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Christian Liberty

*"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,
and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." - Gal. 5:1.*

THE love of freedom is inherent in all of God's intelligent creatures. Moreover, under certain limitations, it was manifestly his purpose that all enjoy liberty -- the limitations, in every case, being those of righteousness, of respect of and submission to the divine law, and mutual love and respect for the rights and liberties of fellow creatures.

However, many have very different ideas of freedom from this. One of the world's great champions of human liberty -- Abraham Lincoln -- once said:

"We all declare for liberty; but in using the same word, we do not all mean the same thing. With some, the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself, and the product of his labor; while with others the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men's labor."

Again he wrote:

"The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as his liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act, as the destroyer of liberty. Plainly, the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon a definition of the word liberty."

As we look around us today, it seems evident that there are yet many men who have not repudiated the wolf's dictionary. Such are anxious to cast off all restraints of God and man, to pursue a selfish course, untrammelled, and without regard to either their obligations to God, or the rights of their fellow-men. Such ideas of freedom (?) lead only to anarchy and destruction. And those who hold them look upon all wholesome restraints of law and order as infringements of their rights, and consider themselves in bondage under them. This is the rapidly growing sentiment all over the world today among the masses of mankind. And this is what makes the outlook for the future so ominous, threatening the utter wreck of the present social order in world wide anarchy.

These remarks, however, have to do mainly with the liberty known and experienced by mankind in general. From these reflections let us turn to the consideration of the liberty of our text: "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

From time to time the question is raised: Would it not be possible to formulate a list of elementary, fundamental truths, the acceptance of which would be all that was necessary to enable followers of the Master to attain and enjoy Christian liberty, unity, and fellowship? To such a question I reply: It surely is possible. As a matter of fact it has been done for us. The list was compiled many years ago, and consists of seven foundation truths of our "most holy faith." A wise and faithful Pastor furnished this list, and did so, I am persuaded, under the guidance of the holy spirit of God. These seven vital truths are grouped together by none other than the great Apostle to the Gentiles himself, in Ephesians 4:2-6, as follows

"One body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Here the Apostle mentions:

1. The Author of unity -- "One God and Father."
2. The Center of unity -- "There is one Lord."
3. The Door of unity -- "There is one baptism."
4. The Kinship of unity -- "There is one body."
5. The Nature of unity -- "There is one spirit."
6. The Goal of unity -- "There is one hope of your calling."
7. The Creed of unity -- "There is one faith."

WHAT IS THE "ONE FAITH"?

What is the "one faith" mentioned as item 7 in the list? Ah! it is here, very often, that our wily adversary is successful in ensnaring those not on the alert. All the more important that we should be, as was the case with Jesus, of "quick understanding" in the reverence of Jehovah; that we should be fully informed as to just what the faith is, quick to detect the counterfeit from the true. What, then, is the "one faith"? Let a wise and faithful Pastor, who labored long and earnestly in our own times, make reply. I quote:

"The one faith, which all should hold, was a very simple one; one so simple that all, the learned and the unlearned alike, could grasp it and comprehend it, and be *fully persuaded* in their own minds' concerning it. It was not a dose of incongruous mysteries, inconsistent with themselves and inharmonious with reason as well as with the Bible, to be swallowed by the ignorant with credulity, and by the learned with hypocritical mental reservations. But it was so simple, so clear, so reasonable, that any and every honest follower of Christ could be *fully persuaded in his own mind* regarding its truth. What is this *one* faith? The basis of it is stated by Paul, thus: 'I delivered unto you *first* of all, that which I also received [first of all -- as a foundation truth or doctrine,

upon and in harmony with which all other doctrines must be built], how that *Christ died for our sins*, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures' (1 Cor. 15:3, 4). 'There is *one God* and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.'-1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

"This, in a word, confesses sin and utter helplessness; it acknowledges God's loving plan for our redemption; it owns that our Lord's death was our ransom price; and that forgiveness (justification), and reconciliation to God, and the restitution of believers, come as a result of *faith* in this Redeemer, when in due time that plan is made known to each and all.

"These brief statements contain the whole Gospel, in the same sense that an acorn contains an oak tree. Without this Gospel kernel, the true Gospel can never be possessed; hence *this must be insisted* on as a test of Christian fellowship. This must be received, else the Gospel is not received. When it is received, the Gospel is received....

A PERFECT BASIS OF UNION

"This true Gospel, this simple faith, easily understood and confessed by the weakest babe in Christ, must also be, and always, and equally the faith of the most developed sons of God. *This* one faith (and not the endless ramifications and details of faith which lead out from it) Paul placed as a standard or test of all claiming the name Christian. All the consecrated who agreed on this one standard, or foundation truth, Paul counted as in and of the one Church. While each member was to grow in grace, knowledge, and love, there would always be harmony and oneness in the faith and fellowship of the Church, if all growth were kept in line and harmony with this foundation truth.

"Here was a perfect basis of union, which allowed for all the various stages of individual *development in the truth*, and which most effectually guarded against errors. For if this simple creed were today made the standard by which all doctrines should be tested, it would speedily lead to the discarding of every error, and to the true union of the Church in the 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.'

"The endeavor to compel all men to think alike on all subjects, culminated in the great apostasy and the development of the great Papal system; and thereby the 'gospel,' the 'one faith,' which Paul and the other Apostles set forth, was lostburied under the mass of uninspired decrees of popes and councils. The *union* of the early Church, based upon the simple Gospel and *bound only by love*, gave place to the bondage of the Church of Rome -- a slavery of God's children, from the degradation of which multitudes are still weak and suffering.

THE TRUE BIBLE STUDENT'S PLACE

"The Reformation movement of the sixteenth century came as an effort to regain liberty of conscience; but, deluded by the idea of *an elaborate creed*, insisted upon for so many centuries, the reformers and their followers formed other systems of bondage very similar to that of Papacy, though slight modifications gave liberty to fuller ideas on some subjects. And so it has been ever since: each new reform movement has made the failure of attempting to make a creed just large enough for its prime *movers*." -*Reprints* R1572.

"The true teacher's place, and the true Bible student's place, is outside of all human bondage, free to examine and feed upon all portions of the good Word of God, and untrammelled to follow the Lamb whithersoever he leads."-S.S. Vol. III, p. C145.

- *P. L. Read.*

Melchisedec

"And Melchisedec King of Salem brought forth bread and wine, and he was priest of God Most High." - Gen. 14:18.

THREE verse in Genesis (Gen. 14:18-20) contain all that the *Spirit* of God has seen fit to record historically of this remarkable personage. Melchisedec, the king of righteousness, ruler of Salem, "priest of the Most High God," who appears in this incident for a moment and then suddenly vanishes, in all ages, alike from his name, which in itself commands respectful awe, and the silence observed respecting his origin or history, has been a favorite subject for speculation. Around this personage tradition has gathered many legends which have no credibility in themselves and no foundation in history. The words of our record are these; "And Melchisedec King of Salem brought forth bread and wine, and he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him a tenth of all."

