which God promised to the one who would keep the Law. All the rest, though obligated to keep the Law, failed; not because of any fault with the Covenant itself, but because sinful flesh is not able to keep the perfect law of God.

Since the Law Covenant was confined to natural Israel, the question would naturally arise as to whether or not the New Covenant would likewise be confined to them. In so far as any definite statement of Scripture is concerned, the answer is Yes: for where ever we find the two parties to the covenant definitely stated, it is always God and the natural descendants of Israel. This would agree with Paul's statement in Romans 9:4 where, speaking of Israel, his brethren in the flesh, he says: "Whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants; and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises."

In this 31st chapter of Jeremiah it is manifest that the promise of the New Covenant is made to natural Israel alone; then again, in chapter 32, the covenant promise is confined to natural Israel. Here the promise is called an "Everlasting Covenant," but a comparison of the two chapters (Jer. 31:27-34; 32:37-42) leads to the inference that both prophecies refer to the same covenant, for both are consummated with the natural house of Israel under the same circumstances and at the same time. This is based on the assumption that the phrase "Behold the days come" in verses 27 and 31 refer to the same period of time; we discover no reason for any other assumption.

In chapter 31, verse 28, it will be seen that the fulfillment of the promise of a New Covenant is to follow the dispersion and regathering of Israel: "It shall come to pass, that like as I have watched

over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord."

The proof that this statement refers to the regathering of the Jews following the dispersion of this Gospel Age and not the Babylonian captivity or other like short periods, is given in the two verses which follow:

"In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge."

In other words, in the day *when Israel is regathered*, no man shall die because of the death inheritance received from Father Adam; if they die, it will be because of individual sin willfully committed; and this we know is not true now, nor has it been true at any time in the past, but will be true when they are released from the death penalty brought upon them through Father Adam, in the time that they come under the judgments of Christ's Kingdom reign.

Corresponding to this, as showing the same circumstances, we read in chapter 32, verse 37:

"Behold, I will gather them *out of all countries*, whither I have driven them in Mine anger, and in My fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely."

Here again it is quite evident that the prophecy relates to the regathering of Israel at the end of this Gospel Age, when the Lord shall come in Kingdom power to reign. Thus prophecy establishes *the time* when the New Covenant will be put into operation, and *the people* with whom it will be made: namely, natural Israel during the reign of Christ.

These conclusions are verified in the writings of Paul. In Romans 11:25-29 he says: "For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so *all Israel* shall be saved; even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; and *this is My Covenant unto them* WHEN I shall take away *their sins*. As touching the Gospel, they are enemies for your sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and the calling of God are not repented of."

Thus Paul speaks of the Covenant (New) which will be made with *all* Israel, as a future event, to take place when Christ delivers them, following the period in which the Gospel has gathered the full number from among the Gentiles, to complete the Church.

THE BETTER PROMISES

Again in Hebrews 8:6, after identifying our risen Lord as the great High Priest of the Heavenly Tabernacle, we read:

"But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

In Hebrews 7:22 we read: "By so much hath Jesus become the surety of a better covenant." The word "surety" signifies something or some one that becomes a guarantee for the fulfillment of some promise not yet realized. (See Webster.) Had the New Covenant been in operation at the

time Paul spoke, he would not have used the word "surety," but some other expression signifying the then-present operation of the covenant; but the word "surety" does enable us to understand the statement of Heb. 8:6 above quoted, for a promise that has been guaranteed by worthwhile surety is "established" although the time of fulfillment may be years away.

Thayer, Strong, and Barry all show that the Greek word "*Nomotheteo*," rendered "established" (Authorized Version) "enacted" (Revised Version), "legislated" (Rotherham), "instituted" (Diaglott), has to do with the legal aspect of the matter and means "to legislate," "to pass," "to enact," to "sanction by law." In other words, Jesus, in providing the ransom, satisfies the requirements of the Law. There is nothing here to indicate as to when the covenant becomes operative: this must be determined from Scriptures which have to do with the *work* of mediation.

What were these better promises upon which this better covenant was established? Evidently they were the promises of God to Israel recorded through Jeremiah, for the writer of the Hebrews continues by saying:

"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault *with them*, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I shall make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not saith the Lord."

Here for a second time, Paul quotes from the Old Testament in proof that *the New Covenant is to be made with natural Israel*. Furthermore, the operation of the covenant is said to follow a period in which God "*has regarded them not*." In the history of Israel, from the time they dwelt in Egypt down to the time they were rejected from favor by our Lord, they were punished many times by permitting them to go into bondage, but *they were not cast off or "disregarded"*. Even in the seventy-year period of captivity to Babylon, God gave them Prophets and showed them favors; but during this Gospel Age, natural Israel has had no favor from God -- He has "regarded them not" -- left them to their own devices, and they have been dominated by Gentile rulers and beaten down almost to the point of extinction more than once. Here then is further proof that the operation of the New Covenant does not start until the close of this Gospel Age, the period in which natural Israel has been disregarded.

Another significant statement made by the Apostle in the above Scripture avers that "had the first covenant been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." The inference plainly indicated in these words is that *the New Covenant will accomplish that which the Law Covenant failed to accomplish*. Natural Israel was unable, through weakness of the flesh, to fulfill its part of that first covenant agreement, and so failed to gain the reward; and since under the New Covenant they will be able to gain that reward, we have the answer to our fifth question, for the reward which that covenant offered was life and earthly blessings-that which Adam had lost, and which "Christ came to seek and to save."

