

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## Annual Report of the Institute

EACH of the Evangelists sought in his Gospel to give us a portrait of Jesus, his character, his manner of living, revealing him as the Son of God, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, always doing those things pleasing to his Father. With us, as ministers of the Word of God, the desire and effort we trust has been, by precept and example, to portray Christ, to reflect him in word and deed. How could it be otherwise with *any* who have caught the spirit of the Master and his glorious Gospel! This truly is the greatest privilege to which one can aspire, since He was the reflection of the Father.

Our efforts have but feebly represented our desires to be all and to do all we would in the service and ministry of the Lord, and while it is only visible results that can be reported, we trust that each of the Lord's little ones who has been served, as well as those who have rendered service, realize a clearer vision of the Lord, and some benefit that has thus come to the "inner man." That this has been accomplished seems to be unmistakably indicated by many letters which have been received, as well as personal comments given.

### PILGRIM SERVICE

Last year we reported that many were richly profiting by the ministry of our visitor from Scotland, Brother Alex. D. Kirkwood. It was indeed fortunate that he was able to give more time to his trip than others that have visited us; but even so, it was not long enough according to the opinion of many of those served by him. We, too, regretted that in order to serve as much territory as possible and have part in many conventions it was necessary to place on him a larger burden than human wisdom considered best.

Our Brother J. T. Read also has been faithfully and continually serving in this capacity, "confirming the souls of the saints," and from reports received his ministry has been much blessed of the Lord.

In all the years of our service we have recognized that the greatest work is that of being transformed into the likeness of our Lord. We have therefore considered it our most important

duty to encourage the friends to cooperation with the Lord and with each other for their mutual upbuilding, in preparation for that stupendous event-our entrance into the presence of the God of the universe. The Pilgrim service we believe has been especially helpful to this end.

Miles traveled	103,250
Meetings held	675
Attendance	20,839

## CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence department reports much encouragement and inspiration from the letters received. Your messages have been attentively read and appreciated by us.

Letters received	3,915
Letters dispatched	4,500

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

That other feature of our mission—a witness to the world—has not been neglected, occasional public meetings having been arranged by the Classes visited, and funeral discourses and even weddings being taken advantage of for preaching the message of the Kingdom to the uninformed; but the various tracts we keep in stock have borne the largest part of this witness. We have a fear, however, that our friends are not feeling as free as they should, to order these for judicious distribution. It is not wise to "withhold thy hand" because of the lack of large visible results. Our commission is not to convert the world, but to be "witnesses ... unto the uttermost part of the earth." Whoever you are, wherever you live, that description fits well your opportunities.

The "Basic Bible Studies" that have appeared in the "Herald" this last year, have for many been a welcome means of witnessing to their friends, resulting in additions to our subscription list. And it is noted that many of these new subscriptions are being renewed by the subscriber himself. It has been suggested that the "Basic Bible Studies" be reprinted in booklet form, but it will not be wise to do so without assurance that our readers will find use for them. The office will be glad to hear from all who will wish to have copies, provided they can be supplied at a reasonable price.

Bible helps have been furnished the friends on request—Bibles, Concordances, *Studies in the Scriptures*, the Daniel and Revelation volumes, our own edition of the *Divine Plan of the Ages*, the booklets, *What Say the Scriptures About Hell?* and *Our Lord's Return*, as well as works on Bible themes from the presses of other publishers.

Let us not slacken our hands either in serving the brethren or the public, using faithfully our Bible and our "Bible helps," doing with our might what our hands find to do, "doing good to all men" in opportunities small or great, "preaching the Word, instant in season and out of season," remembering however to "please our neighbor for his good to edification," "praying always with all prayer and supplication" for divine guidance of our feeble efforts.

## Report of Annual Meeting

At 2:00 p.m. the Chairman of the Board, Brother J. C. Jordan, called for hymns and prayer for the opening of the meeting. Nominations were then received for chairman and secretary of the meeting, and Brothers J. C. Jordan and P. E. Thomson were elected to these posts, following which the Chairman gave a brief outline of the purpose of the meeting, with instructions as to who might vote in the election of directors for the coming year.

The reports of the Board, the Treasurer and Auditors, were next given and approved. These reports indicated that the blessing of the Lord had indeed been with the Institute during the past year, and while not evidencing numerical prosperity, were clear indications of His favor and guidance; but also of a desire for a careful watching for his leading in the year to come.

After the reading of the lists of new and deceased members, the Chair appointed Brothers L. Newman, W. L. Glenn, and C. -M. Glass to act as tellers for the counting of the votes and ballots in the election. Testimonies occupied the time during the absence of the Tellers who, on their return, announced the election of Brothers F. A. Essler, H. E. Hollister, J. C. Jordan, J T. Read, P. L. Read, W. J. Siekman, and P. E. Thomson to the office of directors for the coming year.

Other helpful and inspiring incidents of the afternoon were a letter from two brethren encouraging us to faithfulness in carrying on the work for which the Institute was organized, a *solo* by Brother J. T. Read, and a hymn by the Chicago trio.

The Board meeting which followed elected as their officers, Brothers J. C. Jordan, chairman; W. J. Siekman, vice chairman; P. E. Thomson, treasurer; and P. L. Read, secretary.

## **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, FISCAL YEAR ENDED APRIL 30, 1954**

### **Statement of Income and Expense and Analysis of Net Worth Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1954**

#### **Income**

Contributions	\$8,721.05
Herald Subscriptions	1,247.32
Gain on Sale of Books, etc.	121.01
Rental Income	569.25
Legacies	267.53
<b>Total Income</b>	<u>\$10,926.16</u>

#### **Expense**

Pilgrim Expense	\$4,350.48
Herald Expense Including Printing, Mailing and Clerical	6,191.45
Free Literature	652.10
Maintenance of Property Including Taxes, Gas, Electricity, Insurance, and Repairs	915.44
Comfort Committee Expense	82.08
Office Expense	<u>572.46</u>
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<u>\$12,764.01</u>
Net Expense for Fiscal Year Ended April 30, 1954	\$ 1,837.85
Net Worth, May 1, 1953	<u>27,520.84</u>
Net Worth, April 30, 1954 (as per Balance Sheet above)	\$25,682.99

### **Statement of Auditors**

The books of account and record of the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc., were examined by us, covering the fiscal period from May 1, 1953, to April 30, 1954, and in our opinion and to the best of our knowledge and belief they show the correct historical record of the above stated year. The foregoing financial statements are in agreement with the books of account and record.

THOMAS P. TILLEMA  
STEPHEN H. JONES  
LOUIS NEWMAN

## As Day by Day

As day by day I follow on and seek to live aright,  
I find within a bent for sin that tests my soul and might.  
O how could I myself deny, did not Thy grace and power  
Supply the strength I daily need to triumph hour by hour.

