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Lessons from the Life of Joseph

Scripture Reading: Psalm 105:17-23; Genesis chapters 37; 39-50.

Joseph and His Dreams

THE story of Joseph begins when he was a lad of seventeen years. His brother Benjamin was four or five years younger. Joseph was sent by his father to his brethren who were herding, the flocks, to find out how they fared. He was unpopular with his brethren, because he was his father's favorite. Jacob showed his favoritism, which, in a family, is most-unwise. It is the dull child, or the weak one, who really needs the more praise and encouragement, the more help and favor; and favoritism for the more talented usually spoils the child; cultivating pride, self-conceit. It is unjust to the others, and draws down upon the favorite their envy and hatred.

Joseph's brethren saw him coming afar off, and said, "Behold, this; dreamer cometh. Joseph had had some dreams in one of which his brothers' sheaves bowed down to his sheaf; the sun, moon, and stars made obeisance to him. With boyish simplicity he told his dreams and his brothers never forgave him. The dreams were divine intimations of the boy's future; but the hints of his present or possible superiority over them made their envy the more bitter.

Sixty miles he had come to find how they fared and carry back word to his father. Doubtless they knew him afar off by his coat of bright colors. "Behold, this dreamer cometh," they said. "Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will 'become of his dreams." Here we see the fearful danger of allowing envious thoughts to remain in the heart. Envy grew into murder-murder of their own brother! We are reminded of the wisdom of Paul's counsel, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." We should instantly crush the merest beginnings of envy. Ere we close each day, we should see that every feeling of bitterness against any person is cast, out of our heart. It should be a time of forgiving and forgetting all injury or unkindness done us by any one.

But Joseph was not killed: his mission was not yet ended. His brother Reuben was not ready for murder, and proposed casting him into a dry pit, intending to rescue him later. His suggestion was accepted; Joseph was cast into a pit, and they sat down to eat. In all this, God's providence was working. As they ate, they saw a caravan coming, and Judah proposed they sell Joseph to the passing men chants. It seemed good to them for two reasons: They would get rid of the boy's

blood-and blood is always a troublesome thing on one's hands. It will not wash off. Besides there would be a little money in the transaction. So they hastily drew Joseph from the pit, and after parleying with the Midianites they sold him for twenty pieces of silver-\$12.50.

When Reuben returned he found the pit empty, and supposing that Joseph had been killed, he rent his clothes in grief. The other brothers, knowing that some news must be sent to their old father, killed a kid, dipped Joseph's coat in blood, and sent it to the father with the explanation: We found this coat, in this condition, in the field. Does our father think it is his son's coat? The father recognized the coat, and drew the inference they wished, and said, "Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces! So he thought for more than twenty years, and all the years were filled with sore mourning.

LET OUR FAREWELLS BE IN LOVE

Let us pause' here and draw some lessons from this narrative. When Joseph parted from those at home, they thought it was for only a few days' absence. His Grandfather Isaac was still living, and Benjamin was but a small boy. They thought in a few days he would be home again.- No one dreamed that for more than twenty years they would not see his face again-some would never see him again. There is a lesson for us here: Our casual partings too may be for years-may be forever. When we part at our doors in the morning, we never know, whether we shall look in each other's face again or not. We expect to gather in the evening at the fireside; but we never know. Many go out who never come home.

If Jacob had known what was to befall his son, how tender would have been the parting! Above all, we should never separate in an angry or impatient mood, with unforgiveness, bitterness, misunderstanding. No amount of flowers on the coffin will atone for the coldness of the parting, or take the pang out of the bereft heart. Every parting with loved ones should be sweet enough, kindly enough, for a last farewell.

"If thou dost bid thy friend farewell,
But for one night though that farewell may be,
Press thou his hand in thine.
How canst thou tell how far from thee
Fate or caprice may lead his steps, ere that tomorrow comes?
Men have been known lightly to turn the corner of a street,
And days have grown to months,
And months to lagging years, ere they
Have looked in loving eyes again.
Parting at best is underlaid
With tears and pain:
Therefore, lest sudden death should come between,
Or time, or distance, clasp with pressure firm the hand
Of him who goeth forth:
Unseen, fate goeth, too.
Yea, find thou always time to say some earnest word
Between the idle talk, lest with thee henceforth,
Night and day, regret should walk."

Another lesson: Joseph, the happy lad leaving Hebron for Shechem, had no inkling of what was to befall him. He expected a kindly welcome on meeting his brothers, and to return quickly to those who loved him. So we know not what lies before us. We spend today in gladness, not

knowing that tomorrow will bring us tears. We move on through the flowers, heedless of danger, not suspecting that at our next step we may fall' into some hidden pit. We rejoice in our prosperity, unconscious of the fact that disaster may come any hour and sweep it away. We set out on the happy journey, without thought of the possible accident which may leave us crippled or dead.

What is the lesson? Should this uncertainty of all human affairs sadden our life? No, that is not the lesson. God does not want us to be unhappy while the sun is shining because by and by it will go under a cloud. He wants us to live in today, and enjoy its blessings, and do its work well, though tomorrow may bring calamity. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." How can we do this if we know that the future has in it possibilities of sudden darkness? Only by calm, quiet, trustful faith in God, and obedience' to Him at every step. We sometimes wish we could look into the future, that we might choose our way and avoid the rough paths. But suppose Joseph had been told how his brothers would treat him, and that he would be sold as a slave. Would he have gone forward? Then what a wonderful story of providence would have been spoiled!

Joseph would have missed all that bright future which lay beyond the period of wrongs and cruelties into which he was first plunged. And think what his people, and the world would have missed!

It would not be well for us to know what is before us; we, would want to meddle with God's plans, thus marring 'our own future, and harming others. Nor should we be afraid and over cautious. Yet this uncertainty ought to hold us near the side of Christ at all times. Nothing can ever really go wrong with us if He is leading us and we are quietly following Him. Though He take us through pain, misfortune, suffering, it is because that is the path to true blessing and good.

JOSEPH A SLAVE AND IN PRISON

A modern writer has a story entitled "Hands Off," which illustrates providence in the life of Joseph. It represents a man in another stage of existence, looking down upon the Hebrew lad in the hands of the Midianites. In this story, being an active, ingenious lad, Joseph escaped from the caravan on the first night after his brothers had sold him. He had just reached the outer edge of the camp when a yellow dog began to bark and awakened the men who were in charge of him, and he was returned to captivity.

However, the onlooker wanted to kill the dog before he had awakened the camp. Then Joseph would have gotten away and would have reached home in safety. Great sorrow and suffering would have been avoided. But the onlooker's guardian said, "Hands off!" And to let him see the evil of interfering, he took him to a world where he could try the experiment and see its results. There he killed the dog. Joseph reached home in safety, and his father rejoiced and was 'comforted. It certainly seemed a better way than the other. But when the famine came, there had been no Joseph in Egypt to foretell it, and to prepare for it, and there was no food laid up in storehouses. Palestine and Egypt were devastated by starvation. Great numbers died, and the savage Hittites destroyed those whom the famine had spared. Civilization was set back centuries. Egypt was blotted out. Greece and Rome remained in a barbarous state. The history of the whole world was changed and countless evils came-all because a man in his ignorant wisdom killed a dog, saving a boy from present trouble, to his own and the world's future great loss.

We would better keep our hands off God's providences. Peter wanted to keep Jesus back from the cross; suppose he had done so, what would have been the result? No doubt many a time love has kept a life back from hardship, sacrifice, and suffering, thereby blighting or marring a destiny.

We are likely to pity the boy Joseph as we see him enter his period of humiliation, as we read of his being sold as a slave, and then cast into irons. But if human pity could have rescued him from this sad part of his life, the glorious part that followed, with all its blessed service to the world, would have been lost.

