

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## Thanksgiving Thoughts

*"My cup runneth over." - Psalm 23:5*

GRATITUDE pre-eminently distinguishes the people of God. This is the lesson of the tenth leper. Sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise continually ascend to the heavenly throne as each saint responds to the divine goodness manifested in his daily experiences. The outpourings of a grateful heart have been likened to the little bird, which when drinking, constantly raises its head as if thus to thank its beneficent Provider. So also do our hearts overflow with gratitude for the matchless grace bestowed upon us by the "Giver of every good and perfect gift," who has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies." But where shall his praise begin and what words can our "stammering, lisping tongues" utter which will adequately convey to our Father our love and adoration? Who has not felt this lack and yearned for fulness of expression?

Poetic souls have endeavored thus to do, and truly beautiful are some of the poems which have been written. But He who searcheth the heart and knoweth our every longing, and our very thoughts afar off, has wonderfully provided for even this want. In the Book of Psalms He has graciously caused to be recorded "words" expressive of the deepest emotional feeling. Luther has well said:

"Where do we find a sweeter voice of joy than in the Psalms of thanksgiving and praise? The Psalter forms a little book for all saints, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find psalms and sentiments which shall apply to his own case, and be the same to him as if they were for his own sake alone; so expressed as he could not express them himself, nor find, nor even wish them better than they are. Therefore, God, seeing that we know not what or how we ought to pray, as the Apostle saith, and desiring to help our infirmities, after the manner of schoolmasters who compose for children letters or short prayers, that they may send them to their parents, so prepares for us in this Book both the words and feelings with which we should address our Heavenly Father, - and pray concerning those things which in the other books he had taught us we ought to do and to copy, that so a man may not feel the want of anything which is of import to his eternal salvation. So great is the loving care and grace of our God toward us, who is blessed forevermore."

How marvelous that the Lord, in addition to all his lavish gifts, has thus also provided even the language which we may borrow to express our gratitude to him!

For this thanksgiving meditation, let us draw on these precious words, and may they reflect the heart of each one who reads them. Omitting our own comments, we shall, to accentuate the forcefulness and beauty of the Psalms, preface each separate group with verses from a beautiful poem (Joseph Addison, 1672-1719) which is the basis of one of our hymns. Thus, like a great strophe and antistrophe, each shall reflect and enhance the other; the lovely thoughts of a human heart echoed by the loftier and nobler strains of the spirit of God.

"When all thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view, I'm lost  
In wonder, love, and praise.

"O how shall words, with equal warmth,  
The gratitude declare  
That glows, within my inmost heart!  
But Thou canst read it there."

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches." "In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul." "I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the works of thy hands." "Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: to show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep." "I will praise thee with my whole heart; before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy name. In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul. All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they shear the words of thy mouth. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord." - Psa. 104:24; 94:19; 143:5; 86:15; 16:5-7; 116:12; 92:1-5; 138:1-5.

"Thy Providence my life sustained,  
And all my wants redrest,  
When in the silent womb I lay  
And hung upon the breast.

"Unnumbered comforts to my soul  
Thy tender care bestowed,  
Before my infant heart conceived  
From whom these comforts flowed."

"Thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in

the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." "Thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make the trust when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God since my mother -bare me." "By thee have I been holden up from the womb; thou 'hast been my benefactor from my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee." - Psa. 139:13-16; 22:9, 10 A.R.V.; 71:6 A.R.V.

"To all my weak complaints and cries  
Thy mercy lent an ear,  
Ere yet my feeble thoughts had learned  
To form themselves in prayer.

"When in the slippery paths of youth  
With heedless steps I ran;  
Thine arm, unseen, conveyed me safe,  
And led me up to man."

"Thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord." "Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." "Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip." "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy Word." "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." -- Psa. 71:5; 103:13, 14; 25:7; 71:17; 94:16-18; 18:35, 36; 119:9; 37:23, 24; 40:2, 3.

"Through hidden dangers, toils, and deaths,  
It gently cleared my way;  
And through the pleasing snares of vice,  
More to be feared than they.

"When worn with sickness, oft hast thou  
With health renewed my face;  
And, when in sins and sorrows sunk,  
Revived my soul with grace."

"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." "When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell." "For by thee I have run through - a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall." "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." "I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee." "O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girdeth me with gladness." "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." - Psa. 34:6-8; 27:2; 18:29; 61:2; 41:4; 30:2, 3, 11; 103:1-5.

"Thy bounteous hand with earthly bliss  
Hath made my cup run o'er;  
And, in a kind and faithful friend,  
Hath doubled all my store.

"Ten thousand thousand precious gifts  
My daily thanks employ;  
Nor is the least a cheerful heart,  
That tastes these gifts with joy."

"Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: Thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it." "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation." "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and -it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord." "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me. O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." "Many, O Lord my 'God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and 'thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." - Psa. 65:9; 68:19; 128:1-4; 139:17, 18, 5, 6; 40:5.

"Through every period of my life  
Thy goodness I'll proclaim;  
And after death, in distant worlds,  
Resume the glorious theme.

"Through all eternity to Thee  
A grateful song I'll raise;  
And my eternal joy shall be  
To herald wide Thy praise."

"I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord." "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore." "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For who in the heavens can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?" "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing." "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever:: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory: Amen, and Amen." -- Psa. 22:22; 34:1-3; 104:33,34; 86:12; 89:1,6; 107:21,22; 72:18,19.

Our hearts, lifted up by these wonderful strains of praise and gratitude for God's unending goodness, forget "the light afflictions which are but for a moment" and thrill to the future prospects,

the bliss to come, and the praise that yet awaiteth God in Zion. For our debt of praise will never end, and the attainment of victory will but begin for us an eternity of thanksgiving opened by our "casting our crowns before him, lost in wonder, love, and praise." Our fellowship with him now will continue then enhanced, forevermore.

We long for that day when the rapt strains of the new song which fell on the entranced ears of John in Patmos shall be heard everywhere, for then, as he wrote: "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honor, and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Then shall be heard the great Hallelujah, that mighty burst of gladness which is the last Psalm, like the very summit and climax of the praise that can ascend to God, the loftiest wave of the many waters that break at the foot of his throne:

"Praise ye the Lord.

Praise God in His sanctuary:

Praise Him in the firmament of His power.

Praise Him for, His mighty acts:

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet.

Praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance:

Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.

Praise Him upon the loud cymbals:

Praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals.

Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

- *W. J. Siekman.*

## "Men Ought Always to Pray"

(Continued from last issue.)