As day by day I follow on in footsteps of my Lord,  
I learn to lean upon His arm, and trust in His sure Word.  
He tries my faith, He tests my love; He gives me here to prove  
If I am wholly sanctified, so nothing can me move.

As day by day I follow on to know the love of God,  
He shepherds me with tender care by means of staff and rod.  
To Him give praise, who fills my days with joy and blessings rare:  
Lord, may Thy will in me abide, be this my constant prayer.

- J. T. Read.

## The Two Sauls

*"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." - 1 Samuel 15:22.*

TWO men of Israel, Saul, once the king, and Saul of Tarsus, established great records in Biblical history. These two men, although very different, were similar in many ways. Saul, who was the first king in Israel, was humble in the beginning of his public career. 1 Samuel 9:21 tells us that he was of the tribe of Benjamin; so also was Saul of Tarsus. (Phil. 3:15.) Let us first consider the man Saul who was made king, the man who said, "I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly." (1 Sam. 26:21.) He acknowledged that he acted foolishly, but did not profit by his experiences. He is one of the most striking and tragic persons in the Old Testament. Here is a man who had great possibilities and opportunities before him. As one described him, "In some ways he is commandingly handsome, and in other ways decidedly ugly. All in one he is a giant and a dwarf, a hero and renegade, a king and a slave, a prophet and a reprobate, a man anointed and a man Satan possessed. He began promisingly, yet deteriorated dismally, and ended so ignominiously as to make the down-grade process which ruined him monumental for ever afterward to all who will read, mark, and learn."

Our attention is called to three notable periods in his career: (1) his early promise; (2) his later failure; (3) his final ruin. He had a distinguished physical superiority. "A choice, young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." (1 Sam. 9:2.) Again, "There is none like him among the people." (1 Sam. 10:24.) The physical stature of a man is not the most important thing. As' one has said, "I must be measured by my soul [that is, my manner of living], the mind is the standard of man." Those are true words. How often do we see men possessed of strong, well proportioned bodies, handsome, and envied by their fellow men, who see only the outward man. Though one may possess personal magnetism, if the inward man is corrupt, he is not much of a man. The inward man may be of a sinister disposition, ready to commit crime at the least provocation. Such may be very agreeable when everything comes his way, but woe unto the man who dares to cross him. He is the one who has no rule over his own. spirit, but is like a

city broken down, and without walls. Such was Saul in his declining years, when the spirit of God left him.

In his early life he was very modest and humble. This was demonstrated when he was about to be presented to the people as king. He hid himself among the stuff, so that he could not be found. Somehow the Lord made it known to the people where he was, and they "fetched him thence." Samuel, in presenting him to the people, said: "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people. And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king." There were some there, "the children of Belial," who were a worthless class of men, reprobates, and were in the minority. They said, "How shall this man save us?" They were of a class that sneer at things pertaining to that which is just, upright, and of a godly nature. One word from Saul could have put them to death, but he held his peace. We read that the people said, "Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel." (1 Sam. 11:12, 13.) He also had great love for David at one time, so that he made him his armor-bearer.

David was the means of soothing Saul's downcast spirit by playing on the harp. But as time moved on, all this changed, and Saul eventually became David's enemy, a child of the Devil. Saul had a very good 'beginning, but a sad ending, all because of being disobedient, self-willed, and jealous of others, because she wanted all the glory and honor. He no longer displayed the spirit of humility and mercy. The Lord's people do well to take notice, and take an inventory of themselves ever so often, to see if we are still in God's favor. It is written: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." - 1 Cor. 10:11.

After Samuel anointed Saul, he gave him certain instructions where to go, and told him that he would meet a company of prophets, that they would prophesy; that the spirit of the Lord would come upon him, and that he would prophesy with them, and he would be turned into another man, a different disposition. When these signs would come to him he was to observe them, and do as instructed, for God would be with him. When he met the other prophets, the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied with them. This is evidence that he was being changed inwardly, that the spirit of God was directing him what to do and say.

He was surrounded by a company of prophets, which evidently made it easier for him to become better equipped to serve God as king in the theocratic arrangement that the nation of Israel was under. He also had Samuel to guide him aright. He soon gained notoriety, after he won his first battle with the enemy, for he became great in the eyes of the people. (1 Sam. 11:10-12.) He had gained a great victory over the Ammonites. Many a man has had outstanding opportunities, but lacked the ability; and many another man has had outstanding ability, but lacked the opportunity. Here in the case of Saul, he had both. It does not happen very often that men are taken from the humble walks of life and rise to such heights. Let us not forget that in 'connection with such opportunities there is always more or less hardship, privation, and adversity. Thus far the spirit of vainglory was not manifested. He was being used of the Lord mightily, and would have continued to be so used had he remained humble, loyal and obedient. There is a tendency with some when suddenly elevated to honor and prestige, and the people begin to, unduly praise them, to begin to think they are indispensable, and pride and vainglory overcome them.

## SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE AND REJECTION

Let us now consider Saul as he starts on the downward path. He was told by Samuel to wait upon the Lord for his instructions, that he was to keep the commandment of the Lord. (1 Sam. 13:4-14.) Saul engaged the Philistines in battle, who gathered themselves together and made it miserable for Saul and his soldiers, so that they were quite alarmed as to the outcome, for he was told by Samuel to wait seven days, and that he would join him then. The seventh day was almost ended and no Samuel, so Saul offered a burnt offering, which was unlawful for him to do, and as soon as he had made an end of the offering, Samuel came, and he asked Saul what he had done. As usual he made excuses, saying that he was afraid of the enemy, and as Samuel did not come, he took it upon himself to make the offering. Whereupon Samuel told him that because he had disobeyed the Lord's commandment, the kingdom would be taken from him. The disobedience and presumptuousness of Saul cost him his kingdom.

Let us take heed, and not run before the Lord. When the outlook is discouraging, we should not take things into our hands, get impatient, and try to force the issue, claiming that what we did was in obedience to the Lord's commandment and therefore His will, when, in fact it was our own will. Let us "wait upon the Lord," and he will direct the issue. Lamentations 3:25, 26 reads: "But the Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." It is far better to seek the Lord's counsel in all matters than to do as Saul did, and lose our life, because of disobedience. On one occasion when he was commanded by the Lord to "utterly destroy" all the animals taken as "spoil" in the battle against Amalek, he saved all the best of them, and when Samuel questioned him, his reply was that "the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord," thinking to justify himself. Samuel's reply was: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Sins of disobedience are not covered by great sacrifices. Be not deceived. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." (1 Sam. 15:23.) Again, "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure," but to do the will of God is pleasing to him. - Heb. 10:6, 7.