In this 8th chapter of Hebrews, Paul quotes from Jeremiah proof not only of what the covenant will accomplish and when it will go into effect, but also proof of why it is better.

"For (ver. 10) this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord [the days in which they had been disregarded]. I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and, I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all

shall know Me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Here is set forth the respects in which this Covenant will be better than the one given to Israel at Mt. Sinai: it is not that it will have a better law, for as we read elsewhere, "The Law was perfect"; nor is it that the promised reward is different; for as already seen, the New Covenant will accomplish that which the Law Covenant failed to accomplish; namely, the bestowal of life and earthly blessings. No, the difference lies mainly in the fact that the New Covenant will have a better mediator-one able to rewrite God's law in the hearts and beings of the willing and obedient.

Moses was an exceedingly able man, and did as much for Israel as it was humanly possible to do, but he had no life-rights of his own to give as a ransom for man; and so, under divine direction, he offered up bulls and goats, the blood of which could not take away sins, but which typically cleansed that people (as a whole) for one year.

Then, too, besides being unable to take Adam's place in death, that thereby he might set aside the condemnation resting upon man, Moses did not possess the wisdom or power to rewrite God's laws in the hearts and beings of those to whom he ministered, and so was instructed to write them upon tables of stone.

On the other hand, Jesus not only provided the price of redemption by His death, but suffered that death in such a manner as to meet the curse imposed by the Law upon those who failed to keep it. This he did in order that, as mediator, he might have the right and power to restore all the willing and obedient to that perfection of being which will enable them, when the Covenant has been fully mediated, to keep the perfect Law of God (the Law upon which the Covenant is based - Jer. 31:33) that thereby they may enjoy the blessings it offers.

Instead of writing the Law upon tables of stone, Christ will write it upon their hearts and in their beings; they will not only have the spirit of the Law in their hearts, but will also have the perfection of being that will enable them to keep it in letter as well as in spirit. Those who enjoy the blessings provided under the New Covenant will have to keep both the letter and spirit of the Law.

Briefly then, the answers to the questions enumerated in the beginning of this study are as follows:

1. The New Covenant is the agreement that will be mediated between God and natural Israel by Christ when he comes to reign. - Jer. 31:31, 32; Heb. 8:6; Rom. 11:25, 26.
2. It is called a New Covenant because it is given to replace the old Law Covenant. - Jer. 31:31-33.
3. It is made with natural Israel. - Heb. 8:7, 8.
4. It is given in order to accomplish the work of restoration which the Law failed to accomplish. - Heb. 8: 7.
5. It guarantees life and earthly blessings to those who become able, through the mediatorial work of Christ, to keep it. - Heb. 8:10-13; Rom. 10:5.

6. It is a better covenant because it will have a better mediator, one able to restore and perfect in being those who come unto God through Him. - Jer. 31:33, 34.

7. It will need a mediator, first, to satisfy the claims of justice against the sinners; and second, to restore the sinners to that perfection that will enable them to keep the perfect law of God. - Rom. 11:26, 27; Heb. 9:15.

8. It was established in a prophetic sense when God gave His promise concerning it; but in the real sense, it was established when Jesus became its "surety." - Heb. 7:22.

9. It becomes operative when "The Deliverer shall come out of Zion and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." - Rom. 11:25, 29; Jer. 32:37-42.

Any one not familiar with the Divine Plan might infer from the foregoing exegesis that natural Israel alone would benefit under this New Covenant arrangement, but not so. God's promise to Abraham provided for the blessing of *all* the families of the earth under the ministration of his seed -- that part of his seed called "The seed of promise" and identified by Paul as being The Christ, Head and Body. (Gal. 3:16, 29; 4:28; Rom. 9:8.) Furthermore, we know that life in perfection on the human plane of existence-yea, all the things which Jesus came to seek and to save-will be the reward of those who obey "that Prophet" (teacher) and thereby learn righteousness during His Kingdom reign.

We also know that eternal life (life in unending continuance) is conditional upon unending obedience to God, and that this constitutes a covenant agreement which can be fulfilled only by those who have been restored to perfection of being as was Adam before he sinned. - Hosea 6:7, R. V.

It is easy to understand how *all* Israel, living and dead, will be brought into the New Covenant agreement, for God has promised to return them to their land, no matter whither they have been driven, or whether they be living or dead, and to save them from their blindness and unrighteous ways. (Ezek. 37:12-14; 36:24-31; Rom. 11:26, 27.) But how about the Gentiles? Under what arrangement will they receive the promised blessings? The answer is: They will have to become proselytes to natural Israel's God and Covenant, just as members of the Church have had to become spiritual Israelites in order to partake of the favors and blessings of this Age. As Gentiles, we had no standing with God, but were aliens and strangers. But, through faith and the grace of God, we, by nature wild olive branches, have been grafted into the tame olive tree that we might partake of the benefits of the "root," God's promise through Abraham. (Rom. 11:17-20; Eph. 2:11-13.) So, of that Age to come, we read:

"Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house .of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." - Isa. 2:3.