*And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. - Luke 18:1.*

A BRIEF meditation upon the conditions which make possible the life of prayer will be profitable to every true child of God. The Scriptures indicate that there are three conditions which must be obeyed, and which constitute the essential groundwork upon which all true prayer is built. The first and primary condition is *a keen realization of our utter helplessness*. Fellow brethren in Christ, are we not getting very near to the explanation of much of the failure in our prayer-life? How slow we are to confess our complete and entire helplessness; how slow to see the necessity of looking away from ourselves, and looking outside ourselves for guidance, for direction, for instruction, for wisdom, for deliverance in even the smallest details of our life's experience! Ponder for a moment-how often we make decisions without any reference to God, our Father; how often plans are formed without the "upward glance" and a prayer for guidance and direction! We have not ceased entirely to trust to our own judgment in so many matters which come before us. How different it was with the Lord Jesus! How often the perfect Son of God spoke of his *helplessness* before God! Hear his words: "Verily, verily, I say unto *you, the Son can do nothing of himself*, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (John 5:19. Again he said, "*I do nothing on my own authority.*" (John 5:30, R.S.V.) On another occasion he said, "*I do nothing of myself*, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak." - John 8:28.

Thus can we understand why he spent so much time in prayer and communion with his Father. Yes, the Lord Jesus himself was ever keenly aware of his need of God and his utter dependence upon him. He would do *nothing* without reference to his Father. He lived in the consciousness of his Father's presence, and looked to him to direct his words and deeds, and to order all his ways. What a lesson and example for, us who are, so imperfect in judgment, so full of sin, so alienated from God except as he should look down upon us in our helplessness and draw us to himself-and this he will do *only when we recognize how truly helpless we are*. Jacob prevailed with God, not by wrestling, but by *clinging*; it was thus that he obtained the blessing. Yes, "prayer and helplessness are inseparable." Only *he who is helpless can truly pray*. When we have been broken, and every vestige of confidence in ourselves has been shattered, then we are in the right condition of heart to pray. Then, even though words may be unspoken, the Father-heart of God is touched by our utter helplessness and weakness, and he hastens to respond.

The second essential condition for prayer is Faith. Unless we have faith our helplessness will avail us nothing. There can be no prayer without *faith* coupled with the sense of weakness. "Without *faith* it is impossible to please him [God]. *For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he . . . rewards those who seek him.*" (Heb. 11:6, R.S.V.) "He that cometh to God must believe that he is" - none would call himself a Christian and deny the existence of God, our Creator-but is there also the faith to believe that God hears and answers *prayer* -- "*that he is a rewarder* of them that diligently seek him"? How easy it is to say, "O yes, I believe that" -- but will faith take hold of any promise in God's Word enabling each to say from the heart, "That is *mine*; I believe it, because, Father, thou hast said it"? Why, then, are we troubled and anxious? "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, *and it will be given him. But let him ask IN FAITH, WITH NO DOUBTING*, for he who doubts is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person *must not suppose that he . . . will*

*receive anything from the Lord."* (James 1:5-7, R.S.V.) Hear the words of the Lord Jesus: *"If ye have faith, and doubt not, . . . whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, BELIEVING, ye shall receive."* (Matt. 21:21, 22, R.S.V.) "I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, *believe that you receive it, and you will.*" (Mark 11: 24, R.S.V.) *Is this* the explanation of so many unanswered prayers? Let us neither add nor take away from the words of our Lord, who taught us to pray. His words are sublimely simple, yet how searching!

Three simple words convey the third condition for acceptable prayer -- "THE ONLY NAME." There can be no approach to God except it be "in the name of Jesus." The name of Jesus meant much to the disciples of the early Church. How frequently they used the phrase! Almost immediately after Pentecost Peter boldly declares concerning the risen Lord: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12, R.S.V.) *"No other name!"* If we would be reconciled to God, if we would know the joys of fellowship with God our Father, we must come to him "in the name of Jesus." What does that mean?

It suggests very much more than closing our petitions to God with the name of Jesus. It is not merely a magic word which opens for us the windows of heaven. Is it possible that the expression has become so familiar that there is a failure to fully appreciate the import of the words we say, and think of them only as a proper ending to our prayers? What do those words really mean: "in Jesus' Name we ask it"? Do they not suggest that we are praying Jesus' prayer -- a prayer which he himself would pray -- praying *in his Name*? How tremendous, the thought!

It is recorded that during the American Civil War the son of a wealthy banker enlisted in the armies of the Union. The father's heart was deeply grieved to part with his son, and the sight of a man in uniform ever reminded him of his own son away in the forces. One day there came into his bank a private soldier in a faded; and much worn uniform, bearing the scars of war in his face and hands. Standing before him, the poor soldier began fumbling in his pockets as though in search for something. At last he drew from his pocket a small scrap of dirty paper and laid it before the banker. On it he read these words, written in pencil: "Dear Father -- This is one of my comrades who was wounded in the last fight and has been in hospital. Please receive him as myself. -- Charlie." Immediately the banker took the young man to his palatial home and placed him in Charlie's room. He gave him Charlie's seat at the table, and cared for him until food, rest, and love had restored him to complete health and strength. That poor soldier had appealed to the banker *in the name of his son*, and the father heard and answered.

Just so it is with those who pray to God "in Jesus' Name." "Hitherto have ye asked nothing *in my name*: ask *and ye shall receive*, that your joy may be full," are the words of Jesus himself to his chosen disciples. (John 16:24.) How careful we would be in our approach to the Father if we remembered that we are praying Jesus' prayer. With what care we would see to it that our prayer contained only those things which really express the will of the Lord Jesus for us. We would never pray "casually," or thoughtlessly, if we remembered that we are coming to God "in Jesus' Name."

There is a further depth of meaning in this wonderful expression of which we should be reminded as we utter the words -- "in the name of Jesus." In Scripture, names are not only intended



to identify individuals, but -re an expression of the character, disposition, or nature of him who bears the name. When we pray "in the name of Jesus," our prayers should be according to his nature or disposition. Surely our prayers can never be selfish or boastful prayers; they cannot be pharisaical prayers: "God, I thank thee that I am no as other men are." Rather, our prayers will breathe the spirit of Christ the spirit of purity, peace, and love; the spirit of sacrifice and self-giving; the spirit of humility and service; the spirit of compassion and mercy. *The only prayer that is acceptable at the throne of grace is the prayer of "the Christ" in us, not of "the natural man" with it self-will, and carnal desires.*

Again it is the Lord himself who places before us this third essential condition for true and acceptable prayer. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, *ye shall ask what ye will*, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7.) Thus are we reminded of our oneness *with* Christ, our oneness *in* Christ, our baptism *into* Christ, and of our place as members of Christ's Body. As "branches" of "the true Vine" we may "*ask what we will*" in full assurance that we will be heard and our requests will be granted.

Here is "The Master Key of Prayer" -- the key which will open for us "the windows of *heaven*" -- "*abide in me, and I in you.*" Thus do we pray "in Jesus' Name." To "*abide in Christ*" suggests an experience which is unbroken -- "in Christ" today, "in Christ" tonight, "in Christ" tomorrow -- a "moment by moment" experience of fellowship with him through all life's pilgrimage. Inevitably it suggests a life of prayer, unceasing prayer, which is the essence of communion and fellowship with God and with his dear Son, our Lord.

