

DAVID

A Man After God's Own Heart

A Book of Devotions



He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.' From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus.

Acts 13:22,23

Introduction

DAVID was a man of a high and varied order of natural ability, a combination of the rare qualities of the successful statesman, warrior, musician and poet. His disposition was, in the main, noble, generous, humble, kind, enthusiastic and heroic. He was reverential toward God, and seemed from his youth to have almost implicit faith in the promises and providences of God. Yet David was not a model saint: there were some strange inconsistencies in his character which stand out the more prominently in contrast with the beautiful and noble traits which fill us with admiration. But since these, so far as he was able to see them, were most sincerely repented of, we can appreciate the humility that led to repentance, and regard David from the same standpoint of that loving and merciful consideration from which God regards all his fallen and weak followers who struggle against inherent depravity, humbly acknowledging their shortcomings, and leaning upon his tender mercy. While in his youth, when God was about to anoint him king of Israel, it was said of David, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart." (1 Samuel 13:14).

The record of David's course from the time of his anointing to his establishment in the kingdom shows an implicit trust in God--that he who had called and anointed him was able also in his own good time to bring him to the throne and to establish his kingdom. He took no measures whatever to displace Saul, nor to undermine his authority, even when Saul was pursuing him to take his life. And when Saul was unconsciously in his power, so that he could have slain him, he would not put forth his hand to touch the Lord's anointed. He was willing to wait patiently the Lord's time, knowing that what God had promised he was able also to perform; and so, even after Saul's death, he was not in haste to claim the vacated office, but he first inquired of the Lord to know if his time had come.

Thus God not only chose, but trained, his servant for the duties to which he had called him. And this providence in David's case reminds us of God's providences in general, how wisely he adapts means to ends and guides in all things to the accomplishment of his will. Many of the most comforting psalms of David were the results of his hard experiences in this time of his exile. In fact, the peculiar and varied experiences of the man, and the lessons derived from those experiences as expressed in his psalms, have been the comfort and blessing of God's people in all ages since. In a general way, David's

experiences correspond to those of the gospel Church whom God is similarly preparing for the Kingdom of heaven. And doubtless it is for this reason that the lessons of David's experience find an echo in so many of our hearts.

On coming to the throne David's course was marked with the same wisdom and magnanimity that had characterized him previously. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice"--is prophetic of that blessed time when the antitype of David's throne, the Kingdom of Jehovah's Anointed, our Lord Jesus, shall be established in all the earth. Then indeed may the earth rejoice; for that king will reign in righteousness, and justice and judgment will be the habitation of his throne. R. 1996



**Scriptures in the headings of each devotion are in the
New King James Version.
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C. T. Russell, author of *Zion's Watchtower*.
Articles are noted with Reprint references after each entry.**

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***Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power
of His might.... Take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able
to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand...praying
always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful
to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.
Ephesians 6:10,13,18***

Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised and His greatness is unsearchable. I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. The LORD is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works.

Psalm 145:2-3,5,9

The Psalmist says, "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." This sweeping statement takes in the utmost bounds of the material universe and also the humblest, as well as the most exalted, sentient being. The whole creation is his care. Jehovah, our God, is the great Emperor of the whole universe, and his wisdom, power, goodness and benevolence are abundantly equal to all the responsibilities of so exalted an office. The human mind staggers in its efforts to comprehend the mental resources of a being who is able to assume and to bear such responsibility. Think for a moment of the memory that never fails; of the judgment that never errs; of the wisdom that plans for eternity without the possibility of failure, and that times that plan with unerring precision for the ages to come; of the power and skill which can harness even every opposing element, animate or inanimate, and make them all work together for the accomplishment of his grand designs; of the tireless vigilance that never ceases, nor seeks relief from the pressing cares of universal dominion – whose eye never sleeps, whose ear is ever open, and who is ever cognizant of all the necessities, and active in all the interests, of his broad domains. R. 1560

For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past and like a watch in the night.

Psalm 90:4

As scientific instruments demonstrate to us the immensity of the Universe, we perceive that the Prophet used very moderate language indeed in his description of the majestic power and greatness of the Creator, when he represents Jehovah as weighing the mountains in His balance and holding the seas in the hollow of His Hand. (Isa. 40:12.) From His standpoint, a thousand years are but as a watch in the night. (Psa. 90:4.) How insignificantly small we all feel in the presence of our God! R. 5209

The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech and night unto night reveals knowledge.

Psalm 19:1-2

Well has the Psalmist said, in consideration of the immensity and the minutiae of God's providence over all his works – "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it." (Psa. 139:6.) No, we cannot; but Oh, what a thrilling sense of mingled reverence, love and adoration fills the heart, when thus we catch a glimpse of the intellectual and moral glory and majesty of our God! As we thus contemplate him, all nature becomes eloquent with his praise: the heavens truly declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handiwork: day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. (Psa. 19:1,2.) They tell of the order and harmony of the circling spheres, and the benevolent purpose of their great Creator and Controller, as the changing seasons and the alternating days and nights fill up the copious horn of plenty and refresh and invigorate the animate creation. R. 1560

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.

Psalm 111:10

This heavenly wisdom, we are told, has its beginning in the reverence of the Lord. That is, we must look away from our own narrow thoughts, plans and schemes and allow our minds to dwell upon the grandeur of God's benevolent, loving and glorious character until a gleam of his glory awakens in us a feeling of admiration, veneration and love, and then of longing to be conformed to his image.

Reverence is defined as a feeling of profound respect, often mingled with awe and affection; a feeling of worshipful regard when directed to the divine or sacred: also conduct inspired by, or conformed to, such feeling. "The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Psa. 111:10) This is the only proper attitude of the creature toward the Creator, the Author of our being, and the Creator, Preserver and Lord of the whole universe. When he speaks, therefore, our ears should be reverently attentive to his voice, and every power alert to do his bidding. Our safety, our happiness, and that nobility of character which prompts to love and gratitude, and which promptly and wisely heeds instruction and advances in knowledge and wisdom, all depend primarily upon our supreme reverence for the Lord. And therefore the Lord would foster and cultivate in us that becoming, filial reverence that is due to his name.