"At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah: and *all* the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart." - Jer. 3:17; see. Ezek. 16:60,61; Amos 9:11, 12; Acts 15:16-18.

Thus will all the children of Adam, living and dead, be given the opportunity of restoration to God's favor; and those who take advantage of that opportunity will eventually experience all the blessings promised.

- J. T. Read

The Organist of Freiburg

AN EXHORTATION TO QUIETNESS

There is a story told of the organist of Freiburg, who sat, one day, playing the famous organ in that old Cathedral-church. He loved good music, and found life's richest joy in bringing out the thrilling melodies and harmonies of the masters from the great organ's throbbing pipes.

As he played on, oblivious to everything around, a stranger entered the -old church, and stood awhile listening from a point on one of its long aisles. Presently the stranger found his way up to the organ loft, and stood there listening again. "Let me take the organ a little while," the stranger said at length.

The organist, intent on completing his exercises, refused to vacate the seat.

Several times, as the music ceased, the stranger repeated his request. Each time it was refused. At length, the practice over, the organist, with ill grace, made way for the persistent stranger.

Taking his seat, the stranger sat looking at the keys, as though wondering what to play. Then, after a few moments' reverie, his fingers began to sweep the keys, and volumes of sound pealed forth such as the old organ never made before! It filled the stately old church from floor to roof, the very walls vibrating in unison with the lofty themes, and echoing back the sonorous swell as the music rose and fell in rippling surges of melody and harmony.

The old organist stood entranced until the mighty anthem ceased, then, gripping the unknown player by the shoulders, said: "Who are you?"

"Mendelssohn," said the stranger quietly.

"And to think that I nearly refused Mendelssohn the use of my organ!" said the abashed old organist.

It required the master-hand to bring forth the possibilities of that great instrument, for when the master played, the performance was lifted to a higher plane, and the humdrum and ordinary gave place to the superlative and superb.

So in life's little rhythms for every child of God. We may each and all be interpreting the great realities of life to the best of our abilities, bringing forth in our performance the best and sweetest music which our souls can make. But so intent do we become in our little rounds of life we can scarcely bring ourselves to leave the old organ stool, even for a little while, that we are repeatedly ignoring the solicitations of a greater than Mendelssohn to rest and listen :the while He ;plays, so that He may cause diviner melody to flow within and around our little souls.

The old Freiburg organist played sweeter music in after days for having heard the great Mendelssohn play. So, likewise, each child of God will make sweeter melody for his friends if, once in a while, he vacates his stool and listens as his Master's fingers sweep the keys.

Each child of God should let the urge of service-the innate want to be "doing something" for the Lord-subside from time to time, to go aside and listen quietly to the higher harmonies and deeper concords which sweet fellowship with the Lord, in secret and alone, can bring into his deeper life. It is not what we can do for the Lord, but what the Lord can do for us in the symphonies of life that really counts. Even Jesus spent some of His, nights in undisturbed solitude-alone, yet not alone-becoming thereby attuned to the rhythms and tempos of His Father's love.

Does His ardent follower need to do less than that? -T. H. - *Bible Students Monthly*, Eng.

Security, in the Secret Place

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." - Psa. 91:1-7.

IN BEAUTIFUL phraseology the Lord gives assurance of protection and security for His chosen and peculiar people. It is related that the birds who built their nests within the sacred precincts of the temple in ancient days, were considered as coming to Jehovah for protection, and were therefore kept safe from harm while in that sacred place. So likewise has God furnished protection to His people down through the ages. That is the theme of Psalm 91. Examination of its provisions gives comfort in abundance to those of the household of faith.

Undoubtedly the writer of the Psalm, in speaking of the secret place of the Most High, thought of Israel's specially favored position. Jehovah had formed Israel and called her by name as His own. He had entered into a solemn covenant with the nation, under which He became the God of the people, guaranteeing them protection and life in return for obedience to the covenant on their part. Truly they were in a secret place under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty.

But it is not Israel's favored condition which especially interests the Christian. Its primary application is to the called ones of this Gospel Age, and it is at this critical time, in the days of the Lord's Second Advent, that its provisions bring solace and strength. The Prophet Malachi, referring to these troublous days, asks:

"Who may abide the day of His coming? Who shall stand when He appeareth?" - Mal. 3:1.

These are no idle questions, but carry with them the implication that in the days of the Lord's presence many will fail to meet the fiery tests. The continuous procession of siftings and divisions of recent years gives evidence that the test is on. Ensnarements and entrapments, arrows by day, and pestilences by night are prevalent. Many fall on the right hand or the left. But those in the "secret place of the Most High" are delivered and kept free from harm.

THE SECRET PLACE

What is this secret place which affords such great security? The children of the Most High are said to have been baptized into Christ, and thus immersed into His death. They are a part of the Body of Christ. Their condition is described by Paul as "The secret which was concealed from ages and generations, but now is manifested to His saints; to whom God wished to make known, what is the glorious wealth of this secret, among the nations which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:26, 27, Diaglott.) Beautifully pictured in the "holy" of the tabernacle is this hidden condition of the spirit-begotten ones, where they are said to "walk with God within the first veil of consecration, and beyond the intellectual sight of the world, and the unconsecrated believers. These enjoy the inner light of the golden candlestick, while others are in 'outer darkness'; these

eat of special spiritual food, represented in the unleavened 'bread of presence,' and offer incense at the golden altar, acceptable through Christ Jesus."

