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THE DAY IS AT HAND

"Poor, fainting Pilgrim, still hold on thy way -- *The Dawn is Near!*
True, thou art weary now; but yon bright ray becomes more clear.
Bear up a little longer wait for rest;
Yield not to slumber, though with toil oppressed.

The night of life is mournful, but look on -- *The Dawn is Near!*
Soon will earth's shadowed scenes and forms be gone; yield not to fear.
The mountain's summit will, ere long, be gained,
And the bright world of joy and peace attained.

'Joyful through Hope' thy motto still must be -- *The Dawn is Near!*
What glories will that dawn unfold to thee! Be of good cheer!
Gird up thy loins; bind sandals on thy feet:
The way is dark and long; The End is Sweet."

Clear Vision Brings Strength

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." - John 12:32.

IN ORDER for us to "carry-on" in the good, Christian way, it is important that we possess two qualifications:

- (1) A clear vision of (and firm faith in God to accomplish) the ultimate triumph of good over evil.
- (2) A courageous disposition.

Our text, then, will consist of verses 31 and 32 of the twelfth chapter of John (John 12:31-32): "Now is a judgment of this world [or, more literally, now is a crisis of this world]: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I 'be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." In the verses just preceding these it may be seen that our Lord's ministry was closing, that His crisis hour had come, and that instead of praying, "Father, save Me from this hour," the

burden of our Lord's prayer at the supreme crisis of His history was, "Father, glorify Thy name," although He knew that meant for Him the way of the cross. To His prayer a voice from heaven replied: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Now it was immediately after hearing that voice that Jesus spoke the words of our text. It follows, therefore, that the meaning of our text, when rightly understood, will form a correct interpretation of the meaning of the voice from heaven. What, then, is the connection between the Father's words: "I have already glorified My name" and the words of Jesus: "Now is there a judgment of this world"? and further, what is the connection between the Father's words: "I will glorify My name again" and the words of Jesus: "The prince of this world shall be cast out, and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Myself"?

To answer these questions it is but necessary to ask and answer one further question, namely, "How had the Father already glorified His name?" And the answer to that question we know. For had not the Father accomplished this through His Son's own faithful walk and ministry? None ever had been used before to bring such honor, such glory, to the Father's name as had He. By every expression of righteous indignation against sin wherever found, by every loving word, by every gracious act, He had manifested not only His own character but that of His Father. And because of this, men were under a test, a judgment, which they had not previously experienced, at least in so marked a degree. A crisis had been reached in their affairs. The manner in which they reacted to the Light of the World who had been in their midst would disclose their own characters unerringly, and so, when the voice from heaven declares, "I have already glorified My name," our Lord Jesus understands the reference is to His own faithful walk and declares in His turn, "Now there is a crisis of this world."

This glorification of the Father's name through the Son's obedience, however, magnificent though it was, was small when compared to the far greater honor His Son would bring to His name when raised to almighty power. As yet He had magnified His Father's name only within the confines of one small nation, that of Israel, and that name, notwithstanding all His matchless ministry, was still very imperfectly understood, even by the best of these. Indeed, only a few days before His death, Philip, one of the Twelve, makes the astonishing, (and what, to our Lord, must have been a most disheartening) request: "Show us the Father." As if He had not done so in a most wonderful way throughout the whole of His ministry! But the Father, looking forward to the time when all should know Him, from the least to the greatest, when the knowledge of Himself would not be confined to one small nation but would embrace the Gentiles too, when the knowledge of Himself would fill the earth as the waters cover the mighty deep—the Father, we say, looking forward to the still greater honor which the Son would bring to His name during the Gospel and Millennial Ages, declares further: "And I will glorify it again," while the Son, fully understanding His Father, makes reply: "The prince of this world **shall** [indeed] 'be cast out.'"

We thus reach the main intention, the ruling significance, of our text. In the events then transpiring around Him and in the prophetic emotions they excited within Him, Christ found a signal, or sign, of three spiritual transactions of the widest scope, of the gravest moment; a sign, first, of the judgment of this world; second, of the expulsion of its former but usurping lord; and third, of the accession of its true and lawful Prince. Let us try to see what He saw and as He saw it.

"Now There is a Crisis"

First, then, as to the judgment of this world. We have already observed that the literal meaning here is "crisis," a crisis through which the world was then, and for that matter still is, passing. And from what has already been said, it must surely be apparent that when our Lord speaks of the glorification of His Father's name by His own wondrous life and sacrificial death on the cross -- when He speaks of **this** as a crisis (or judgment) of the world, He cannot mean less than this: that

the attitude which men take to Him and to the death in which He most of all reveals the fatherly, redeeming love of God, determines what their character is and must **ultimately** determine what their condition shall be. If they recognize His goodness, if they respond to the love which He reveals, they prove themselves capable, under proper guidance and with adequate help, of inheriting eternal life, while if they do not, they pronounce themselves unworthy of eternal life and, for the present at least, incapable of it.

This is no mere matter of doctrinal theory on which there may be plenty of room for difference of viewpoint, but it is a truth which enters into and determines the whole current and bent of our practical, everyday life in the most decisive way. If we acknowledge that in Christ we find the highest revelation of the name, or character, of God; or even if we do less than this, if we do but acknowledge that in Christ we find the highest human wisdom, the best **human** goodness, and a love so disinterested, so wide and deep, so unfathomable and unchangeable that it might well be **called** divine-if we acknowledge this, and yet, when this decisive test is applied to our characters, we make no response to it; if His wisdom does not command our admiration, and shape our conduct; if His goodness does not elicit our love; if His purity does not call forth our homage, we are judged and condemned -- not judged and condemned by Him, be it noted, but self-judged and self-condemned. A crisis has come to us -- a judgment -- and we, alas, have been tried and found wanting.

Every coming of the spirit of Christ to our conscience, through His Word and spirit, is a judgment, a crisis, one of many. Happy shall we be if, recognizing Christ to be the wisest and best, and therefore the true judge and Ruler of men, realizing in His death on the tree the supreme proof of the fact that God is our Father and that He loves us well enough to make any sacrifice in order to redeem us out of the hand of our iniquities -- happy shall we be, say we, if, recognizing this, we commit ourselves to Him, now and always in faith and love and obedience. Thus doing, our hours of judgment, our crisis hours, will prove to be hours of salvation for us.

But it is when we come to consider the words in themselves and in their more immediate context that we catch some glimpse of the full orb of their meaning, for then we see that they contain, not a single prophecy concerning His death on the cross, but a fourfold prediction.

The Manner of His Death

The words predict; first of all, the death of the cross, as St. John himself observes, "This He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die." (John 12:33.) However, instead of parading, they veil and extenuate the horrors of that death, speaking of it as a mere lifting up from the earth, and so making the cross itself an instrument of elevation rather than an implement of torture and shame.