Few truths are more sustaining to Christian faith than this, that our times are in God's hands. We forget it too often, and fret when life brings hard things to endure, when our own plans are broken. But some day we shall see that God knew best.

"How oft, O God, when we have wept in vain
O'er Thy decrees and blurred, with fretful tears
The heavenward window of the soul, appears
Thy purpose sweet and wise, in after years,
Like sunshine streaming through the veils of rain!

"If we had had our way -- if Thou hadst given
The lesser good in our imploring hands,
Withholding larger; if the small demands
Of human choice, that sees nor understands

Life's broader issues, had prevailed with heaven;
"If we had never wept, nor known the keen,
Pure, cleansing pain of sorrow's sacred fire --
The broken tie, the unfulfilled desire --
Our sluggish lives had never risen higher,
But fixed in self, had ever selfish been.

"But Thou hast led us out of self, hast shown"
How love's great -circle rounds from soul to soul,
How sorrow makes us quick to others' dole
And binds each unit in the larger whole
Of life and love, complete in Thee alone.

"O God, Thy thought infolds us all! the days
Ev'n of this brief, imperfect life attest,
Ere they are spent, Thy will is ever best.
Oh, may we in Thy love and wisdom rest,
For Thou dost know the end of all our days!"

Joseph was seventeen when the caravan bore him off as a slave to Egypt. He was thirty when called from prison to become prime minister of Pharaoh. The whole period of his humiliation was therefore thirteen years. The three points we wish to consider are, his slave life, his great temptation, and his, prison life. The special thing to mark is that Joseph went through all the experiences unhurt. This is a secret worth learning-how to meet injustice, wrong, cruelty, inhuman treatment, temptation, misfortune, in such manner as to receive no harm from the experience. Let us see how Joseph bore himself so as to rob these experiences of their bitterness and power to harm, and extract from each of them blessing and good,

A SORE TEST OF CHARACTER

Think of the sense of wrong which must have filled his thoughts as he remembered the treatment he had received from his brothers. They had torn him away from his home. They had been about to kill him. They had treated him, with heartless cruelty. They had sold him as a slave. Surely it was hard to keep one's heart sweet and free from bitterness with such a sense of injustice.

Add to this the hardness of the new condition in which Joseph found himself. He was among strangers. He had not a friend in all the land. Not a face he had ever seen, passed, before him. Many a stranger in a strange land is free to make his life what he will, and is soon on the "way to success. But Joseph was a slave, in bonds. Potiphar saw him in the slave market, and bought him as he might a horse. It is hard to conceive of a condition more discouraging. It was a sore test of character to which he was exposed. If the treatment he had received from his brothers was enough to make him bitter, his present circumstances seem enough to have crushed his spirit. There are people who have not had the tenth part of Joseph's trouble but who are embittered against the world and denounce it as cold and heartless and ungrateful. Others having been wronged; grow hard and vindictive, and, live only to repay the injustice they have received with like injustice blow for blow. Still others sullenly surrender to the injuries they have received and with broken spirit creep through life like wrecks drifting on the sea, pitiable spectacles.

Few there are who pass through such experiences of injustice and cruelty as those Joseph met and keep their heart sweet and gentle, their faith in God bright and clear, and their spirit brave and strong. It showed the wholesomeness of Joseph's nature that he passed through these galling experiences unhurt. He was not soured 'toward men. He did not grow morbid, sullen, or disheartened. Though a slave, he accepted' his position with cheerfulness, and entered heartily into his -new: life, doing his duties so well that he soon became overseer in his master's house. He did not waste time or strength in weeping over his misfortunes, or grieving over his wrongs, nor exhaust himself in self-pity. The darkness of Joseph's life was not allowed to enter his 'heart.' This was one of the great secrets of his victorious living. With hatred all about him, he kept love in his heart. Enduring injuries, wrongs, and injustices, his spirit was forgiving. With a thousand things to discourage, and dishearten him, to break his spirit, he refused to be discouraged. Because other' men lived unworthily was but a stronger reason why he 'should live' worthily. Because he was treated cruelly and wickedly was fresh reason why he should give to others about him the best service of love and, unselfishness. That his condition was hard, was to him a new motive for living heroically and nobly.

THE PROBLEM OF LIFE

So we find the spirit of Joseph unbroken under all that was galling and crushing in his circumstances. The lesson can not be too urgently pressed. Many people find life hard. Sometimes wrong; and injustice make the days bitter. Sometimes the atmosphere of daily, life is one of strife, petty persecution, miserable fault-finding, incessant opposition, nagging, criticism. Home life ought to be ideally loving, inspiring, encouraging, helpful, full of all kindness and grace. Yet there are homes little better than Joseph's, where instead of love are envy, selfishness, bitterness. There are those who must live 'continually amid unjust opposition and antagonism.

The problem of life is to keep the heart sweet and kindly amid all injustice and wrong; to keep the spirit brave and cheerful in the midst of life's circumstances and conditions; to be true and right and strong in all moral purpose and deed, however others may act toward us. We must be unselfish and loving, though even our nearest friends prove selfish and cruel to us. We must keep our spirit strong, cheerful and hopeful, though adversities and misfortunes seem to leave us nothing of the fruit of all our labors. In a word, we are to live victoriously, nobly, sweetly, cheerfully, songfully, in spite of whatever maybe uncongenial in our condition.

This is the lesson from the first period of Joseph's humiliation. This is the lesson of all Christian life. We should not let the outside darkness into our soul, should seek to be delivered from all morbidity, all dwelling upon our own difficulties and unhappinesses, from continually talking about our unpleasant experiences. We should not allow anything to crush us. Though a slave as to our condition, our spirit should be free.

We read that Joseph bore himself so genially, and did his work so well, and was so capable, so true, so trustworthy, that Potiphar left all he had in his hand: "He knew not aught that was with him, save the bread which he did eat." Joseph would never have won such a success if he had given up to discouragement, if he had brooded over his wrongs, if he had sulked or complained, if he had spent his time in vain regrets or in vindictive feelings. We should learn the lesson, and it is worth learning, for it is life's highest and best-lesson. It is the victory of the faith in Christ which overcometh the world.

MEETING TEMPTATION ON GROUNDS OF PRINCIPLE

Another part of Joseph's humiliation was his temptation. He had been in Potiphar's house for several years. He had lived so worthily and wrought so faithfully that he had his master's fullest confidence and had risen to the first place among all the servants. We can think of the boy's dreams of greatness as again coming into the mind of the young man as he found himself so honored. His temptation, was that of an intrigue with Potiphar's wife, perhaps thereby to rise to yet higher prominence, to throw off the slave's chains and become a man of rank in the land. No eye of one who worshiped his God was upon him to inspire him to what was pure, true, and noble. He was in a heathen land, where the standard of morals was low and doubtless such intrigues were common. He had not the social restraints which we find about us today.

But he met the temptation on far higher grounds; on grounds of pure principle. Note his answer to the solicitation of his temptress: "Behold, my master knoweth not what is with me in the house, and he hath put all that he hath into my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Two motives appear in this answer. One is loyalty to his master. Potiphar had trusted him implicitly with all that he had. Could he now be guilty of such a base wrong to the man who had placed such confidence in him? Such an act would have been treachery to his friend. In the face of this flattering solicitation of this woman of high rank, and regardless of the consequences which the offending of her might bring upon him, he kept his eye fixed on his duty and wavered not, but tore himself away from the temptation, his soul unstained.

The other motive which saved him was his loyalty to God. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? All sin is against God. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned," said David in his penitence. We can never get away from our relation to God in any act of our life.