R. 1518 and R. 2002--See also January 29 Manna

The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”

Psalm 14:1

The Bible points out Jehovah God as the great first cause of all things. It addresses its counsels and promises only to those who recognize their Creator with the eyes of their understanding, and declares that those who do not recognize this great first cause, God, are so degraded, have their intellects so perverted, that they are **non compos mentis**--fools. (Psa. 14:1.) It further declares that God will not in the present age deal with any who are so depraved; but that "He that cometh unto God [acceptably] must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."—Heb.11:6. [The] children of God, begotten by his spirit, are seeking the wisdom that cometh from above, and are finding and knowing him whom to know is life eternal. they manifest a faith which is pleasing to him, and put themselves into a position of heart in which they may be "all taught of God," and thus know things which the natural man cannot know--thus seeing and appreciating things which "eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither hath entered into the hearts of [natural] men, ...but which God hath revealed unto us by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."—1 Cor. 2:9-10. R. 2834

The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.

Psalm 147:11

As a Father, he shows us that he bears a father's love to all his intelligent creatures--"the whole family of God in heaven and in earth"--and that for his "pleasure they are and were created." (Eph. 3:15; Rev. 4:11.) He created them in his own likeness--with the same mental and moral attributes, so that he might have communion and fellowship with them as sons, and they with him as a Father, that thus, in mutual fellowship and communion, the Creator and the creature might find pleasure, happiness and delight. This likeness of God includes in all not only the same mental faculties, but also the free exercise of the same in the formation of character. A creature incapable of thus forming character would not be in God's likeness. And for the purpose of developing character the alternative of good and evil must be placed before him. The right and wrong principles of action must be discerned and the individual left free to his own choice in the matter, that the pleasure of God may be realized in the virtuous character resultant from the free choice of righteousness. R. 1832

For You have made him a little lower than the angels and You have crowned him with glory and honor.

Psalm 8:5

In a word, man was intended to be the king of the earth, the lord of the earth; and it was to this end that he was crowned with the glory and honor and majesty of the divine image,--in the moral and intellectual features of his being, a flesh image of his invisible spirit Creator. It is to this high exaltation of man, as God's representative in the earth, that the Prophet speaks, saying, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; **thou crownedst him with glory and honor**, and didst set him over the works of thy hands." (Psa. 8:4-8.) So far from being only a little removed above the beast, this scripture declares that man was created in the very highest position of earthly creatures, but a little removed in intelligence, etc., from the angelic hosts. What we shall subsequently see respecting the fall of man from this grand position and the necessity of his redemption before he could be restored to it, is in perfect accord with the declarations respecting the glory and honor of the image in which he was created.

R. 2834

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6

The class referred to in our text as coming to God or as willing to come to Him, have a heart-hunger for their Creator--a longing for Him that nothing else can satisfy. They say to themselves, "There is a God who made me. The more I learn respecting the vast Universe and of my own anatomy, the more I see the Wisdom and the Power of God, and the more I realize my own littleness and weakness and need. For this great God my soul is crying out, and I have been told that He has made a revelation of Himself, that to certain Prophets of old He revealed the fact that He takes an interest in His human creatures. I mean to study what He has declared through these His servants. I am also told that He has revealed Himself and His love further through Jesus Christ His Son; and that this Son of God came to earth and died for sinful man that he might live. If God has really given man His Message, I want that Message; I will draw near to this God, that I also may receive His blessing." R. 5716

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens and Your glory above all the earth.

Psalm 108:5

The sin of idolatry is most prominently set forth in the Jewish law, the very first commandment being,--"Thou shalt have no other gods before me;...for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous god." The worship of the one true and righteous God, whom we are commanded to worship in the beauty of holiness (Psa.29:2; 96:9), is elevating and ennobling, and calculated to develop in us the glorious moral likeness of God; and only those do truly worship him in the spirit of the truth--in the beauty of holiness-- whose fruit is always unto praise and honor and glory.

R. 1835

As for God, His way is perfect. The word of the LORD is proven.

Psalm 18:30

If we come to his Word as reverent students, expecting to find therein the delineation of the pure and righteous character and plan of our God, that plan and character will be revealed to us; but if we come to it in a captious spirit and with impure and unholy thoughts and ambitions, we have just the kind of poor, imperfect brains that can warp and twist the Scriptures to suit our own ideas. If we put on the colored glasses of prejudice we can read God's Word as seen through them only. And this is what the Psalmist implied when he said, "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward. For thou wilt save the humble people, but wilt bring down high looks." (Psa.18:25-27.) Oh, how we need to beware of "high looks" and of the pride that goeth before destruction and of the haughty spirit that precedeth a fall! (Pro. 16:18.) For if in pride we go about to establish our own ways, and do not fully submit ourselves to the right ways of the Lord, we will surely deceive ourselves and be led away by the error of the wicked, so that God's way or plan, as viewed through the colored glasses of our ambitions and prejudices, will seem to our obscured vision as the Psalmist describes--unmerciful, impure and perverse, instead of what it really is--merciful and holy and righteous altogether. R. 3336

Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You.

Psalm 63:3

The Psalmist had a taste of the loving-kindness of God in his own experiences. When he was anointed to be king of Israel, he knew that he had found favor in God's sight. And later, when he did things that were wrong, God chastised him, punished him in love, because David was a man after the Lord's own heart--had a desire to do right--to do God's will. As the needle of a compass may under certain circumstances be detracted from its normal condition of pointing toward the pole, just so some attraction at times influenced David and led him into a wrong course. But as soon as the besetment was past, or he was led of the Lord to see his sin, his heart returned fully to Jehovah, as the needle of the compass returns and again points to the pole. Therefore King David declared that life without God's loving-kindness would be worth nothing to him; he would not appreciate his life if cut off from the favor of the Lord. This being the case, his lips would always confess the Lord--tell forth His loving-kindness, show forth His praises. R. 5440

For the LORD does not see as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

1 Samuel 16:7

God looked for the same characteristics in David that he now seeks in those whom in this age he calls to be anointed for the Kingdom. He found in him faith, meekness, courage, energy and loving obedience. Yet he was young and inexperienced and untrained and unskilled in the duties of the high office to which he was called. This latter condition, which, in the estimation of men, would have been an insurmountable barrier, was no obstacle in God's sight; for God is able to inspire his called ones with his spirit and to arm them with his might. So he did with David, and so he does with the Christ--our Lord Jesus and his body, the church.