Now we do not always recognize the prophetic power displayed by our Lord Jesus in foretelling by what manner of death He should die. He had long known that the Jews would put Him to death. It needed no prophet to forecast **that**, perhaps, when once their bitter enmity had been aroused, for which of the servants of God had they not rejected and slain? But **crucifixion** was not commonly inflicted, even by the Romans, except on traitors or slaves, while among the Jews an apostate, an offender against the sanctity of the temple or the authority of the law, was stoned. There was, therefore, an indubitable element of prediction in our Lord's habitual foreboding that He should be crucified, that He should be "lifted up" to bear our sins in His own body on the tree.

His Resurrection and Ascension

Nor was it only His crucifixion these words foretold. Behind and beyond that shameful elevation He saw a glorious ascension into heaven. Literally rendered, His words would read, not "if I be lifted up 'from' the earth," but "if I be lifted up 'out' of or 'above' the earth." The "Diaglott" renders the words: "And I, if I be raised on high from the earth, will draw all to Myself"; and in this peculiar phrase, whatever its first intention may have been, all the great expositors find a reference to His resurrection from the dead and His ascension to the right hand of God as well as to the peculiar manner of the death by which He was to glorify God.

There is here, therefore, a splendid example of His faith in the love and justice of His Father and of His prophetic insight into His Father's will. Must not He have been in very truth a Prophet who could foretell an event so improbable, so incredible to human wisdom, as that One who was soon to perish on the cross of a slave should rise from the grave in which they laid Him and ascend the throne of the universe, to be forever at the right hand of God? Must not He have been a Seer who could foresee that death, so far from putting a period to His life, would but enhance the power of His life and that the shame of the cross, instead of making Him of no reputation, would only minister to and swell His glory?

He who predicted His own death, then, and even the manner of His death, also predicted His triumph over death and His ascension into heaven; and if the former prediction indicated but a comparatively low measure of the prophetic energy, it must be admitted that in the latter we have a splendid and illustrious proof of His prophetic energy and foresight. Yet even this latter prediction pales before the glory of those that follow it. For our Lord proceeds to foretell the results of His death and of His triumph over death, the effects of His being lifted up "from" the earth and of His being lifted up "out of" and beyond the earth.

Jew and Gentile to be Drawn to Him and to Each Other

One result, He says, will be that He will draw all men unto Himself -- all men, that is to say, without distinction of race -- both the Jews who had rejected Him and the Gentiles who were ignorant of Him. And what could have seemed more improbable, more incredible, than that? Who but He could have seen in the crucifixion of a Galilean peasant, against whom the whole world, Hebrew and heathen, had conspired, the signal of a religious revolution which should cover the whole world and lift and bind its scattered and hostile races into one new and perfect manhood? The whole set of His time was against any such idea. The whole course of history had been against it for two thousand years. Through all those centuries God had had an elect people to whom, and to whom exclusively, He had confined the direct and immediate disclosures of His will. Was this divine procedure to be changed all in a moment. Could it be that the unique grace so long shown to the Jews was now to be extended to all mankind? All the more wonderful was it that the Lord Jesus should predict, even before He died, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Myself," without distinction of race or case.

Satan to be Cast Out

Even yet, however, we have not exhausted this marvelous prediction, have not followed it out to its full scope. For just as behind the death of the cross Jesus saw the resurrection and ascension into heaven, so behind and beyond the extension of His Kingdom from the Jews to the whole Gentile world He foresaw and foretold the final triumph of good over evil.

When He heard the great voice out of heaven which assured Him that as He had been successful in bringing glory to His Father's name by His work among the Jews, so on a much grander scale He would in due time bring glory to His Father's name by a world-wide work among all nations, He cried: "Now is a judgment [that is, there is now a judicial crisis], of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out"; while in the next breath He adds: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto

Myself." Evidently, therefore, He implies a contrast between Himself and the prince of this world—a contrast also between their respective destinies.

Who this false prince of the world is we can have no doubt if, at least, we accept the teaching of the New Testament. The Jews habitually called Satan—the adversary of man and God—the prince of this world. And Jesus adopts both the name and the conception which underlay it. Not here alone but again and again this title falls from His lips, as when He said: "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me" (John 11:30) or when He predicted that the Holy Spirit should convict men of judgment "because the prince of this world hath been judged." (John 16:11.) It is this evil prince, then, of whose downfall from the seat of power Jesus finds a signal in the extension of His own Kingdom to the Gentiles. It is this prince whom He Himself is destined to replace.

The World Itself to Become a Holy Place

But notice the force of the solemn and picturesque phrase: "The prince of this world shall be cast out." He who before this had seen Satan fall like lightning from heaven now predicts that he is to be cast out from the earth. And this phrase "cast out" is very suggestive, for it is the technical phrase for excommunication, for the solemn and formal expulsion of one who has sinned against the light of a synagogue, a temple, a church -- of any holy place or community. To affirm, therefore, that Satan is to be cast out of the world implies that he has no right in it. It implies that the world is (or is to become) a holy place, a place sanctified by the divine presence, and therefore a place for which he is unfit, in which his presence is a usurpation, and an offence, from which he is to be solemnly and forever expelled.

As yet, indeed, we see not that he has been expelled, whether from the world or even from the church. But He who came to destroy the works of the devil, He who is able to measure all spiritual forces with a precision to which we cannot pretend and to calculate the issue between good and evil with an infallible prescience -- He here assures us that as the result of His coming into the world, His death for the world's sin, and His judgment or rule of the world, the power of evil is to be broken, that the supreme representative of evil is to be overcome, dethroned, driven out. He pronounces the issue certain, however long the conflict, the campaign, may last. He affirms that the temple of the world (God give us faith to believe that this world is yet to be a temple) is to be purged from whatsoever offendeth, or loveth and maketh a lie. The prince of this world has been judged, self-judged and self-condemned, in that he stirred up men to reject their wisest and best, set himself and tempted them to set themselves against the supreme revelation of the righteousness and love of God. Sentence has gone forth against him, and in due time that sentence will infallibly be carried out. Oh! it is a great promise, alive with the inspirations of courage and hope, and may well nerve us to carry on the conflict with evil in ourselves and in the world around us, which often looks so hopeless that we grow weary and faint in our minds. Failure is impossible, however imminent it may seem. Victory is certain, however improbable it may appear, however distant it may be.

But though He is to displace the prince of this world, our Lord' will not be, as the Jews expected Him to be, only another and a better Prince of this world. He is to be lifted up, lifted out of and above the world. To Him the elevation of the cross, the throne of love, is but an emblem of His elevation to heaven, the throne of power. From thence He will **draw** men—draw them by the sweet and healthful influences, by the gentle compulsions of the love He has shown for them and revealed to them, until at last they shall all come to Him -- all, that is to say, who do not willfully resist Him, and be changed into His image, clothed with righteousness, crowned with the glory and honor of perfection; some, the Church, to share even in His nature and His throne; all to partake of eternal life, made possible for them through His sacrifice.