Another element of Joseph's nobleness of character appears in his silence under false accusation. It is not recorded that he said a word to Potiphar to turn suspicion upon the accusing wife. He seems to have thought still of Potiphar's honor, and rather than lay a stain upon it he would go to the dungeon under a false charge; leaving to God the vindication of his own honor and the proving of his innocence. It has been said, For his purity you will find his equal, one among a thousand; for his mercy, scarcely one-. There are persons who bear reproach and odium to shield others. Joseph had resisted temptation to be loyal to Potiphar; now Potiphar thinks him guilty of

the very baseness which for 'love of him lie had scorned to commit. But in all this Joseph kept his heart sweet; and loving.

Sometimes it seems to cost very dearly to be loyal to God. Joseph now lay in a dungeon. But his loss through doing right was nothing, in comparison with what he would have lost had he done the wickedness to which he was tempted. His prison gloom, deep as it was,, was as noontday, compared with what would have been the darkness of his soul under the blight of evil and the bitterness of remorse. Though his feet were in fetters; his conscience was free, and his heart was pure. . Better to suffer any loss, any cost, any sacrifice, than to sin against God. The lesson of Joseph's victory over temptation is: anything-dishonor, loss, dungeon; death -- before sin.

Another phase of Joseph's humiliation was his prison life. The Psalmist says of him (Psa. 105:18): "His feet they hurt with fetters he was laid in chains of iron." This, then, was the reward of being true to God and duty! He had resisted sin, and here he was in irons, while his guilty temptress was posing as an injured woman, receiving compassion and enjoying luxury.

However bitter the prison may have been at first to Joseph, he was not yet crushed,, but the noble soul within him rose above the effects of the misfortune and wrong he had suffered. He did not despair, but his old aptitude for meeting life with courage and hope showed itself. "The keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison. . . . The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand." His manhood was not in chains. The fetters, did not hurt his soul. He was victorious over all the wrong, the in justice, the false accusation, the suffering. He found his period of; humiliation a time of growth, of discipline, of training, producing in his heart hope, joy and love. And when at length he was called from prison to sit beside the king, he was so well fitted for greatness that his head; was not turned by the pinnacle of honor and fame.

So we get from this part of our story the lesson of victory over all of life's conditions. Be true to God, true to yourself," true to your fellow men. The record is that "The Lord was with, Joseph, and shewed kindness unto him, . . and that which he did the Lord made to prosper." Likewise,'if, we are true to God, He will bless us, and will use even our misfortunes to train us for a larger, better, nobler, more useful life. Christ is with us; His life is in us; and nothing should be allowed to crush us. Live close to Christ and the world's power cannot hurt you nor its darkness dim your soul's light.

FROM PRISON-TO PALACE

This story reads like a romance. In the morning Joseph was in prison. He had been there probably three years. He knew of nothing that gave any hope of release. In the evening, he was wearing the king's ring, was arrayed in vestures of fine linen, had a gold chain about his neck and was honored as next to the king. It seems too strange to be true, yet it was true.

Though he was in prison, he was not a criminal; he was there on false charges. We see a man with a pure soul, though under the cloud of a black charge. May it not be so with some one we know, of whom people allege dishonorable things, but who in God's sight is innocent? We should stand for justice and charity toward all. We should shut our ears to the insinuations and whisperings of the slanderer's tongue. It was a lie that put the felon's garb and chain on Joseph and robbed him of his good name. Be slow to believe an accusation against another. One false mouth can destroy the reputation won by a life time of worthy deeds. Let' us see to it that we have the love that thinketh no evil.

Joseph was suffering wrongfully; but his case demonstrates the truth declared by the Psalmist: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall make thy righteousness go forth as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." (Psa. 37:5, 6.) We, too, may safely leave *our* vindication to the Lord.

The life of Joseph remained gentle, beautiful and, sweet under all the terrible trials of those thirteen years. Yet some of us can hardly keep sweet under, little or imaginary slights, the microscopic hurts and injustices of every-day life. And what though our trials may be severe and long? The noble bearing of Joseph teaches us to be superior to *all* circumstances and conditions, to *all* unkind or unjust treatment. Discouragement is undivine. We must be strong in the grace of God. We must be unconquerable through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us. We must put misfortunes, adversities, personal injuries, sufferings, trials, under our feet, and tread ever upward on them.

"We rise by the things that are under our feet;
By what we have mastered of good or gain;
By, the pride deposed, and the passion slain,
And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet.

Remember, your problem in living, is to keep sweet, to keep your heart gentle, brave, strong, loving, full of hope, under the *worst* that the years can bring you of injustice, hardship, suffering, and trial. That is what Joseph did; then, when he was suddenly wanted for a 'great duty, he did not fail.

Something went wrong, one day in the world above Joseph's dungeon. There was trouble in Pharaoh's palace," and two high officials were hurried off to prison. God is always coming down to us through unlikely paths; meeting us unexpectedly. We know not what trivial occurrence any day may affect all our after course unto the end" of life. The touching of Joseph's life by these prisoners from the palace was a link in the chain by which he was .to be lifted out of prison.

Yet it seemed for a long time as if nothing would come of this contact. Joseph told the meaning of the men's dreams, and in three days what' he had said came true. As the chief butler went out happy from the prison, to resume his old duties, Joseph said to him: "Think on me when it, shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and-bring, me out of this house." No doubt the butler promised to do so. But the pathetic words of the record are: "Yet did' not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him."

The butler was restored to his place in the palace and the brilliance of the royal presence. Waiting in his prison, doubtless Joseph hoped each day to be released through the strong influence of his friend at court -- waited and hoped, but there was no answering token. Two years passed, and still Joseph was in prison: the chief butler had forgotten him.

Many there have been in all ages who would condemn the ingratitude of this Egyptian officer, and yet who repeat his sin. At the time when help comes to us, or deliverance, or favor, our hearts are warm with gratitude. We say with sincere intention that we will never forget this kindness. But do we never forget it? Alas, we are all too prone to remember wrongs, but to forget kindnesses. We write the record of our grudges in marble, and of favors in water. The lesson, is that we should write the record of hurts and wrongs done us in water, and of kindness shown to us, in stone.

Yet see how God uses even *ibis* adversity to Joseph's final good.' Had he been released at once he was still a slave, and might have been sold away from the city. Or had he been set free, he would likely have returned to Canaan. He would not likely have been in reach when he was sought for to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. And so all the future blessings would have been thwarted.

But while Joseph was left in prison, God's purposes were ripening in the world outside, and Joseph's character was ripening into strength and self discipline within the dungeon walls. In God's providences, nothing comes a moment too soon, and nothing lags, coming too late. He whose hand moves the machinery of the universe is also our Father. And all the wrongs suffered may, by the divine touch, be transmuted into blessings.

Shall we suppose that Joseph's life was in God's hand in any exceptional sense? Is there any less of God's providence in our life than there was in the life of the Hebrew lad? He did not see the providence at the time; not until afterwards did the dark clouds disclose their silver lining, or the rough iron fetters reveal themselves as gold. Not until afterwards shall we see how our disappointments, hardships, trials, misfortunes, and wrongs, are all made parts of God's providence for us; but the "afterwards is sure if only we firmly and faithfully follow Christ and keep our own hands *off*. - *Contributed*.

(To be continued)

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 2:16-19

"Let no man therefore judge you." - Col. 2:16.

THE "THEREFORE" of verse 16 sends the reader back to the statements of the previous verses -- possibly as far back as verse nine of this chapter, but surely to the immediately preceding argument regarding the power of Christ's death to free Jew and Gentile from the laws and ordinances "that were against us." The verses before us are, an exhortation to claim and use that as a basis for deliverance from bondage to ordinances, to men, and to angels. Narrow Judaism and sentimental Orientalism, the two ever threatening antagonists of the Church, Paul claims, can be overcome by the one all-powerful means, the cross of Christ.