There are difficulties in this narrative the 'solution of which has never been successfully attained. The presence of Melchisedec, "priest of the Most High God, in the midst of the probably heathen population of Salem, is perplexing. We are scarcely prepared for the sudden appearance of this priest (Cohen), offering bread and wine in connection with the first-fruits of the spoil, blessing Abram, and receiving tithes from the patriarch, who had seemed to be the one witness to Monotheism among an idolatrous people. To see him now holding a position inferior to this hitherto unknown chieftain is an unexpected difficulty. Who he was, of what family or nation, is left in utter obscurity. This illustrious personage comes forth in the page of history for one brief moment, and then his name is heard no more for a thousand years, when it is found in the Book of Psalms (Psa. 110); a thousand years more pass before it occurs in the Epistle to the Hebrews; so that there is a mystery connected therewith, which gives to it a preponderating interest and charm.

Identity of Melchisedec

As to the identity of the personage himself, speculation has been rife. Melchisedec has been regarded as the divine angel of the Lord; again, as the Holy Spirit; the Jews, in order to account for his acknowledged superiority to Abraham, identified him with Shem, the most pious of Noah's sons, who according to their genealogies lived till Isaac's time; others suppose that he was Ham. Seiss, in his work, "A Miracle in Stone," ingeniously argues Melchisedec's identity with the great patriarch Job, near the end of those one hundred and forty years of glory which succeeded his sore affliction; and in fact connects both characters with a third, the mysterious shepherd prince "Philition," associated with the building of the Great Pyramid and the subsequent building of the city of Jerusalem as mentioned in the writings of Herodotus and Manetho. Some Christians, both in early and later times, have maintained that Melchisedec was the Son of God appearing in human form, which of course would nullify his typical character on which such stress is laid in the Epistle to the Hebrews. He could not be a type of himself; nor would it have been said (Heb. 7:3) that he was made **"like unto** the Son of God," if he had been the Son of God Himself. Christ was not made like Melchisedec; but Melchisedec like Christ.

But though the historic account of this remarkable personage is very brief and attempts to identify him have so far proved fruitless, it is not in the literal history, but rather in the inspired commentary upon the three verses in Genesis referred to previously, that much richness of detail in

spiritual wisdom has been set before us; proving this meager account to have been divinely recorded to preserve just the salient facts purposed, and even teach wonderful lessons in the deliberate omission of some details which otherwise would have been naturally included.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, one great subject is the priestly office of the Lord Jesus. Chapters 4, 8, 9, and 10 are mainly occupied with showing Him to be the great Antitype of the Aaronic Priesthood. But even it, with all its details and ceremonies, fails to show fully the glory of the priesthood of Christ. Therefore the prophetic allusion of Psalm 110 is taken up and used as a text, so to speak, of a discourse, the burden of which is to exalt yet further the official glory of Christ by showing the superiority of the Melchisedec to the Aaronic Priesthood, and that Christ is a Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec as well as after the pattern, or type, of Aaron.

The Unnamed, Exalted One

This Psalm, where next we find Melchisedec mentioned, is wonderfully dramatic and impressive. From beginning to end it celebrates a single mysterious Hero. The Psalmist portrays Jehovah Himself as addressing this great unnamed One, bidding Him to be seated at His right hand until He shall put His foes beneath His feet. That this Psalm is Messianic is of course a foregone conclusion by reason of the solemn quotation of it as such by Jesus Himself. But, apart from this, its very terms make it impossible to imagine such an honor as being invited to, sit on, Jehovah's right hand, attributed to any other person known in sacred story or song. And it is here in the description of the exaltation of God's Son and His subsequent triumph over all enemies, that the significant statement is made in verse 4: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." At once, the brief history of Abraham's superior assumes a new importance; so much so, in fact, that we find the entire 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews devoted to an exegesis of Abraham's mysterious contemporary. Through the inspired and eloquent writer of this epistle our attention is called not only to the general resemblance between Melchisedec and Messiah, but to see in the likeness a verification in a number of details. From the 4th to the 10th verses, the argument is devoted to proving the superiority of Melchisedec's priesthood to that of Aaron in seven particulars

- (1) Because even Abraham paid him tithes.
- (2) Because even the yet unborn Levi may be said to have paid tithes in the person of Abraham.
- (3) Because it is the superior who gives the blessing, and Abraham was blessed by Melchisedec.
- (4) Because the Aaronic priests die, but Melchisedec stands as a type of undying priesthood.
- (5) Because the permanence of his priesthood implied the abrogation of the whole Law, on which the Levitic Priesthood was grounded.
- (6) It was superior because it was founded on the swearing of an oath (Psa. 110:4), which was not the case with the Levitic priests.
- (7) It was superior because the Levitic priests were necessarily many, requiring to be constantly replenished to fill up the ravages made in their ranks by death; but His priesthood, because of His eternal permanence, is intransmissible; whence also "He is able to save to the uttermost those who through Him approach to God, seeing that He ever liveth to intercede for them."

And having thus shown by these many particulars the immeasurable superiority of the Melchisedec Priesthood of Christ to the Levitic Priesthood and thus teaching the important truth that this tranference of priesthood involved the entire abrogation of the Mosaic system in due time, the inspired writer adds a weighty summary in the concluding words of the chapter: "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, **which was since the law**, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore." - Heb. 7:26-28.

Melchisedec Both Priest and King

In the second verse of this wonderful chapter, the name Melchisedec is shown to be more properly a title conveying two meanings, "King of Righteousness," and also "King of Salem," which is King of Peace. Thus in the combination in one person of the two offices of priest and king is shown the most prominent superiority of the Melchisedec over the Aaronic Priesthood. His was a "Royal Priesthood." In Israel, the priest was of the tribe of Levi, the king was of the tribe of Judah, Hence, so long as our Lord was upon the earth, He could not be a priest. (Heb. 8 r His priesthood began in resurrection. Death could not come in to interrupt even for a day this new order of priesthood; it is "after the power of an endless life." Thus in heaven, Jesus, the risen Son of God, is invested-with the new and surpassingly glorious order of priesthood, "a Priest upon His throne." (Zech. 6:13.) He shall one day be revealed as the "King of kings" to sway the scepter of universal dominion, whilst as the great Melchisedec, He shall come forth with all the blessings of the New Covenant -- shadowed forth in the "bread and wine" -- to comfort and to strengthen Abraham's ultimate seed, restored humanity.