The scope, then, of this great prediction is very wide. It is charged with the music of a hope that reaches beyond this present life. It presses on through century after century, unfulfilled or fulfilled

only in part, and will never tire nor rest until it shall close in the complete fulfillment of a redeemed race, a regenerated universe. It conducts us from the travail of the cross to that supreme moment when, seated on the throne of universal dominion, Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, when, having-subdued all things unto Himself, He shall deliver-up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.

- *P. L. Read.*

My Ain Countrie

This lovely old hymn is reprinted in its original Scottish dialect in the hope that lingering over the unusual words may enhance its precious thoughts.

I am far frae my hame, an' I'm weary aften-whiles,
For the langed-for hame-bringin', an' my Faither's welcome
An' I'll ne'er be fu' content, until mine een do see
The gowden gates o' heav'n an' my ain countrie.
The earth is fleck'd wi' flowers, mony-tinted, fresh an' gay.
The birdies warble blithe-ly, for my Faither made them sae:
But these sights an' these soun's will as naething be to me,
When I hear the angels singin' in my ain countrie.

Sae little noo I ken, o' yon blessed, bonnie place,
I only ken it's Hame, whaur we shall see His face;
It wad surely be eneuch for ever mair to be
In the glory o' His presence, in oor ain countrie.
Like a bairn to its mither, a wee birdie to its nest,
I wad fain be gangin' noo, unto my Saviour's breast,
For He gathers in His bosom witless, worthless lambs like me
An' carries them Himsel', to His ain countrie.

He is faithfu' that hath promised, an' He'll surely come again,
He'll keep His tryst wi' me, at what oor I dinna ken;
But He bids me still to wait, an' ready aye to be,
To gang at ony moment to my ain countrie.
Sae I'm watching aye, and singin' o' my hame, as I wait
For the soun'in' o' His fitfa' this side the gowden gate:
God gie His grace to ilka ane wha' listens noo to me,
That we a' may gang in gladness to oor ain countrie.

- Mary Lee Demarest (1860-1881)

Giving Thanks Always

"Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." - Eph. 5:18-20.

THERE SHOULD be a very close relationship between heart and lips when offering praise and thanks unto God; for true thanksgiving must spring from the inner grace of heartfelt appreciation. The words of Paul in Romans 10:10 find application here, in that they set forth a principle which is *true in all* our relationships to God: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

As we grow in appreciation *of* the character and attributes of God, we will feel constrained to give expression to His goodness, not only in words, but in acts and mode of life. This attitude on our part is pleasing unto the Father and is necessary to our own spiritual well being.

There can be no true praise and thanks apart from heart appreciation; and so, if this inner grace is lacking, all outward expression becomes mere idle service and mockery, and as such, is an abomination. God hates hypocrisy, and His Word expresses condemnation of those who draw near with their lips only. To some such Jesus said, "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as *their* doctrines the precepts of men." (Matt. 15:7-9.) Both the houses of Israel are declared to be guilty of this abomination, and lest we partake of "the leaven of the Pharisees," we should continually join with David in the prayer that we may so live that "The words of our mouths, and the meditation of our hearts may be acceptable unto the Lord." - Psa. 19:14.

When we come to Jesus as our Savior and are accepted of Him as 'probationary members -of His Body, a great change takes place in us, but this change does not at once do away with our natural tendencies; consequently, these are carried over into the new life, where we undergo the refining process, the transformation into the image of our Lord and Master.

Some of us in our natural tendencies are too much under the control of sentiment and impulse; others too coldly intellectual and phlegmatic; and so 'the Word furnishes us with mental and spiritual tonics and exercises to build. up that which is lacking, for the well developed Christian must have both. 'And who is that Christian' that does *not*, especially when he makes an honest comparison between himself *and* the perfect pattern of our Lord, find himself lacking? Most of us find that we are deficient both in understanding and feeling as respects worship of the heavenly Father.

WINE-DRUNK VERSUS SPIRIT-FILLED

Seemingly there was need for admonition respecting the unrestrained use of wine among' the early Christians, for *we* find warnings concerning it in a number of places. (Luke 21:34; Rom. 13:13; 14:21; Gal. 5:21; 1 Tim. 3:8; Titus 2:3.) Palestine was a grape producing region, and wine was in general use. John the Baptist was peculiar *in* that he did not drink wine; but Jesus evidently did partake thereof *on* occasion, for the hypocritical Pharisees, who accused John of having a demon because of his abstemiousness, reversed their criticism of Jesus and called him a "wine bibber and a friend of publicans and sinners." - Luke 1:15; Matt. 11:18, 19.

John 2:1-11 tells us that the first sign *wrought* by Jesus was in Cana of Galilee when' he turned water into wine at a wedding feast; and *so* common was its use even among Christians that the Apostle felt it necessary to advise that only those brethren who were moderate *in* their drinking be considered *for* the position of Eldership. (1 Tim. 3:8.) Some *in* the Corinthian Church even went to the extreme of getting drunk at the Memorial observance. (1 Cor. 11:21.) Therefore, in our text, the Apostle again warns against the tendency to intemperance, but urges the unrestrained filling with the Spirit. In this respect it is impossible to go to excess.

In much of his *writings* Paul stresses the importance of a correct understanding of truth, but here in our text he is emphasizing the need for emotional release by the expression of the heart's gratitude in psalms; hymns, and songs of thanksgiving. A person who is drunk with wine, is often sentimentally foolish and not rational in giving vent to the emotions; but one "filled with the Spirit" is keenly aware of what he does, and so benefits in the stirring of his emotions through the beauties of verse and melody, which, in turn help to deepen the sense of appreciation.

PRAISE IN PSALMS AND HYMNS

We all know by experience how this emotional release, through the expressing of gratitude and praise in songs and testimonies of thanksgiving, brings an uplift that causes us to forget the difficulties and trials that attend our way. How much good we derive therefrom, we have no way of determining, but we know that it must be great else the Lord would not have provided so many psalms and hymns of praise, and admonished us in their frequent use.

When King Saul was low in spirit and could not rest, he would call for David and his harp, and the music eased his troubled mind and enabled him to rest. When the Apostles were chained in prison and were in pain and misery from being beaten, they sang songs and forgot their troubles. Many-hospitals and curative institutions, especially those for the insane, now use music as a therapeutic in the healing of mind and body and have found that its soothing strains are often efficacious when nothing else seems to help.