Let all who have this glorious hope in them remember the words of our 'golden text'--"The Lord looketh on the heart." He is looking to see who is worthy to sit on the throne of his Kingdom; and has shown us very clearly the traits of character for which he is looking. It behooves us, then, to see that our hearts (our will, purpose, intention and effort) are in such a condition of loyalty, faithfulness and obedience as will bear the inspection of the all-seeing eye, while we remember for our encouragement that, as shown in the type, no conditions of birth or station or circumstances can form any obstacle to our acceptance with God and our future exaltation with Christ if we are faithful. R. 1901

My soul shall make its boast in the LORD.

Psalm 34:2

Let such a one "glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me." To thus know the Lord is not merely to know of him, to know something of his works and ways, but it is to know him by that intimate fellowship and communion which, by a living faith, seals the testimonies of his Word upon our hearts and makes us to realize that they are ours personally, that the Lord himself is our personal friend and helper and counselor and guide. We thus become acquainted with his spirit, his principles and methods of action,--we understand him,--we know how to interpret his providences, to mark his leadings, to observe his attitude toward us and thus daily to walk with him. Thus also we are led to a fuller appreciation of the Lord's righteousness and of his loving kindness, which will in due time establish justice in all the earth. Well, indeed, may we glory in the Lord and in the fact of his great condescension to us personally, when thus we come to understand and know him. R. 1919

The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way.

Psalm 25:9

The great work of vanquishing sin and establishing righteousness in the earth is the Lord's work: no human power is adequate to the emergencies of the case. Yet God is pleased to allow his power to operate through any human instrument that is meet for his use; **i.e.**, that can be used without injury to itself. If God were to work his wonders through those whose hearts are inclined to pride, that pride would grow, and would arrogate to self the glory that belongs to God, instead of appreciating the honor of being a servant of God, an instrument in his mighty hand--"for the Master's use made meet."

Above almost every thing else, therefore, beloved, let us guard well our humility. It is only when we are little in our own eyes that God can use us with safety to ourselves. And yet he does not shield us from every test of fidelity. If therefore the Lord gives you a little exaltation to-day, a little encouragement of success in his service, receive it humbly, meekly remembering your own unworthiness and insufficiency except as God is pleased to work through you. R. 1919

I have found My servant David. With My holy oil I have anointed him.

Psalm 89:20

Saul's rejection by the Lord because of disobedience meant not only his own ultimate removal from the kingdom, but that his family, his sons, should not succeed him in it. It meant, also, the Lord's selection of another man, another family, for the office of ruler in Israel and representative of the Lord upon the throne. The Lord's choice was David, to whom Samuel indirectly referred, saying, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou [Saul] hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." (1Sam. 13:14.)

Samuel seems to have taken supervision of the family of Jesse to the intent that he might without public display find the man whom the Lord had chosen and anoint him to the office and give him the divine blessing in preparation for it. Jesse properly introduced his sons to the prophet according to the order of their birth, his eldest, Eliab, first; and as he was of fine appearance Samuel naturally assumed that he was the Lord's choice. Eliab was the most suitable person in Jesse's family to be the king over the nation; but not so in the Lord's sight. The Lord was looking at the heart and had already selected David as a man after his own heart.

The name David signifies "beloved," and as it applied specially to our Lord and Master, of whom it was said by Jehovah, "This is my beloved Son," so also it applies to all the members of his body, each one of whom must be beloved, else he cannot be acceptable as a member. The Head says of such, "The Father himself loveth you," and again he says that we should love one another as he has loved us. It is not too much to say that all who receive this anointing of the Lord must ultimately be of this David, or beloved, character--the spirit of love must be in them, love for the Lord and love one for the other, else they are none of his.

R. 3225

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.

1 Corinthians 1:27

In seeking for the Lord's anointed who shall by and by reign in Millennial glory for the blessing of the world, as antitypes of David, we notice that as he was counted by his brethren too insignificant to be considered in this connection, so also are those whom the Lord is choosing and anointing for his heavenly Kingdom. Our Lord Jesus was disesteemed of his brethren, and when the suggestion was made that he should be the Lord's anointed, his people hid, as it were, their faces from him--disdained him, despised him, and considered him hopeless in respect to anything great or glorious--"as a root out of dry ground." The same has been true respecting the members of his body, the true elect Church; they also have been despised and rejected of men, and of them the Apostle declares, We are counted the filth and offscouring of the world; we are counted fools all the day long for Christ's sake -- 1Cor. 4:13.

Instructed respecting the Lord's methods, we are not to despise the least, the most ignoble or illiterate of those who give evidence of a purity and honesty of heart toward God, and to whom he seems to give the anointing of his spirit and the "ear to hear." Rather, while making known the message to all as we have opportunity, we are to rejoice specially with those upon whom the Lord's favor is manifested, regardless of their earthly surroundings, etc. The Lord knoweth them that are his, and it is for us to recognize, to honor and to cooperate with all such, as the ambassadors and representatives of our Lord and Master.

Had the Lord sent us forth to seek his bride, we might have ignorantly passed by some of his choice jewels and have gathered in some whom he rejects as unworthy--because we are unable to read the heart. This thought should make us very humble, gentle and meek toward all, and very trustful of the Lord and very much inclined to look for his leading in respect to our labors as his servants, just as Samuel looked to the Lord in connection with the anointing of David.

R. 3225--See also April 16 Manna

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.