And this being the character of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus, the same applies to the saints. As it is written, "He hath made us kings] and priests unto God" (Rev. 1:6), and again, "Ye are a Royal Priesthood." - 1 Pet. 2:9.

That which appears most prominently in the Aaronic Priesthood is the offering of gifts **to** God; that which is presented in the Melchisedec Priesthood is the **bringing forth of gifts from God**. **In** both these characters our Lord Jesus appears. He is the true Aaron appearing before God in all the acceptance of the one offering, which He accomplished on Calvary; but He is also the true Melchisedec bringing forth and dispensing to His people the fruits of His death and resurrection. He breaks the bread; He pours the wine. Ascended up on high, He received gifts for men, even for those now rebellious, and freely and gloriously did He lavish those gifts at Pentecost and a after it, and will do so during His Millennial reign.

Dual Significance of His Name

It is significant, and attention is directed to the fact in Heb. 7:2, that Melchisedec is **first** King of Righteousness and "after that also King of Peace." This is always the divine order. It could not be otherwise, for "peace at any price" is not God's principle. Righteousness must first be considered, and all the claims of perfect righteousness owned and honored before peace could be proclaimed. Thus the Gospel of Peace is based upon the righteousness of God. The Lord Jesus, the true Melchisedec, in securing peace for guilty and condemned sinners, first "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." He "made peace by the blood of His cross." On the day of His resurrection, He greeted His trembling disciples with the glad salutation, "Peace be unto you," and having so said, as if to show the righteous ground of peace, as if to declare that first He was "King of Righteousness," "He showed them His hands, and His side." And thus it is written, "the work of

righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." (Isa. 32:17.) "Righteousness and peace kissed each other" at the cross of Christ, and are eternally united for us in His glorious person as our Melchisedec Priest. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne: Mercy and truth shall go before Thy face." (Psa. 89:14.) In accordance with this great divine principle of righteousness being first, it is written: "The Kingdom of God is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14:17.) So also "the wisdom that cometh down from above is first pure, then peaceable." - James 3:17.

Personal Spiritual Lessons

The saint of today feels quite at home, if we may so speak, in Genesis 14. The symbols of bread and wine are much more familiar to us than the sacrificial types and shadows of Leviticus. And surely there is much for our hearts to learn from the occasion upon which these familiar emblems were brought forth. Abram had gained a great victory; it was an hour of prosperity. Little is a saint aware, oftentimes, of his deepest need. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought." But there was an *eye* upon him that knew and anticipated the temptation that was coming, and fortified him for the further victory that followed. First, Abram gives to Melchisedec tithes of all, owning him thus as the servant of God, who is "Possessor of heaven and earth." He then meets the offered bounty of the King of Sodom in the strength of the blessing received. He had lifted up his hand to the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth; therefore would he not take from a thread to a shoelatchet, nor anything that pertained to the King of Sodom, lest he should say, "I have made Abram rich." Who can tell how the heart of Abram might have yielded to the temptation, had he not thus been met and strengthened with might through the blessing he had received at the hand of Melchisedec? Thus Abram repeats to the King of Sodom the very words of the blessing he had received. He had treasured them in his heart.

The King of Salem yet lives, "a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec"; and the believer who has striven with the rulers of the darkness of this world, will yet meet Him with His bread and wine in the pilgrimage.

"As we have heard, so have we seen, in the City of the Lord of Hosts, in the City of our God." - Psa. 48:8.

- *W. J. Siekman*

"This one Thing"

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." - Phil. 3:13.

IT might be assumed, at first, thought, that *all* who hear the gracious story of Love Divine, would want, out of sheer gratitude, to make some slight return to God for such wonderful loving kindness to men. To learn that he gave his well-beloved Son to be the all sufficient Redeemer for sinful men, ought to awaken in the depths of every soul, a responsive gratitude, so deep and strong, that every moment of our little lives would be taken up in seeking (if we could) to repay some little portion of the debt we owe to him. But sad to say such is not the case with every one who hears. In every land and every church there are many thousands who seek to pass themselves off as decent Christian folk, who are not so moved and actuated. The Gospel story does not touch life's deeper chords. If there is something' to be gained or acquired, they are quite willing to be recipients and take the gracious gift, but as for giving anything to God, they are not anxious to do much of this themselves. They are quite content to be known as "receiving Christians" -- as Christians *living* on a heavenly dole.

These are Christians with too many interests in life. Jesus said that the deceitfulness of riches as well as the cares of this world -choke the Word and it thus becomes unfruitful. To amass money or acquire other forms of wealth and luxury they are prepared to work long and late. Consequently they have too little time to attend to the pursuit of truth or the means of grace. Others are too greatly involved in nursing and tending this present world. They want to heal all its troubles *in* these present days; hence they join in its political affairs or its humanitarian schemes. Or else they y give themselves to the cultivation of the arts or sciences to an almost exclusive degree, and find themselves with all too little time to spare for holy things.

Now in saying all that has been said we have no intention to find fault with such a mode of life. It is better far to live for these nobler things than for the vicious and unholy things around them. But such a life needs to be seen for what it is, for it is not a Christ-like life! And no life which is not a Christ-like life can be accounted as a really Christian life. In spite of the little interest in holy things which manifests itself from time to time, it cannot be accounted as a "following in his steps."

The life and service of Jesus *was* devoted always to the one end and a purpose. He had, no time or energy for other things. He had come down from heaven to do his Father's will, and to that service he dedicated himself exclusively. He knew the world was suffering in its sorrows and sins, yet he did not let that detract him from his purpose. True, he healed some of these suffering souls, but there were many that he did not heal! His people sought and schemed for freedom from the Roman yoke -- he did not lift a finger to help their schemes along! Certain Greeks seem to have invited him to leave the thankless Jews and withdraw to their more cultured land. (John 12:20-22.) From the nature of his reply, Jesus flatly refused to be drawn aside from the path of danger and of sacrifice. He had come into the world for that very hour, and that very sacrifice!

That selfless, concentrated, unceasing devotion to the will of God is the standard and pattern of the Christian life. It is the model of "the one thing" that every consecrated follower should emulate. He will thenceforth have need to make it the "one thing" of his life, if he is to remain secure in Christ. He cannot now pursue the many things as in his former days. There cannot now be pursuit of wealth, nor even a nursing of this old world's cares. He can no longer devote himself

to mere humanitarian reforms, nor engage in worldly politics henceforth. He must now be prepared to stand aside with Christ, and let the world, with its tinsel and its toys, go by.

To become carnally minded now will lead towards "new creature death. Even the highest standards of a fleshly life and outlook can eventuate only in such a death. And if, as an unfruitful branch of the Vine, he is cut away from Christ, decay and destruction is sure to be his end, as the earthly horticulturalist could so easily testify.