The question as to the relation of the Christian to circumcision had already been covered in verse eleven. The circumcision of the heart, always a necessity even to those who practice the circumcision of the flesh, he declared as the only essential circumcision to those made free in Christ. To the liberation from the fleshly ordinance is here added freedom from the Mosaic restrictions regarding food and festivals, which never, in God's plan, were the real objectives, but mere shadows pointing to the greater things which are the heritage of the Church. Numerous Scriptures of both Old and New Testament tell of the vanity of a religion that is in word and not in the heart, that is faithful to the "shadow" but never appropriates the "body." - Isa. 1:13; 29:13; Matt. 23:23; Gal. 4:10,11; 2 Tim. 3:5.

Young in his "Concise Critical Comments on the Bible" says regarding Paul's reference to Sabbaths in this 16th verse: "The observance of the 'first day of the week' cannot be justly included under the 'sabbaths' here referred to, as the primitive Christians, following -the example of the New Testament -writers, scrupulously avoided calling it a 'sabbath.' " Undoubtedly Paul's

reference is to the Jewish days and years called rest, or Sabbath days and years, the observance of which the Judaizing teachers make of equal importance with faith in the shed blood of the antitypical Lamb. The ground on which all such questions are settled by the Apostle is that these are but "shadows of things to come," merely rough outlines of the great realities, such outlines as the sketches a carpenter would draw when planning a structure or some detail of it. The reality, "the body, in this instance, as in most instances, "is of Christ." He is the key to both Testaments. Scientific research into the Bible and the history associated with it, details beyond the carpenter's sketch, has brought forth much of undoubted value but "much learning, when it results in losing sight of Him, loses its benefits and becomes a menace.

A higher sense of purity than can be comprehended by the depraved carnal mind, since "to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure (Titus 1:15), is taught in the symbolism of "meats and drinks"; but the New Testament is the revelation of Him who is the personification of that purity, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.' -1 Pet. 2:22.

The yearly feasts instituted by Moses prophesy of times of refreshing, and the process by which Christ will bring in the antitypical rest -pictured in Israel's Sabbaths. In Christ, as revealed to us in the New Testament, we have the fulfillment of all the blessedness "darkly" pictured in these types. Paul's argument therefore in effect is, The King has arrived. Cease, ye heralds, to proclaim His approach. The great Body that cast the shadow has appeared why longer give attention to the shadow?

"LET NO MAN THEREFORE, JUDGE YOU"

It cannot be the Apostle's thought that any one can have the power or the authority to so regulate matters that neither the world nor the brethren will any longer pass judgment upon him: On the contrary, as elsewhere indicated, those whose honest endeavor, is to be "pure even as He is pure," must expect to be misunderstood and condemned as was their Lord. - 1 John 3:3, .13; Matt. 10:22; 24:9; Luke 6:22; 21:17; John 15:19; 17:14; Rom 8:17, 36; 2 Cor. 1:7; 4:10; 2 Tim. 2:12 1 Pet. 2:20; 3:14; 4:-14-16.

What he evidently does mean is: "In view of the fact that 'He who is our life has appeared,' do not permit the opinion of those who still observe the customs of the Covenant whose bondage He came to deliver us from to sway you into expecting life by it, or even into subjecting yourself to that Covenant. Though they condemn you for not following with them, do not permit their condemnation to deprive you of your liberty in Christ Jesus. "Be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." (Gal. 5:1.) More forcefully even than by his words, Paul taught this in his conduct. When false brethren came into the Church for the very purpose of robbing them of their liberty in Christ, he "gave place to them *in the way of subjection*, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with" the Church. (Gal. 2:3-5.) The "truth of the Gospel," deliverance through Christ Jesus, must not be taken from the Church by Judaizing teachers if Paul can be used to prevent it.

On the other hand, the world must be considered, and if the exercising of that liberty proves a stumbling block to the world or to the brethren, Paul is prompt to forego his privileges. He does not turn back to become a Jew, but he does act "as a Jew, that he might gain Jews, to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, *not being himself under the Law*, that he might gain them that are under the Law." (1 Cor. 9:20:) He can observe the Law, that salvation may be acceptable to others, but not as a means of salvation.

Paul was not in these two methods of conduct making a distinction between the Church and the world, refusing to listen to the judging of brethren and forestalling the judging of the world; but he was distinguishing between faith in a dead covenant and life in Christ. Associated with brethren who *honestly* felt that the eating of meat that had been offered to idols might contaminate them, he was ready to deprive himself of meat for the rest of his days rather than stumble one of them. He could not descend to their level of thinking, but he could for their sakes live as *though* he did.

When Paul ate with Gentile converts, "asking no questions for conscience sake," it was a witness that he was no longer bound by the Law. When in company of Jewish brethren, as a concession to honest ignorance, he "walked orderly and kept the Law," performing the rites of purification and joining in the temple worship. (Acts 21:26.) Thus does every good shepherd say, as Jacob: "I will lead on softly, according as the flock and the children be able to endure. (Gen. 33:14; 1 Cor. 8:8-13; 10:31; Rom. 14:1, 2, 15; 15:1.) This is the "faith that worketh by love." - Gal. 5:6.

The observance of a weekly rest day, not as a means of salvation, but as a day of worship and of physical rest for the restoration of body and spirit, had also - the sanction of the Apostle's example. In view of his great care lest he stumble either a brother or one of the world, we doubt if Paul would have done any of his shopping or would have engaged in any other unnecessary pursuits on that rest day; though the only violation to his conscience would have been that he might thus have stumbled some one. He who is our rest has appeared. As a commandment 'the day therefore is obsolete, whether the seventh or the first day of the week; but as a grace it may always be accepted with appreciation.

Opinions vary greatly as to the proper rendering of the eighteenth verse, but its first few words, "Let no man beguile you of your reward, without dispute are picturing the Christian as contesting in a game for a prize which may be lost if some adroit reasoner can induce the contestant to strive unlawfully. Tindal renders it: "Let no man make you shoot at a wrong mark." It is not necessary to suppose that the robber (See R. V.) was intending to deprive the contestant of his crown. Four things are told us about the unnamed robber:

(1) He is "delighting in humility of mind and a religious worship of the messengers." (Literal rendering) This is not true humility, for that quality takes no pleasure in itself, but rather is covered with confusion at falling so far, short of the high standard it has accepted as its goal. Anything contrary to this is pride, an arch-enemy of the spirit. - Phil. 2:3-5; Psa. 73:6; 119:21; Prov. 6:17; 11:2; 13:10; 16:18; 21:4; 28:25; Luke 18:11; John 9:41; 1 John 2:16; Rev. 3:17; Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 8:2.

(2) "Dwelling in the things which he has not seen" -- how economically yet effectively the Apostle uses his brush strokes! Could there be a more apt way of describing the Christian' who prefers his own speculation to the Word of the Lord, the Christian who brazenly invents his own types and doctrines, refusing to "cast down imaginations [literally, "reasonings"], bringing *every* thought into subjection to the mind of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5.) The thought of the passage need not be different even though we accept as more authentic the manuscripts that omit the "not." The emphasis would then be on the word "he" "Dwelling in the things which *he* hath seen;" not the things which God had taught.

(3) "Vainly - [without any excuse whatsoever] - puffed up by the mind of his flesh, is sure to be one of the characteristics of one whose self-conscious humility is only skin deep. As compared with more feeble brains his may be "a great mind," but if he would only honestly compare his mind with, the only Mind in the universe that can reason effectively, true humility must result.

(4) "Not holding the Head." It is apparent; that the only way to insure the maintaining of our proper relation with the Head (the One who does our reasoning, our thinking, for us) is to be completely' humbled; and how thankful we should be for every exposure of our inabilities that thus we may be reminded in every moment to turn to Him "who is able."