Saul was too ready to impose the death penalty on those who disobeyed his orders, even though it were his own son Jonathan. On one occasion he would have been put to death had not the people interfered. (1 Sam. 14:40-45.) Such are some today who have the spirit of Saul. They would relegate those who disagree with them to the "man-of-sin class." How thankful we should be that God is our judge, and not some man or organization. We see that Saul was playing the fool in the declining period of his reign. Three times he tried to kill David, whom the Lord raised up to deliver the Philistines into the hands of Israel, thereby saving King Saul. Jealousy controlled him, and he was ready to commit murder. "Jealousy is as cruel as the grave." When he failed in the attempt to kill David, and David refused to kill him when it was within his power to do so, Saul said, I have played the fool. - 1 Sam. 26:21.

Instead of becoming submissive, Saul was self-assertive. One writer said: "We may trace the four progressive stages of his ruinous selfism in Saul: first self-sensitiveness, then self-assertiveness, then self centeredness, increasingly issuing in self-destructiveness." The final climax came when he sought out the Witch of Endor. It was Saul that issued the decree that all witches should be put to death. (1 Sam. 28:9.) He violated his own decree. Instead of being loyal and faithful to God, he sought to please self. Also he loved notoriety, he sought the esteem of men more than of God. He loved outward show. Because of being too self-centered he could not stand criticism. O, wretched man! Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

"Self" was his greatest enemy, not the Amalekites, or any others. So it is with us; if self gets the upper hand, it will surely ruin us. Is it any wonder that Paul said, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest after preaching to others, I myself become a castaway"? Let us not rest on our past achievements, but press on until we have gained the victory; for he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.) Let us not play the fool as Saul did. What we are doing today, and not what we have done in the past, is what counts. We can "play the fool" in many ways: by being self-righteous, by thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought, by disobeying God in the little things of life, making excuses for ourselves as did Saul, by refusing wholesome admonition, by trying to do great things which God did not authorize. God is master of the whole situation. We are still unprofitable servants, even after we have done as commanded. Let us not play the fool, and make shipwreck of ourselves.

Now let us consider Saul of Tarsus, later known as the Apostle Paul. He was a devout Jew, aggressive, and determined to live his conviction, a leader among men, well educated in the Jewish law, a great logician; but as to his physique, there was no comparison between him and Saul the king. That, however, is of little consequence. Neither was there any comparison between these men as to their characters. Paul was head and shoulders above Saul, mentally and morally. Saul died a miserable failure. Paul was a complete success. He wrote nearly one-third of the New Testament, leaving a lasting heritage. What a wonderful record he left! He wrote more than all the other Apostles, and this under great handicap, and many disadvantages. He suffered more than the others, next to our Lord Jesus Christ. But he could truly say, "We glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; *because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts* by the holy spirit which is given us." - Rom. 5:3-5.

True it is, Paul before his conversion was a fierce persecutor of the Christians, but all because of misunderstanding. He said, "I verily thought I did God service." While on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians, a light shone around him so that he was blinded. "He fell to the earth and heard a voice saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord answered, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." For three days he was not able to see. One, Ananias, was sent to him to relieve him of his blindness, and that "he might be filled with the holy spirit." The Lord told Ananias that Paul was a chosen vessel unto him, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; and that he would show him how great things he must suffer for his name's sake.

### **NOT DISOBEYING TO THE HEAVENLY VISION**

There was a time when Saul of Tarsus sought to please men, which seems to be implied in Acts 9:1, 2. He desired letters of the high priest to give authority to bring in both men and women to Jerusalem that were Christians. After his conversion he made this statement: "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10.) Paul turned over a new leaf in his life. His only purpose in life was to please God. Obedience requires submission, and submission loyalty and faithfulness to the Master under any and all conditions without question; these Paul gave and carried them out in his Christian life to the best of his ability. He became a voluntary bond slave to Christ. He accepted the will of God as his will, never doubting for a moment but what the Lord would give him far more in return than what he gave or deserved. Saul, the king, sought to serve self; Paul presented



himself for sacrifice that he might suffer with the Lord. He, like Moses, chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." - Heb. 11:25, 26.

There is a sharp contrast between the Saul of the Old Testament, with whom there was a steady decline, and the Saul of the New Testament, who was ever, progressing to a higher life. With Saul the king, self got the upper hand, and he became more ugly and Satanic, and finally died a despicable criminal; while Saul of Tarsus put to death his self-will and it was displaced by God's will, being changed from glory to glory into the image and likeness of his Master. He said, "For me to live is Christ."

When Paul reached the end of his pilgrimage he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." (2 Tim. 4:7-8.) The other one could only say, "I have played the fool." The following words are very appropriate:

"Live for self, you live in vain;  
Live for Christ, you live again;  
Live for Him, with Him we reign --  
Henceforth, the crown!"

The Apostle James said, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." (James 1:2.) Paul's life showed this.

### **THE MARKS OF THE LORD JESUS**

In Galatians 6:17 we read: "From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." What did he mean? The footnote in the *Diaglott* on this is: "The Apostle calls the *scars* he received from stripes, chains, etc., in the service of Christ, *the marks of the Lord Jesus*, by a beautiful allusion to the *stigmata* with which servants and soldiers were sometimes marked to show to whom they belonged." "For I bear in my body the brand marks of Jesus." - *Diaglott*.

Brand-marks may be of various kinds. For instance, a priest may be known by the way he wears his collar, being fastened in the back; another, because he wears a Prince Albert coat; others by the kind of headgear they wear. Some wear sandals instead of shoes; a soldier is known by his uniform, and so on. Criminals and slaves were branded. It is evident that Paul had two kinds of brands in mind, literal and figurative, for he had both. He was accused of lawlessness, a disturber of the peace. For this he was stoned and left to die. He was beaten five times, and each time received thirty-nine stripes; thrice he was beaten with rods. Surely the scars would remain with him the rest of his life. Oh, what suffering he bore for the sake of his faith in God; yet he remained loyal through it all, and could say that he rejoiced in tribulations for the sake of Christ. Yes, he carried with him to his death, literal brand-marks, of which he was not ashamed.

The Apostle had much to glory in, for he really did have a share in filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for his Body's sake, which is the Church. Paul had great endurance, never wavered for a moment, but could say, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." (1 Cor. 9:26.) He truly was a battle-scarred soldier of the cross, not afraid as so many are when they are called upon to take a stand against the enemy, and endure just a little inconvenience. Some are afraid to let their light shine among their neighbors,

for fear of what they may think of them. The Devil suggests to them to be moderate, go slow, or you may be ostracized, shunned, and left alone.. It is far better to suffer as a Christian than to compromise with the world, thinking that we may be able to win them over. The chances are that they will win us over. Never quit, but stand fast in the faith, for he that hath begun the good work in us will also finish it. "A quitter never wins, and a winner never quits." Paul was on the winning side from the day of his consecration. Let us be likewise.

There is a story of how Napoleon's army on one occasion was demoralized, and the general ordered the drummer boy to sound a' retreat. The little fellow straightened up with pride and said, "Sir, I don't know how to sound a retreat, I never learned -- but I can sound a charge." "Sound!" said the emperor. He sounded the charge. The army rallied and was victorious. 'It overcame at last.