Carnal mindedness need not of necessity mean evil mindedness. The best of men, unbegotten by the spirit of God, are carnal men. "Carnal," as a word, is the Latin form of the word "flesh" -- and need not mean more than that a man lives according to the dictates of his five main senses. He may tend to lead his life on a higher moral plane, or wallow, otherwise in the mire; in either case, it is life on the fleshly plane.

It is not possible for a spirit begotten child of God to live his life on the plane of his five senses alone, even though he lives on the highest moral level. He has entered into a life on another plane and must draw supplies of nourishment from another source. In the language of the ancient Tabernacle, he has been constituted an under-priest, with right of entry into the Holy Place. He may enjoy the illumination, from the Golden Candlestick, and partake of the "Presence" Bread from the Holy Table of his God. How improper it would be for him to live all his life in the Camp, eating, sleeping, and working there every day, and all the day! The purpose of his anointing and dedication to the holy service would be defeated and the divine intention altogether frustrated. And surely, from such tokens as we have, divine recompense and wrath would most certainly overtake him for his waywardness.

Carnal mindedness may be nothing more than service in the Camp, by one whose person had been devoted to the Tabernacle. It may be even clean and helpful to the Camp, but that consideration alone does not make it the right thing to do. The Camp is not his proper sphere; his vocation lies in the holy things of God. Service to God was the "this one thing" of his life. His home relationship -- wife, children, friends -- was secondary to that.

The consecrated, spirit begotten child of God is likewise called to the service of his God. That is the specific vocation of his life. All other things are secondary to this, the mere avocations of the daily round and common task. Attention to the thing for which he has been apprehended of God must ever be the "this one thing" of his life. It must affect his working and his leisure time, it must control what he reads and what he says, as well as where he goes. It must be the regulator of his entire day, as also of his entire life.

Let us see how this works out. And first as concerns his time. As with the priest in Israel the Lord claims all his time, yet graciously allows him to use enough of this to win his daily bread. Should the bare winning of that bread take all his day-save only his sleeping time-then he must take the whole to "provide" for his own. That is according to the will of God for him, provided only that in all he does eating, drinking, working he does it to the glory of God.

But not all are situated quite like that. Some win their bread in fewer hours, and thus have time to spare. What may he do with these leisure hours: These are not his own, but God's! He must not forget his stewardship-for these scraps of time, but must utilize them as one who must answer for his stewardship. Here the issue is not what he "must," but what he "may" do with his leisure hours. Shall he use them to rake together still more of this earth's golden dust? or shall he let them slip noiselessly and uselessly away? or shall he turn his mind to holy things, to read, or write, or meditate with others of kindred mind? It is for each one to make his choice, but in arriving

thereat, each one is revealing the temper and warmth of his heart, and of his sense of stewardship. Eternal issues hang upon these things. The tilt of the scales towards carnal or spiritual things is revealed by zeal in what he "may" or "may not" do, - not in what he -"must." When he is quite as mindful of the glory of God in the things that lie "may do" as he is in those that lie "must," then all is well with his soul.

What may be read? Anything, everything? Here again, he must choose for himself -- but if the stuff he reads is the food of his mind, that ought not to be a question difficult to decide. Here again there may be some things he "must" read for bread-winning purposes. These are legitimate. What of the rest? "This one thing" should determine these! Again the sense of stewardship comes into play and will place limitations upon what is accordant with that "one thing."

What may he say? Again, the glory of God provides the test! Here the question of influence on other lives comes in. In apostolic days Pharisees and rulers took note of humble un-schooled men that they had "been with Jesus and learned of him"! There is no mistaking what they had said!

There are always some things that "must" be said at home, at work, on the street, in the store, and elsewhere. All these things should be said to the glory of God. What are the things that "may" be said: These are words of a special kind, and for special purposes -- words in which a testimony to the grace of God may express itself. They may carry the blessing of a Providence into some lonely soul or some weary heart-a draught of life-giving water in some desert patch of life. More than any other, these words show the gracious temper of the inner life -- the outflow of a spirit filled individuality.

In no place do these words show themselves so apt and helpful as in the assemblies of like precious faith. *Too much careless conversation, lacking point or purpose, can mar the life and fellowship of the ecclesia gatherings.* And too much insistence on secondary themes can sap the warmth and enthusiasm of any body of Christian folk.

The Bible is a storehouse of many kinds of evidence, some of them less essential than others to the healthy growth and vigorous well being of the child of God at this present time. Some of these things pertain to other times and other people at a later stage of the Divine Plan. Others have to do with the authenticity of the text-its structure and grammatical construction. Still others treat of things upon which conjecture and imagination can run riot things difficult to prove in the last degree, and which leave the mind unsettled and confused.

To the plodding child of God, treading in the Savior's footsteps, these many things are of secondary importance only. To all such, life and its experience has but one worth while thing to offer-to all such the Word of God has but one sole objective to present-to make the calling and election sure! To learn ten thousand things and yet miss that one will mean that all, so far as this present Age with its heavenly call is concerned, has been lost! And if that is lost, what is all thee knowledge in the world then worth to one whose eyes are fixed on that forever with the Lord association with the Altogether Lovely One?

The all essential thing in our study of the Word is to put "first things first," and relegate all unessential things, no matter how intriguing they are, to a secondary place. The only thing that is important, with a really first class degree of urgent importance, is to apprehend that relationship to Christ for which we have been apprehended by him. That is the "one thing" of the present Age -- the one goal and objective that lies between Pentecost and glorification for the Gospel Church. Nothing else matters to the same degree -- no acquisition of knowledge nor solutions of

prophetical problems can compare with this. There are many things that matter only in small degree -- this one matters to the absolute degree.

On this account the words and utterances of the Elders and Teachers in, the Church gatherings need to be directed expressly and with emphasis to that "one thing." They, more than any other, can lead the brethren's minds away from the contemplation of Christlike growth and development, and blur the clear outline of the call to suffer with him while following in his steps. Conversely they, more than all beside, can be instrumental in holding that heavenly call before their brethren's minds with clarity and emphasis, and with inborn earnestness themselves becoming examples to the flock.

"First things first" should be the motto of every instructor in the Church; other things may then be taken in. their place without danger of detracting attention from the goal.

Never has it been so necessary as it is today to focus the attention of each and all -- of both "the teacher" and "the taught" upon that goal. The day of opportunity is fleeting fast away; the "appointed time" will soon be past, and with its passing the privilege of sharing in his sufferings will be gone and if there is no suffering, there can be no reigning with the Lord!

Our way is still "a narrow way" - our course is still to renounce the many things, and concentrate on the "one"; our "destination" (the predestined end to our course) is still our conformation "to the image of his Son."

Give all diligence then to the "one thing" alone, beloved in the Lord, and let that be the motive and lode-star of your lives.