Reverence and fear of the hosts of spirit messengers, good and bad, are things of the past, but the principle still *lives* in the "channel" idea. To the flesh; it is too often pleasant to have some one say, "I have been appointed to decide for you what is truth." It is strange that such a theory could secure a following; but much more astounding that any one of us, knowing the thousands of mistakes of judgment chargeable against each of us, should ever forsake our great Head to follow his own imaginations!

In setting the various members in the Body, God bath set some in very high positions, and in our appreciation of these is one of the greatest danger to the members in general: that of substituting for the legitimate use of these teachers a subserviency, to them. Each member has his position, but only because of the Father's having placed him there; and this is as true of, the least of the Body members as of the Apostle Paul. Realizing this fact, every Christian will be well protected against the spirit, whether from within himself or from without, that would "stir up strife among brethren." Only he who knows their effectiveness as a divinely appointed "channel" of the "increase of God," will be "*knit* together" with the various "joints and bands" of the Body. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou established strength, because of Thine adversaries, that Thou mightest still- the enemy and the avenger." - Psa. 8:2.

It is not merely because a doctrine is at stake that Paul writes the passage we are considering,' but because eternal life is at stake; therefore the solemn earnestness of his warning. It is true also that 'the belief of certain truths would tighten their hold on the Lord. Then, too, self-conceit, that would war against the full acceptance of God's Word, must be vanquished if the hold on Jesus is to be made secure. There is, besides, a transforming power in truth; the nobler: the truth, the higher will be the point to which it can, lift one. A dispensational truth does not have to become an untruth in order to lose its effectiveness, a nobler, higher truth, as for instance the antitype of that dispensational truth, if received into the life, may carry its recipient beyond the realm of, that first truth. All they had learned through Moses regarding the ceremonies of the tabernacle were true, but the day of "greater sacrifices" had come and these brethren must have the greater transforming power of the, greater truths-another reason why there must be no intrusion of "messengers" in the position designed only for the Advocate. He can "take away sins"; the "blood of bulls and goats": could never, though the animals were appointed of God as sacrifices. So also, every "messenger" of God is appointed for a specific work, but none to be an atoning sacrifice.

In his argument against elevating messengers to a station above the one to which God appointed them, he is not setting aside the teaching of such passages as the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians that each member does have his place in the Body and is to be accepted and used as God intended he should be used in assisting others to "increase with the increase of God." There must be no lack of appreciation of any "joint" in his capacity of a joining member if the Body is to be "knit together" for this absolutely essential growth; for that growth is by that which "every joint supplieth." For this reason Hebrews 10:24-26 associates the Second Death with those who do not appreciate their great privilege of assembling together.

Skilfully Satan suggests a great variety of excuses for separations. Effectively for a few the cords of love reach out drawing them together. "The love -of Christ holds us together" is Young's translation of 2 Corinthians 5:14 in his "Comments." Surely only one "vainly puffed up by his

fleshly mired," one "not holding the Head," one not appreciating "the increase of God, will neglect privileges so precious.

-P. E. Thomson.

The Toronto Convention

Besides those gathered from the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, there were representatives from Brooklyn, Syracuse, Buffalo, Detroit, and Chicago. The convention was called to order by Brother J. J. Blackburn, who acted as chairman; and after a few words of appreciation for the Lord's goodness, and a hearty welcome to those who had made the effort to attend he presented the first speaker, Brother J. A. Bell, whose topic was "The Rainbow."

Brother J. T. Read of Chicago was the next speaker, and took for his subject "God First and Self Last." Brother Read called attention to the fact that this constitutes an unfailing guide in all that confronts the Christian in his daily walk.

The evening session began with a song service and was followed by a discourse by Brother P. E. Thomson whose topic was, "Blessed is the Man" -- based on the first Psalm.

The services of the day had begun with the invitation, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" (Psa. 95:6), and following the final prayer, they were concluded with the acknowledgement voiced in Psalm 133:1-3: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

The Sunday morning session was opened with prayer, hymns of praise, and the admonition to "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." (Psa. 29:2.) Then Brother J. E. Pollack of Varna, Ontario, was introduced, and took for his subject, "Fellowship with God."

Brother Thomson then spoke upon the "Elect of God," using as his text 1 Peter 1:2, and emphasizing the requirements to be met by the Elect.

The afternoon session began with a praise and testimony service that gave opportunity for all to express their heartfelt gratitude unto God, and their joy in the fellowship they were having. Brother Read then spoke on "The Perfecting of the (Saints," and was followed by Brother Bell whose subject was "The Lord's Jewels." - Mal. 3:17.

There was no speaker named for the evening, discourse, so in response to a unanimous vote, Brother Blackburn consented to serve us. His topic was, "The Results of Waiting on the Lord." (Isa. 40:31.) Brother Blackburn's remarks made us to feel the power of the Lord as if "mounting up with wings as eagles."

The several services at which Brother Read rendered "spiritual songs" were all enriched by his contributions.

A vote of thanks gave expression to our appreciation of the labor of love that had made the convention possible, and all voiced the desire that another convention be held next year. The service concluded with the beautiful hymn, "God be with you till we meet again."

A Meditation in the Twenty-third Psalm.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."-Psa. 23:1.

IT IS doubtful if there is another passage of Scripture more fitted to inspire and strengthen our confidence in God than the twenty-third psalm, that sweet shepherd psalm which most of us learned in childhood. As we ponder it here afresh, may He who so often before has graciously applied the comfort of His Word as balm to our hearts, do so once again, sending us on our 'way with' fresh courage and renewed hope: His peace, which passeth all understanding, guarding our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus our Lord.

One expositor* reminds us that three thousand years have passed away since the sweet singer of Israel first sang this psalm about the shepherd-care of God. Thirty centuries! It is a long time; and in that vast period all the material relics of his life, however carefully treasured, have moldered into dust. The harp, from the strings of which his fingers brought forth music which relieved Saul of his sadness; the tattered banner, which he was wont to uplift in the name of the Lord; the well-worn book of the Law, which was his meditation day and night; the sling with which he overcame, Goliath, and the huge sword with which he slew the giant; the palace chamber in which at last he died-all these have been buried deep amid the debris of the ages. But this psalm is as fresh today as though it were just composed.

* To avoid endless quotations we refer once for all to "The Shepherd's Shepherd" by Samuel Cox and "The Shepherd Psalm" by F. B. Meyer. This Meditation is little more than a compilation from their works. Theirs is the bread, only the basket is ours.

Its power lies in the fact that it dwells so much on God, so little on man. Notice, as we study it, that every verse stresses what God is and is doing. This is, the true policy of life. Unbelief puts circum stances between itself and God, so that He is lost from view, and the soul becomes overwhelmed. Faith, on the contrary, puts God between itself and circumstances, so that it cannot see them for the glory of His shining countenance. Unbelief fixes its gaze on men, and things, and likelihoods, and possibilities, and circumstances. Faith will not concern herself with these; she refuses to spend her time and waste her strength in considering them. Her eye is steadfastly fixed on her Lord; and she is persuaded that He is well able to supply all her need, and to carry her through all difficulties and straits. The outlook may be very dark, but the uplook is always bright, so faith looks away off unto Jesus, and to our Heavenly Father, and rests in Them in peace.

THE SONG OF A SHEPHERD-KING

It has been well observed that this psalm derives no little of its beauty from the fact that it is a psalm of a shepherd about a Shepherd, the psalm of a king about a King. David himself had led a flock to the pastures of Bethlehem, guiding and protecting them with crook and staff as they passed from-hillside to hillside. He had himself welcomed to his royal table fugitives from the wrath of Hebrew and alien tyrants, anointing their heads with oil, and filling their cups with wine till they ran over. And, therefore, he is speaking from his very heart, out of what was most personal and most memorable in his experience. To him God was a shepherd, searching out for His flock pastures of grass, that is, pastures in which the grass had not been scorched up by the heat of the sun; and waters of rest, that is, waters beside which the sheep might securely lie down. To him God was a shepherd, who, when leading His flock through desolate valleys and gorges,

haunted' by wolf, and lion and bear, defended them with His staff and rod. ' God was also a bountiful and princely host, receiving to His table and sheltering in His house fugitives pursued by their enemies, offering them the oil of anointing, and gladdening them with overflowing cups of wine. And because God was both his Shepherd and his Host, David looks up to Him with an absolute devotion, and rests in Him with a calm and happy trust.