1 Samuel 16:13

Subsequent history shows that David's brethren did not understand that he had been anointed to be king. Samuel may have let Jesse into the secret, and may subsequently have whispered something to David on the subject; but most evidently the matter was kept a profound secret, with the understanding that David's anointing would give him no authority of kingship until in the providence of God the authority should be fully taken from the hands of Saul and put into David's hands; and with the full understanding also that David himself was to have nothing whatever to do with grasping the power. His anointing was a prophecy respecting his future, and also a type of the anointing of the Christ. Certain it is that the youthful David conducted himself most modestly, most becomingly, and that the experiences through which he subsequently passed in the Lord's providence in following his vocation were very helpful to him, fitting and preparing him for the office of king, which came to him in due time. R. 4209

You love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

Psalms 45:7

Little known, not highly esteemed amongst men, not many of them great, wise or noble, the Lord is anointing all of the David class, the beloved class in the present time. They do not at once begin to reign, but do at once enter a school of experience designed by their Father to be helpful in preparing them for the duties and privileges of the Kingdom when the due time shall come for the Kingdom to be given to them. The world knoweth us not, saith the Apostle. Very true. They know not that we are anointed. Indeed, even many of our brethren who perceived the anointing know not what it signifies; they perceive not that we are anointed to be kings and joint-heirs with our Redeemer. However, the matter is communicated to us; as the Apostle declares, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye all know it." (I John 2:20.) Under this unction, this blessing of the Lord, we are to develop more and more in preparation for our position of royalty, to which we shall attain in our change in the First Resurrection. R. 4209

And the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.

1 Samuel 16:13

The blessing and power of the Lord accompanied David's anointing in some manner--just how, we may not understand, because the manifestation of the spirit was not the same in that time as it is with us, the Church, since Pentecost, respecting which the Apostle declares, "The holy spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39.) However, in some manner God's blessing and power were with David, enabling him to progress in knowledge, etc., and fitting and preparing him for the duties of the office to which he had been anointed. May we not consider as an antitype to this, the anointing which comes upon the Church from the time of her acceptance with the Lord? Ours is not a physical anointing, nor are the blessings conferred of a temporal character: it is as New Creatures that we are anointed; as New Creatures that we grow in grace and knowledge and love; and as New Creatures that, by and by, we shall be perfected in the First Resurrection and come to the throne with our Lord and Master as our Head.

R. 3225

The law of the LORD is perfect converting the soul. The testimony of the LORD is sure making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Psalms 19:7-8

How true are these prophetic declarations may be comprehended only by those who have learned to appreciate the Word of God. It deters from sin, it encourages toward righteousness, it gives consolation in trouble, it gives strength and courage in a time of general fear and quaking, it gives wisdom in times of perplexity, and the result is that the people of the Lord have much advantage every way through it as respects the present life, besides the hope, the encouragement and the preparation which it gives for the life which is to come.

R. 3608

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

Psalm 119:97

It is good to meditate upon, to ponder, the Word of the Lord; for only in so doing can we receive the nourishment it is designed to give. The Psalmist beautifully represents the proper attitude of all those who truly love the Lord, and who therefore delight in his Word and plan: "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night;" "I will meditate of all thy work, and talk of thy doings;" "I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word;" "Thy testimonies are my delight and my counselors;" "I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands;" "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day; ...therefore I hate every false way....Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage forever;" "My meditation of them shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord."—Psalm 1:2; 77:12; 119:15,16,24; 143:5; 119:97,104,111; 104:34.

Hear the Psalmist: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Other influences may lead to temporary and partial changes of course and action, but nothing else equals God's revealed Truth in producing a change--change of being, character, soul.... People may be converted from savagery to civilization by a general knowledge; or from intemperance to sobriety by a study of the advantages of the latter over the former; or from dishonesty to honesty by learning that "Honesty is the best policy." But none of these are soul conversions. Only God's truth can produce soul conversion, as also our Lord indicates in his prayer, "Sanctify them through thy truth--thy word is truth."

R. 1390

Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand. Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear, for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands.”

1 Samuel 17:45,47

The quality which God esteemed in David was his faith--the same quality that he esteemed in Abraham and in all the faithful of the past. Of all who had "this testimony that they pleased God," it is written that by faith they did thus and so, "and it was counted unto them for righteousness." --Gal 3:6.

David's faith in the Lord being great, he was surprised to learn when he came to the army that the Philistine had been boasting himself for forty days against Israel and Israel's God, and that no one of his nation had possessed sufficient faith in God to accept the challenge. He at once proposed that he would accept it himself and asked to be taken to the king that he might be thus commissioned. Those who mentioned him to the king spoke of him as a "mighty, valiant man," yet when Saul looked upon him he perceived that he was but a youth and was physically no match for the giant. However, he was the only champion who had arisen, and he was full of confidence in his own success as an instrument in the Lord's hands for delivering Israel from the boastful heathen.

David's retort shows clearly that he appreciated the situation in all its bearings. He was aware that his opponent was armed with sword and spear and javelin, but, as he states the matter, he was approaching the conflict strong in the strength that God supplies-- strong in his faith in the Lord as the decider of battles, as the one who would be able to give him the victory and deliver his people from all their enemies. David noted, and counted well upon the fact, that the issue was not between the two armies, not between two men, but between the God of Israel and the false gods of the Philistines.

R. 3230

I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies.

Psalm 18:3

David's conquest [of Goliath] in some respects illustrates battles which all of the Lord's people must engage in. Goliath and the hosts supporting him may well illustrate to our minds various foes of God and truth and righteousness which challenge us and all of the Lord's people.

(1) The hosts of doubt and skepticism are today led about by the great giant of unbelief, whose size, armor, sword and spear are over all the hosts of nominal Christendom--all except the David class--the body of Christ.

(2) Goliath may properly represent pride, backed by a host of worldliness. One of the severe ordeals of the New Creature is the conquering of the love of the spirit of worldliness under the leadership of pride. Worldly pride challenges faith in God and obedience to him, and only those who are of good courage and full of confidence in the Lord can overcome this giant.