May the Lord help us all so to do till "the Image" is complete.

- *T. Holmes, Eng.*

Rebuilding the Walls

"So built we the wall ... for the people had a mind to work." - Neh. 4:6.

ONE of the main methods by which a man may receive his education and knowledge of spiritual as well as of mundane things, is through his observation of what *other* men have been and what other men have done. We find evidence that God also recognizes this fact in the detailed accounts which he has preserved in the Scriptures "for our learning", of the lives of many men both good and bad, and through our careful study of how God dealt with them, we may learn a good deal about what our Heavenly Father requires of us.

Autobiographies form a part of the record, accounts of lives written by the men who lived them; and these are always interesting because in each case we get the intimate personal viewpoint of the writer and his reaction to the events and circumstances of his life. No attempt is made, as with many of our modern biographers, to gloss over personal weaknesses and mistakes in order to make an attractive "front", or to place in the best possible light the errors which swayed a life.

In addition, as the writer concisely recounts the experience that came to him, we get, through the very brevity of the record, a sort of birds-eye view of the leading of God in his life, as well as some idea as to where he fitted in the development of God's plans. There can be no doubt at all that the life of everyone who is trying (who is putting forth his best efforts) to do the will of the Father, occupies a unique and necessary position in the Divine arrangements until the great plan of salvation shall have been carried to completion.

We know, of course, that no slightest hint of compulsion of any kind is brought to bear upon anyone in the filling of the positions God offers, and that it is strictly up to those to whom the opportunities have been offered, and who recognized them, to grasp firmly the privilege that is theirs, and to follow the course of training necessary to fill each place in His Kingdom. Otherwise the opportunity will simply be offered to someone else until finally the one is found who is faithful, for each position *must* be filled.

Only those who have been convinced of the great importance of the positions to which they have been called as workmen for God, to the extent that they are made unhappy by any circumstance which may delay that work, will ever have the necessary stamina to complete their appointed task. Only those who have the continual urge "to be about their Father's business" will be able to obtain the reward which has been promised by God for faithfulness.

THE BUILDER'S BACKGROUND

Though he is but infrequently referred to except in his own book, such a workman for God was the historian Nehemiah, and we have selected his autobiographical account as the basis for our study. Shakespeare says in his play "Julius Caesar" that "the good men do is oft interred with their bones. This is not true of Nehemiah, for the account of his life contains many valuable lessons for us. His character was such that we might with profit develop one similar to it, even if it is over 2300 years since Nehemiah finished the task God had put in his heart to do, the rebuilding of the walls and gates of Jerusalem.

In Nehemiah we have the last book of Old Testament history, but we find here more than mere history, for between its lines we read of the repair of the defenses of the Christian against the assaults of his enemies. Even while we read of the restoration of the literal ramparts of the Holy City, and the replacing of the charred timbers of its gates with stout beams and new hardware, in

order that the peace and security of its inhabitants might be serene and undisturbed, we can see with little stretch of our imaginations, the application to our spiritual building today.

We remember the record of how the entire nation of Israel, as punishment for its idolatry and wickedness, had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. The captivity, according to God's prophecy through Jeremiah, was to last seventy years, and we find that events as they occurred had exactly fulfilled this prophecy. At the end of that time, in about 536 B.C., had come the decree of Cyrus, that the temple of Jerusalem was to be rebuilt, in harmony with the prophecy made earlier (in 712 B.C.) by Isaiah, as we see it recorded in the 44th chapter.

In the 26th to the 28th verses (Isa. 44:26-28), Isaiah had foretold how Cyrus was to initiate the rebuilding of God's house, though Cyrus was a Persian and a Gentile, not of the house of Israel. Between the time of the decree of Cyrus, and the beginning of the account of Nehemiah, two groups of Israelites had gone back to Jerusalem, one of about 50,000 under Zerubbabel, who was of the house of David, and another of around 42,000 under Ezra, the priest. Very much like the first Jews who returned to Palestine in our own time, most of these people had not prospered greatly in exile, and so looked forward to their homecoming with high hopes for the future. But Jerusalem was a shambles when *they* reached it, for weeds and even trees grew in the streets, water supply pools, of which there were a number under the city, had long since been filled with stones and other debris, and very few of the houses which still stood were habitable. Try to imagine what your city or town would be like if everybody left it for even one year; and these people had been away, and the city left deserted for longer than the average lifetime. Besides, at the time of the captivity, Jerusalem had been looted, and a complete wreck made of everything which could be destroyed, even the gates having been burned up.

Now, at the time Nehemiah became interested, the temple had been rebuilt and rededicated, a twenty year task, but little progress had been made on the buildings, and none on the walls. Lack of money and the opposition of the neighboring Samaritans, as well as constant raid by bandit tribes of the desert had given the struggling little nation, in its unprotected city, little chance to do more than barely keep itself alive. Such was the sorry state of the chosen people of God, when their condition was called to the attention of Nehemiah, who at the time this account begins, was cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia. The position of cup-bearer to the king in those days, was one of great influence, for in addition to being responsible for the king's life, he was usually the confidante of the ruler in matters of state. It was a position something like that which in our country is held by the Secretary of State, but even more confidential in some ways. His duties included tasting the king's food and wine in his presence, as assurance to the monarch that they contained no poison or harmful drugs.

The cup-bearer had access to the king at all times, and it was important that he be a peasant as well as a wise companion, since the displeasure of his sovereign could cost him his life. It was not unusual for a Jew to occupy such a high office in these heathen kingdoms, for led by God as they were, they often showed the superior wisdom which God had given, them, and for that reason were very highly esteemed by the Gentile rulers, who were glad to have their services. The cases of Joseph, the son of Jacob, and of Daniel, as well as that of Nehemiah, will serve as illustrations of this fact.

It may seem strange, accustomed as we are to rapid means of transport and communication, that Nehemiah knew so little of the circumstances of his people, but there I were no radios, telephones, 90-mile-an-hour diesels, or jet planes to spread news in his day. Then too, as one writer has said, possibly Nehemiah's parents had been too comfortably situated, and perhaps too prosperous to take much interest in the return of Israel, and that Nehemiah himself, as a young

man in a fine position as far as wealth and influence were concerned, had probably given but little thought as to what had become of the others of his nation, and had therefore made no inquiries. Since travel by camel caravan in those times was so slow, it is probable too, that it was seldom anyone came to the Persian court from Jerusalem. We may be sure, however, that it was not an accident that the brethren from Jerusalem, when they did come, went direct to the one man who had both the will and the power to help those who were so greatly in need of assistance, but that the hand of Jehovah was operating behind the scenes, as it always does in connection with everything which concerns His people. With this background in mind, let us turn to the record which Nehemiah gives us, and see if it contains lessons for us.