If this were true of David it was still more true of Jesus, that great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, whom David, in so many of his experiences typified, and it is to be true also of us, the members of His Body, as we seek to walk in His steps.

From the peaceful serenity of its tone, and the absence of any-hint of doubt, misgiving, or fear, it is probable, almost to a certainty, that our psalm was written when David was well stricken in years, when, by the experience of a long and checkered life, he had learned that in God alone are strength and peace. No! this psalm is not the utterance of his shepherd days, though it perpetuates their memory. Had it been thus, men might have said that it was but the natural outflowing of a confiding boy's heart, unversed in care or struggle. But this peaceful psalm is a voice out of the maturer life of the psalmist; out of memories of care and battle and treachery; a voice that tells that peace and rest of heart depend not upon the absence of life's burdens, nor on the presence of nature's tranquilizing scenes, but solely upon the shepherding care of God.

David's emotion of entire trust receives in our psalm a threefold expression: (1) I shall not want; (2) I will fear no evil; and (3) I will dwell in the' house of the Lord for ever. I shall not want, for God will find me green pastures and waters of comfort. I will fear no evil, for even as I pass through the gloomest and most perilous valleys He will protect and defend me. I will dwell in His house for ever, for He welcomes His' guests with an unfailing bounty, and under His roof no enemy can make them afraid.

I SHALL NOT WANT

The careful student will have noted that the word "Lord" with, which the psalm opens, is printed in our Authorized Version in small capital letters. Wherever this is the case it stands for the word "Jehovah." This word, scholars tell us, means the Living One, the self-existent Being, the I AM. He was, and is, and is to come; who inhabiteth eternity; who hath life in Himself. All other life, from the little insect on the rose-leaf to the archangel before the throne, is dependent and derived. All others waste, and change, and grow old; He only is unchangeably the sane. All others are fires, which He supplies with fuel; He alone is self-sustained.

Now this mighty Being David claims as his Shepherd, and if this were really the case, he needed no argument to prove that all his wants must be supplied. He knew that, when he was a shepherd, no one of his sheep wanted aught that he could get. He had watched over every one of them with an unfailing solicitude. He had often wandered on the hills till he was weary, and long after he was weary, to find what little water the drought had spared. He had driven off birds and beasts of prey with the smooth stones of his unerring sling, and had even ventured forth against the lion and the bear, risking his very life that he might save his flock. And if Jehovah is *a shepherd, will* He let *His* flock lack anything that *He* can get for them? And as there is nothing *He* cannot get, how can they ever want?

This, doubtless, was David's argument, though he gave it no logical expression. We admit the force of the argument; we admire the beauty of the figure; we feel the pathos of the appeal. We love David for the vigor and the serenity of his trust in the God he had so often put to the test. But do we not also envy, rather than imitate, him? Which of us can say, with entire sincerity, "Since

Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want. Because He is with me, I will fear no evil. Because He has anointed me with joy so often in the past when I have fled to Him, I will abide in His love and service for ever"? Alas! do we not feel that we want much, and are likely to be wanting much, before the journey is over?

Moreover, even if we do not fear anything at present, do we not often trouble our present with anxious forebodings as to the future? And while we may have the grace to believe that we shall *ultimately* find ourselves sitting at His table on the other side, do we not sometimes fear that the journey there is likely to be anything but pleasant, that the future looks as though it will be just filled with inevitable changes, dark uncertainties, and gloomy experiences; that 'we have yet to pass through that narrow gorge of darkness which leads from this life to the next, and instead of a cheerful trust in His abiding faithfulness, do we not find ourselves, on occasion, wondering if, after all, we shall be able to see the Shepherd going before us all the time, staff in hand, to brush from our path any brier of offense, and to guard us from the ills which, at least to our imagination, haunt the pathway which lies ahead of us?

Beautiful as the psalm is, much as we admire it, many of us, we fear, must read it as a rebuke. We feel that we miserably lag behind the fair ideal it sets before us, that we are far from having attained the holy serenity, the calm, unwavering trust in God, which breathes through its every word.

A SIMPLE TEST

If, however, we have any doubt on that score, we may soon put it to a simple, but conclusive test. 'Can we repeat without doubt or misgiving even, the opening words of the psalm: "The Lord [Jehovah] is my Shepherd, I shall not want"? If Jesus, His great Under-Shepherd, were to stand in our -midst again, today, so that we could see Him with the eyes of flesh, and with all the graciousness of" which' only He is capable, were to ask us: "Brethren, lack ye anything?" and if we felt sure that He would give us whatever we asked Him for, would there be but one answer from us all, and would that answer be: "Nothing, Lord, nothing. We lack for nothing. We have everything we need. We have lacked for nothing thus far; all our present wants are bountifully supplied; and we are sure, so complete is our trust in Thee, that this will be so always"?

If we were quite honest with Him, quite frank, should we not meet His question with a chorus of eager requests? More than one brother, perhaps, would say, "Lord, of course I want Thy will done, not mine, but the circumstances in which I find myself are not at all suited to my taste. I could fill another sphere of: activities much more congenial to me, if only the way were opened, but unfortunately I lack the means to fit myself for the change. Or another would reply, "Lord, my business is waning. I have certain ideas, which, if adopted, would make all the difference in the world, but it requires new capital, or at least a line of credit, which I seem unable to secure." Perhaps one might say, "Lord, of course Thy way is best, but I had hoped to be able to spend my entire time in Thy service, ministering Thy gracious Word to others. As things are now, I am so pressed upon by domestic or business relationships, that I have hardly sufficient time to see that my own spiritual life is nourished." A 'few, perhaps, who now spend their whole time in "truth" activities, might be disposed to reply: "Lord, of course I am very appreciative of my privileges, but when I succeeded in arranging my temporal affairs so as to spend my' time exclusively in Thy service, I little realized how petty and trivial many of the problems of the Church were to which I would be assigned. Of course I have no idea. of drawing back, but if there is another corner in Thy vineyard to which I could be transferred I feel that my labors would proceed much more happily there." How many of us would be able to reply with absolute sincerity and joy: "Lord, I want for nothing; save to be more like Thee. And even this, dear Lord, Thou art working in me,

and I look forward with confidence in Thy love and skill, that this work of grace which Thou hast begun in me Thou wilt complete in Thine own good time and way. Meantime, I am content, whatever lot I see, since 'tis Thy hand that leadeth me"?

OUR FATHER'S RESOURCES ARE INFINITE

And yet, as soon as we pause to consider, we may see that these cries for what we do not possess, spring more or less from distrust-most of them from ignorance of our Father's resources. We do not pause to reflect that our God is an *infinite* God. While the cry of the worldling may be and indeed often is: "I perish with hunger!"; while it is true that even young lions lack and suffer hunger, they that seek the Lord shall *not* want any good thing.