Are we enjoying this great privilege of prayer? Are we daily practicing "the presence of God," and living in the consciousness of his nearness at all times? Is his presence, and the fellowship of his Son -- our Lord and heavenly Bridegroom -- a very real thing to us -- as real as the presence and companionship of those around us whom we can see? That is what it means to live in the spirit of prayer. And when the pressure of duty has lifted, do our thoughts immediately turn to our loving Father and his dear Son, the Lord Jesus, who have been present with us through all the busy hours, caring for us and strengthening us? Finally, is it our joy and delight to lift our hearts to heaven, to pour out our love and gratitude, our joys and sorrows, our hopes and longings after righteousness? *Can we sing with all the sincerity of our hearts:*

"Lord, no hour is half so sweet,  
From bright morn to evening fair,  
This which calls me to Thy feet,  
Is the blessed hour of prayer"?

*(To be continued)*

- Edwin Allbon, Eng.

## A Study in Isaiah

### Chapter 50

*"Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?" -- Isaiah 50:2.  
(Continued from last issue)*

IN THIS lesson the picture changes, and the Arm of Jehovah, our Lord Jesus Christ, is represented as speaking. In his words (Isa. 50:4-9), we have a preview of his character. He says (Isa. 50:4): "The Lord God [my Lord Jehovah] hath given me the tongue of the learned [instructed], that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear [hearken] as the learned [as do the instructed]."

In his prehuman (*Logos*) existence, our Lord was endowed with great wisdom and ability, so much so in fact that he was personified as Wisdom (Prov. 8:22-31), and was made the Father's executive in the creation of all things. (1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:15-17.) We know that seeds possess within them the necessary elements to develop all the characteristics of the source from which they come; and no doubt the seed that was nurtured and given birth by Mary, when fully matured, possessed the mental and moral characteristics that had obtained in the *Logos*, and was therefore endowed with wisdom to know how to speak the word in season that should give rest to the weary.

And what was that word? The Jew, in common with the Gentile, was weary and burdened with the yoke of sin and inherited weakness; but in addition thereto, he found the Law Covenant to be a yoke much too heavy for him to bear. And so our Lord spoke the words of wisdom and comfort recorded in Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

This was the "word of wisdom" spoken in season to the weary, but only those who had the ears to hear were able to understand and find rest unto their souls. Then too, within these words of our Lord, lies the secret of true wisdom: "Learn of me, FOR I AM MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART." It is only those who follow the example of Jesus and become meek and lowly in heart, that God will teach wisdom; for he tells us that he "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

This attitude which commended our Lord to the Father, is further evident in Isa. 50:5, 6: "The Lord God [my Lord Jehovah] bath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned *away* back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

What marvelous grace and humility our Lord possessed to be able to do this; he who was "the beginning of the creation of God"; he who had been given glory and honor above all others; he who was the active and trusted agent of the Almighty in the creation of everything that had been made; he who had to greatly humble himself in order to become a man, that he might suffer and die to redeem the very ones that were treating him in this shameful manner. Was he compelled to submit to such treatment? Was he, like Lucifer, covetous of still more glory and power? No! For at the end, all he asked was that he might be restored to his former position with the Father. Jesus

was not obligated to take upon himself our sins; nor to bear the ignominy and shame imposed upon him by a rebellious people. He humbled himself of his own free will, in response to the need of man, and to the pleasing of his heavenly Father.

"Meek and lowly in heart." To what extent have we been able to manifest our Lord's spirit? Have we that mind in us that was also in him (Phil. 2:5), and can we ignore self and expend our lives for others in the face of misunderstanding and injustice? And can we continue to lay down our lives with no resentment in our hearts if we are mistreated or if those we love are mistreated? We could never equal our Lord in these respects, but the last few years have noted an increase of those opportunities that give occasion to prove whether or not we are being perfected in his likeness.

Jesus had demonstrated an ability to overawe his enemies and render them incapable of doing him harm, when he walked through their midst. Even the mob sent with Judas to apprehend him in the Garden of Gethsemane, was afraid to lay hands on him. (John 18:4-8.) But knowing that the due time for his sacrificial death had arrived, he suffered their murderous acts and, as the prophecy says: "He gave his back to the smiters, his cheek to them that plucked off the hair; he hid not his face from shame and spitting," but drank the dregs of suffering that ended upon an ignominious cross.

Jesus, being perfect as a man, was an acceptable sacrifice when he presented himself to John at Jordan; and so, to become the ransom, did not require the shame and suffering he endured in the three and a half years interim to the cross. But of one thing we may be sure, God would not have permitted his beloved Son to endure such humiliation and suffering to no good purpose. Therefore, we are not surprised to read: "For it became him [God], for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, . . . Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest . . . For in that he himself bath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." (Heb. 2:10, 11, 17, 18.) "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." - Heb. 5:8, 9.

God, in loving recognition of his Son's faithfulness under these adverse conditions, purposed to reward him by exalting him to the Divine nature his own plane of existence, where he would have life within himself, even as the Father bath life in himself. Manifestly, God would not bestow such a gift before the favored one had been fully developed as a new creature, and had been proved worthy *by loyalty* and obedience under the most crucial tests. Jesus stood alone in his fight against the powers of evil; there were none with him; none who could fully understand and sympathize. But he was not alone in the sense of being abandoned by the Father, for in Isa. 50:7-9 we read: "For Jehovah God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? Let us stand together: who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they shall all wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up."

These are not the words of one left to his own devices-to sink or swim as the case might be: but rather, they are expressions of full trust and confidence in Divine aid and guidance when facing the foe; for foe there was, wily, strong, and merciless. Even our Lord felt the need of the Father's help when he, in human form and limitations, invaded the domain of the wicked usurper. For

having left the glory he had with the Father, and being born of a woman under the Law, he was subject to the conditions of the Law, and to the limitations of flesh, even though unmarred by sin. Doubtless this Scripture was inspired by God to give Jesus the necessary courage and strength for the battle he had to fight. From this prophecy, Jesus knew that he would not be confounded nor put to shame, and so he set his face like a flint and defied Satan, knowing that the Father would help him.

We who follow in his footsteps, may appropriate these words of assurance unto ourselves also, for having become his Body members, we are admonished to rely upon the Father's aid and guidance in our battle against the world, the flesh, and the Adversary; we too are promised help for every time of need, and, like our forerunner, can say: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"

The statement of Isa. 50:8 that "He is near that justifieth," is in full harmony with the statement of the New Testament that "It is God that justifies." Even our Lord did not justify himself, but must needs keep the Law perfectly in order to be declared just. God's Law is the standard by which all must be measured. But how can we, the members of Christ's Body, endure measurement by such a standard? Certainly not in our own righteousness, but only through being in him. "There is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled by us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. And who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. 8:1, 3, 4, 33, 34.) The enemies of the just shall not prosper, for "Lo, they shall all wax old as a garment: the moth shall eat them up."

Isa. 50:10: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light."