In the beginning, as the account opens, we can see something of the parallel between the experiences of the young Hebrew, Nehemiah, and that of the Gospel-Age Christian, if we read not only the lines as written, but also read between them for their message. "One of my brethren came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach-the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven." -Vs. 2-4.

We notice first of all, that the message of the broken-down walls and burned gates came to Nehemiah through his brethren. Likewise, are not St. Paul, Peter, James and others, our brethren who have informed us in much vivid detail of the dilapidated condition of our defenses against sin and evil? And these are not only all around us, but even inside our walls, the gates having been burned long since by the Adversary. As we read of how Nehemiah wept and mourned certain days, are we not reminded of the love and pity in our Master's voice as he wept over the pathetic state of his brethren? And can we not feel the yearning in the words of Paul, the Lord's chosen vessel, as he pours out his heart to the churches through his Epistles, trying to bring them to a realization of their true state? And have not our own hearts, understanding, been made tender and touched with sympathy for all mankind and their undone, pitiable condition

The fact that the message came to one like Nehemiah, with a naturally sympathetic heart as well as the ability to help his people, seems to assure us that we too have been drawn because we are capable, with the help of our King, Jesus, of completing the task He has assigned to us of restoring the walls and the gates that shall keep sin from the chosen ones of God. In other words, an all-wise and loving Father would not hold out to anyone the truth of his plan nor the call to consecration that comes with it, unless that one can, with prayerful diligence and faithfulness, complete the task he has been given to do.

Nehemiah, after he had come to a clear realization of the condition of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, must have in his own mind gone over the entire question of why Israel had been cast out from the favor of God. He must have thought of how the nation had been forewarned of the very things which had come upon them as the direct result of their deviation from the doing of God's will as his law and his prophets had revealed it.

He must have seen, too, the glimmer of hope that lay in the promises of God, and how a return to a proper condition of heart would also bring a return to harmony and favor with Him. We see in the fasting and prayer which followed, how earnestly Nehemiah was seeking a state of heart and mind which would be receptive to a revelation of the will of his God.

As we look about us and see the sorry plight of the world and of the individuals who compose it, we see plainly that it is the same lack of obedience to God's holy laws which is the cause of all their sorrow and trouble. It is apparent then, that we should first cease from everything which might prevent our getting the clearest possible insight into God's will concerning us. Having prepared himself in this way, Nehemiah turned properly to prayer as the channel through which he would receive God's instructions.

The book of Nehemiah opens and closes with prayer, the opening one being especially interesting because it contains, like our Lord's model prayer taught to his disciples, the basic essentials of all prayer to the Father. There is, as well as petition here, confession for wrongdoing and acknowledgment of God's faithfulness to those who revere his name and keep his commandments.

In this confession before the God of heaven, Nehemiah admits that all the trouble which had befallen the nation was the result of their neglect of God, and of failure on their part to keep the covenant which He had made with them. Nor did the prophet forget to include his family and himself with these erring ones.

PLANS INTO ACTION

It was probably December when the news of those who were already at Jerusalem came to Nehemiah, but it was about April before a favorable opportunity came to present before the king the plans he had matured. During that four month period Nehemiah had continued in an attitude of seeking to know the will of God concerning himself, and during that time also his intention to devote all that he had to the welfare of God's people had crystallized. Now his one purpose to do what he could to bring peace and security to those at Jerusalem was placed ahead of personal possessions, influence with the king, and all else that was at his disposal. The first six verses of chapter 2 show that even in the face of possible disapproval of the king, firmness of purpose prevented any drawing back.

As soon as the enemies of Israel heard about the plan of Nehemiah, opposition started, and how much the same is it in the life of the Christian! As soon as he makes up his mind to repair his defenses, to rebuild his walls to keep out sin and selfishness, the adversary takes immediate notice, and begins to do all in his *power* to discourage the builder, using ridicule, obstructions, or even threats, as suits the individual case. "They laughed us to scorn and despised us," says Nehemiah--"and said, What is this thing you are doing, are you rebelling against the king?"

Would we dare to rebel against the prince of this world by setting our insignificance against the power of the "ruler of darkness"?

Nehemiah answers for us in his own words, "And I returned them an answer, and said unto them, 'The God of heaven will indeed give us prosperity, and we His servants will truly rise up and build; but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem.'" - Neh. 2:19, 20.

We are told by Nehemiah in verse 13 of the second chapter, that he went quietly by night to view the walls and the gates, telling no one, and it would seem that there is an important lesson for us in this--our plans for rebuilding our Christian defenses are not to be advertised or revealed to any one but our King. In the 3rd chapter we are given details as to how the actual work on the walls proceeded, and how each of the groups started on the wall closest to where he lived. Though this was but economy and common sense, yet there is in this an indication that rebuilding the walls which protect us against the "world, the flesh, and the devil" is an individual matter, and that we

should start as close to home as possible, on the worst fault we recognize in ourselves. These who worked under the leadership of Nehemiah were not wall-builders by trade, nor stone-masons by training, but merchants, goldsmiths, priests, apothecaries, etc., which might suggest that any who have the will to say, "Let us rise up and build," will find their hearts and hands strengthened by the Lord, as were those of Nehemiah's helpers. The suggestion is here also, that if we are called to be workmen for God, he will instruct us by his Word and give us the training we need by his spirit, while we work for him.

Building anything is hard work, but rebuilding is even more difficult, as anyone who has tried it knows. The tribe of Judah told Nehemiah, "There is much rubbish and therefore we are not able to build the walls." - Neh. 4:10.

How true it is, dear brethren, that rubbish of many kinds can and often does hinder our labor in building the walls of a Christ-like character! Prejudices, creeds, even more than worldly ambition or yearning for ease and security, are among the kinds of rubbish which must be carried away, before unselfishness, patience, brotherly kindness, and entire devotion to God will have space to go to work on the wall! Each of us should get acquainted with his own rubbish heap (not always so easy to recognize as rubbish) which *must* be removed before the work on the wall can go forward, and right now is not too soon to begin moving it.

In answer to the earnest prayer of Nehemiah, we find that God gave him both wisdom and tact in the handling of the work on the walls, so that he was able to impart enthusiasm and to give moral strength and encouragement to the workers. We find similar help and encouragement in the leadership and instruction of our loving Master, no matter how unsuited we may deem ourselves to be for building walls against the adversary.

As the work progressed, and the enemies of Israel saw that there was a possibility that the wall-building might continue with no let-up in spite of their opposition, they increased their efforts to stop it to the point where the workmen had to labor with a building tool in one hand and a weapon in the other. (Neh. 4:17.) But Nehemiah had seen to the arming and the preparation of his men, just as our Captain has done, and we have His armory of truth, St. Paul assures us, upon which to draw for tools as well as weapons.