It is the spirit-begotten, anointed condition of those called to be joint heirs with Christ that constitutes the secret place of the Most High. Happy are they thus dwelling under the wings of the Almighty.

SUBTLE SNARES OF THE ADVERSARY

Satan is the great fowler who would ensnare these children of light, and many are the ingenious and crafty devices used to overreach and deceive them. In the days of Israel the prevailing method of deception was through idolatry. God had warned Israel that the worship of other gods would be a snare unto them (Exod. 23:33; Judges 2:3); nevertheless idolatry appears to have been their besetting sin, and at the time of the great desolation Israel had become an idolatrous nation. Then every city had its idol, and every street in Jerusalem its altar devoted to idolatrous worship. Yet God was patient with Israel. He delivered them many times from the snare. And although the seventy years desolation was a severe punishment to the nation, it also was a medicine for idol worship which produced a cure. After the return of the Jews from the captivity, Baal worship ceased to be a serious temptation, and at the time of the first advent of Jesus, Israel as a nation, in form at least, worshiped the one God, Jehovah.

Likewise during the Gospel Age idolatry has been a baited trap for the called of God. True, they have not bowed down to the golden calf or the brazen image, but too oft there have been other tangible things assuming the place of supremacy in heart and mind, which belongs only to God. The worship of the idol *self* often drives out the worship of God. Wealth, honor, position, and family, improperly valued, become idolatrous snares. And in this end period of the existing order, there are more subtle snares used by the fowler to entrap brethren. They are decoys, not seen in their true import until the victim becomes ensnared by means of their influence.

Sectarianism is an old type of pitfall now brought out in new form by the great Deceiver. Paul warned the Corinthian brethren and others against its dangers; nevertheless following the lead of a man or an organization became the popular thing among those setting out to be footstep followers of Christ. The Papal Church secured the worship and servitude of most of the world. Protestant systems have received the image worship of millions. And, regrettable but true, in these days of present truth many have given God's servant a devotion and subserviency which belongs only to God. Any organization, though once used as a vehicle for the promulgation of truth, may become an idol of substantial proportions, thrusting itself forward as the only true channel of the Most High God, alienating many from single-hearted devotion to God into a slavish obedience to human mandates.

PRESENT DAY IDOLS

As we draw nearer to the cataclysm which will terminate the present evil world, forms of idolatry become more ingenious and sly. We find God's people divided into many groups, and it is the attitude of brethren towards these groups which oft determines whether fetishism again entraps them. Does our particular cluster of brethren constitute the channel of God? Do we disfellowship those of other congregations? Do we boycott elders and speakers solely because of their affiliation with another company, regardless of their own unimpeachable Christian character and ability? Do we indulge in evil speaking against those not linked with us? Do we identify ourselves as members of one particular aggregation of brethren, as the sole members of the Body of Christ? The Master, in plain and simple terms stated, "All ye are brethren"; but under the artful

delusions of today, how painful to see some recognize only those of their own particular religious persuasion as being of the Bride of Christ. Thus a religious association, though it may be small in number, may assume undue authority and become an idol of no mean proportions. Even inanimate objects such as helpful volumes to assist in Scripture study may with some assume undue supremacy, and be held as divinely inspired, and their contents accepted without question or dispute. That is idolatry. A set of books may be an instrument of the Lord, and an invaluable aid in securing a knowledge of the Truth, but can never be a substitute for the Bible.

"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," is a decree for spiritual Israel as well as natural Israel. Maintaining one's position in the secret place of the Most High gives assurance of deliverance from the entanglements of idolatry.

THE NOISOME PESTILENCE

The noisome pestilence is another danger from which deliverance is promised. In the Hebrew the word noisome is derived from a root word which means covetous. The noisome pestilence may be defined as a form of fatal, wide-spreading disease, derived from covetousness, which attacks the New Creature.

Possibly God had this form of pestilence in mind in telling, through the Apostle Peter, of the false teachers who would come in among God's people bringing in destructive heresies, and leading many into their pernicious ways. He states further concerning such: "And with covetousness they will make gain of you with deceitful words." (2 Pet. 2:1-3, Diaglott.) This pestilence of covetousness follows quite a definite routine. The leader, gifted with ability to readily grasp and explain Biblical matters, may be the first subject of Satan's attack. The desire for adulation of men and a personal following is fostered by the Adversary until it becomes a dominating ambition. Then with deceitful and feigned words these false teachers make merchandise of the brethren, securing their allegiance and leading them from the pathway of truth. "Take care that no one make a prey of you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ," (Col. 2:8, Diaglott) is the good advice of the Apostle; nevertheless, how sad has been the record of this Gospel Age which has seen millions succumb to this pestilence of covetousness.

One of the helps for deliverance from this pestilence is that portion of the armor of God called the Girdle of Truth. Those in the Secret Place use the Truth as a support and a defense. In days of trial and test how essential it is to be Bible *Students* in fact, and not mere spoon-fed babes in Christ. How necessary it is to prove all things, and thus be enabled to hold fast that which is good. Bibles, Scripture Studies, concordances, apostles, prophets and evangelists, together with reasoning faculties, are gifts of God, that we may be enabled to see the unsoundness of plausible, but deceitful philosophy promulgated speciously under the cloak of truth. Use of this Girdle of Truth will enable brethren to retain their liberty in Christ and in the Truth.