If *God* be our Shepherd He *can* get us all we want, for there is absolutely no limit to His power; and He *will* give us all we need, for there is absolutely no limit to His goodness. Too often we forget, not only His resources, but His love; and how that love, which embraces all, takes thought and care for each. We want to choose our own way, to walk at our own will, and to *see* the store from which our future needs are to be supplied. We forget that, if it have a good shepherd, the flock is not permitted to ramble where it will, and still less is every sheep in the flock permitted to, do so. If they were, there would soon be no flock left, but only a few sheep scattered through many failing pastures (oh! how they fail), or on many barren hills, (oh! so barren) each at the mercy of its foes. We are, too commonly, like sheep who should want to see an endless supply of food and water set apart in their own private store, as though the sun would never rise, or the rain fall, or the grass grow, again; or like a flock, which,, when one pasture was consumed, and one stream dried up, should conclude that the shepherd knew of no other pasture, and could find no other stream, because they could see none.. If we would at all enter into the rest of David's trust, we must learn both that God cares for the whole flock, and that *He* has provided for the future which *we* cannot foresee, and for which we cannot provide.

If only we could eat our bread, and do our work, from day to day, without fretting about tomorrow, and pass on to new spheres of action, and to new stores- of bread, when the Shepherd goes before us, relying on His higher wisdom and love, would not our days go happily enough? There is hardly any reflection more painful, than this, that if we look back on our past lives, and recall all that has fretted and afflicted us, we shall find that most of our fears were groundless fears, most of our anxieties 'needless anxieties, most of our troubles a burden which we packed with our own hands, and imposed on our, own shoulders, and that, had we been content to take each day as it came, and put our trust in God, the lives that have been so fretted and sorrowful, might have been bright with content and cheerfulness. Shall we not, then, for the-days that remain, believe that, since Jehovah is our Shepherd, we shall not want?

FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS

But let us also, understand that, while the Good Shepherd will not let any of us want any good thing, His main care will be for the whole, flock, and that at times He may do us the, honor of asking us to bear trouble and bear pain, for the sake of the flock. As. He Himself spared not His well-beloved Son, who was more than life itself to Him; as Jesus came and willingly sacrificed Himself; as in all our afflictions Jehovah Himself is afflicted, so He may invite us to bear toil and pain on behalf of others. Shall we shrink and complain if He should put this honor on us? We shall not, if we are wise; for in calling us to this service He is not, as we might hastily infer, asking its,, to sacrifice ourselves to others; He is rather asking us, to serve others by toils' and sacrifices by which we ourselves shall be made perfect. Reader, can you re-call any labor to which you have bent, or any sacrifice you may have borne for the good of others, which has not,

in the long run, made you wiser, better, and, happier? Be sure then, when the call to service and sacrifice comes again, that God is asking you to lose your life only that you may find it, to serve His flock and to suffer for it, only that you may enter more: closely into the joy and fellowship of your Lord.

I WILL FEAR NO EVIL

We have considered David's calm assurance that since the Lord was his Shepherd he could not possibly want; let us turn next to his second expression of confidence: "I will fear no evil."

Perfect love casteth out fear. Nothing else will do, it. You may argue against fear, whether in yourself: or in others. You may laugh it to scorn. You may try to shame it. But all will be in vain. If you would' master fear, whether in 'yourself or in others, you must expel it by the trust which is born of love. A simple illustration will suffice to demonstrate this. A man comes home extremely hungry. His whole nature craves food. But as he enters his house he learns that his child, suddenly stricken with fever, is lying at the point of death. What becomes of that man's hunger? It is forgotten; it is gone. In the intense love and, grief with which he bends over the tiny, feverish form, his own hunger is forgotten, and he thinks only of how best he may minister to his child's needs. Thus the lower passions are subdued in the soul by the higher. Thus, and thus only, is fear dispelled. And so it happens, that the most timid brother or sister, from the natural standpoint, who yet is conscious of the presence of the Good Shepherd, can sing through the gloom, with notes of music which vibrate with the buoyancy of a courage which cannot flinch or falter "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow, of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

THOU ART WITH ME

Have *you* ever noticed the change in the pronoun here? Hitherto the Psalmist has spoken of the Lord in the third person; but now; as he enters the dark, gloomy ravine, like the sheep had often done to him, he, as one of the Lord's sheep, presses close against his Shepherd. No longer does he speak *about* Him; he speaks *to* Him. In the green pastures, and beside the still waters, he was content to speak *of* Him, "*He* maketh me to lie down." "*He* leadeth me." But now, as the darkness deepens, it is "THOU."

When things are going well with us we may content ourselves with talking *about* the Lord; but when the sky darkens, we hasten to talk directly *to* Him. I will fear no evil, though I walk through a gloomy ravine, even the shadow of death itself; I will fear no evil, for *Thou* art with me, *Thy rod*, Thy staff, they comfort me.

FOR EVER WITH THE LORD

With, Jehovah as his Shepherd, then, David was assured of two things. First, he could not experience want, and second, he would fear no evil. Just a word in closing, on the third expression of his trust and devotion: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over; surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Is it still the Shepherd whom we meet in the closing verses of this psalm? Are the memories of his pastoral life still giving form and color to David's thoughts? Expositors differ in their viewpoints on this question. Some think the figure of the Shepherd is maintained throughout, and

it must be admitted that if this be true, the value of this brief lyric, from the literary standpoint, would be enhanced. Others think that at this point the figure changes, and that, whereas in the first four verses of the psalm we see a shepherd, guiding and caring for his flock, we see in the last two verses a king, who receives fugitives *to* his table with a princely hospitality, despite *all* the threatenings of their foes; anoints them for the feast with cool, fragrant, oils; fills their cup with wine till it runs over, and so bountifully *supplies* their wants that they resolve to stay 'with him for good, feeling that in his house, and reclining at his table, they have all their hearts can desire.

However we may read them, we cannot doubt that much new meaning and beauty is thrown into the psalm by its final verses. Hitherto David has described the providence of God in neutral tints, in negative tones. The Good Shepherd supplies the wants, and relieves the fears of His flock. There is grass for their hunger; there is water for their thirst; there is the protecting staff for their weakness. Hitherto, therefore, David has said only: "I cannot want; I will fear no evil." True, even to rise above the fear of want and danger gravely tasks *our* faith. But to, the faith of David this, seems an incomplete result. If he is to do justice to *his* sense of the divine trustworthiness and goodness, his voice must take warmer, fuller tones. If he is to give the energies of his faith way and scope he must soar into a higher strain, and breathe a more illumined atmosphere. The divine providence is far more than a mere asylum from want, or a mere refuge from peril. It *is* characterized by the generous warmth and bounty of *Home*. And he who sincerely trusts in that providence does far more than surmount the depressions of fear and care; he mounts into a triumphant gladness, a sacred and constant joy. Hence David depicts himself as sitting at the table of the divine Shepherd, anointed with the oil of festive mirth, drinking of a cup which runs over, so full is it of quickening joy, while his foes, the enemies of his peace, rave and threaten ineffectively, from beyond a gulf they cannot pass. I cannot want!-No, indeed. I am raised a whole heaven above want. I sit at a table lavishly supplied with all that is best and choicest; with fragrant oil on my head, and the wine-cup in my hand. I will fear no evil!-What is there to fear in this secure abode? My enemies, want, and care?" Ah! see, they stand afar off-impotent, incapable of approach. Only goodness and lovingness pursue me now, or so pursue me as to reach me. I will dwell with God my Shepherd-Host. I sit at His bountiful table. I shall never more go out from His presence. And, therefore, with my whole heart will I sing and give praise. I am the happy guest of God, and dwell with Him in an inviolable sanctuary, an eternal home.

Thus the psalm, which opens in a mood of sacred and tranquil content, closes in a rapture. He who knew no want, kindles into an ecstasy of triumphant joy.' He who feared no *evil*, wears .the crown of a victoriousness and ever-augmenting gladness. He who was willing - to wander in dark and perilous paths, finds himself in the house of the Lord for ever.

So may it be with each one of *us* for His Name's sake. Amen.

-P. L. Read.

"As Always, So Now"

THE CONCLUSION-"I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED"

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death." - Phil. 1:20.