With Christ on our side, the final victory will be ours. Let us never admit defeat, for Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the Age." The victory will be ours through Jesus Christ our Lord.

These brand-marks on Paul's body were for the sake of Christ, and. for the sake of the Church. They become a sort of encouragement to us. Why does Paul refer to these brand-marks? First of all there were those who tried to discredit Paul and his labor of love, saying it was necessary to observe the law in order to be saved. They talked and preached much, but there was no suffering connected with it.

Paul pointed out that it is not the mark of Moses (which was circumcision of the flesh), but the marks of Jesus Christ. These were faith in Christ's redemptive sacrifice, obedience to his will, and putting on the fruits and graces of the holy spirit, and suffering for righteousness.

He was accused of being an impostor, a deceiver, and his sincerity questioned. Paul was equal to the occasion. He said, "From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the brand marks of the Lord Jesus." They were stamped all over his body. These marks all came because he espoused the name of Christ.

We may not in this day and age be required to be subjected to such sufferings as Paul was, but we can have the marks of Christ's character indelibly stamped in our very being, so that all men may know that we "have been with Jesus and learned -of him." Let us be living examples of the believers, and in due time we shall reap if we faint not. Paul started out in life as one who persecuted the Christians, but ended up by suffering as a Christian, laying down his life as a martyr, for which he will be highly exalted. There is a lesson here to be learned by all who have named the name of Christ. What is it?

Paul represents a class that are overcomers, while Saul the king represents a class of spirit-begotten ones who have turned their backs upon the Lord, and walk in their own pernicious ways, leading them into the second death, the man-of-sin class, self-willed, disobedient, lawless, without natural affection, raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. - Jude 13.

The Saul class are afraid to die; the Paul class are not afraid, but they live in anticipation of meeting their Master, to reign with him a thousand years, and have a share in lifting the world of mankind out of sin and death, bringing back all the willing and obedient into harmony with God.

What a glorious prospect awaits the faithful! May the grace of God abide on each one of us, enabling us to follow the Apostle even as he followed Christ.

- E. W. Hinz.

## Special Divine Providence

*"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." - Psa. 73:24.*

ON the subject of divine providence there are many widely diverging views. Even among Christians some are quite skeptical with reference to it, while others view it in a light so extreme as to destroy in their minds the idea of human, free agency and accountability. But to rightly understand the subject, we must carefully observe the Scripturally marked metes and bounds within the limits of which divine providence can be and is exercised. First, we observe that since God is good, all his providences must be with a view to wise and benevolent ends, either near or remote. Secondly, that since he made man in his own image-morally free-and with the alternatives of good and evil before him, it would be contrary to his purpose, thus manifested, to so hedge him about with his providences as to interfere with his free moral agency, which is the crowning glory of humanity, and the right exercise of which gives to virtue all its worth. Thirdly, we see that since God is working all things after the counsel of his own will according to a plan of the ages, which he purposed in himself before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:9-11; 3:11), and since he changes not (Mal. 3:6), but all his purposes shall be accomplished (Isa. 55:11), it is manifest that he cannot exercise his providence in any way which would be detrimental to the ultimate ends of his perfect plan.

If these three principles, viz., the divine goodness, the inviolability of human free-agency, and the necessary consistency of the divine providences with the divine purposes-be always borne in mind, they will save, both from skepticism on the one hand, and from fanaticism on the other, as well as greatly assist the believer to a clearer understanding and fuller appreciation of God's dealings, both in general and in particular.

The Psalmist says, "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over *all* his works." (Psa. 145: 9.) This sweeping statement takes in the utmost bounds of the material universe and also the humblest, as well as the most exalted, sentient being. The whole creation is 'his care. Jehovah, our God, is the great Emperor of the whole universe, and -his wisdom, power, goodness and benevolence are abundantly equal to all the responsibilities of so exalted an office. The human mind staggers in its efforts to comprehend the mental resources of a being who is able to assume and to bear such responsibility. Think, for a moment of the memory that never fails; of the judgment that never errs; of the wisdom that plans for eternity without the possibility of failure, and that times that plan with unerring precision for the ages to come; of the power and skill which can harness even every opposing element, animate or inanimate, and make them all work together for the accomplishment of his grand designs; of the tireless vigilance that never ceases, nor seeks relief from the pressing cares of universal dominion -- whose eye never sleeps, whose ear is ever open, and who is ever cognizant of all the necessities, and active in all the interests, of his broad domains.

Well has the Psalmist said, in consideration of the immensity and the minutiae of God's providence over all his works: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it." (Psa. 139:6.) No, we cannot; but oh, what a thrilling sense of mingled reverence, love, and adoration fills the heart, when thus we catch a glimpse of the intellectual and moral glory and majesty of our God! As we thus contemplate him, all nature becomes eloquent with his praise: the heavens truly declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handiwork: day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. (Psa. 19:1, 2.) They tell of the order and harmony of the circling spheres, and the benevolent purpose of their great Creator and

Controller, as the changing seasons and the alternating days and nights fill up the copious horn of plenty, and refresh and invigorate the animate creation.

Since we are distinctly told that his tender mercies -his kind providences-are over all his works, that all his wise purposes shall be accomplished, and that the ultimate design in all his works is the firm establishment of universal harmony and peace, and the eternal happiness of all his subjects (Psa. 145:9; Isa. 55:8-13; 1 Cor. 15:24, 25), whatever inharmonies we now see in nature must be viewed as incidental to the preparations for the perfection of all things, which is not due until "the dispensation of the fulness of times," following the Millennial reign of Christ. (1 Cor. 15:24, 25; Eph. 1:10; 3:11, 15.) And since we are enlightened by a knowledge of the divine plan of the ages, we see, further, in the introduction of the human race upon the earth before the physical perfection of nature has been attained, a wonderful display of wisdom. This measure has furnished the necessary condition for the experience and trial of the human family., and has made use of the labor of the race, while under condemnation, to urge forward the work of preparing the earth for its final glorious condition, as prefigured in Eden, by the time the race will be fully recovered from the fall and established in righteousness.

If we keep this thought in mind, and do not lose sight of the ultimate purpose of God, and of the fact that the present is only a preparatory state, progressing toward final completeness, we need never be skeptical about an overruling providence which now permits a cyclone, a tornado, an earthquake, a volcanic eruption, or any other of nature's throes and distresses. They are all means working toward the grand ends of eternal peace and glory and beauty. Even that widespread calamity of Noah's day, which deluged the world and wiped out the whole mongrel race with which sin had peopled the earth (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:5), sparing only righteous Noah (who "was perfect in his generation" - Gen. 6:8, 9 -- and not of the mixed or hybrid race), and his family was probably part of the natural process of preparation of the earth also for the new dispensation which began, with Noah and his family, after the flood.