A man that is completely under the influence of alcohol, has all his senses affected, and his thoughts, speech, and actions show his condition. The same is true of one who is filled with the Spirit; he too, is under a powerful influence. But instead of its being an influence that first excites and then numbs, as is the case with wine, it is a quickening, uplifting, and upbuilding experience. One who becomes drunk with wine usually enjoys the first effects of the stimulation, but the afterward is a headache and nausea, a weakening and breaking down of the physical and mental powers. But "The blessing of the Lord [being filled with His Spirit-the greatest blessing we can receive in this life], it maketh rich; and He addeth no sorrow therewith." - Prov. 10:22.

We have observed that drunkards have a tendency to talk to themselves and to sing maudlin songs. Paul suggests that, being filled with the Spirit, we speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and that we not only make melody with our lips, but in our hearts. Some singers are so able in their art that they can convey sentiments with their lips that give impression to the listener of deep feeling, when in reality there is no real sentiment there. God, however, is not deceived by mere lip service, no matter how real it may seem to us, for He looketh upon the heart and judges not by the seeing of the eye or hearing of the ear.

When the Church was established on the day of Pentecost, and God's Holy Spirit came upon the waiting disciples, the record is that "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This was evidently a loud sound and quite

a demonstration, for we read that "When this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man ["devout Jews from every nation under heaven"] heard them speaking in his own tongue, and they were amazed and marveled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? . . . But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine." - Acts 2:5-13.

Those who were filled with the Spirit rather than with new wine, as Peter points out, were not speaking to one another so much as they were unto the multitude, for the context shows that it was in witness of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, and of the power of God through Jesus Christ to give salvation by faith rather than through works of the Law that they spoke. This witness of the Spirit through the disciples was very effective in convincing these devout Jews that the Christ of whom they were in expectation had indeed come, for about three thousand were added to the Church that day. The gifts of the Spirit granted to the early Church, did much toward its establishment, but were not intended to aid much toward its growth in character-likeness unto the Lord, for as gifts, they were bestowed apart from any effort toward Christlikeness.

The fruit of the Spirit is a matter of development, and this filling of which our text speaks has to do with fruitage. Hence it is a different and much more valuable filling than that which was bestowed in a miraculous way at Pentecost. We are not told just what the message was that the Holy Spirit uttered through the disciples, but reasoning from Peter's line of thought which follows, we would think it had to do with testimony concerning Jesus and His mission. The disciples, however, could have had but little, if any, volition in what was uttered.

We, on the other hand, exercise volition in the message we speak to ourselves; and so did they after they had experienced the development of fruit by the Holy Spirit. And while we also speak of Jesus, yet it is more in praise of His grace and beauty of character, and in heart appreciation of the love and fellowship of both the Son and the Father. The hymns we sing, especially those we choose as we become ripened in character, are largely designed to express to ourselves and to one another audibly and in rhythmic cadence, the sentiments of our hearts in thankful praise. Just note, if you will, how much this is true of such hymns as "Abide, Sweet Spirit"; "My Goal is Christ"; "His Loving-Kindness"; "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"; "I've Found a Friend"; "Sun of My Soul"; "The Gate Ajar"; "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

And what could be more inspiring than the twenty third Psalm? These and many more of equal worth give expression to our joy and gratitude, and voice for us in words better than we could choose, the praise and thanks we would offer unto God.

THANKS FOR ALL THINGS

In the last verse of our text, the Apostle admonishes us to "Give thanks always for all things unto God, even the Father [R. V.], in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." To be able to do this indicates a well developed Christian-one who has really come to know that "All things work together for good to them that love God." Only those who actually believe that God's providences are over all their way that He directs their path, and withholds no good thing from them that walk uprightly, can thus give thanks.

But what does the Apostle mean by "all things"? Naturally, there would be no question about the things we consider to be good-our daily bread, our comforts of home, the bed upon which we ease our tired bodies at night, pleasant surroundings and associations, time for study, opportunity for fellowship, and a thousand other things we could name-we would readily agree that we should give thanks for these. But how about the multitude of things that are hard, unpleasant, monotonous,

disagreeable, disquieting, trying, painful, dishonoring, unjust, inhuman and even detestable: *must* we give thanks for these?

No, God will not compel us to give thanks, not even for those things for which we ask; nor will He force us to make our calling and election sure. But, if the question be asked, Should we give thanks for these things? then the answer is, Yes. Have we not made a covenant under which these bodies, reckoned holy through Christ, are committed to sacrifice, even unto death? Have we not placed ourselves under the control of the Father's will in order that His wisdom and power may be exercised on our behalf to perfect us as New Creatures? And has He not told us that through much tribulation lies the way into the Kingdom, and that He scourgeth every son He receiveth?

How could we be conformed to the image of Christ and become like God if we did not have the means of developing long-suffering, kindness, compassion, generosity, mercy, patience, and sympathy? And how could the means be provided except through- contacts that are hard, unpleasant, monotonous, disagreeable, etc.? Even Christ Jesus Himself was made perfect through the things which- He suffered, "For it became [was fitting] Him, for whom, are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of; their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:10.) Therefore, no matter what experiences come to us in any of our associations, whether it be family, business, social contacts or Church, we should give thanks; for all things are for our sakes and are permitted of God -- in order to work in us that which is pleasing in His, sight. We cannot give thanks and at the same time murmur or complain; we cannot give thanks and at the same time feel impatient and resentful.

Jesus knew full well the hardness and suffering we would have to endure, but did He commiserate us because of it? No, He says, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say, all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be *exceeding* glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Again He says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." But why, Lord? why give us this hard task? "That," says Jesus, "ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

And so the multitude of things which are to try us, call for our thanks just as sincerely as do the things we enjoy, for "all things work together for good to them that love God." If the "all things" work for our good, then we should give thanks for the "all things.

But how about the weaknesses and tendencies of our own fleshly minds and bodies-do not these often, cause, us to stumble? And how about Satan and the principalities and powers arrayed against us to entrap us and bring to naught God's purpose concerning us? Are we to give thanks for these? Yes, we can even be thankful for these; not because they have become what they are, but because,, under God's overruling providence, -they become invaluable in our-development. If the deed of Joseph's brethren,- which they meant for evil, could become (under the providence of God) an' experience for good, (Gen. 45:5-8) , and if all of Satan's power and cunning, exercised directly and indirectly,, against Jesus could become the cup poured out by His, Father, is it too much to believe that God scan work the same wonders for us? "Moab is my washpot." - Psa. 108:9.

The text concludes with a statement most important to us, a statement which, if it always continues the expression of our hearts, will make all our efforts and prayers and thanksgiving acceptable unto God; but if rejected, nothing we can do will be acceptable. May God help us always to recognize and remember, that only "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the merit of His, blood is there any possibility of salvation or reward for our endeavors -to serve and praise Him.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." - *J. T. Read.*

I Would See Thy Face

I would see Thy face, O Jesus,
Lying fair, and sweet, and mild,
Against the bosom of dear Mary
On Thy natal night. Thou Child
Son of God's transcendent grace,
I would look upon Thy face
And be like Thee.