This seems somewhat blind and paradoxical, but it is evident that there is a change in the personality of those addressed, for it is spoken to those who hearken to God and to the voice of his Son. In the *King James Version* the greater part of the verse constitutes a question, but in the *Leeser Translation*, the question is simplified: "Who is there among you that feareth the Lord, that hearkeneth to the voice of his servant?" Here the question ends, and the implication is that not many do so, for Satan has blinded the minds of the great majority: "Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people." And so: "Though he have walked in darkness, and had no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and lean for support upon his God." This world has been a place of gross darkness; but they that hearken unto the Lord and the voice of his servant, have been given his Word as a lamp unto their feet, and a light upon their pathway. And as long as they lean on him for support, they need not stumble or fall by the way.

Then again in the last verse (Isa. 50:11), we have still another class brought to view: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand: ye shall lie down in sorrow."

We are not dogmatic in our interpretation of this verse, but it seems to refer to a class that is presumptuous in not hearkening to the Lord or to the voice of his servant; false prophets, in other words, who bask in the flickering light of their own bonfires (wisdom) with which they lead themselves and others astray. The sparks they shed around are bits of earthly wisdom, and not the

light of the sun, moon, and stars of God's Word. But they are warned that "This shall they have at his hand, they shall lie down in sorrow."

Peter says that "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the holy spirit." He also says that "there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who OF THEMSELVES shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. . . While they promise liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption:..." And he warns that "of whom a man is overcome [led astray with sparks of false teachings] of the same is he brought in bondage." - 2 Pet. 1:21; 2:1, 2, 19.

The Bereans of old were commended because they searched the Scriptures to see if the things being taught them were of God. To follow any man's teachings without proving them by the Word is foolish, and will surely lead to disaster. They that are truly obedient children of the Lord, will give heed to his voice, and will not follow another; and they that have his spirit will manifest the fruit of that spirit, and we shall know there by their fruit.

We are living in the end of the Gospel Age, the harvest time (Matt. 13:39), which constitutes the setting for the parable of the ten virgins. (Matt. 25:1-13.) Regardless of the application we make of the five foolish virgins, they are represented as losing the privilege for which they sought because of not being watchful and prepared. The only difference noted between the foolish and the wise was the lack of oil in their vessels, by reason of which they were losing the light of their lamps. - Psa. 119:105, 130.

Typically, oil was used to anoint, sanctify, and give light to the Aaronic priesthood. (Exod. 27:20; Lev. 8:12.) Antitypically, God's spirit is the means by which we are anointed, sanctified, and enlightened (Act 10:38; 2 Cor. 1: 21, 22; 1 Pet. 1:2; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9), and if we fail to have our hearts filled with God's spirit, we will not be prepared to enter in with our Lord.

"Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." - 2 Pet. 3:17, 18.

- J. T. Read.

## "Oh, For a Deeper Love"

"I love Thee, Lord; yet 'tis no love of mine  
That goeth forth to that great heart of Thine;  
'Tis Thine own love which Thou hast given me  
Returning back, O loving Lord, to Thee.

"The earth absorbs the soft, refreshing rain,  
And sends it back in flowers and fruits again;  
So I receive Thy love so rich and free,  
And send it back in joy and praise to Thee.

"The moon receives the sun's bright, golden light,  
And gives it forth to cheer the darksome night;  
So I receive the rays of love Divine,  
And with them cheer this weary world of Thine.

"'Tis by Thy love that I can love and bless  
The foes who seek to blast my happiness;  
Can e'en rejoice, when bearing wrong and shame  
Thou deem'st me meet to suffer for Thy Name.

"Naught but Thy love can satisfy my heart,  
Constrain my will from self and sin to part;  
In love so great Thou givest Thyself to me,  
For Thou art love -- to all eternity.

"Oh! help me, Lord, to take, by grace Divine,  
Yet more and *more* of that great Love of Thine;  
That day by day my heart may give to Thee  
A deeper love and growing constantly."

## "A Legend of Service"

*"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." - Isaiah 6:8.*

"It pleased the Lord of Angels (praise His name!),  
'To hear one day, report from those who came  
With pitying sorrow, or exultant joy,  
'To tell of earthly tasks in His employ;  
For some were sorry when they saw how slow  
The streams of heavenly love on earth did flow;  
And some were glad because their eyes had seen  
Along its banks, fresh flowers and living green.  
So, at a certain hour before the throne  
The youngest angel, Asmiel, stood alone;  
Nor glad, nor sad, but full of earnest thought,  
And thus his tidings to the Master brought:  
'Lord, in the City Lupon I have found  
Three servants of Thy holy name renowned  
Above their fellows: one is very wise,  
With thoughts that ever range above the skies;  
And one is gifted with the golden speech  
That makes men glad to hear when he will teach;  
And one, with no rare gift or grace endued,  
Has won the people's love by doing good.  
With three such saints Lupon is trebly blessed;  
But, Lord, I fain would know which loves Thee best.'

"Then spake the Lord of Angels, to whose look  
The hearts of all are like an open book;  
'In every soul, the secret thought I read,  
And well I know who loves Me best indeed,  
But every life has pages vacant still  
Whereon a man may write the thing he will;  
Therefore, I read in silence day by day  
And wait for hearts untaught to learn My way.  
But thou shalt go to Lupon, to the three  
Who serve Me there, and take this word from Me:  
Tell each of them his Master bids him go  
Alone to Spiran's huts across the snow;  
There he shall find a certain task for Me,  
But what, I do not tell to them nor thee,  
Give thou the message, make My word the test,  
And crown for Me the one who answers best.'

"Silent the angel stood with folded hands  
To take the imprint of his Lord's commands;  
Then drew one breath, obedient and elate,  
And passed the self-same hour through Lupon's gate.  
First to the temple door he made his way,  
And there, because it was a holy day,  
He saw the folk by thousands thronging, stirred  
By ardent thirst, to hear the preacher's word,  
Then, while the echoes murmured Bernol's name,  
Through aisles that hushed behind him, Bernol came;  
Strung to the keenest pitch of conscious might,  
With lips prepared and firm; and eyes alight,  
One moment at the pulpit's steps he knelt  
In silent prayer and on his shoulder felt  
The angel's hand: 'The Master bids thee go  
Alone to Spiran's huts across the snow,  
To serve Him there.' Then Bernol's hidden face  
Went white as death, and for about the space  
    of ten slow heart-beats there was no reply  
Till Bernol looked around and whispered,  
'Why?' But answer to his question came there none,  
The angel sighed, and with a sigh was gone.

"Within the humble home, where Malvin spent  
His studious years, on holy things intent,  
Sweet stillness reigned, and there the angel found  
The saintly sage immersed in thought profound,  
Weaving with patient toil and willing care  
A web of wisdom, wonderful and fair;  
A beauteous robe for truth's fair bridal meet,  
And needing but one thread to be complete.  
Then Asmiel touched his hand and broke the thread  
Of fine-spun thought, and very gently said,  
'The One of whom thou thinkest bids thee go  
Alone to Spiran's huts, across the snow,  
To serve Him there.' With sorrow and surprise  
Malvin looked up, reluctance in his eyes.  
The broken thread, the strangeness of the call,  
The perilous passage through the mountain wall,  
The solitary journey and the length  
Of way unknown, too great for his frail strength,  
Appalled him; with doubtful brow  
He scanned the doubtful task, and muttered,  
'How?' But Asmiel answered, as he turned to go,  
With cold disheartened voice, 'I do not know.'