In our battle against sin and whatever might hinder us in the work to which our Lord has called us, we should remember that we are not fighting for the old creature, but for the new, and that this fight is a very worthwhile battle. Being of good courage then, and full of faith in our Master's leadership, and assured that our God will fight for us, is of first-ranking importance in our lives. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."

- *F. R. Heitland*

Be Still, My Soul

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
In every change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heav'nly Friend
Thro' thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hast'ning on
When we shall be forever with the Lord,
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

- *Katharina von Schlegel*

Where He Leads Me I Will Follow

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul: for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." - Psa. 116:7.

TO BE always hopeful and courageous in depressing circumstances is not an easy thing. The discipline of life seems often very hard; and we rebel against it, not because of its hardness alone, but because much of it seems so unnecessary. Sometimes it is the pettiness of our ordinary life that weighs us down; and sometimes it is the disappointing ineffectiveness of our efforts to serve God worthily. Our ordinary concerns look so poor and mean that we long to be free from them, so as to spend life in a nobler way; but we cannot get free; we are chained to the drudgery; we cannot rise. "This endless struggle just to live," we say, "this weary round of uncongenial work day after day, this endless buying and selling, this ceaseless toil of mere housekeeping, this narrowing down of my thoughts to the petty details of food and clothing; this irksome monotony of life where I have the same small things to attend to day after day, all the year through, unable to get above them or devote my energies to loftier things-why does God tie -me down to a life like this? Why does he not give me work to do in which I could better serve him, and at the same time better satisfy my own idea of what a noble life ought to be?"

If we take such questionings to God in- the still hour of meditation and prayer, however, we shall get his answer to them clear enough, just as he gave it to Israel by Moses long ago. He will tell us that what we call the drudgery of our common days is meant to do two great things that are absolutely indispensable; first "to humble us," and next "to prove us, and to see whether we will keep his commandments or no.

It needs not only divine teaching, but divine discipline in addition to the teaching, to make us content with faithfulness in very lowly things, instead of complaining that we have not greater things to do. We are eager to do great things. Our pride and self complacency are flattered by our having large services demanded of us. And God understands us well, and therefore seeks to purge us of this pride by giving us only common and humble things to do, that ostentation may not tempt the heart.

But the discipline is also meant "to prove us" whether we will keep his commandments or no; to see whether we are seeking simply to do his will, and are not pursuing our own. There is hardly one man in a thousand who sets himself steadily and humbly just to do the will of God with no ulterior aims whatsoever. If we all did that, there would not be a single unhappy heart in the world! In our impassioned longings for some other kinds of life than what is God's present will concerning us we are living in the region of dreams; and men are not sanctified by dreams, but by battles. When that old people of Israel listening to God at the fiery mount had a bright vision of the great and noble life they would enter on ere long, they thrilled with devotion to him, and vowed perfect obedience to his will in everything. But how long was it till they were bitterly complaining of the tiresome and poor monotony of those wanderings in the desert by which the vision was to be realized? And where are our vows of obedience too? Where are' our professions of living only according to his will? To have bright visions of what a noble thing life might be made to be is not to make it so. But all the time we are looking at our dream-pictures, God is taking a better way with us, though we see not what his meaning is -- training us to humble faithfulness by the seeming drudgery of commonplace duties in an uncongenial sphere: and he shows us this as soon as we get alone with him.

There is another and a keener discouragement, too, over which nothing can lift us so easily and so completely as a quiet talk with God -- the discouragement arising not from the pettiness of our lives, but from our disappointing ineffectiveness and want of success in working for God's righteousness in the world. The discouragement grows often into despair, and we cry, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, then would, I fly away and be at rest!" That was the cry of a thoroughly dispirited man, yet not a worldly' man, nor a man simply saddened by accumulating sorrows; rather, a man weary with the vain struggle against the opposing forces of evil, a man striving to fight against 'the sin around him, and to put down iniquity, yet finding his efforts thwarted on every hand, and almost giving up the battle in despair, saying bitterly, "I have spent my strength for nought and in vain. Can God mean that his work shall be only pain to me and defeat? Has he nothing better to give me than this?"

There are many such hearts in the world today; earnest Christian hearts, zealous for God, yet saddened by the feeling that all their efforts are in vain; not world-weary, nor sin weary, nor sorrow weary, but battle weary; looking at the difficulties on every side, thinking of their own weakness to stem the rushing tide of evil, and looking forward to the long-drawn fight that is before them still, till their courage fails, and they shrink from the depressing prospect of useless battle to the very last. For it is not the sharpness of the conflict, but the weary length of it, that often makes the heart give way. It is the never-endingness of the fight, the hopelessness of anticipating any triumphant close, that makes so many who are really soldiers of the King cry, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, to fly away and be at rest!"

But now let this depression be not nursed in the brooding mind, but taken into the secret place of communion with God, and how soon a different complexion is put upon the circumstances that cause it! What has he to say about it? What is his answer to the weary sigh? It is just to think of Christ. Who had ever so sore a fight as he, or more discouragements than he? Whoever kept up the fight to the very last as he? It was said of him before he came, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth," and he will yet fulfill the prophecy. He has been waiting for his victory for nineteen hundred years, and is waiting for it yet, but waiting undiscouraged as well as undismayed, "expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." The unfailing and unfainting hopefulness of Jesus Christ may shame us out of our discouragement while following him as "fellow-workers with him unto the Kingdom of God." The one answer to all our despondency is Christ. If he had spoken as we so often speak, and felt as we so often feel; if he, seeing how small his success was, had folded his weary hands and given up the conflict, what then? And what was his review of his life when almost done? "I have glorified thee upon the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." That -was all, but that was enough. Can any of us wish to be able to say more? "Oh for wings," we cry, "to fly away and be at rest! But if Christ had said that, where would our redemption have been? Wings await us only as they awaited him-only when, like him, we have finished the work given us to do, and have fought out the battle to the end. Armor now; wings, if we are patient, we shall find in due time.

Yet, even meanwhile, the blessing of "wings" is not always denied; not wings with which to escape all troubles, but wings with which to rise above them. "They that wait upon the Lord shall mount up on wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." That is not a promise for the far distant future. It is a promise for the present; and each part of it will be at one time or another, fulfilled to the "waiting" heart. There will be soaring days, when we get so high above the world that we can feel as if we had parted company for ever with its sorrows and its temptations, when we can not only outrun the vexations of life, but outfly them, and feel as if they did not exist. God means us sometimes to have hours like these; but they are not the ordinary experience even of the best of men. The ordinary experience is a lower, and yet equally comforting one -- the fulfillment of the other part of the promise, "They shall run and not be

weary; they shall walk and not faint." Not so ecstatic an experience as the soaring, but quite as useful and possibly more safe, is this humbler experience given to those who know that they have no might in themselves, and wait for 'God's might to strengthen them.