NO FEAR FOR TERROR BY NIGHT

There are other dangers mentioned in this Psalm, to which no promise of deliverance is given, but which the Psalmist states we as God's anointed need not fear. Among these is the "terror by night." What is the "terror by night" which frightens others, but does not increase the pulse beat of the Christian?

Possibly the Psalmist thought back to the time when a terror came in the night, bringing horror and dread to the proud and haughty Egyptians. At a midnight hour, the messenger of death smote

the first-born in every Egyptian house, from the Pharaoh down to the captive in the dungeon. Great was the cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. But in Israel there was no fear. They were under the protection of the Almighty.

During the ages there has been great fear among people of the calamity which comes in the dark; of the vengeance which is alleged to come from God upon all who do not conform to prevailing religious theories. Eternal torment, purgatory, and the second death have been nightmares to such. The fear of the great tribulation of the day of the Lord, so forcibly described by the Prophet Isaiah (Isa. 13:6-8) disturbs the rest of many. But the child of God is not fearful of these unseen terrors. They have no fear of a mythical hell or purgatory. They blanch not at the thought of second death. Their confidence is placed in the Most High and in Him do they trust. Love casteth out fear and in place leaves a peace which abideth continually, and which the world knows not of.

THE TONGUE

They fear not *the arrow that flieth by day*. Here is a form of attack that comes not under the cover of midnight darkness, but with open, frightening visibleness. The Church of God is subject to much in the way of open attack, and the attack of the tongue is one which oftentimes hurts the most. Jeremiah describes the evil tongue as an arrow shot out speaking deceit. (Jer. 9:8.) Evilly used, it can cut deeper than a sword. And how true it is that the course of many is determined by the tongues of others. Some on receiving a knowledge of the truth hesitate, and pass up the golden opportunity, solely because of fear of what their friends might say. Some have stepped aside from whole-hearted adherence to the truth, because of fear of criticism. Some have refrained from declaring vital truths because they feared a verbal attack. Jesus suffered from this form of assault but manifested no fear of it. All who walk faithfully in the footsteps of the Master can make up their minds they will be subjected to misrepresentation, slander, or abuse. The true soldiers of the cross have well demonstrated their lack of fear by boldly declaring the truth in the face of murderous, slanderous assaults. Faith is their shield of defense and they can endure all things with fortitude and cheerfulness.

In the midst of the gross darkness covering the people of earth the Adversary with persistent diligence has brought forth many perversions of truth, and errors of doctrine, which may be described as the *"pestilence that walketh in darkness."* These false teachings, described by Jesus as being great signs and wonders which would deceive the *very* elect if possible, have the appearance of truth, and are the means of deceiving many. Their name is legion. We mention only a few of the modern variety, brought forth in these closing days of the Gospel Age.

Denial of the Ransom -- An old form of the pestilence, dressed up and exhibited with new garments. The modern style is not a forthright denial of the ransom, but a limitation of its provisions, such as declaring Adam and Eve outside of its benefits.

Great Witnessing Work -- The gospel of works has been presented as an open door into the Kingdom. Great works of peripatetic preaching with circulation of religious literature in voluminous quantities, with much publication of the numbers of proselytes secured, and persecution reaped, are held forth as sure evidence of *its* divine origin. "Lord, have we not done wonderful works in Thy name?"

World's Judgment Now -- Again the formula of salvation now or eternal destruction is held forth to frighten people of the world into the path of religion.

Universal Salvation-On the surface this looks like a doctrine of purity, enlarging the view of God's love and mercy. But examined closely, we believe it to be a doctrine contrary to well defined expressions of the Lord concerning an eventual destruction of the incorrigible, and therefore antagonistic to the Bible teachings, and as such, a subtle delusion.

The review of this brief list is painful, but there are many others. A thousand on one side, or ten thousand on the other side will be deceived and led astray by these teachings of error, but those in the secret place of the Most High keep on the Girdle of Truth and are not deceived.

DESTRUCTION THAT WASTETH AT NOONDAY

The final form of pestilence for consideration in this article is described as the destruction that wasteth at noonday. There is nothing secretive about this. It is a disease attacking the New Creature in the open, and sometimes with fatal results. It is a wide-spread, destructive work, breaking down the barriers of strict Christian life. Jesus may have referred to it when He said, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24:12.) Paul describes its effect when he tells of the selfishness, pride, covetousness, corruptness of morals, blasphemy and opposition to truth that would abound in the last days. It constitutes a blackout of the Spirit of Christ, and a let down of morals. Intolerance, selfishness, and the spirit of evil take the place of the fruits of the Spirit. It may begin in a small way by an undue emphasis upon works of service in place of growth in character-likeness to Christ. But, like leaven in a loaf, it spreads until evil dominates, and the first love is forgotten. Christians are not contaminated by this disease and fear not its evil spread. They walk in the footsteps of the Master, whose life was one of purity and devotion to righteousness. Thus they know no evil will befall them, and no plague will come nigh their dwelling.

"Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known My name." Relying upon this the New Creature maintains his position and continues in the narrow way that leads unto life eternal, unmoved and unafraid of the plagues, pestilences, and snares placed in his way. Surely goodness and mercy will follow him all the days of his life and he will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

-O. R.. MOYLE

The Grace of Christ

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." - 2 Thess. 3:18.