I would see Thy face, O Jesus,
Man of truth, and life, and power,
Lifting burdens, healing, helping,
Breaking bread in hunger's hour.
Let me now Thy footsteps trace,
Just to look upon Thy face
And be like Thee.

I would see Thy face, O Jesus,
As *Thou* spent Thy dying breath;
Know the deeper, fuller meaning
Of Thy sacrificial death.
In the sacred "secret place,"
Lord, to meet Thee face to face
And be like Thee.

- Nellie Florence Jolly.

Circumcision and Baptism

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the, faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." - Col. 2:11-13.

IN THE verses previous to those now under discussion, there has been in the Apostle's mind the contrast between that fulness which is the precious lot of those who are in Christ Jesus, those *who* have the mind of Christ, and two will-o'-the-wisps prevailing in Colosse-the empty philosophies resulting from the reasonings, so called, of human minds; and the religion of vain formalism. Always there have been the two corrupting tendencies to influence religious thought, that of the intellect, and that of the senses -- the danger that the cultured few will place their trust in the superior workings of their mind, while the great mass will make the equally serious mistake of depending on feelings. With the one, speculation runs riot, and with the other religion becomes a mere display of feelings. Apparently both these false hopes held sway in the Colossian group, for Paul assailed both.

In the verses now before us, the Apostle is answering that company of formalists who would impose the Jewish circumcision on Gentile converts. This that was the seal of the Covenant with Abraham's seed (Gen. 17:9-14) and which must be maintained in order to retain their right, to the blessings promised to the Jews, either in that day or in this, could be of no avail to a Christian, whose seal is not the letter but - the spirit. (Rom. 2:29; 7:6; 2 Cor. 3:6; Matt. 23:23; Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:20; 2 Tim. 3:5; Rom. 14:17.) "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 5:6; 6:15.) But there is a circumcision for Christians-the circumcision of the heart, their seal of acceptance with God. For those who have this circumcision the ancient Jewish rite manifestly is obsolete.

CHRISTIAN CIRCUMCISION DEFINED

This true circumcision has three characteristics: It is "not made with hands"; it consists in "putting off the body of the flesh"; and above all it must be "of Christ."

Since it is "not made with hands," it is a God-given reality and not the work of the flesh. The Jewish circumcision was a ceremonial cleansing faintly suggestive of the Christian's purity of heart. Even the Old Testament points to this deeper meaning of circumcision, as in Deuteronomy 30:6: "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart . . . to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart." See also Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4.

The Christian circumcision is no such small matter as the Jewish symbol, for it is the "putting off the body of the flesh." The words, "the sins of," are evidently an interpolation, as indicated by the more reliable manuscripts; and we suspect Satan's hand in this addition. He would very much like to convince every saint that all there is to his circumcision is the putting off sins, whereas its real import is the "putting off *the body* of the flesh" -- the "making *no* provision for the flesh to satisfy the desires thereof." - Rom. 13:14.

The Apostle's expression is a strong one, for, the "putting off " is more literally a complete *stripping* off, as of the laying aside of *one's* clothing. How evident it is that this is not made with

hands, even though it is a gradual work and embarrassingly partial for a time. Only our Heavenly Father can effect and complete *so* great a change as this "circumcision" of the heart. This must be circumcision "*in* the spirit." If it were only "in the letter," an obedience to the letter of the law, man might *work* that in a measure satisfactory to the human mind. "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born *of* water and *of* the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) "Not by works, of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing *of* the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:5.)

Even though there were an absence of allusions *in* Col. 2:11 to anything beyond the mere *putting* aside of sin, that would not indicate that higher attainments are not part of the work of the divine Spirit in us. Every one should know "this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," but "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." - Rom. 6:6; Heb. 12:28; 13:16; Psa. 34:14.

The Law required the circumcision of the flesh. Just as positively the Spirit dispensation requires the circumcision of the heart; and this is manifestly necessary that there may be the "new creature in Christ Jesus [for whom] old things have passed away [by heart circumcision]." (2 Cor. 5:17.) That individual has ceased to live after the flesh, though' *still in* the flesh. In another sense the' Apostle says: "Ye are not in the flesh, but]In the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. 8:9.) He can speak thus truly because of his stronger expression just quoted above that the body of sin *is* "*destroyed*," that henceforth we should not serve sin." This destruction is of course not of the physical body but of the will that has controlled it until that time.

It is not surprising that Satan has been successful in inducing the great mass of so-called Christians to be content because they have in a measure put off some of the sinful tendencies of the flesh, but there is no excuse for this error on the part of those who seek to do His will. One feature of the King James Translation that has assisted in this wrong viewpoint is the use of the word "lust" in translating a Greek word that does not necessarily mean anything stronger than the most innocent of desires. Evil desire should be implied only when the context so indicates. ("Lust" is, however, the correct translation of another word used in Col. 3:5 and Rom. 1:26.) This true thought is plainly enough taught in Paul's exhortation to live not after the flesh but after the spirit. The word translated "after" in Romans 8:13, in the construction there used, means "conforming to the standards of" the flesh. Following the least suggestion of the flesh, unsupported by the Spirit's guidance, therefore, constitutes one as living after the flesh. This is not a question of sinful lusts, but of seeking anything other than the will of God—a thing which faith can never do. When one follows his own will, he is just as definitely proving that his faith is in self as he proves his faith in God by following the divine will. It is for this reason that no Christian can pray for anything until he has first determined God's will in the matter, or in the absence of any means of knowing the Father's will, he will say, "If it be Thy will."

SPIRITUAL CIRCUMCISION "OF CHRIST"

Doubtless it is this completeness of submission to the divine Spirit that is indicated when we are told that our circumcision is "of Christ." "In Him" we not only have the justification that makes us acceptable in the presence of the Father though still bearing about this body of flesh, but in a still more important sense we are "in Him" as members of His Body. Here the thoughts of the flesh cease and the "mind of Christ" begins. But we cannot be "in Him" without "circumcision of the heart." Any holding fast to the flesh and the works of the flesh marks us as carnal to that degree. We must not, however, permit Satan to deceive us into thinking that the works of the flesh must be sinful to place us in this category.

The circumcision is "of Christ" probably both because He submitted to it and because He instituted it. There were many noble men in Israel previous to the Spirit dispensation, who knew some measure of this heart-transformed condition, but we cannot suppose that any prior to Jesus' time could actually experience a condition so drastic as the entire putting off the mind of the flesh. This work could be possible only in a Spirit dispensation. And what need can these Gentile converts have of the Jewish ceremony when the reality is theirs? Later in his argument the Apostle alludes to a series of ceremonials which are likewise outmoded by the establishing of the reality.