But while God's tender mercies are over all his works, and the whole creation is his care, we must not overlook the fact that man, by sin, has forfeited all claims upon the divine providence. As a son of God, Adam had a son's claim upon his heavenly Father's benevolent providence; but when God condemned him to death on account of sin, he thereby rightly repudiated all human claims upon his fatherhood. The creature was thenceforth unworthy of life, and of the divine providence which alone could sustain it. Therefore the condemned world has no right to question why God permits one calamity after another to overtake them and to sweep them into oblivion. They have no right to expect anything else; and if calamities do not hurry them off, they are perishing just as surely by more gradual processes, in consequence of the curse pronounced on account of sin....

Then why should any expect God to interfere and interrupt the course of justice? -- especially in the case of those who still continue unrepentant and utterly regardless of his holy law, and who have no desire to return to his favor and control? True, he might, and sometimes does, temporarily interfere with the present course of evil in order to facilitate his own wise plans; but man has no right to expect such interference in his behalf, nor would it be an evidence of divine favor toward the sinner. Sometimes, but not always, sudden calamities are the servants of some *special* purpose of God-as, for instance, the deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the fall of the tower of Siloam (Luke 13:4), etc.; but usually they are only serving his general purpose as executors of the death penalty upon the condemned.

While the condemned world of mankind is thus left to its fate, men are permitted largely to pursue their own course in the management of their affairs. They may take such advantage as they can of the elements of nature, or of their own medical and surgical skill and ingenuity, to

prolong their days and to ameliorate their condition under the curse; they may control their evil passions for their advantage, or give them loose reign, to their individual and mutual detriment; they may institute and maintain such forms of civil jurisprudence as they can agree upon, subject to the secret and cunning intrigue of the wily and powerful, but unrecognized, prince of this world, Satan. But their course is *their own course*, and God is not in it. Hence God has no responsibility with reference to it; nor can he in any sense be held accountable for the misery that men bring upon themselves and each other in pursuance of their own godless and evil way. Yet God could, and undoubtedly would, put a sudden end to the sin and misery that is in the world, were it not that his far-seeing judgment counsels its temporary permission for a benevolent ultimate purpose, toward which even the wrath of men is unconsciously ministering.

But the case is quite different with those who have renounced their own way and turned to the Lord, who have accepted of his forgiveness through Christ, and who 'have thus been restored to their original standing (as in Adam before sin) as sons of God. All so recognized of God are again the heirs of his favor through Christ -- "If a son, then an heir." (Gal. 4:7.) And it is to such, and such only, that the promise of divine guidance, referred to in our text, belongs: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."

What advantages, then, should be looked for in the cases of these sons of God, who have separated themselves from the world and its spirit? By natural inference, we should expect the return of God's favor to restore again the blessings lost by the fall -- the blessings of lasting life, health, peace, prosperity and happiness. Yet what do we see? We see these justified ones suffer and die just like other men. Evils befall them; disease lays hold of them; poverty hampers them; friends desert them; and death overtakes them, as well as other men; and, the whole course of the present evil world being against them, their pursuit of righteousness is attended with great difficulty and privation. Wherein, then, "are they profited?"

The world cannot see that they are profited at all; for the profit is discerned only by the eye of faith in the counsel of God's Word. That counsel, all the sons of God take for their guidance. It describes -the present life as a preparatory state, which, if rightly used, prepares for the truly glorious condition designed for sons of God hereafter. It is in view -of this instruction of the Word of God, that the Psalmist, in the words of our text, expresses his confident realization of present guidance and of the eternal glory to follow. The present life, being preparatory, is a time for the schooling and discipline of the sons of God; and their subjection to the present ills, while it is often painful, is recognized by them as necessary, in the providence of God, to work out for them an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Cor. 4:17.) In this confident realization they have peace, and even joy, in the midst of present tribulation. And this present peace and joy in a realization of the divine forgiveness and favor, and the privilege of present experience, discipline and instruction under the divine tutorship, is the *present* advantage of the sons of God, while an eternal weight of glory is in store for all who prove faithful under it.

The providence of God over these, his sons, is a very particular providence. All their steps are ordered of the Lord (Psa. 37:23); and the very hairs of their head are all numbered. (Luke 12:7.) His eyes are ever upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers. (1 Pet. 3:12.) All the angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to these heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1:14.) All things are made to work together for good to these, who love God and are called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28); and no good thing is withheld from them. (Psa. 84:11.) How wonderful and particular is this care; and they have the promise of it to the end of their trial state. God is indeed a Father to all that put their trust in him; but there is a wide difference between those who are his sons, and those who remain aliens, and even enemies.

While we thus view the present providence of God and his opposite attitude toward the world and toward those who are now recognized as his sons, we may rise to a still higher altitude. Here we observe the breadth and scope of the divine plan, and see that even now, while God does not and cannot treat the world as sons and grant them his fatherly grace and blessing, he is nevertheless preparing to bless them with his favor as soon as they come to the proper attitude of sons.

He has devised, and already partly executed, a plan for the redemption and restitution of all who will by and by repent fully and submit themselves to his righteous requirements; and, in their present alien and outcast condition, he is giving them such experiences as will in time bring them to realize their own helplessness and to desire and seek the favor of God. In the working out of his grand general plan, which has for its ultimate end the blessing of all the families of the earth, all the bitterness of sin and evil that men have experienced have had a part. To this end God has also been over-ruling the affairs of men for the past six thousand years. That is, while he has been permitting men to rule themselves according to their own ideas, he has been, unknown to them, so over-ruling as to make even their blind and evil course bring to pass circumstances and events which they did not foresee nor contemplate, but which in the long run of his plan ministers to his purpose. Thus, for instance, the world's present blind and wrong course is bringing about a great time of trouble, which God foresaw and will permit, whose final outcome under the overruling of God, will be the overthrow of human governments and the establishment of the divine. In the past, men have had their affairs their own way to the extent that they could agree among themselves, to the extent that the unseen prince of this world, Satan, did not interfere and overpower them, and to the extent that their plans were not interfering with the purpose and plan of God.

Thus, though men have not been aware of it, and have conducted their affairs regardless of both God and Satan, God has all the while been overruling both man's and Satan's designs in the affairs and destinies of nations, so as to give to men the largest possible experience with sin and its consequences, thus to prepare them eventually for willing submission to the righteous reign of the Prince of peace. They have had experience with every shade and form of government; and now, as the end of Gentile times approaches, the world is preparing to express its complete dissatisfaction with all, in general and worldwide anarchy. The crisis is fast approaching and the end is nearing when the wayward, prodigal world will come to its last extremity. But man's extremity will be God's opportunity; and to this extremity he is *therefore* permitting them blindly to drift. But when, with broken and contrite hearts, they turn to the Lord, they will prove the joys of his forgiving love, and mark how, even before they called upon him, he was preparing to answer (Isa. 65:24) first, in the redemption provided; and secondly, in the necessary, hard experiences which shall have brought them to repentance and to a full realization of their need of God's fatherly providence, and to humble, grateful dependence.