TO HOW many thousands of suffering saints and dying martyrs Paul's example and words have been an incentive and inspiration none other than the Lord can say. All through the earlier Pagan and later Papal persecutions the thrilling words of Paul formed the shout of victory for untold thousands. "I am now ready to be offered" has been said again and again as a faithful follower of the Lamb finished his earthly course.

How gracious of the Lord to have made fitting pr,-vision for His people in those days of intense darkness, when the fountains of truth had been defiled. Believing Jesus to have been a "God man" -- a member of the Trinity; Very God of very God; they would never have been able to see themselves as "filling up that which was behind of the sufferings of Christ in that their sufferings were linked with the sufferings of Jesus; hence, the Lord had provided an exemplar in suffering from among themselves. He chose Paul and set him before succeeding generations as an illustration of the fact, that "all who will live godly shall suffer persecution." And many men have lifted their eyes to the heights of Paul's life and suffering, who would not have striven to reach the sublimer heights of the Savior's own sufferings and death.

We can thank God today, that although the example set before us in the experiences of Paul reached such amazing heights of constancy and devotion, still he came of the same fallen Adamic stock as ourselves. Although by natural endowment he was one of the noblest of Adam's most noble progeny, yet we may take comfort in the thought that the Savior's dying and intercessory services were just as needful for him as for ourselves, and that our greater need is covered just as truly as his, by that same precious blood.

If then, while trying to follow Paul (as he tried to follow Jesus), we fail to reach up to the heroic levels of his fully-surrendered life, we need never despair, because all our deficiencies and demerits are fully covered by Jesus' perfect sacrifice. That being said, it is incumbent upon us to remind ourselves why Paul's life reached such sublime and exemplary heights. We must never, think that he had reached perfection. He was not a perfect model. Unique though he stands among the followers of the Lord, he still had some Adamic imperfectness about him, so far as his flesh was concerned. It was in the domain of his motive and desire where his excellence abounded. Here indeed, was no deficiency. His intention and purpose was always to do the will of the Lord, withholding neither hand nor brain from the service of God, or the needs of his brethren.

He was a "chosen vessel" unto the Lord-a Christian on a colossal scale; intended as a "star of the first magnitude in "glory" when raised again; and the Lord dealt with him accordingly. The Lord asked much of him, and gave much grace to him; and it was in the gigantic trust which the Lord had committed to him, that we see what grace is able to do, when it can work without let or hindrance. Paul became one of the most glorious examples of what the indwelling power of God could produce, when that Divine Spirit could both will and do of its good pleasure. There is no

limit on the Divine side, in this achievement. It is on the human side that the frailty lies. But, in this case, in spite of frailty inherited or acquired, the Heavenly Artificer wrought one of His most magnificent works in all the annals of time.

What then was the secret of it all? Again we ask, Was it because Paul was the master theologian of his day? Was it because of, his indefatigable service in laboring more than they all? Was it because of his unconquerable spirit that never admitted defeat? All these things had their place, but these were consequences rather than causes? "I know whom I have believed," he says. "I am persuaded that neither death nor life . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus" - "The Lord stood with me"- "He loved me and, gave Himself for me." Here we are touching primary things-causative things-the things from which all other things sprang-and which generated in him dynamic energy, superhuman endurance, and unswerving constancy.

His heart lay open to the Lord,, and the Lord filled it to overflowing; and in the filling, transmuted whatever was base or of common ore into gold seven-times purified. That is the secret of the Christain life even today, as then. No confession of faith, however full and correct in statement it be, can fill and satisfy all the deep needs of the heart. No' system; of doctrine, however faultlessly defined, can produce the fair bloom and fragrance of sanctified experience. Necessary as a frame-work-a trellis-work-its gaunt ribs would be unpleasing to the eye, if there were no fair foliage, no delightful bloom, or caressing fragrance of the rose to follow, which, while hiding its structure, should yet reveal it there. It is very necessary to know that Jesus died for us and that He rose again for our justification, and that He will come again to receive us to Himself, but the best of all is to "*know Him*"!

It is very necessary to know our proper relationship to God's Covenants-the instruments by which He is working out His plans-but better far to know Him who is the Seed of one, and the Sacrificial Victim of another of these Covenants! "Remember that: Jesus Christ . . . was raised from the dead," said Paul to Timothy. "Remember that- Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead," says the Diaglott. "Jesus Christ is raised from the dead"-alive, forevermore, that was the great fact in. Paul's Gospel. And that is the great fact today.- He is alive-a living, loving Savior; always f at one's call; nearer than a brother,' warmer than a lover, tenderer than a mother, stronger than an army, entering into every moment of every step of the way!

No child of God however untaught, or however small his mental ability, need ever fail to enter into this assurance. Doctrinal exactitude may elude him, chronological evidences may baffle him, but no believer is so poorly endowed as to fail' to grasp the assurance that Jesus lives; and the same loving Jesus who accompanied Paul, and transformed his whole life, can do it again in the more limited sphere of his own little life. Give Him but the opportunity to rule with undivided sway in a life devoted to "this one thing," then no power on earth-nor life, nor death, can prevent the accomplishment of His purposes in us.

If the consecration is full and unreserved, and the needle of our will swings free and true to His blessed Will, then every moment of our lives we will be able to say, "For me to live is Christ. And come that last moment at the "nether gate, we shall find "to die is gain" making our account in the Lamb's Book of Life complete. Then we also, Paul's brethren in the faith, even though of lesser mold than he, can say as he, "As always, so now" will we magnify Christ Jesus our Lord, in life or in death.

- T. Holmes, Eng.

Pauline Sonnet Sequences

I - The Fight

"My son, Timotheus, I have fought
The fight and found it good; for I have met
The herds of Bashan; Ephesian beasts have set
Their fangs to rend; and poisoned barbs have caught
And pierced the web of doctrine which I taught;
But I laid hold on God. The bayonet
Of Truth has slain the foes of Christ; and yet,
Was ever *love* of Truth too dearly bought?

"I still have on the armor, whole and strong,
And boldly fight the foes intrenched within,
For victory is the watchword of our days.
The Christian may not compromise with wrong,
My son. Be strong. To weaken is to sin.
To live is Christ. No other standard raise."

II - The Finish

"O Paul, most valiant courser, tell. Just how
Do matters stand? And 'being such an one
As Paul the aged,' do you with patience run
The race along the track that stretches now
Toward yonder hill? Upon that gleaming brow
The goal is set. The race so well begun
Must finish there if thou dost hear, 'Well, done!'
O tell! Hast thou had grace to keep thy vow?"

"My course is finished, Timothy. The prize
Is won. I stand a victor before the gate
Of heavenly courts, and bright, eternal years
Unfold before my feeble, wondering eyes.
The time of my departure I await
In hope, forgetting now the toil and tears.

III - The Faith

"And, I have kept the faith. Through good and ill
Report, my God has given power and grace
To keep committed truth; and in the space
Of time apportioned me I live to will
And do Him service; afflicted, to fulfill
All that which is behind in Christ; abase
Myself that in no way I shall erase
The luster of His image with me still.

"It is the 'faith of God' that I have kept.
It is His gift most precious. The faith He gave
To Israel is mine. In faith I bow
With all the righteous prophets who have slept
In confidence of rising from the grave.
Let Christ be magnified! 'As always, so now.'

IV - The Crown

"And now henceforth there is laid up for me
A crown of righteousness. It shall be mine
On that great day of days when our benign
And gracious Lord shall call, and I shall see
His Face, and all His power and majesty
That once before I glimpsed. Those Hands, divine,
Hold now a crown of heavenly design,
The righteousness of immortality.

"And not for me -- not for me alone
Is this most precious thing. It is for all
Each true, and chosen, faithful one, who hears
And loves the Lord, all unashamed to own
And praise His name. Be faithful to thy call,
My son. A crown be thine when Christ appears."

- *Nellie Florence Jolly*

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