The ceremony has had its place in that great pedagogic work of bringing its votaries to Christ, not that they might bring to Him something that the empty reasonings of their philosophers had evolved, but that laying aside all human thought they might receive the mind of Christ, "bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5.) Never has force imposed on any creature bondage comparable to this. They *who* are in Christ Jesus; having learned the folly of all the workings of the flesh, even at its best, gladly share with the Apostle Paul in "dying daily" that the "*life of Christ*" might be manifested in them. That life- cannot fully manifest itself while the flesh has its way about anything.

Perhaps more than anything else in the Christian life this resigning of the will of the flesh separates us from the world and its spirit. We note in connection with the Apostle's definition of a new creature that he does not say that *all* "old things have passed away," but he does say that "*all* things are become new." Much that is "old in the life of the individual continues after he has given himself unreservedly to the guidance of the Heavenly Father; but every old practice is conducted on a new basis, so that it is literally true that "all things have *become* new." It would be very strange indeed, if the world would not notice this change and condemn us for being so contrary to their aims and principles. But this only adds to the Christian's joy, as thus he can "go to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." Undoubtedly Saul of Tarsus, as his own words testify, lived on as high a moral plane as was possible for- a human being, but it was an entirely new experience that came into his life when "dying daily he shared in the "sufferings of Christ," "filling up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ," "bearing *His* reproach."

BAPTISM, PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

This deeper experience is more definitely referred to by the other symbol, baptism, which the Apostle here associates with circumcision. We are told that the form of expression in the Greek, implies that the two things are "contemporaneous. In other words there can be no true spiritual baptism where there is lacking a genuine circumcision of the heart-the laying aside of the entire will of the flesh. Nor can there be any circumcision of the heart without a 'true spiritual baptism-burial into the will of Christ.

Only a ceremony which is in accord with the meaning of the word "baptizo" can have been in the Apostle's mind, and only that can truly represent the Christian's actual experience. "All but entire unanimity prevails among commentators on this point. The burial and the resurrection spoken of point unmistakably to the primitive mode of baptism, as Bishop Lightfoot . . . puts it in his paraphrase: 'Ye were buried with, Christ to your old selves beneath the baptismal waters, and were raised with Him from these same waters, to a new and better life.'" - Manifestly the symbol cannot accomplish for us all that is ascribed to baptism in the New Testament, any more than could a physical circumcision all that is ascribed to its antitype. Our hope is not in the work of some man who submerges and raises us again from the baptismal waters, but- "through faith in the working of God." - Col. 2:12. - R V.

Baptism is more than circumcision. It carries the picture one step further. Here, too, the death of the flesh is represented, but additionally a resurrection to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, "to walk with Him in newness of life," *even* as He walked." (Eph. 2:6; Rom. 6:4; 8:1; 1 John 2:6.) Paul, in this same letter (Col. 3:1), tells us how we may know whether this is our experience or not, for he says that such "seek those things which are above." It should be easy for each one to scrutinize his daily life and know whether treasure is being laid up on earth or laid up in heaven. "Where one's heart is, there will his treasure be also." (Matt. 6:19-21.) We may well ask ourselves, Which brings the greater distress into our life, the missing of some spiritual blessing, or the missing of some physical satisfaction? If the former, we have known the "power of His resurrection." Jesus' resurrection demonstrated the acceptableness of His sacrifice. The power of His resurrection manifest in us proves the acceptableness of our "living sacrifice." By His cross the world must be "crucified unto us [dead so far as we are concerned], and we unto the world [dead to its every allurement]."

"LIFE MORE ABUNDANT"

This would be a sad state in which to find ourselves if it were not followed by the resurrected life. "There is the actual communication of a, new life when we touch Christ by faith. The Prophet of old laid himself upon the dead child, the warm lip on the pallid mouth, the throbbing heart on the still one, and the contact rekindled the extinguished spark. So Christ lays His full life on our deadness, and does more than recall a departed glow of vitality. He communicates a new life kindred with His own."

Paul's next phrase, "having forgiven us all our trespasses," as the most trustworthy manuscripts render it, gives us one of his intimate, personal touches, introducing us into the depths of the Apostle's character. While all that he had spoken of before was part of his own experience as a Christian, both the circumcision and the baptism, his sharing in them is not alluded to; but he is too widely awake to the, realization of his own unworthiness to fail to mention his association with those who must have their trespasses forgiven. The manuscripts from the earlier centuries render the passage, "having forgiven us all trespasses." It is through Christ's death that this pardon is Paul's and. ours. Satan's eagerness to becloud this truth is matched by Paul's intense hatred of anything that would veil from our sight the crucified Christ.

The ordinance of baptism into literal water was given, not only that we might recognize our privileges, but also that we might the more clearly apprehend Him who first went down into the waters symbolic of death and resurrection. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the' keeping of the commandments of God." (1 Cor. 7:19.) Nor is baptism into water of avail for the washing away of sins or the consecrating of the individual; but burial into His will, accompanying true circumcision of the heart, a stage of the true baptism, is absolutely essential that we may rise to walk with Him in newness of like the final stage of the Christian's baptism for this walk, for those who are "faithful unto death," will lead to and beyond the "veil that but thinly intervenes." "For we are the circumcision, which worship God -in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." - Rev. 2:10; Phil. 3:3.

- P. E. Thomson

The Afterward of Peace

"Mercy and truth are met together. Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other." - Psalm 85:10.

HERE is a veritable jewel embedded in a context which may not on its surface arrest our attention, but when we pause as suggested by the "Selah" at the end of verse two, we will find much to consider.

The Psalm may be logically divided into three parts which can appropriately lead to a fourth and concluding thought-"The Afterward of Peace", viz.,

- (1) An allusion to God's gracious interposition in former times; and now used as the ground for the present appeal.
- (2) The present condition from which they would be delivered.
- (3) The expression of a confident hope that deliverance would come.
- (4) The afterward of peace.

THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND

Of particular interest is the early mention of "The Land" referred to as "Thy Land." Reference is also made to the people of the land as "Thy People."

These two facts -- Thy Land and Thy People -- give good reason for the "Selah." Consideration of this historical phenomenon will reveal that much of the world history has revolved around this divine arrangement for important aspects of the Divine Plan necessitated that there be a people and a land. The first and logical step would, therefore, be the selection of the land to be inhabited by the chosen people. Both of these steps are seen in God's dealings with Abraham, who, upon separation from his native land, was subsequently promised a land that he and his seed would ultimately possess.

This land, therefore, came to be the world's most important piece of real estate as can be seen in the words from Deuteronomy 32:8:

"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel"; an irrevocable "set aside" of a portion of planet earth for a very special people, "a people for a purpose."

Long years after God's covenant with Abraham and in fulfillment of the Divine intent as revealed to Abraham in a vision, a major step was taken toward the selection of the people to occupy the land. This people were found, as foretold, in slavery in a foreign land under the burdens of the Egyptians but upon whose ears fell the following note of encouragement:

"I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." - Exod. 6:7.