"Now as he went, with fading hope, to seek  
The third and last to whom God bade him speak,  
Scarce twenty steps away whom should he meet  
But Fermor, hurrying cheerful down the street,  
With ready step that faced his work like play,  
And joyed to find it greater every day;  
Then Asmiel stopped him with uplifted hand,  
And gave without delay, his Lord's command:  
'Him whom thou seest here, would have thee go  
Alone to Spiran's huts across the snow  
To serve Him there.' Ere Asmiel breathed again,  
The eager answer leaped to meet him, '*When?*'  
The angel's face with inward joy grew bright,  
And all his figure glowed with heavenly light;  
He took the golden circlet from his brow  
And gave the crown to Fermor, answering, 'Now,  
For thou hast met the Master's hidden test,  
And I have found the man who loves Him best.  
Not thine, nor mine, to question or reply  
When He commands, answering, "how?" or "why?"  
He knows the cause; His ways are wise and just;  
Who serves the King must serve with perfect trust!"

## Half Hour Meditations on Romans

### No. 17

*"He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." -- Isa. 61:10*

HAVING in our previous meditations reviewed in a general way what St. Paul means by righteousness (or justification) by faith, more particularly as opposed to righteousness by works of the Law, we are in a position to consider a number of questions vitally related to his Gospel theme: questions of great influence in the history of the Church that have lost none of their interest to us who have remained to these closing days of her career. For example, when the Apostle says that a gift of righteousness is revealed in the Gospel, which righteousness has its origin in faith and that this gift is of God (Rom. 1:17) what does he mean.

- (1) Does he mean that righteousness is communicated to us or merely imputed to us? In other words, are we made righteous or merely reckoned righteous. If the latter,
- (2) How can God reckon us as being what we as a matter of fact are not?
- (3) Again, what is the relationship justification bears to sanctification? Are these two stages of which the first is over before the second can begin?

Regular readers of this journal will bear us witness that it has been our constant endeavor to avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they do gender strife (2 Tim. 2:23). However, when in the course of orderly, consecutive examination of an epistle we are confronted with certain doctrines or teachings which may arouse controversy, we do not feel that this fact should deter us from presenting as best we may our understanding of the subjects brought before us by the apostolic writer. To shrink from the discussion of certain doctrines merely because they have been subjects of controversy in the past or may be so in the future and to allow such considerations to weigh with us beyond their proper limits, we believe would render us negligent in our duty. Our faithful Apostle shunned not to declare all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

In what we trust is a proper spirit of humility and in a spirit of loving consideration of the thoughts of others who may differ with us, we therefore propose to take up consideration of these questions in this "half hour."

May we not do so in the full confidence that the nearer we approach the truth in their solution and their practical application to the affairs of everyday life the closer shall we be drawn to our Lord, who is himself the Truth and prayed the Father that by the truth we might be sanctified.

### Righteousness Imputed

The answers to these questions, then, appear to us to be connected with one another. To begin with, justification is a judicial or (as it is called) forensic word: a word derived from processes of law. When a judge *declares* a man to be "not guilty," he does not thereby *make* him "not guilty." Though *declared* not guilty the man may as a matter of fact be guilty.

Moreover, some men have been *declared* guilty who later were proved to be innocent. No scholar will dispute this forensic use of the word "justification" in the Bible. It expresses the *verdict* of

acquittal and establishes a mans status in the eyes of the law. Thus God justifies whenever he refuses to condemn -- when he ignores whatever may have been our sins. And he declares his willingness to do this simply be cause a man believes in Jesus Christ. Let a man believe or take God in Jesus Christ at his gracious word and the value of this act of trust or allegiance is such that God reckons it for righteousness and admits a man into his fellowship, as if he were already fit for such fellowship in his actual habits and conduct. There is imputation here, but it is the right sort of imputation. *It is dealing with us not as we are, nor exactly as we are not, but as we are becoming in virtue of the new attachment under which our life has passed.* Faith, then, is reckoned for righteous ness because it puts us upon the right basis and in the right relation to God; and therefore, it is a root out of which, *provided it continues to subsist*, all righteous ness can healthily grow. Whereas, the most brilliant efforts or works on a wrong basis may have neither sound root *nor principle of progress* in them. To believe in Jesus is to have the root of the matter in one self. Therefore, when a man first believes, God can ignore all his previous life and deal with him simply on the new basis, in hope.

### **Justification May Lapse**

This preliminary acquittal or acceptance (some times spoken of as tentative) is of course provisional. As the servant in the parable who had been forgiven his debts found them rolled back upon him when he behaved in a manner utterly inconsistent with the position of a forgiven man (Matt. 18:23-35), so our preliminary justification may be promptly canceled by our future conduct if we behave as one who has forgotten the cleansing from his old sins (2 Pet. 1:9). After he has been welcomed home, the prodigal son *may* go back again to the far country. "This reckoned justification, or justification by faith, holds good so long as the faith continues and is backed by endeavors to do the Lords will. (If faith and obedience cease, at once the justification ceases to be imputed.)" [S. S. Vol. 6, p. F103.]

### **Justification Merges Into Sanctification**

Simple reliance on the merits of Christ, however, and acceptance of forgiveness at his hands and for his sake is a profound movement of the heart that involves much more than might at first appear. "With the heart," not merely with the head, "man believeth" (Rom. 10:9, 10). Those who isolate this mere reliance on another's merits [the merits of Christ] and set it apart from all deeper movement of will or love, and have it and it only concerned with our justification, are hopelessly wrong and unlike St. Paul. To St. Paul even the first movement of faith is a surrender of independence and a recognition in intellect, and much more in will, of the lordship of Jesus. It is in other words a change of allegiance, and this is the important thing about it. The absolved man finds himself embarked on a new service, inevitably *and without any fresh act*.

If he does not find this, he is not a man of faith at all and is therefore not justified in any sense of the word. With St. Paul the faith which justifies is always inseparable from hope.

It is the basis of things *hoped for* (Heb 11:1). It is faith *which worketh by love* (Gal. 5:6). Though it shows itself first as the mere acceptance of an undeserved boon from the Divine bounty, faith is so deep a principle that it involves such hanging upon God as necessarily enlists the *will* to choose and serve him, the *intellect* to know and worship him with a growing perception as he is revealed in Jesus, and the *affections* to desire and love him.

We see therefore that by his death on Calvary's cross our Lord performed a work *for* us that constitutes the basis of our righteousness or justification. And in his risen and glorified condition he is carrying on today a no less important work *in* us. If when we were enemies we were

reconciled to God by the *death* of his Son, much more being reconciled, says the Apostle, we shall be saved by his *life* (his resurrection life) [Rom. 5:10].