(3) Another giant, which will sometimes challenge the people of God, is fear, distrust. Mighty, imposing and terrifying indeed is the influence of fear, except upon those who have learned to know the Lord through previous experiences, and to trust him even where they cannot trace him.

(4) Another giant which assaults the Lord's people, but which in the present time can be overcome only by the David class, the body of Christ, is the giant of sectarian influence. How strong, how majestic, how well-armed, how influential is this great giant, whose powers are exercised in a large measure in intimidating the Lord's true children, so that all their lifetime they are subject to bondage and fail to attain the liberty with which Christ makes free indeed!

Let us all remember the meekness and humility of David, note that his conduct was utterly devoid of boastfulness, and that we are to copy this. Like him our confidence is to be in the Lord, and not in ourselves.

R. 3230

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Ephesians 6:10-11

It is written of the Lord's faithful disciples, who shall constitute the Church of glory, that they must walk in his steps as he set the example. This means to them, as to him, a warfare against sin, its great representative and leader Satan, and all the hosts of deceived humanity who are on his side. Does not the Apostle intimate this when he says, We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in influential positions? (Eph. 6:12.) Our enemy is a giant in whose presence we are feeble indeed. The Apostle calls him a wily foe and our Lord taught us to pray the Father, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Very evidently, then, we need divine assistance in our unequal contest, as did David in his.

The natural thought in connection with such a contest is to put on armor similar to that of our opponent, as Saul offered his armor to David. It is for each of the Lord's people, however, to learn that victory cannot be won along worldly lines. We cannot fight evil with evil, wrong with wrong, boasting with boasting and slander with slander, hatred with hatred, etc. If we undertake so to do, we shall surely lose in the battle. Our course, like that of David, must be full reliance upon the Lord and the use of the sling and pebble of truth. If we cannot conquer along these lines we cannot conquer at all. Who is sufficient for these things? --for such an unequal contest with the prince of darkness and all the hosts of sin? Surely the one who would have confidence in himself would be unwise; hence, as the Apostle says, we place our confidence in God; if we are loyal to him victory will be ours, if we are careless or unfaithful we shall not be of the David class--not be members of the glorious Body of Christ, in which event we shall never reign with him, even as David, who received the anointing, would never have reached the throne, if he had fought the giant with Saul's armor.

R. 4215

Honor your father and mother.

Exodus 20:12

Jonathan, the eldest son of King Saul, was the natural heir to his throne, and doubtless would have succeeded his father had Saul not incurred the divine displeasure and so forfeited that privilege for his posterity and cut short his own career. (1 Sam. 13:13.)

Jonathan was a devoted son to his father and a devoted and energetic servant to God and to his people. The deep attachment of father and son is manifest from several facts: Jonathan could undertake his dangerous expedition against the Philistines only by keeping his project a secret from his father. (1 Sam. 14:1.) The effect of Saul's strange vow was emphasized by his affection for his son. (1 Sam. 14:39-44.) That dearest object he declared he would sacrifice, if need be, in fulfillment of his vow. But the people rescued him, declaring the Lord to be on the side of Jonathan.

There was very marked and intimate confidence between the father and son. (1 Sam. 20:2.) "Behold my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will show it me." And Jonathan had great influence with his father (1 Sam. 19:6), and was very active in cooperation with him in the defense of the Lord's people against their foes and oppressors.

Jonathan was the natural heir to the throne of Israel, and David had been anointed to take his place; though Jonathan was of the royal family and a man of some thirty odd years, while David was but a shepherd youth, probably about twenty-three years of age. Each in simplicity of heart accepted the Lord's appointments as wisest and best, and determined nobly to do his part toward the Lord and toward his people and toward each other. And so Jonathan, cooperating with his father in the duties of his office to Israel so long as the Lord sustained him in power, nobly used the privileges of his position for the protection and preservation of the one whom he knew to be appointed to reign in his stead.

R. 1908

**Jealousy is as cruel as the grave. Its flames are flames of fire,
a most vehement flame.**

Song of Solomon 8:6

WARS with the Philistines continuing, David was made a regular soldier, with a command over a regiment and closely in touch with King Saul himself. Victory after victory came wherever David was engaged, and King Saul saw the admiration of the people turned from himself to David. The sentiment reached a climax when, returning from one of the victories, the women and girls of a village came forth singing:

"Saul hath slain his thousands,
But David his tens of thousands!"

The flame of jealousy took full possession of the king, and thenceforth his one purpose seems to have been to destroy David. It was a secret withheld from him that David was already anointed by Samuel to be his successor.

Jealousy is the bitter fruit of selfishness gone to seed. It unbalances reason, extinguishes happiness. It subjects its possessor to horrible melancholy, so that when it is in control, he is really crazy. Not only is this illustrated in King Saul's case, but it is more or less illustrated in the experiences of every human being. Who does not by experience know what jealousy is? and the more he knows of it the worse.... It is the most terrible, and at the same time the most foolish manifestation of selfishness. Everyone recognizing it in himself should be alarmed--should throttle it promptly, seeking victory through vigilance, and if a Christian, through prayer.

R. 5662

Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul. And David behaved wisely in all his ways and the LORD was with him.

1 Samuel 18:12,14

THIS lesson affords us a contrast between a spirit or disposition in harmony with the Lord and a spirit or disposition out of harmony with him and his arrangements. The first is exhibited in David, the shepherd boy, secretly anointed to the office of king and later brought into prominence through his victory over Goliath.... So far as Saul is concerned the record is that an evil or malevolent spirit possessed him. On the contrary the Spirit of the Lord is said to have been with David from the time of his anointing. We are not to confuse in our minds those blessings of the Lord's Spirit in ancient times with the still more blessed experiences of God's people throughout the Gospel Age under the anointing of the holy Spirit, the begetting of the holy Spirit, the sealing of the holy Spirit as sons. Doubtless there would be much in common in the experiences of those who received the Lord's Spirit at that time and those who receive it now; but most certainly that which we now enjoy as the "house of sons" is far beyond anything that was possible for the "house of servants" to experience.