And the order of these three promises is to be noted well, for they are often fulfilled to us just in that order and no other. It may seem strange that the loftiest attainment should be put first and the lower last; but this order is the true one for all that. The soaring days of every Christian generally come at an early stage. At the wonderful time of his "first love," his first experience of the riches of divine grace, his conversion days, he often rises wonderfully high above the world. Never, indeed, does he feel so completely loosed from its thrall, never does he rise to such a height both of joy and of surrender; his glowing feelings seem then to carry him up to the very gates of heaven.

But soon he has to come down from his ecstasies because God calls him to battle and service below, and then he learns to be thankful if only he can "run with patience the race set before him."

And later still he is humbler still. A larger experience of the world and of himself shows him that constant "running" even is a thing he cannot keep up. He is thankful then if he can but "walk" with God, leaning upon his everlasting arms, till he comes to the dark valley at the end of the pilgrim way, and finds that there is no soaring over it, nor running through it. He is glad of the Lord's staff to keep him from falling, and will only say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil." But as he goes leaning on God, he finds that God's strength gives him the victory as completely as when he was able to soar.

Now, the manifold discouragements of life are sure to oppress -us terribly so long as we are merely alone with ourselves, brooding over them; but they will quickly disappear when we are alone with God; for then we look upon them with his eyes, weigh them in his balances, measure them by his tests; and as we review them in his light, there comes into us a great hope, a great courage, and a great peace.

- *The Herald.*

As Moments Pass the Kingdom Nears

Men may sorrow in distress,
Sin-cursed, blind and weary,
Death may rule supreme today
All things may look dreary:
Make haste, O time; speed on, ye years!
As moments pass, the Kingdom nears.

Saints may "groan within" and suffer
Outward shame, distress, defeat;
Trouble may test faith and patience
Fiery trials, "furnace heat";
But stop your sighing, dry your tears;
As moments pass, the Kingdom nears.

Men for earth and saints for heaven;
God's decree will surely stand.
Shout for joy, give God the glory!
Safe deliverance is at hand.
Ah, no more doubtings, no more fears,
As moments pass, the Kingdom nears.

- J. G. Kuehn

The Question Box

Leviticus 8, 9 and 16

Question:

Will you please distinguish the ceremonies outlined in the 8th, 9th and 16th chapters of Leviticus, and show their relationship, if any.

Answer:

Leviticus 8 has to do with the consecration of Israel's priesthood, both the High Priest and the Under Priests. Leviticus 9 shows the inauguration of that priesthood, following its consecration; the purpose or object of that consecration. In Leviticus 16 is given the account of the services performed by the (previously consecrated and inaugurated) priesthood, *on the Day of Atonement*. Only when consecrated, as outlined in Leviticus 8, and inaugurated, as set forth in Leviticus 9, was the priesthood qualified to engage in the ceremonies of the Atonement Day, dealt with in Leviticus 16.

The Atonement Day arrangements, detailed in Leviticus 16, were performed once a year, on the 10th day of the 7th month, the month of Tishri (Lev. 16:29, 34). It is to these, not to the ceremonies of Leviticus 8 and 9, that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes specific reference in Leviticus 9:7.

The consecration of the priesthood was not an annual performance but took place only on the accession of a new High Priest (Ex. 29:29, 30; Lev. 16:32). The consecration ceremonies lasted seven days (Lev. 8:33-35). For these ceremonies the High Priest wore the garments collectively described as garments of glory and beauty (Lev. 8:7-9). Nor were these garments changed on the 8th day, but continued to be worn during the inauguration ceremonies of Leviticus 9.

However, this was not the case throughout the Day of Atonement. After the morning sacrifice (Numbers 28:4) the High Priest took off his garments of glory and beauty, and after washing his person, put on his holy linen garments (Lev. 16:4). On that day, it was only after the sacrifices of the bullock and goat were completed, and the scapegoat sent into the wilderness, that he put off these holy linen garments, and resumed his "usual" glory and beauty garments (*). Moreover, whereas the blood of the animals (sacrificed as sin-offerings on the Day of Atonement) was taken into the Most Holy by the High Priest (Lev. 16:14, 15), this was not the case with the blood of the animals sacrificed during the ceremonies of chapters 8 and 9; nor did the High Priest, throughout the entire seven-day period of consecration detailed in chapter 8, venture within that sacred enclosure. He did so only *at the close* of the inauguration ceremonies of chapter 9, and then *only when accompanied by the Lawgiver*, God's highly honored servant and representative, Moses.

*The linen garment worn by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:4), should not be confused with the brodered linen coat, worn next to his person, as the first of the garments of glory and beauty put on him in connection with his consecration (Lev. 8:7). These were two different garments.

Again, it is important to observe that throughout the entire seven days of consecration, the leading figure was not Aaron, but Moses. He it was, who slew the bullock for the sin-offering, the ram for the burnt-offering, and the other ram, (the ram of consecration). He it was, who applied the blood to the tip of their right ears, the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right

feet. Yes! -- it was Moses, supervising everything throughout the entire seven days of their consecration, not Aaron. Moses supplied the animals, too.

However, in Leviticus 9, a change occurs. It is no longer Moses, but Aaron, who appears prominently. The sacrificial duties are seen to pass to him. Aaron it is, who slays the animals and officiates throughout the day, not Moses. Moreover, Moses does not supply the animals for ceremonies of Leviticus 9. They are furnished by Aaron and the people.

We note, too, that the ceremonies of Leviticus 9 follow immediately after the seven days of consecration, namely on the 8th day (Lev. 9:1). What does this portray? We answer: the priesthood, being now consecrated, is about to be installed in its office and duties.

Even yet, however, Aaron does not venture within the sacred precincts of the Tabernacle-the Holy or the Most Holy. It was necessary that Moses, the divinely appointed leader of the nation, should induct Aaron into the Tabernacle. After he had done so, what took place? Moses and Aaron came out together and blessed the people. This joint blessing (of Moses, the Mediator of the covenant between God and the nation, and Aaron, the High Priest,) was the solemn conclusion of the consecration and inauguration ceremonies of Leviticus 8 and 9. And what was the immediate result? We read: "the glory of the Lord appeared" (Lev. 9:23). How did the glory appear-that is to say: How did it manifest itself. The next verse tells us: "Fire came out from before the Lord, and consumed the burnt-offering," -thus manifesting God's acceptance.

The foregoing, as nearly as we are able to determine them, distinguish the ceremonies themselves, as may be verified by reference to the scriptures. What their antitypical significance may be is, of course, a matter of interpretation.

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