These over-rulings of God among the nations are not to be regarded as providences over, and favors to, sinners, but rather as measures preparatory to the blessing of future repentant and obedient sons, who will profit by contrasting the coming good with the present evil; and also as measures necessary for the present welfare of those who are *now* his sons.

With these thoughts in mind, mark the stately steppings of our God along the aisles of history—how even the wrath of man has been made to further the interests of the divine plan. The rise and fall of empires and the wars and revolutions that have unsettled and disturbed the world, while they were great evils in themselves, nevertheless saved men from sinking lower and lower in lethargy and vice: they roused ambitions; they kept the human mind awake, and set men to thinking and planning to improve their conditions. They brought men of different tribes and nations together, sharpened intellectuality, stimulated ambition, led to discoveries and inventions,

and thus helped to keep the race above the level of the brute creation. Even the infamous slave trade, which brought thousands of black men from Africa to this favored land, was, as viewed in the light of God's overruling providence, a blessing in disguise; for the black man in America has enjoyed advantages of civilization here that he would never have known in his native land. And similar providences we can also mark in the great persecutions and distresses of the old world, which drove the lovers of liberty to our shores, here to establish a free government and conditions of society specially favorable to the consummation of 'God's great purpose to gather a people for his name. The subject is too large for extended discourse here, but with this brief suggestion the reader will mark thousands of instances where God's overruling providence can be seen in history working together to the predetermined end; and yet in it all the world is still pursuing its own willful and wayward course, and will continue to do so until the judgments of the Lord overtake and subdue them.

No nation on the face of the earth can now be said to have God's special fatherly providence over it; for there is no nation even claiming to be the sons of God. Consequently, no nation can claim his care and protection. All are alike exposed to the fortunes or misfortunes of the course they pursue; and God will not interfere, except in so far as to shape the end toward the final accomplishment of his great work; and that shaping, we are informed, will soon require the overthrow of all the thrones of earth and a great time of unprecedented trouble. - Jer. 25:15, 16, 26, 27; Dan. 2:44; 12:1; Hag. 2:21, 22; Heb. 12:26, 27; Rev. 11:15.

But let the surges of trouble rise: God's people -- his sons and daughters -- can still claim the precious promises of guidance with his counsel. They are his "peculiar people," "a holy nation," unrecognized by the world, as yet, but soon to be manifested in power and great glory. Previous to the Gospel Age, the Lord had a special, holy nation, and his special providence over that nation was illustrative of a similar providence over the antitype, the Gospel Church. But let us not overlook the fact that the providences of God over typical Israel were of a disciplinary character, as are those of the Church, the spiritual Israel, now. They were led, instructed, chastened, and encouraged according to the necessities for their development and perfecting as children of God. And those of that Age who meekly submitted to the Lord's providential care and leading, walking by faith as we do now, though they received not the reward of their faithfulness then (Acts 7:5; Heb. 11:39, 40), were laid away to rest until God's set time to recall them, and were marked by him as the precious heirs of his loving favor to be granted in due time. . . .

In this reasonable and Scriptural view of divine providence, the humble and believing children of God will realize that, while they may not be able at all times to understand the Lord's ways in all his dealings, they can know of his wisdom, love and care, and that they can therefore trust him where they cannot trace him. We should not expect to be able always to comprehend the divine wisdom, which is so much beyond our own; yet we can often see it afterward. Sometimes his discipline may be severe, and by no means easy to bear, yet "afterwards, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness." After the bitter comes the sweet; so let us take the bitter patiently, and rejoice in hope of the sure fulfillment of all the exceeding great and precious promises to be realized in due time by those who patiently continue in well doing-in submitting without reserve to the providence of God, to the guidance with his counsel.

The Psalmist represents a large class of the immature, inexperienced and only partially instructed children of God, when he says (Psa. 73:2-12), "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped: for I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . . Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt and they speak in the wickedness of oppression. From on high [from the chief places of power and control] they speak. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue

walketh [their influence hath free course] through the earth. Therefore do his [God's] people turn away hither [into the wilderness condition of separation from the world] and waters of a full cup [of affliction and persecution] are wrung out to them. And they [the ungodly] say, 'How hath God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.'

The picture is a true one of the present reign of evil. (See also Mal. 3:15.) It is those who selfishly seek their own present aggrandizement, regardless of the interests of others, that are most prosperous now, and that occupy the chief places of control-political, financial, and even religious; while the godly, who despise oppression and love righteousness, and who, therefore, live contrary to the course of the present evil world, become the subjects of oppression.

Taking a narrow or merely human view of the matter, we might well question why God permits the wicked so to triumph at the expense of the righteous. The Psalmist says (Psa. 73:16-17), again speaking for the same class of God's children, that the problem was too difficult for him to solve until he went into the sanctuary of God (into the Holy Place of entire consecration to God, typified in "the holy" of the Tabernacle. See *Tabernacle Shadows of Better Sacrifices*.) Therefore, being specially taught of God through his Word and his providences, we are made to understand the reason for the present perverse order of things-that for a wise purpose it is permitted for a time; but that by and by there will be a great change, when the righteous, now being tested and tried under the reign of oppression, will come forth to honor and glory and power.

It is indeed impossible to understand this-to rightly appreciate the deep philosophy of God's plan of the ages and our *privilege* of trial and discipline under the present reign of evil -- until we come into the sanctuary condition of entire consecration to the will of God, where the meat of the Word and the light of the holy spirit are granted to us. - Then, like the Psalmist (Psa. 73:22), we see how ignorant and foolish we were in being envious of the prosperous wicked. And though, in our former ignorance and foolishness, our feet were almost gone, and our steps had well nigh slipped, we have reason to thank God that he held us by the right hand and did not suffer us to fall. And in view of such care in the past, we joyfully and confidently trust him, not only in the midst of the present trial state, but also for the future outworking of his plan with reference to ourselves and all mankind. The Psalmist has well expressed the present confidence thus acquired, and the grateful adoration of all the consecrated or sanctuary class, saying (Psa. 73:24-26), "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth [the flesh is too weak and the heart too faint to pursue the course marked out for the righteous in this present evil day, except as strengthened and upheld by power from on high]; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.

When God's wonderful plan of the ages is understood, every thing in nature and in experience bears testimony to the overruling of his, providence. The heavens declare the glory of God and the earth showeth his handiwork; all speak of an intelligent Designer, wisely adapting means to good and benevolent ends, and ministering to -the necessities of his intelligent creatures. Every leaf and every sunbeam bears a loving message of divine providence to the thoughtful. And every inharmony of nature, when viewed in the light of God's plan, is seen to be but a part of that great process whereby God is preparing for the perfect order of things which shall continue forever, when sin and its entailments shall have been banished under the successful reign of Christ; and even the long permitted wrath of man and Satan will eventually be to God's praise.