To whatever extent the holy Spirit was bestowed upon the "house of servants" it would necessarily be a spirit of moderation, of fellowship with God, of desire to do his will and of peace with him; and to this extent it would be the spirit of a sound mind, relieving its possessor of much of the nervous fret and strain, excitability and languor which might be his own naturally under trials and disappointments. Of Saul, it is said that an evil spirit entered into him, but this does not necessarily mean that he became obsessed of a demon, but rather that an evil mind, a perverse mind or disposition, an unhappy or melancholy mind took the place of the restful and peaceful and trustful mind which he previously had enjoyed.

It is undoubtedly true that persons whose minds are in sympathetic accord with righteousness and truth, are proportionately surrounded by a protective influence which shields them from the intrusion of the evil spirits. This is the intimation of the Scriptures, which declare that the holy angels are ministering spirits for those who shall be heirs of salvation, and "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." (Heb. 1:14; Psa. 34:7)

R. 4218

The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

1 Samuel 18:1

We read of how Jonathan's soul was knit unto the soul of David--their affections, confidences and loves were interwoven. Jonathan giving to David certain parts of his own apparel when the latter came to live at the court of Saul, was merely an outward manifestation of the other precious sentiments which prompted this and other manifestations of affection--all of which, dignifying David and promoting his honor, were derogatory to the natural interests of Jonathan, who, as the heir apparent, might not improperly have aspired to the maintenance of his own place of honor at the court. Small minds are apt to make the mistake of supposing that the crushing down of others is essential to their own honor and exaltation; but it was because Jonathan was not thus small-minded, but noble-hearted, that his character has been beloved by all who have known it from then until now.

What was there in David's character that attracted Jonathan's love? Undoubtedly it was his nobility, his courage, his honesty, his faithfulness to the king and to the nation, and, above all, his trust in God, his reliance on him. What was there in Jonathan which drew forth the responsive love of David? There were many of the same qualities: Jonathan was also courageous and had already demonstrated this; he was sincere, honest, humble-minded, generous, faithful to a friend, and above all faithful to his God. One writer says, "The glory of life is to love, not to be loved; to give, not to get; to serve, not to be served....The self-centered cannot keep friends even when he makes them." R. 3232

And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

1 Samuel 18:4

Every success and honor that came to David raised him as a popular idol to the place which Jonathan to a considerable extent had held. Every advancement of David meant the preparation of the people to receive him instead of Jonathan as Saul's successor. The king saw this, so did Jonathan; but they were reversely affected by it. The king was made jealous, angry; Jonathan, reversely, loved his rival, and that from the time of their first meeting, on which occasion he gave to David his armor and court robes. (1 Sam. 18:4.) We read, "The soul of Jonathan was knit unto the soul of David"; their natures interwove, intermixed--a beautiful description of the purest and truest of love. R. 4223

He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings you shall take refuge.

Psalm 91:4

We might exercise a particularity of inspection of our text, and say that the word feathers might carry a little further thought than the word wings. "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust." The soft, downy feathers under the mother-hen's wings serve to keep the little chicks warm and to shield and hide them from enemies that would attack them. Not only the strong sheltering wings, but also the feathers of the hen-mother's breast are used to protect her young. We have seen alarm on the part of a mother-hen at the approach of danger, and heard her cluck to her little ones. Then they would run to her, nestle under her wings, and seem perfectly satisfied and free from fear in their place of safety. Presently you would see the little heads or eyes peeping out; but the chicks felt perfectly secure.

And so with us. Our Heavenly Father's love and care and protection are His wings and His feathers, shielding us from all harm, keeping us warm and safe. So close to his heart does Jehovah gather his loyal and faithful children that they feel the warmth of his love, and the responsive language of their hearts is, "I will abide in thy tabernacle"--under thy protection --"forever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings; for thou hast been a shelter for me and a strong tower from the enemy. R. 5437 and R. 3331

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psalm 46:1

Saul, although appreciative of David's prowess, was, nevertheless, jealous of him because of the prominence to which his noble course brought him in the eyes of the people. This jealousy was accentuated as he heard the praises of David sung in grander terms than his own were lauded. Jealousy is always an evil quality--no part of the Lord's Spirit, the holy Spirit, but a strong ingredient in the spirit of evil. Hatred, envy, malice, strife, works of the flesh and devil, are all closely related to jealousy, and often spring from it. Saul should have resisted the envious suggestions which came to his mind: he should have allowed his mind to rise above all personalities and to rejoice most sincerely, most heartily, in the praises of his young general.

Jealousy is one of the great foes that confront every Christian. It should be slain on sight as an enemy of God and man and of every good principle; and to the extent that its presence had defiled the heart even for a moment, a cleansing of the spirit of holiness and love should be invoked....Our Golden Text should be borne in mind as a comforting and sustaining power to the Lord's faithful. R. 3232

As soon as the lad had gone David arose from a place toward the south, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another and they wept together, but David more so. Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘May the LORD be between you and me and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’”

1 Samuel 20:40-41

In [this] beautiful friendship there was no spirit of rivalry, no jealousy, no vain glory, although Jonathan was the natural heir to the throne of Israel, and David had been anointed to take his place; though Jonathan was of the royal family and a man of some thirty odd years, while David was but a shepherd youth, probably about twenty-three years of age. Each in simplicity of heart accepted the Lord’s appointments as wisest and best, and determined nobly to do his part toward the Lord and toward his people and toward each other. And so Jonathan, cooperating with his father in the duties of his office to Israel so long as the Lord sustained him in power, nobly used the privileges of his position for the protection and preservation of the one whom he knew to be appointed to reign in his stead.

The friendship of David and Jonathan seems also to be suggestive of that beautiful accord which shall exist between the glorified Church and the earthly princes who shall be next to them in the Kingdom of God. There will not be a note of discord or rivalry or jealousy between them; for each will be delighted to fill his honored place in the wonderful plan of God, and will love the other as his own soul. Though the Gospel Church will receive the first place of favor offered in the Abrahamic covenant, and the ancient worthies will find themselves next in honor, they will rejoice to have it so, because divine wisdom and love have so planned it.