The title to the land is, therefore, vested in Abraham and his seed by promise of One having the sovereign right thus to deal with it. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." . . . "For all the earth is mine," words used as the basis of God's dealings with his selected people. - Psalm 24:1; Exod. 19:5.

Although Abraham himself never took possession of so much as a foot of the promised land, his descendents did after much discipline durin their wilderness wanderings and spite their disobedience and resistance to the will of God. We can, therefore, say on the basis of much scriptural proof that the people and the land are inseparable permanently. Verse 1 of our Psalm (Psalm 85:1) indicates the land in the past had enjoyed the prosperity of God's favor. Reference to a captivity from which they had returned indicates in the past a separation of the people from their land. Which captivity is referred to we cannot be sure; in any case the people must have experienced the horrors of an invasion of the land which had by now become their home. Invasion by an alien army conjures an awesome picture in the minds of those who have passed through the experience . . . the merciless sword, pillage, rapine, and captivity of the survivors.

To such horrors God's people were no strangers. Neither were they strangers to His love and mercy in reuniting the people and the land and the fleeting moments of peace that came to them as a result of periods of rehabilitation.

But of deeper and more abiding comfort was the thought the Psalmist expresses in verse two (Psa. 85:2):

"Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah." What an occasion for thanksgiving! What a solid basis for national prosperity and security, enjoyment of divine favor and peaceful living! These conditions would continue so long as they remained obedient to God's commandments and would trust in Him.

SPIRITUAL BENEFITS

God's antitypical people -- "Israelites indeed" -- are reminded by the Apostle Paul that "these things happened unto them [Israel] typically, and are written for our admonition on whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Cor. 10:11). Peace in this higher sense therefore comes to those who have accepted the One who is "The Way the Truth and the Life" by his death on the cross and resurrection, even the Lord Jesus Christ. The One who is now the intercessor in the Divine presence for us.

Obedience and trust are also the conditions on which this vital relationship may continue. To such come the peace that passeth understanding, a blessing for those who realize and appreciate their position of sonship. Consequently when the sacred precincts of our relationship with the Lord are invaded by such enemies as fear, lack of faith, and trust, we also are in danger as were the typical people of being overcome and taken captive by our wily adversary.

In such circumstances we should recognize wherein lies our safety; surely not in any provision we can provide, for we are wholly dependent on Him who called us to this high station of sonship. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." . . . "He is our refuge and fortress" and "a very present help in trouble." - 1 John 3:2; Psa. 91:2; Psa. 46:1.

"Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease" (Psalm 85:4). This is an indication that Israel is again in trouble due to disobedience and again feeling the sting of

Divine disfavor and anger. The pleading is immediately followed by the question "Wilt thou be angry with us forever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?"

The Psalmist is here obviously reminded of the penalty attached to the violation of the first commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." . . . "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Exod. 20:3, 5). One of Israel's problems in their earlier history was worship of false gods, a practice imported from neighboring nations with all of its attendant evils. This unfaithfulness to Jehovah, who had so wonderfully delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, had brought upon them the foretold punishment, and the reason for the present supplication for relief. However, they seemingly had learned that just as surely as their unfaithfulness led to the punishment, repentance would bring forgiveness and the smile of God's approval.

From this, too, spiritual Israel may draw a valuable lesson for who has not at one time or another had a sense of Divine disapproval and through tears of repentance realized and appreciated the unfailing love of the Heavenly Father, his forgiveness and tender mercy through our Lord Jesus our advocate in the Divine presence. Is it not after such experiences that we come to know the value of the "peace that passes understanding"?

HISTORICAL REVIVALS

The Psalmist's plea continues: "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" - Psalm 85:6.

Yes indeed, it takes the spiritual surges seen in revivals to bring rejoicing to the Lord's people. The history of God's people, typical and antitypical, has been punctuated by revivals, repentance and outpourings of God's Holy Spirit. In ancient Israel, for example, the resurgence of faith and obedience were brought about during the reigns of such kings as good king Josiah, the conquering King David, peaceable king Solomon, and revivalist Ezra, to name a few.

The history of spiritual Israel too has seen some notable revivals, such as the great Reformation initiated by Luther in Germany, the Wesleys in England, the Miller movement in anticipation of the Lord's Second Advent, and more recently the Bible Student movement under the leadership of Brother Russell.

With each of these spiritual awakenings have come new insights into various features of Christian faith and practice with emphasis on particular matters of faith peculiar to the needs of the times in which they occurred. Thus it was that spiritual Israel was through Divine guidance carried forward, holding high the banner of truth as revealed at that time.

With the rapid increase of knowledge that has marked the past hundred years in every field of endeavor, compensating increase in the knowledge of the Bible has also come about. Infidelity, skepticism, atheism, etc., have been met by a more enlightened interpretation of the Lord's Word. Our Heavenly Father is seen in a much more reasonable light through a knowledge of the Divine Plan in which He is viewed as a God of love, as well as of power, justice, and wisdom.

In our contemporary period of church history the Lord's people are not only encouraged to expand their knowledge of God, but in addition to cultivate the devotional life, including a closer walk with the Master in communion and fellowship with the Father. "Whom having not seen, we love; . . . and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8). When this goal has

been attained the revival will have done its work. With the Holy Spirit shed abroad in our hearts, peace, too, will be the portion of God's people.

DIVINE LOVE UNFAILING

The Psalmist continues to probe the deeper insight into the mind of the Lord: "Show us thy steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation." - Psalm 85:7. These are indeed moving words, indicating that the Psalmist has a keen appreciation of Jehovah's true character.

Israel's waywardness had merited severe punishment, but rather than alienate, it promoted a longing toward the One administering the discipline. There is comfort in the thought that it is administered in love and designed to teach unforgettable lessons. Such steadfast love is the source of deepest comfort also to spiritual Israel as they journey homeward in an alien world which is so much in need of the comfort of God's love.

WAITING UPON GOD

Up to this point the Psalmist has been making known his own desires, and longings. Now he says, "Let me hear what the Lord will speak: for He will speak peace unto His people." - Psalm 85:8.

The Psalmist is now ready and in an attitude to receive the blessing. Up to this point he has voiced a plea for God's favor; he has been seeking audience with the recognized source of these blessings, and is now satisfied that he has been heard. He now waits with expectancy to "hear what the Lord will speak."

This is good rule to follow in our own fellowship with the Father and with the Son about the inspired Word. For not only should there be a readiness to exercise ourselves in prayer as we are so frequently admonished to do in making our requests and our supplications known to Him, but we at the same time should exercise due care that we understand what the Lord is saying to us through His Word. The inspired Word is, when examined in the power of the Holy Spirit, our unfailing guide and channel of truth; for has not the Lord revealed these things to us by his Holy Spirit for the Spirit searcheth all things even the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10). The gateway to peace is to those who turn to Him with all their heart and not be found, as was Israel, "returning to folly."

"Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell on *our* land." - Psa. 85:9.

This verse indicates a relationship of fear to salvation. What kind of fear? The Word tells that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Psa. 111:10) They that fear the Lord will be glad" (Psa. 119:74).... "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever." - Psa. 19:9.

Obviously this is not a fear that produces anxiety, dread, or alarm, but rather promotes the development of wisdom and enduring peace of mind. In short, a reverential fear toward a loving God and toward His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who so marvellously revealed the Father's love in his own ministry and the laying down of his own life on behalf of a lost and dying race.

We should not overlook the change in the possessive with respect to the land, from "thy land" in Psa. 85:1 to "our land" in Psa. 85:9 and again in Psa. 85:12. More on this point later.

A MEMORABLE MEETING

We come now to what can be thought of as the key verse (Psa. 85:10) in the Psalm, probably more familiar and intriguing than its setting or context: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (A. V.). "Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet, righteousness and peace will kiss each other" (R. S. V.). "Loving kindness and faithfulness have met together, righteousness and prosperity have kissed each other" (Roth.).

Although there are minor variations in the three translations quoted above, it will be generally agreed that the universal intimate gesture of the kiss is expressive of love and kindness and well understood, by all. By what better way could the Psalmist convey to us the thought of God's love and compassion?

What combination of circumstances in human history would therefore answer to this striking simile? What was in the writer's mind impelling him to use this word picture of "righteousness and peace kissing each other"?

Consider first the motivation behind or leading to this transporting sequel. Before it occurs, there is a coming together of two most important divine qualities-"Mercy and Truth" or "Loving Kindness and Faithfulness." Is the Psalmist under the power of the Holy Spirit unwittingly pointing out the focal point in history when the "arm of the Lord would be revealed" to the few who could see it, and the fact "that God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"? - John 3:16.

In this revelation of His love, our Heavenly Father in sending His son to die for all mankind redeeming them from Adamic condemnation, shows that active quality of love to be seen in His mercy.

It is written of Him who was the active agent in this great redemptive work, that "He is the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6). See also Eph. 4:21. And is "the only name given under heaven or among men whereby men can be saved." - Acts. 4:12.

The Father's steadfast love in sending his Son plus the faithfulness on the part of the Son in carrying out the Father's will could not better be described then in the words "Mercy and Truth are met together"; fitting antecedents to the "righteousness and peace which kiss [affectionately greet] each other."

What better way for describing this personal experience which comes to every child of God, than is given us through the Apostle Paul at Romans 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" the gate way to "the peace of God which passes understanding." The legacy that Jesus left his disciples when he ascended into glory (John 14:27): "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." The righteousness on which this peace is based is of celestial origin, provided freely by divine grace responding to individual faith in Christ, whom God hath sent in order to reveal himself and his great love for the human family (John 3:16, 17), the satisfying answer to the Psalmist's request: "Show us thy steadfast love."

What a conjunction of divine benevolence and human needs is seen in this passage of inspired prophecy-"Mercy and Truth"! God's mercy combined with the life and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, providing as it does the Righteousness and Peace

foretold by the Psalmist and experienced by all who "believe in their heart." The consequence of this is Peace -- "The Afterward of Peace".

A GLORIOUS SEQUEL

The impact of this upon the human family has been restricted during the gospel age wherein "many are called and few are chosen." Only a little flock will be accepted as worthy of a place in the throne with their Redeemer and Lord.

However the Psalmist is not viewing the matter from this standpoint; rather, he is beautifully describing a condition which is the sequel to that affectionate meeting of "Righteousness and Peace." "Faithfulness out of the earth doth spring forth, and righteousness out of the heavens bath looked down" (Psa. 85:11, Roth.), a prophetic vista that bespeaks harmony and peace, productiveness of the land and blessing for the people.

"Yahweh himself too will give us the blessing, and *our* land shall yield her increase." - Psa. 85:12, Roth.

"Thy land", Yahweh's land is now looked upon as "*our land*" and may well be a reference in prophecy to the long delayed fulfillment of the ages-old promise to Abraham (Gen. 13:14, 15): "To thee will I give it"; all that could be viewed from Abraham's vantage point north, south, east, and west. The prophet is obviously moved by the prospect of this vital rapport between heaven and earth suggesting the thought of response ascending from the earth because of Divine approval.

The land which in our day has become the focal point of world attention and dispute is now occupied by its rightful owners, the seed of Abraham, and will in due time yield her increase. This fact is eloquently set forth by many of the prophets in ancient Israel, e.g., (Isa. 35:1, 2, Roth.): "The wilderness and parched land shall be glad for them and the waste places shall exult and blossom as the lily." "It shall blossom abundantly and exult." "People will praise thee O God; Peoples will all of them praise thee . . . Earth will have given her increase, God our own God will bless us." - Psa. 67:3, 6, Roth.

As "righteousness and peace" march along in the blessed day when the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the great deep, it will very soon become a pathway and indeed a highway, a way of joy and exultation.

A regenerated people and a fertile earth will combine in bringing about the long promised reign of peace on earth under the dominion of Him whose right it is, even the Prince of peace. - Isa. 9:6, 7.

Peace in its deeper sense is not attainable by any not in harmony with the Divine will. It comes only to those who have accepted the provision made in Christ Jesus and responded to the admonition of Paul. - Rom. 12:1, 2.

In that glorious day "so long foretold" peace will reign over the earth and in the hearts of all who are then obedient to the laws of Christ's Kingdom. Meanwhile the oft repeated prayer becomes increasingly urgent: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

May the Lord bless to us the study of His Word and write its eternal truth upon our hearts.

- J. B. Webster

To every one on earth
God gives a burden, to be carried down
The road that lies between the cross and crown;
No lot is wholly free;
He giveth one to thee.

Some carry it aloft,
Open and visible to any eyes;
And all may see its form, and weight, and size;
Some hide it in their breast
And deem it thus unguessed.

Thy burden is God's gift
And it will make the bearer calm and strong;
Yet, lest it press too heavily and long,
He says, 'Cast it on Me,
And it shall easy be.'

And those who heed His voice,
And seek to give it back in trustful prayer,
Have quiet hearts that never can despair;
And hope lights up the way
Upon the darkest day.

Take thou thy burden thus
Into thy hands, and lay it at His feet,
And, whether it be sorrow or defeat,
Or pain, or sin, or care,
Oh leave it calmly there.

It is the lonely road
That crushes out the life and light of heaven;
But borne with Him, the soul restored, forgiven
Sings out through all the days
Her Joy, and God's high praise.

Entered Into Rest

Archie C. Berdahl, Bismarck, N.D.

Sis. I. Cawker, England

Sis. A. Chapman, England

Bro. F. C. Futcher, England

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