- Reprints, pages R1560-R1562.



## Lessons from the Life of Joseph

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

*(Continued from last Issue)*

THERE were seven years of plenty in Egypt, and then the seven years of famine came. The famine extended to Canaan, where Jacob lived. He and his household began to be in want. Then Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, so he sent his sons to obtain provisions for his household. The brothers seem to have been slow to start on this journey, and their father had to urge them. "Why do ye look one upon another?" he asked them. "Get you down thither, and buy for us from thence that we may live, and not die." We are not surprised that they did not set out eagerly for Egypt. It was into Egypt they had sold their brother. That was more than twenty years before, but doubtless the memory was fresh in their minds. There are some things we cannot forget. No wonder they had to be urged to start.

Only ten went: the father would not trust Benjamin away from himself. Arriving in Egypt, they were ushered into the presence of the governor, and bowed down themselves before him, with their faces to the earth. So Joseph's dreams were fulfilled at last. He knew his brothers. At first he treated them harshly, made himself strange to them, spoke roughly to them. Why did he do this? Was it resentment? Was he repaying the evil they had done to him so long before? No; he was proving them. He wanted to know if they had grown better through the years; so he tested them in different bays. If one has wronged us, treated us unjustly, forgiveness is not all the duty we owe him. We should seek the cure in him of the evil disposition which caused him to sin against us. We should try to make it impossible for him to repeat the wrong to another.

Joseph sought to know before he revealed himself to them whether his brothers had been cured of the evil heart which twenty years before had led them to treat him so cruelly. Were they still hardened, or were they penitent? He found very soon that they were suffering the bitter pain of remorse. He put them for three days into prison, alleging that they were spies. Again they stood before him. Not supposing that he understood their Hebrew language, they talked among themselves.

They said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."

Joseph heard their words, and saw that they remembered their sin against him and were experiencing remorse. The first testing was encouraging; they seemed to be truly penitent. Joseph was deeply affected. The record says, "He turned himself about from them and wept." This shows that even at the first interview his heart was tender and loving toward them. Instead, however, of making himself known to them at once, he restrained his heart's deep feeling and turned back to them sternly, saying that one of them must stay in prison while the others returned home with food for their households. Then he took Simeon and bound him before their eyes. Why this seeming severity when his heart was so full of love for them? He was not yet sure enough of the genuineness of their repentance. Perhaps it was the prison that had wrought this penitence in them; perhaps they were-not really changed in heart and character. Mere sorrow for wrong doing is not enough. One may have bitter remorse for a bad past, and yet not be cured of the spirit which did the evil. Would these men do now the same thing, over which they were grieving? Joseph was not yet sure, and he would not make the mistake of revealing himself to them and making known to them his readiness to forgive them until he was satisfied on this point. So he sent them away.

Nine brothers went back to Hebron. On their way home they were startled at finding their money in their sacks with the food. Guilt makes such cowards of men that every new incident fills them with new terror. Finding the money made the brothers afraid. They interpreted this bit of generosity as evidence of enmity, a trick to get some cause of harming them. Thus does a sense of guilt cause unhappiness in the midst of blessings.

The brothers went home. At length they are back again in Egypt, and Benjamin is with them. They had a kindly reception. The governor asked after the welfare of their father -- "the old man of whom ye spoke." He saw Benjamin, and his heart yearned upon his brother, and he sought where to weep. He could not keep back the tears, and he entered his own room and there gave vent to his feelings. Gaining control over his emotions, he washed his face, to remove the traces of his tears, and came again to his brothers. He had them dine with him. Still he did not make himself known to them. He let them start homeward again. They are happy now. Benjamin is safe in their midst -- that fear is past, the fear that he would be retained. Simeon is free too, and returning with them.

But they have not gone far before they are suddenly overtaken by an Egyptian officer who charges them with the theft of Joseph's silver cup. Sack after sack is taken down and searched, in the order of the men's ages. At last the missing treasure is found in Benjamin's sack. Instantly dismay seizes all the brothers. They did not know that Benjamin was innocent, that Joseph had ordered the cup to be put into his sack for a purpose. All the circumstances were against him. It looked as if he were a thief--this youngest brother' of theirs, of whom their father was so proud. Here he was, bringing disgrace upon all of them. Now mark where the test of character comes in. If these older brothers had been the same men they were twenty-two years before, they would have made short, sharp work with Benjamin. But what did they do? They rent their clothes in their sorrow, and went back, all of them, to the city. They hastened to Joseph's house and fell down before him on the ground. Joseph spoke sharply to them:

"What deed is this that ye have done?" There was another burst of penitence: "What shall we say unto my lord? How shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out, the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found." They do not denounce Benjamin and propose to give him up: they will stand together.

Joseph said he could not punish the innocent with the guilty. "The man in whose hand the cup, is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto, your father."

Here was the test. Would these ten men go away and leave Benjamin alone, in the grasp of Egyptian justice, to suffer for his supposed offense? Twenty-two years ago they would have done it., Instead of this, however, we have one of the finest scenes in history. These brothers will not desert Benjamin. The speech of Judah, as he pleads for Benjamin, is one of the noblest pieces of eloquence in any literature, sacred or profane

"Then Judah came near unto him, and said, O, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn , against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his-father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we

came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And 'thy servant' my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with' sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever. Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father."

No one can read these pathetic words of Judah, as he pleads for his brother Benjamin, and not see that these men have been wonderfully changed since that day when they sold another brother into bondage, and were deaf to all his piteous cries and entreaties. Judah evidently speaks for all his brothers. We notice particularly in these men a tender regard for their father which they had not shown before. They had seen his uncomforted sorrow all the years since they had robbed him of Joseph; now they cannot endure to cause him another pang. We notice also a tender love for their youngest brother which contrasts wonderfully with their hard-hearted cruelty toward Joseph that day at Dothan. As they were then, they would not have cared what might happen to Benjamin; now Judah begs to take the boy's place and bear his punishment, staying in Egypt as the governor's slave, that Benjamin may return home.

Joseph was now satisfied. At their first visit he had seen their deep consciousness of guilt, as they remembered their sin against him. In this final testing he saw more—he saw that they were changed men. The grace of God had been at work in them. The sin of twenty-two years ago they could not now commit. Penitence had wrought deeply in them, softening their hearts. They were prepared now to stand together as brothers, and together to lay the foundation of national life.

The time had come therefore for disclosure. All doubts are gone from Joseph's mind. As soon as Judah had finished his eloquent plea, Joseph caused all strangers and attendants to go out of the room. No eye must witness the sacred scene which was about to be enacted. When they were alone, those twelve men, Joseph, with streaming eyes and loud weeping, made himself known to his brothers. "I am Joseph," he said to them.