R. 1908

Rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

1 Peter 4:13

Spiritual Israelites who have already received the adoption and anointing of the Lord to future service as kings and priests, who shall reign on the earth with our blessed Lord and Head, to bless all the families of the earth, can easily trace valuable lessons in the trying experiences of David....The Prince of this world is our enemy, not because we have done evil, but because he realizes that he has but a short time, and because he has a spirit that is opposed to the Lord's Spirit in us. We too, at times, may wonder why the Lord--having anointed us and assured us of the glory, honor and immortality in the Kingdom--permits us to have such trying experiences and such severe conflicts with the world, the flesh and the devil. The reason becomes evident as we learn the way of the Lord more particularly--as we learn that the present "afflictions which are but for a moment [comparatively] are working out for us [fitting us for] a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

R. 3238

Your love to me was wonderful.

2 Samuel 1:26

We must love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul and strength before we shall be prepared to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to wish for him the same riches of grace that we desire for ourselves under the Lord's providences. Still more is it necessary to have this supreme love for God before we could in any measure approximate the degree of love which the Lord set before his followers as a new commandment, saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you." Jonathan's love [for David] approximated this Christian love, this self-sacrificing love which so loved his neighbor as to delight to see that neighbor have the Lord's blessing upon him, even while this meant his own loss of honor, prestige and kingly power. Oh, that such love as this might more and more prevail in the hearts of the New Creation!

R. 4223

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

Love begets love; and so the Scriptures tell us that it was not that we first loved God, but that he first loved us and manifested his love for us in the gift of his Son. So it was the love of Jesus that attracted us and drew forth our love in response. And day by day, as we come to appreciate more and more the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love of God and of Christ, which passes all human understanding, the more our love toward them will increase and abound. And as it increases we ourselves become more Godlike and correspondingly also from us proceeds a love for others who love us not; and our love for them will excite the love of some in return, and lead them to a greater appreciation of this principle which stands in opposition to the spirit of the world, the love of the world, the selfishness of the world. Let us then seek to cultivate this godlike quality. Let us notice not only that the Scriptures declare love to be the principal thing in the world, but that it is the very essence of the divine character, the very essence of the divine law which is fulfilled in this one word, Love.

Well has the wise man said that a friend loveth at all times. He who merely loves at a time when he thinks it will be to his own advantage to love, knows not love. He who loves, and is a brother in prosperity merely, and whose love and friendship wither under the heat of persecution and adversity, has never known love in its true sense, but merely a certain brand of selfishness--the love of the world.

As God commended his love toward us and showed us that not through selfishness, but generosity, at a great cost to himself, he provided us release from our prison, and gave us privileges of sonship, so true love will be willing to sacrifice. Let us judge then of our love for others, for the Lord, for the brethren, for our families, for our neighbors, for our enemies even, by our willingness to sacrifice in their interest and for their highest welfare.

R. 4223

For the LORD God is a sun and shield.

Psalm 84:11

Our Golden Text is a great encouragement to the David class, the beloved class, the anointed ones, the members of Christ. To these the Lord God is both a sun and shield; he not only enlightens these but he will not suffer them to be injured by the blessings which he bestows upon them. He will shield them from all enemies and everything that would tend to injure them in any manner; all things shall work together for good to those that love him, to the called ones according to his purpose. (Rom 8:28.) With such blessed assurances, then, we may look forward into the future with rejoicing and with confidence, trusting to have a share in the glorious rewards God has promised to the faithful.

As each step of opposition on the part of Saul worked out a blessing for David, giving him wider experiences and fitting and preparing him for his future usefulness as the king, so all of the trials and difficulties and the disappointments that the Lord will now permit to come upon us from the world, the flesh and the Adversary--all of these will prove but preparations for his glorious Kingdom privileges, if faithfully used.

R. 4218

In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust. I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?

Psalm 56:4

It is to inspire such a faith as this that the Lord has offered us, in addition to all his precious promises, so many encouragements to simple, childlike trust in him, and that he has bidden us turn a deaf ear to the reproaches of men, saying--"Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings....I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord, thy Maker, that has stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy?...I have put **my words** in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand....

R. 1787

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God.

Psalm 42:5

He would not have one of his children live in an atmosphere of tormenting fear, but would have them happy and always rejoicing in the glorious liberty of the sons of God, free from all fear and corroding care by simply trusting in him, ever remembering the blessed promise: "The Lord Jehovah is a sun and shield [to shine upon our pathway and into our hearts and to protect us from all the fiery darts of the wicked]: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." -- Psa. 42:5; Psa. 84:11.

Should the child of God, the heir of glory, the inheritor of all the exceeding great and precious promises, and the present companion of Divinity itself, which condescends to our low estate, ever feel desolate or forsaken or alone? or fear that his love will ever forsake or leave him to be tossed helplessly upon the billows of misfortune at the mercy of the prince of this world who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience? Ah, no! Greater is he that is for us than all they that can be against us. We are not alone in the world; for we have the blessed promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." (Heb. 13:5.) Nor is the smallest interest of ours overlooked. --Matt. 10:29-31. R. 1905

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

Psalm 19:14

The inspired Psalmist not only puts this prayer in our mouth, but he suggests the means by which we may be acceptable to God, recommending the Word of the Lord as able to bring about this desired result, saying: "The law (margin--doctrine) of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul"--bringing us back to a condition of harmony with God. Without a close study of the teaching of our Father's Word it is impossible to do or think those things that are pleasing in his sight. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Those who come to the Word of the Lord in simplicity of heart, with no other desire than to know his will, shall surely obtain the heavenly wisdom. [Let] us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, meditating much upon the precepts and teachings of his Word, that through them we may be imbued with their spirit. And thus the words of our mouth and the meditations of our heart shall be acceptable in the sight of the Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. R. 524

Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name.