GRACE! 'TIS a charming sound, harmonious to the ear." Thus wrote the poet. It is a charming sound, not only because we all need the grace of God, but also because it is a charming adornment of Christian character, and it gives a charm to any who possess it.

The fashion of this world is rapidly passing away. As we face the future and realize life's uncertainties, whether we be young or old, if we take our life thoughtfully, and in a Christian spirit, especially if we have consecrated ourselves to do the Father's will by walking in the footsteps of Jesus to the best of our ability, we feel our need of a higher wisdom, a more pure and enduring energy than our own, to guide our steps, to mould our character, to shape our lot for us; and so we look up to God and ask, both for ourselves and for the whole dear family of God, His benediction, His grace upon all our days and on all our ways -- grace sufficient for every time of need, teaching us how to make all things contribute to our highest welfare, thus securing alike from the bleak north winds of adversity as from the warm south winds of prosperity real and lasting benefits. - 1 Cor. 7:31; Heb. 4:16; Rom. 8:28; Song of Solomon 4:16.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with *you*." Do not these words meet *your* sense of need, *your* craving for good, *your* hope of a benediction which will make *your* days bright with the luster of a joyous, holy living? To St. Paul they conveyed and implied so much, they were so bright with hope, that, as another has observed,* "they became his standing good wish for those whom he loved." They appear at the close of nearly all the letters he wrote, in one place reading, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you"; in another, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit"; and here, in our text, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."

* For much of the material used in this article, we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to Samuel Cox, an expositor of days gone by.

It is entirely possible, however, that the very frequency with which we meet these words, has served to dull their force and clearness. As another has expressed, "People, in reading the Bible, are often not conscious of the extreme listlessness with which they pass along the familiar and oft repeated words of Scripture, without the impression of their meaning being at all present with the thoughts-and how, during the mechanical currency of the verses through their lips, the thinking power is asleep for whole passages together." Perhaps this is true in regard to our text. We may never have asked what the words meant originally, and still mean, what the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was and is, and in what senses that grace may be with us, and be the crown and benediction of our whole life. It will be worth our while therefore, if we meditate on the text long enough to note that the phrase "grace of Christ" would convey at least three ideas to the members of the early Church, and should convey the same ideas to us; and that if the grace of Christ is to "be with us" or "with our spirit" we must in all these senses reproduce it, and make it our own.

THE GRACEFULNESS OR CHARM OF CHRIST

The first thought which this phrase would suggest to St. Paul's readers, especially to his Grecian readers -and most of them were Greeks-would be the gracefulness, the charm, of Christ. They would understand the Apostle to refer to that exquisite sensibility to beauty, the beauty of nature and of man, by which Christ was distinguished, that love of all that is fair - and pure and good which gave a beauty, a winning charm, an attractiveness, to His person, His character, His manner and bearing, and to His words, which no heart not wholly dead to beauty and goodness was able to resist. Both the Puritan conception and the Monastic, or ascetic, conception of Christ have gone far to hide this thought from us-so far that it has been argued from such texts as "His face was more marred than that of any man" that they do greatly err who attribute any comeliness to the Man of Sorrows. It is difficult, however, to believe that One born of a pure virgin and begotten of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of goodness and beauty, could be other than the most pure, beautiful, and attractive of men. Who can believe that the one perfect Man, He whose majestic bearing was such as to elicit from Pilate the exclamation, "Behold the Man!" was destitute of any outward and visible sign of His inward perfection? A lovely spirit does, indeed, transfigure even the plainest features and lend them a charm beyond that of a simply formal beauty; but a lovely spirit in a lovely form is a still more potent force. And hence the great painters who have invested the face and figure of our Lord with all the perfections of manly beauty, and who have added a pathetic charm to that beauty by depicting the perfect face as worn and wasted with thought, with compassion, with all the toil and burden of His great work of love, have reason on their side, and give us, we may be sure, a far truer conception of Him than either the Puritan or the Monk.

For the whole story of His life shows both that He was exquisitely sensitive to beauty in every form, and that He had the still rarer power of reproducing that beauty in His words and ways. The whole world of nature lives again in His discourses and parables, to prove how keen He was to note the loveliness of the world around Him; while these same parables and discourses are so perfect, both in substance and in expression, as to prove that He could reproduce this beauty in still more exquisite and enduring forms. And what a keen eye for beauty of character, for a latent unsuspected goodness, must He have possessed, who saw in doubting Nathaniel an Israelite indeed, in fickle and impetuous Peter a steadfast rock, in timid and halting Nicodemus, and even in the wanton of Samaria, fitting recipients for the deepest truths of His Kingdom, in Mary's waste of ointment an insight which transcended that of the Apostles, and in the self-humiliation of the woman who was a sinner a love capable of transforming her into a saint! He who spoke the most beautiful words that have fallen from human lips; He who clothed perfect thoughts in forms so perfect that the noblest spirits of every subsequent age have held them to be "sweeter than honey" and more precious than "much fine gold," and yet in forms so simple that the common people have always heard them gladly; He who was at home with all classes, learned and ignorant, rich and poor, powerful or enslaved, who saw good even in the worst, and found something to pity, something to love in even the forlornest outcast; He to whom little children ran for a caress, round whom wronged women and outcast men gathered as to a friend-was there no beauty, no charm, in Him? Was there not rather a charm which no open and susceptible heart could withstand?