Who can imagine their feelings as these words fell upon their ears? First there must have been terror mingled with their amazement. Again all their sin against their brother rose before them. Here was Joseph whom they had so cruelly wronged. He was lord of Egypt, and they were in his power; what would he do with them? Twenty-two years ago they had put him in the pit to die, and then hastily lifted him out only to sell him as a slave. They had supposed that they were now done with that "dreamer." But here they are before him in utterly reversed position. Is it any wonder they stood dumb in the presence of Joseph, or that they could not answer him, or that they were troubled?

But Joseph's heart was too full to prolong the scene. "Come near to me," he said. "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." But he hastened to comfort them. "And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life . . . to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance." Then he added, "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." Then he bade them hasten to his father with the news and to return, all of them, with their father and their families, to dwell in Egypt, to be near to him. The wonderful scene closes with Joseph's falling upon Benjamin's neck in loving embrace, then 'kissing all his brothers and weeping with them in the joy of reconciliation. The barriers were now all

broken down. The old sin was forgiven. The long-sundered family was brought together again. Estrangement had been healed by love and peace. O what a burden that must have lifted from their hearts, like the burden that rolled away when God forgave us.

Here we may pause in the narrative to gather some of the practical lessons. Joseph's dealing with his brothers is an illustration of Christ's, dealing with us as sinners. There is forgiveness in His heart the moment we stand before Him. We have not to excite and kindle love in Him. He loves us in our sins. He is always ready to forgive. But oftentimes He leads the penitent through experience after experience before He reveals Himself in full, rich love, until we demonstrate that our penitence is sincere. These brothers were sorry for their sin when they first stood before Joseph. "We are verily guilty," they said among themselves. That was confession. But had their sorrow for their sin cured them of their wickedness of heart? Mere consciousness of guilt is not enough when we stand before Christ. It is not enough to say, "I have sinned. There is a sorrow because the sin is found out, because it brings shame and reproach upon us, because it hurts us among men, or because it must be punished. Such penitence as this does not satisfy Christ. The sorrow for sin which God wants and waits for is godly sorrow, which works amendment of life, which is not only sorrow for past sins, but which can no more repeat those sins. When our repentance is sincere, true and deep, God makes Himself known to us, grants us forgiveness, and gives us His peace. As Joseph invited his brothers to come and be near him where he could nourish them, so Christ invites His forgiven ones into fellowship with Him, into the family of God, to share all His blessedness and glory.

This story teaches us the duty of forgiving those who have wronged us. It would be hard to conceive of any sorer wrong that could be done to another than that which was done to Joseph by his brothers. There was no sufficient cause, no just provocation, for it, either. It began in a feeling of envy because their father loved him more than he loved them and weakly showed his preference. It was aggravated by the boy's dreams which he in a childlike way told them. Envy grew to hate, and hate ripened into the intention of murder, which by God's providence was softened into selling as a slave. But we have seen how freely and how beautifully it was forgiven. There does not appear ever to have been any revengeful feeling in Joseph's heart toward his brothers. He seems to have kept his heart free from any trace of bitterness, and full of sweet, gentle love, all through the years. Surely it is a beautiful picture, Joseph loving and blessing those who had sought to kill him, who had caused him years of sorrow. It takes more than mere human sweetness and gentleness to do this. Joseph must have lived very close to God all those years to thus become the interpreter of divine forgiveness.

We are living more than as many years after Christ came to earth as Joseph lived before He came: Have we learned this lesson of forgiveness as well as Joseph learned it? Are we keeping our own hearts sweet and loving under ill-usage? Let us study the picture of this badly-treated brother forgiving those who had so sorely wronged him, until its spirit sinks into the very depths of our spirit, until we can from the heart pray, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us."

We are taught here, too, that God uses even men's evil to help advance His Kingdom. Joseph said to his brethren: "Be not grieved, . . . for God did send me before you to preserve life." We can readily see how blessing and good came out of *all* the *evil* done by the brothers of Joseph. It shows *how* God's hand is *on* everything. No evil deed of the worst of men is allowed to run riot among the divine plans and purposes, or to defeat His love and grace. This does not make sin less sinful; but it assures us that even the wrath of man shall be made to praise God. It is a comfort to know that while we cannot undo our wrong deeds, God can keep them from undoing us, and can even use them to advance His Kingdom.

*(To be Continued)*

## Interesting Selections

*"I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse."  
- Song of Solomon 5:1.*

The heart of the believer is Christ's garden. He bought it with his precious blood, and he enters it and claims it as his own. A garden *implies separation*. It is not the open common; it is not a wilderness; it is walled around, or hedged in. Would that we could see the wall of separation between the Church and the world made broader and stronger. It makes one sad to hear Christians saying, "Well, there is no harm in this; there is no harm in that," thus getting as near to the world as possible. Grace is at a low ebb in that soul which can even raise the question of how far it may go in world conformity.

A garden is a place of beauty. The genuine Christian must seek to be more excellent in his life than the best moralist, because Christ's garden ought to produce the best flowers in all the world. Even the best is poor compared with Christ's deservings; let us not put him off with withering and dwarf plants. The rarest, choicest lilies and roses ought to bloom in the place which Jesus calls his own.

The garden is a place of growth. The saints are not to remain undeveloped, always mere buds and blossoms. We should grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Growth should be rapid where Jesus is the Husbandman, and the holy spirit the dew from above.

A garden is a place of retirement. So the Lord Jesus Christ would have us reserve our souls as a place in which he can manifest himself, as he doth not unto the world. O that Christians were more retired, that they kept their hearts more closely shut up for Christ! We often worry and trouble ourselves, like Martha, with much serving, so that we have not the room for Christ that Mary had, and do not sit, at his feet as we should. The Lord grant the sweet showers of his grace to water his garden this day.

- C. H. Spurgeon.

*"If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it."  
- Exodus 20:25.*

God's altar was to be built of unhewn stones, that no trace of human skill or labor might *be seen* upon it. Human wisdom delights to trim and arrange the doctrines of the cross into a system more artificial and more congenial with the depraved tastes of fallen nature; instead, however, of improving the Gospel, carnal wisdom pollutes it, until it becomes another gospel, and not the truth of God at all. All alterations and amendments of the Lord's own Word. are defilements, and pollutions. The proud heart of man is very, anxious to have a hand in the justification of the soul before God; preparations for Christ are dreamed of humblings and repentings are trusted in, good works are cried up, natural ability is much vaunted, and by all means the attempt is made to lift up human tools upon the divine altar. It were well if sinners would remember that so far from perfecting the Savior's work, their carnal confidences only pollute and dishonor it. The Lord alone must be exalted in the work of atonement, and not a single mark of man's chisel or hammer will be endured. There is an inherent blasphemy in seeking to add to what Christ Jesus in his dying moments declared to be "finished," or to improve that in which the Lord Jehovah finds perfect satisfaction. . . . Fall upon thy knees in humble supplication; and accept Jesus to be the altar of thine atonement, and rest in him alone.

--C. H. Spurgeon.