### **Righteousness Imparted**

Undoubtedly, it is a blessed experience to have the peace with God that comes from being justified by faith, but a true lover of righteousness could never be satisfied with an imputed or reckoned righteousness only. His ardent desire is to be saved not only from the guilt and punishment of sin but also from its power.

The words of the psalmist express the sentiment of the true believers heart: "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness" (Psa. 17:15). And he will not be satisfied until then.

By faith in Christ's work *for* us, righteousness is *imputed* to us. As by his Spirit Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, righteousness begins to be *imparted* to us, praise be to God. The Christ spirit or Christ mind *in* us, therefore, is indeed the *hope of glory*. Though our outward man perish, the inward man is renewed. Is it asked, When? Daily, replies the Apostle. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed, *day by day*" (2 Cor. 4:16). Under the gracious influence of the spirit of Christ, that blessed promise of the Father, we are to be no longer conformed to the spirit of this Age. We are to be transformed day by day by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2). Concerning Christ's work *for* us, the all sufficient ground of our acceptance with God, our Lord cried from the cross, "It is finished." In regard to Christ's work *in* us, the Apostle writes. "Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

"Faith justification does not cease as the sanctification work progresses. It continues with us . . . covering us . . . from all the weaknesses and imperfection of word, thought, and deed that are ours through heredity (not willful). It continues thus to cover the Lords people as new creatures even to the end of their journey -- through all the testings and trials necessary to them as candidates for, and probationary members of, the New Creation. . . . We will need this justification, and it will continue to be our robe so long as we abide in Christ and are still in the flesh; but it will cease completely when our trial ends in our acceptance as overcomers and we are granted a share in the First Resurrection. As the Apostle explains -- it is sown in corruption, dishonor and weakness, but it will be raised in incorruption, in power, in glory, in full likeness to our Lord, the Quickening Spirit, who is the express image of the Fathers per son. When that perfection shall have been attained, there will no longer be a necessity for an imputed righteousness, because we will then be actually righteous, actually perfect." [S. S., Vol. VI, p. F104.]

### **Conclusion**

In the light of the foregoing discussion, our conclusions on the three questions before us may be briefly summarized as follows:

(1) When a man is justified by faith, righteousness is not communicated to him but is imputed to him. He is not made righteous but reckoned righteous.

(2) In imputing our faith to us for righteousness, God does not thereby declare that we who are not righteous have become righteous but he thereby undertakes to regard and deal with us as though we had become righteous, extending to us all the privileges that would be ours if we had become righteous. Is it asked, How can he do this justly? We answer: He is able to do so because there is in living faith an active principle of love, the tendency of which is ever towards

righteousness. It is this tendency or inclination towards righteousness, inherent in living faith, that enables God without violating the principle of justice to fellowship with imperfect men of faith as though they were perfect (or righteous).

(3) It seems to us that it conduces to clearness of thought to distinguish justification by faith from sanctification. The Reformers distinguished between them; so also did the late pastor, Charles Russell, Justification is correctly understood as preliminary to sanctification; justification meaning righteousness instantaneously imputed; sanctification meaning righteousness gradually imparted. On the whole, St. Paul does seem to keep the two subjects separate from each other. At the same time we heartily concur in the thought that the matter is "rather one of clear ness of thought and convenience of thinking than anything more material. Although separate, the two subjects run up into each other and are connected by real links.

There is an organic unity in the Christian life. Its different parts and functions are no more really separable than the different parts and functions of the human body." As another has well said: "Justification and sanctification may be distinguished by the student, as are the arterial and nervous systems in the human body; but in the living man they are coincident and inseparable."

If we were asked to answer all three questions in one brief statement, we believe we could not do better than commend our readers to that choice sentence from still another writer who did not enjoy the light and privileges of our day, be it remembered, but whose words contain the very pith of the matter: "The righteousness wherewith we shall be clothed in the world to come is both perfect and inherent; that whereby we are justified is perfect but not inherent; that whereby we are sanctified inherent but not perfect."

-- *P. L. Read*

## Debtors to His Marvelous Grace

*"By grace are ye saved through faith." - Eph. 2:8.*

THE greatest exhibit of God's wonder-working grace will be the glorified Church. No other manifestation of his loving-kindness has ever equaled the perfecting work accomplished in these saints of the Lord. Having in grace chosen not many wise, noble, or great according to the world's rule of values, no flesh may therefore glory in his sight however highly honored. And having chosen to work out the special marvels of his grace on material so imperfect, so prone to be otherwise than always pliable in his hands, how greatly God has needed to be an undiscouraged workman. So often the clay has broken on the wheel as he sought to make it into a vessel of usefulness and of beauty. But in lovingkindness it has been taken up again and made into yet another vessel. Again and again his patience has been manifested according to promise, "He shall not crush a broken reed, nor quench a wick that dimly burns." (Isa. 42:3, *Moffatt.*) Seven times the just man *may* fall, but through grace he "riseth up again," assisted by a hand mighty to save. Truly, "the Lord is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish." - 2 Peter 3:9.

In all his working the ways of God are marvelous in our eyes. The marvels of his grace are the proof that God is love. In the operation of his grace toward his people, he not only knows how to steal the bitterness out of life's woes, but he also knows how to discard the unworthy material we so often bring in word and deed, and to preserve the good and commendable. We are not under law, but under grace, and what debtors to that grace we are! In the Old Testament records, where faults and failings are impartially set forth, Moses leaves Egypt in fear for his life. But when the record appears in the spirit of New Testament grace, what beauty there is in having only his virtues brought to view in the words, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." His flight in fear is forgotten, and the triumph of faith alone remembered.

And we are under that marvelous grace wherein we are made the righteousness of God through Christ. Our imperfections are all provided for in the finished work of Christ for us. He took our place under condemnation, and we take his place now in the holy presence of God. He went to the cross, bearing our sin; we come from the cross, bearing his righteousness. With sins confessed, and cleansed from all unrighteousness, it is ours to know that we are now complete in Christ the beloved One. But to really believe this and by faith enter into the rest it should bring to us-how many of us have learned to experience this promised rest? We have struggled and wrestled to gain it, while all the time the Word has been clear and simple, that such as have "believed do enter into rest." And what a rest is this! "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." - Heb. 4:3, 10.

But too often faith falls short of this possible rest and quietness of spirit. So life goes on in fluctuations between long periods of self-condemnation, and too few brief seasons of happiness when we cease to keep looking inward at self. The secret of perpetual joy and confidence eludes us, and we are ready to confess to ourselves that too often an unaccountable depression settles down over our spirit, making all expressions of professed happiness seem meaningless. We know we should be happy in our knowledge of God's favor, always rejoicing even though outward circumstances be otherwise than calm. We know that our lives should reflect freedom from fear, and bear testimony that we know the One whom we have believed, and that we are therefore able to trust his word in all things. Yet failing to realize the peace and assurance we crave, how easily we can succumb to the Tempter's arguments, and say, "This sweet boon of rest is not for me." We see these possibilities of full assurance taught in the Scriptures, and now again exemplified in the

experience of some we meet; but we conclude that since temperaments differ, ours must be the unfortunate type; therefore to keep up the effort to reach the goal of our aspirations is all in vain.