This beauty, this charm, this gracefulness, is to be with us, is to be ours, if "the grace of Christ" is to be with us. That is to say, the wish, the benediction of our text summons us to cultivate the love of all that is fair, all that is good-all that is fair in nature, all that is good in men; and to reproduce it, so far as we may, in our words, in our manner, in our lives. We are not to be content with being sourly or austere good, but to aim at being winningly and attractively good. The beautiful mind, the beautiful manner, of Christ, the charm of His character, His speech, His dealings and intercourse with men, be with us all.

THE GRACIOUSNESS, THE GENIAL FRIENDLINESS, OF CHRIST

But graceful manners soon break down under the strain of change, familiarity, or time, unless they spring from and express a gracious heart. And hence we must be reminded of the second meaning latent in our text. For if "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" would suggest gracefulness to a Greek, to a Jew, it would suggest graciousness, a willing, friendly, genial spirit; not righteousness simply, but a genial righteousness; not beneficence simply, but a friendly beneficence.

There are men who are weighted all their lives by an unwilling, a reluctant, an unsympathetic temperament. They do not easily consent to what is proposed to them; their first impulse is to say No rather than Yes. Not courtesy alone is difficult to them, but thoughtfulness for others, consideration for their wishes, a lenient judgment of their faults, a kindly interest in that which interests *them*. Their instinct is to differ rather than to concur, to wrangle rather than to assent, to criticize and condemn rather than to work with their neighbors and yield to their influence. And hence, strive as they will-and few but themselves know how hard and bitter the strife sometimes is-they lack the friendly tone, the genial manner, which commands confidence and love, and even when they do good are apt to do it awkwardly and in a way which hurts or offends even those whom they help. They do not give *themselves* with their gifts.

But we find no trace of this stiff, reluctant, self-contained disposition in Jesus Christ. Little though He had to give as the world counts gifts, the world has never seen a benefactor to be compared with Him. Not only did He give Himself for us all, but He gave *Himself* with all His gifts, gave all He had, or all they could take, to every man or woman who approached Him. There was nothing He could do which He was not prepared to do for any who asked His help. So gracious was He, so steadfastly did His will stand at the yielding or giving point, that virtue went out of Him without any conscious exercise of will, whenever the hand of faith or need was laid upon Him. And how interested He was in all who spake with Him, however ignorant or faulty they might be! How deeply He looked into their hearts; how He drew them on, and drew them out, till they had told Him their inmost secret, till they had relieved their bosoms of the perilous stuff hidden there; and then how wisely and delicately He adapted His words and gifts to their needs; as, for example, when He talked with the woman of Samaria by the well! How ready He was to love them, or any trace of good in them, till they rose "to match the promise in His eyes"; as, for instance, in the faith of the Syrophenician woman! How much good *He* saw in them which the world could not see, and of which they themselves had lost sight; as, for example, in Zaccheus, that true son of Abraham, whom the Pharisees mistook for a child of the devil, and in the woman who bathed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head! How quick He was to detect any moment of weakness in those who had a little faith in Him but held it with a feeble grasp, and how prompt to strengthen them against any sudden pressure of unbelief; as, for example, when He said to the faltering ruler of the synagogue, "Only believe; all things are possible to him that believeth"!

But space does not permit -- we should have to go through the wholly story of His life-even to allude to the innumerable proofs of His graciousness, of His willing and friendly heart; the graciousness which enabled Him to give so much, though of outward good He had so little to give, and which made His every gift a charm, an elevating and abiding power, to those who received it, or who listened to the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And yet, with all this graciousness, there was no softness, no weakness, no insincerity, such as is often found associated with a kindly temperament; there was nothing inconsiderate, or indiscriminate, in His boundless charity; no yielding at a single point at which it would have been wrong to yield;

no want of faithfulness, *or* even of severity where severity was needed. He was sincere as He was sympathetic, rare as that combination is. He who said to a sinful woman, "Neither do I condemn thee," said also, "From henceforth sin no more." And He who cured a sinful man of the paralysis induced by vice, also warned him, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee."

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all in this sense also. May His graciousness, His kindly consideration for others, His genial, warm manner, His friendly tone, be ours.

THE FAVOR, THE REDEEMING LOVE OF CHRIST

But perhaps one who has read thus far is saying to himself, "Well, if the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ means gracefulness and graciousness, then I am afraid it is impossible for me. For I am neither very graceful nor very gracious; and while I am learning to appreciate better all that is lovely and fair, both in nature and in men, to reproduce such loveliness in my own thoughts and words and deeds is another matter, and as for being gracious, that does not come at all easily to me."

Ah! beloved reader, if the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ meant only His gracefulness or His graciousness, we would all *be* in great discouragement. But the word has another, a third, meaning, one with which we have long been familiar. The Apostle reminds us of this meaning in 2 Cor. 8:9: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich." Yes, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ means also His favor, His active, redeeming, and renewing love, freely bestowed upon us, and because of this we may entertain high hopes of having His grace, in the other two meanings of the word, fulfilled in us also.