Such conclusions are wrong, and it is well to remember the word of inspiration which says, "Let us earnestly endeavor, therefore, to enter into that rest, that no one may fall by the same example of unbelief" (Heb. 4:11, *Diaglott*) as did Israel of old. It must be remembered that we live in the realm of faith, and that our assurance, our joy and peace, depend not on anything we have done or could do, but on the finished redemption accomplished for us in Christ Jesus. It is from Jesus himself we receive the primary principle of true faith, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:29.) What is this but pointing out the great secret we want to know? To believe on him in the sense intended in this statement is to believe in him as our justification, appropriate him as our righteousness, abiding in him as our life, making him our peace, and accepting through him our victory. All we want *we may* find in him if we will but seek everything through faith. Such faith will bring us into the fixed conviction that since all we need we have in Christ, we may be hourly victorious, daily victorious, and finally victorious.

What God has cleansed we are not to turn from as unclean, and what he has made simple we are to be careful not to mystify and becloud with multiplied words. The verbosity with which this life of rest in Christ is so often treated has hindered many from grasping its meaning. Simply stated it becomes beautifully practical, and surely inspirational. Theological discussions of such themes are likely to be wordy, while experimental discoveries of great truths can be presented in language understandable by all. Having this in mind, it affords a great pleasure to pass on the contents of a letter received quite recently from one who has found the secret springs of this great boon of peace and rest. O how simple these wonderful possibilities are when the Lord can come in and speak as never roan may speak. Let us, then, give ear to the testimony of the writer of this letter. Quoted in part, she says:

"I would like to mention here a line of thought I have been following for some time with great help and profit. It is that instead of spending so much time in looking into my own life to find there whether today I have climbed another rung of the ladder of grace, that I spend more time in thinking of our marvelous Lord and of his wonders of character. In him we see the perfection of all beauty, grace, love, and mercy, the One to whom we may come, finding there One who is perfect in every respect. And I like to enumerate the qualities in which he is perfect-not just to glibly skate over the word, giving it no particular thought, but to feel that he is, indeed, perfect in every wonderful quality I can name or understand-and even then, still to know that we can never exhaust his grace and beauty of character. Why should I look at myself in the light of his glory? What do I expect to find in myself that will ever give me much ground for anything but humility and the feeling that it is himself and not me at all. My puny little efforts pale into insignificance-and more than that, I become so discouraged, looking inside my own heart too closely. But when I look at him I see the Sun of all grace, the perfection of Hope and Joy beyond us to probe to its depths. My heart expands and swells in love toward a God and his Son so worthy of all praise and adoration. I find true joy in forgetting self with its failures and its continual disappointments of development. But I feel strong and mighty when it comes to singing his praise, when it comes to thanking God for the evidence we have of his care and our sonship with him. I become a giant when I attempt to enumerate his blessings, spiritual and material in our daily lives and to thank him for these things which are never-ending.

"But what shall we say when we realize that we have only touched the fringe of all these blessings? What a breathless view we obtain at times of the future in the presence of such a God! How much time is spent by some of us in simple thanksgiving for these matchless blessings? Here I do not need to 'keep my feet on the ground.' We can soar to the heavenlies, feeling that we

have fellowship of the rarest with the true Christians of all ages, be they living or gone from this world. I feel, too, that this is not an impractical thing, a thing illusory and intangible, but a definite reality in which we can forget this life with its failures and troubles, its few friends who understand or who, perhaps, are so stultified by the restrictions of the human spirit, by our clumsy efforts to express ourselves, by fear of being misunderstood and laughed at-by a multitude of human shortcomings and limitations. Surely this is where we meet God in true fellowship and worship. This is the place where we find true strength: knowing we have a God who never fails, who never weakens or grows weary of us and our coming to him. What a God we have! May our thanks ascend like incense daily and our worship grow to full stature. But even in that we shall never reach the end. So once more, my God is an inexhaustible storehouse of grace and glory. Thanks be to his holy name."

In the foregoing letter the writer could express an assurance that in her experience this happier frame of mind was "not an impractical thing, a thing illusory and intangible, but a definite reality in which we can forget this life with its failures and troubles." In this assurance thus expressed there is reality. It is not a reference to "the blessedness I *knew*," but a joy in the realization of a present and living experience in the leadings of the Lord. Such experiences may be new discoveries to any of us when a loving providence finds us ready to be led, but others have known a similar joy before us. Others have testified to being lifted up out of the fluctuating conditions of doubt and depression alternating with times when faith triumphed and rested. Proof of this comes to our attention in another letter received by a friend, the writer having passed on some time ago. We are glad to append this testimonial to the above, and quote in part as follows:

"I notice that you mention 'our covenant by sacrifice' several times, and I just wonder what it all means to you. I used to think of that as meaning what I was doing, and many an unhappy hour I had thinking how constantly I failed in doing and in not doing. Many a time I surrendered myself to God, but now I think I was always thinking of the 'I' in the surrender (what I would now do or say), and that went on for a long time."

"Many a lesson God gave me, and I always laid hold of something, but I can now see, it was always in connection with something on my part. I could fill a book, dear, with all the gracious things the Lord showed me, and I thought I understood it all, but now 'I have entered the valley of blessing so sweet,' and there is no more 'I' in the business."

"About eighteen months ago I was reading and studying Colossians a lot, and saw that Jesus was everything. In him everything in heaven and in earth was centered-God's will for us the Church, and his Plan for the world, and that he was always well-pleasing to the Father. While thinking about that, it came to me how pure and perfect, how lovely and all-satisfying to God our dear Savior was, and I thought if I were hidden in him, then I too would be always well-pleasing to our Heavenly Father. It was as if a door opened and that door was Christ our Lord, and I stepped in and was swallowed up in him, lost in him, and God found me in him. What a day I had! All the verses I used to delight in had a deeper, sweeter meaning to me. He had overcome and he counted me as also having overcome. Out of his fulness I am all that he was and is. 'By whom the world is crucified to me and I unto the world.'

"I see my own weaknesses and failings,, but I seek to follow Paul, and glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. The blood of Jesus Christ is always cleansing me, and he has taken me into the Holy of Holies, and made me to sit down with him, and his banner over me is love. What a difference! I understand what it means to reckon myself dead in the old nature, in a way I never did before. I have entered the joy of the Lord, praise his name! and everything has



a different look in a way I can hardly describe. The work is done, and all is finished, and I go on following in his footsteps, seeking ever to refer all things to him, and to lay hold...."

In these testimonies we see illustrated the verities of feasting on Christ. This is the great truth of our standing in grace. If our vision can reach to the utmost of this wonderful provision made for us in Jesus Christ, the days of faltering faith should be over, and the garments of perpetual praise put on. Then will God's goodness bind grateful hearts to him, and the habit of song will surely be, "Hear what the Lord has done for me."