In the New Testament, as every student of that blessed Volume must know, the grace of Christ is constantly used in this third sense, far more commonly in this sense than in any other. Its most frequent use denotes a divine and loving energy or quality which not only forgives, but also cleanses us from, our iniquity; which not only pardons, but redeems *us* from, our faults and sins; an energy which attends us through our whole career to guard us against temptation or make us strong enough to resist temptation.; as able to change, elevate, and purify our whole character and disposition, and to recreate us in its own likeness.

And who dare say that, with this giving, and forgiving energy, this redeeming and renewing grace, ever at work upon and in him, he cannot become pure, friendly, and gracious in heart, and, therefore, simple, courteous, and even graceful in manner and in speech? Who dare despair of himself, or give up self culture as hopeless, if the strong Son of God is ever waiting to come to his help, ever seeking to bestow His gracefulness, His graciousness, to exert His forgiving and redeeming power upon us, to recast our mind, our character, *our* disposition, our temperament, on the larger, fairer, lines of His own?

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all" the grace which redeems, renews, recreates the inward man of the heart, and so clothes even the outward man of behavior with a new and friendlier charm. Amen -- so let it be.

-P. L. Read

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren at Brooklyn:

I have just received your November "Herald." I wish to ask you if you will kindly continue to send them to me, as they have proved a real comfort to me. I do look for them, and at this time they are very precious indeed. I am needing that food just now which only our dear Heavenly Father can supply. Sometimes I find my own testimony in them, but now they are so precious to me, for I have sustained a very great loss. My dear son, who was just 41, has passed away so suddenly. He went into hospital for an operation, a simple thing they say, and died a few hours afterwards. He came through all right. None of us were with him. Although he asked for us they did not send till he had passed away. He cried poor boy! He has been my support for many years, and he loved his mother.

I cannot get any comfort only from God's Word or His intelligent messengers, so I hope you will still send me the "Herald." I am now 85. I wonder sometimes how long before God will take me home. The dear ones tell me my work here is not done yet, and I know my works will follow me. I have every proof I am called and accepted, and am able to enlighten and comfort others. This is a very great blow.

My boy was conversant with the Truth, and his record in the flesh was great. He sacrificed his whole life for others, to do good to all. His record and his memory live.

So, dear ones, I need comfort in the flesh. Let me have your prayers. I do really experience the prayers of the dear ones. I thank you for sending me the "Herald" free. God will bless you in so doing.

With Christian love,
United we stand in Him, Mrs. A. P. - Eng.

Beloved Brethren:
Fervent Christian greetings.

At the close of another year I join with many brethren, I am sure, in writing to thank you for the glorious spiritual food we have received during 1942. How we look forward to the coming of each issue, and then eagerly devour its contents.

We *pray* -our Heavenly Father to protect the means used to bring them along, and our prayers are answered, for I believe but one has failed to arrive thus far. I have forwarded to London office of B. S. M. a note I desire you to use as you feel best. I just hope and pray that there are many, others enriched and encouraged as we are. . . . And now I pray our Father in heaven will make you channels of help and comfort in even greater degree during 1943.

Yours most grateful for all the blessings received, J. W. - Eng.

Dear Brethren in the Lord:

Greetings in His dear name. I want to thank you at this time for all the blessings I have received through the "Herald," and also through visiting brethren used of the Lord to encourage and help His people. It surely has been a great encouragement and help to me, and may the dear Heavenly Father bless all who are serving Him and His people, and grant that the work may still go on, for we need it so much in these days of stress. Please find enclosed my subscription to the "Herald" for another year.

Again thanking you for your labor of love and all those who have contributed the splendid articles we have enjoyed, I remain.

Your sister in the one Hope, Mrs. H. A. S. - *Ill.*

Gentlemen:

I have read your pamphlet on the subject "Immortality and the Resurrection of the Dead," which I find to the point and convincing. I would like also to read your book entitled, "Th Divine Plan of the Ages," which you will please mail me with bill, and I will mail you check for same.

Thanking you in advance, trusting that this will be a start towards that fellowship and mutual understanding in the Lord's Word,

Sincerely,
A. M. -- N. Y.

Dear Brethren:

More than a year ago I wrote you that I would not renew my subscription to the "Herald," stating that I thought I had more in common with some others. At that time I so rejoiced, having come from under the bondage, of previous associations that I did not realize that I was not yet in complete Christian liberty. I have learned since then that I cannot follow any blue-print, no matter by whom, nor how well intended. While I realize that Brother Russell was greatly used by the Lord, and that his writings embrace the Divine Plan, yet I cannot agree that his writings are infallible.

Please send me all of the issues for 1942 and then begin my subscription for one year. The article entitled, "The Army of Gideon," is wonderful and did much to open my eyes, and I want to pass, it on to other brethren here.

From various sources have come claims of not being dogmatic; tolerance has been stressed, the spirit of love is theirs, etc.; but never have I seen these qualities and principles so exemplified as in the columns of the "Herald.", The October 1942 issue is a wonderful proof of this. The article, "Our Heritage of Knowledge," is a brief but clear outline of the Divine Plan which well deserves its title.

If you wish, you may use this letter or any part thereof, if perhaps it might help some who may be mourning in Zion. Included also is a list of publications I am ordering, and money order for same.

Praying the Lord's continued blessings upon you and your publication, I remain

Yours in Kingdom Hope, C. M. - Idaho.