- J. J. Blackburn.

## The Question Box

*"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." - 2 John 7.*

### *Question:*

Does the coming of Jesus Christ mentioned in this text refer to his first advent or his second? Recently I was told that the reference could not be to Christ's first advent for two reasons:

(1) At the time this epistle was written the whole world was fully informed of the fact that Jesus had come in the flesh. If any one could be found who denied so well-attested a fact, he would deceive no one but himself. There would be no reason, therefore, for the Apostle to insist on the matter. Consequently he must have had reference to the second advent.

(2) The literal translation is "coming" -- not "is come".

### *Answer:*

It is true that the literal translation is "coming" -- not "is come." However, this fact does not prove that the reference is to the second advent. The language employed is such that the reference could be to either advent. However, there are compelling reasons for believing that the reference is not to the second advent, but to the first. Perhaps the following discussion may be of some value in the elucidation of this, admittedly difficult, text.

First, let us verify the fact that the literal translation is "coming." This may be seen by reference to the word-for-word translation in the *Diaglott*, which reads:

"Because many deceivers entered into the world, who not confessing Jesus Anointed coming in flesh;"

In this passage the word "coming" is a translation of the Greek word "*erchomenon*", which is the present participle form of the verb "*erchomai*". (See *Strong's Concordance* No. SG2064.)

The works of other scholars confirm the *Diaglott*. Note the following:

"For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh;" - R.S.V. "Because many deceivers have gone out into the world, they who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in flesh;" - Rotherham.

"I say this, because a number of impostors have emerged in the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh;" -*Moffatt*.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the phrase is not entirely free from ambiguity. How, then, are we to determine the Apostle's meaning? I reply: By comparing scripture with scripture. Let us turn first to 1 John 4:2, reading from *Rotherham*:

"Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ as having come in flesh is of God;"

This is not only another scripture, but one written by the same Apostle. Moreover, he is writing on the same theme, namely, how we may discriminate between true and false teachers, by their acknowledgment of, or their failure to acknowledge, the basic doctrine of the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. In 1 John 4:2, however, there is an important difference in the language employed, which has not escaped the notice of scholars. Whereas in 2 John 7 there is a measure of ambiguity (when considered alone-isolated from other scriptures), there is none in 1 John 4:2. The reference is clearly to a coming in the past-namely, to our Lord's first advent.

It is true that no one living in the days of the Apostle would deny that the Jesus whom John preached was a real historical person - a man who had walked their streets, and spent his brief life in their midst. But they were by no means unanimous in the belief that he was the Son of God, the long-promised Messiah (or Christ, as the Hebrew word Messiah is translated in Greek). Quite to the contrary. Even now, after 2,000 years, Israel as a nation still rejects him as such, as do also many Gentiles.

The widespread heresy of the times, against which John warned, was not that of denying a fact which all admitted, namely, that Jesus walked this earth as a man; rather, it was that of denying the all-important truth that the Son of God had come to earth as a human being, to accomplish our salvation. To lose one's grasp of this fundamental teaching, would make shipwreck of one's faith, and therefore, the Apostle might well employ his inspired pen in its defense. That he does so in 1 John 4:2 there can be no question. Therefore, it is at least possible that he *may* be doing so in 2 John 7.

Turn next to 3 John 3, in which the *Revised Standard Version* reads:

"For I greatly rejoiced when some of the brethren arrived and testified to the truth of your life, as indeed you do follow the truth."

*Rotherham* translates more literally:

"For I rejoiced exceedingly at brethren coming and bearing witness unto thy truth,-even as thou in truth art walking."

In this verse, from the pen of the same Apostle, the word translated "arrived" in the *Revised Standard Version* and "coming" by *Rotherham*, is also the present participle form of the verb "*erchomai*" used in 2 John 7. Grammatically, therefore, the reference *could* be to a future arrival of the brethren. It does not require a knowledge of Greek, however, for one to realize that the Apostle's rejoicing was not occasioned by his hope that in the future the brethren would bring him an encouraging report about Gaius. Rather it had resulted from the previous visits of the brethren, possibly also from their present visit, gladdening his heart with the reports they had brought of the faithful walk of the beloved Gaius.

The conviction that in 2 John 7 the Apostle has reference not to the second advent but to the first, is strengthened, when we recall that such a view harmonizes well with his other writings. For example, in 1 John 1:1-4, in which the theme and purpose of that Epistle is set forth, our Lord's first advent is manifestly under discussion.

When he there speaks of having seen, heard, and touched Jesus, he is telling of experiences already in the past. And this Jesus, he identifies, in the prologue to the fourth Gospel, as being, in his pre-human existence, the *Logos*, the mighty spirit-being who *became* flesh.

Note, too, how well this view harmonizes with 1 John 4:14, 15 which, in the *Weymouth* translation reads:

"We have seen and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God -- God continues in union with him, and he continues in union with God."

Foregoing I have shown, I think, that 2 John 7 cannot be adduced as a "proof text" that the Apostle believed and taught that at our Lord's Second Advent he "will come in the flesh." I now turn to 1 John 3:2, as a "proof text" that the Apostle believed and taught the contrary. The *Revised Standard Version* reads:

"Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."

What he now is like, it doth not yet appear to our finite minds. However, we know that he is no longer a human being. Put to death in the flesh, he was raised in the spirit -- a life-giving spirit-being. (1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 15:45.) No longer is he to be known after the flesh, even by those who once knew him so. (2 Cor. 5:16.) According to Hebrews 1:3, he is now the express image of the Father's person; dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see. (1 Tim. 6:16.) And, as he himself said, just before his death: "Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me." - John 14:19.

Furthermore, we are to be like him, says 1:he Apostle. We are to see him, *not as he was* but as he is. (1 John 3:2.) We are to behold his glory. John heard him request this of the Father. (John 17:24.) We are to be made a partaker of the Divine nature he now possesses. (1 Pet. 1:4.) We are to share his glory, as his joint-heirs. (Rom. 8:17.) What a glorious hope is thus set before us! No wonder the Apostle adds: "Every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." - 1 John 3:3, *R.S.V.*

- P. L. Read.

## **Christ Alone Can Satisfy**

"O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found  
And found in Thee alone,  
The peace, the joy I sought so long,  
The bliss 'til now unknown.  
Now none but Christ can satisfy,  
None other name for me!  
There's love, and life, and lasting *joy*,  
Lord Jesus, found in Thee!"

## **Recently Deceased**

Sr. Fred Everson, Kawkawlin, Mich. - (Sept.)  
Bro. John S. Jaeschke, Pembine, Wis. - (Oct.)  
Bro. O. Magnuson, San Diego, Cal. - (Sept.)  
Bro. C. Paschall, Sr., Richmond, Va. - (Oct.)  
Bro. T. Rabenberg, Saskatoon, Sask. - (Sept.)  
Sr. Laura V. Wagner, St. Louis, Mo. - (Oct.)