Psalm 29:2

Many of those who have risen to prominence in the world have left no footprints that we can see; but when the Lord sets great examples before us, he shows us the footprints, and how some lead downward and others upward. Saul was of the former class, David of the latter. The important point to be noticed by us all is how much these footprints diverge, that we may avoid the one and profit by the other. The secret of David's success was not the mere fixity of his purpose, but additionally the fact that his purpose was kept fully in accord with the divine will. Even in telling to King Saul the story of his conflict with the lion and the bear, he gave glory to God as having delivered them into his hands. And so throughout his entire career. We notice this same desire, to give God the glory of his successes, and to realize that whatever failures there were in his life were either his own weaknesses or divine blessings in disguise. Thus we see David's whole existence exemplifying the words of holy writ--"In all thy ways acknowledge him," "and he shall give thee the desire of thine heart."

R. 4255

My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.

Psalm 57:7

If you have thus far stood firmly in the faith of God's way we are persuaded better things of you; and if, with the Psalmist, you can say, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed"; if your heart is established in love and reverence and faith in the sure Word of God, then you may also say, "For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." (Psa.18:28.) Yea, has it not been even so? Surely hitherto the Lord hath led us. The language of the prophet applies to all those humble and faithful ones whom the Lord has been leading --"For by thee I have run through a troop [of opposing enemies]; and by my God have I leaped over a wall" [of bondage, into the glorious liberty of a son of God].—Psa.18:29.

Beloved, have you been thus overcoming? have you been following the Lord's leading? have you found, and are you still abiding in the sweet rest of faith in his plan, in his way, and not your own? "As for God, his way is perfect": it is just and merciful and benevolent and wise and practicable, and sure of a glorious termination.

R. 3336

Delight yourself also in the LORD and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:4

After we have made sure that our requests are in accord with the promises, those things which lie very close to our hearts become our continual prayer, associating in our minds with all of life's duties and interests, the heart gravitating continually toward the thing we have desired of the Lord, and on suitable opportunities repeating to Him the request. This is the kind of prayer which the Lord commended, saying, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." (Luke 18:1.) The Lord's people ought to continue asking for the right things with some degree of persistency, and should not grow weary, hopeless, faithless, faint in their hearts.

We are to think of our Heavenly Father as rich and benevolent, kind and generous, yet wise as well as loving. We are to suppose that He will have pleasure in giving us the desires of our hearts if those desires are in harmony with His plan, which He has already framed on such lines as to include not only our very highest and best interests, but the highest and best interests of all His creatures. Then, whatever comes, His well-informed children can have all the desires of their hearts, because their hearts are in full accord with the Lord; and they desire nothing of the Lord except the good things of His purpose and promise. R. 4983

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Psalm 100:3

THE LORD, in calling his people his sheep, chose a very significant emblem of the character he would have manifested in them. The most noticeable characteristics of the sheep are meekness, docility and obedience to the shepherd to whose care they fully entrust themselves. They are very true to the shepherd: they study his voice, watch for the indications of his will, and trustfully obey him. When they hear his voice, quickly, and without the slightest hesitation or faltering, they run to obey it. But the voice of a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.

What a lesson is here for the Lord's "little flock," over whom he is the good Shepherd... The true sheep will carefully listen for the faintest accents of the voice of the Shepherd--i.e., he will treasure up his words in his heart; he will study his providences; and he will cultivate that communion and personal fellowship with the Lord which are his privilege. Those who thus abide in him can never go astray.

"They can never, never lose their way." R. 3116

My enemies would hound me all day, for there are many who fight against me, O Most High. Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God I have put my trust, I will not be afraid.
Psalm 56:2-3,11

The seven years from the time David fled from the wrath of Saul until Saul died must have seemed to David a peculiarly long period of trial of faith and patience. His own course had been a noble and true one. He had served his king and his nation most loyally, yet he suffered as a reward. He was for a time an exile in a foreign land, and his father's family was obliged to remove to Moab for protection. It must have seemed peculiar to David that the Lord should permit him, anointed to succeed King Saul, to be thus delayed from coming into his kingdom, and instead to be hunted and persecuted as an outlaw. This, however, was a valuable test of his faith, and doubtless helped to strengthen its roots, and thus to make his character stronger and his trust in the Lord firmer. But besides this, we may readily see that those seven years were valuable to David as a preparation for his kingly office. They made him intimately acquainted with the people and their usual manner of life and general sentiments--acquainted also with the neighboring peoples. Above all, he became intimately acquainted with the Lord, and, we may be sure, learned to trust his providences even where he could not trace them. Several of the Psalms were either written during this period and describe David's experiences on the spot, or written subsequently describing the lessons learned from those experiences. Amongst these Psalms may be mentioned numbers 34, 52, 56, 57, 63.

R. 3238

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Mark 13:32

David wisely estimated that the people of his own tribe knew him well and understood why he was persecuted by King Saul. David was not without honor in his own country and not without confidence in his own tribe. But with all this he had special confidence in the divine wisdom and the divine power. He recognized that the Lord was directing him and that the anointing oil had already been poured upon him and that it was only a question of time when the Lord would point out the next step. Nevertheless he recognized it to be his duty to wait on the Lord and not attempt to grasp and take hastily the things which were his by promise. He had waited for more than ten years. He could afford still to wait patiently on the Lord.

How important a lesson for the antitypical David--the Beloved--the Christ! The Apostle testifies this respecting our Lord Jesus, that he thought the Kingdom not a thing to be grasped or usurped. He waited the Father's time. He meanwhile humbled himself in harmony with the Father's will and gave evidence that he delighted to do that will at any cost. This faithful and patient waiting was pleasing to God in the One who was to be heir of all things and highly exalted. Similarly we, his followers and members, are to remember the Prophet David's words, "Wait, I say, on the Lord." R. 4235

I was mute with silence. I held my peace even from good and my sorrow was stirred up.

Psalms 39:2

How necessary to the stability of Christian character is such a resolution, and the self control which develops under a firm adherence to it. In an unfriendly world we can expect to receive only the reproaches of our Master; for the servant is not above his Lord. The world, the flesh and the devil oppose our way: there are fightings within and fears without, and many are the arrows and fiery darts aimed at the righteous. But what is the safe attitude of the soul under afflictions and severe testings? Is it not in silence before God, waiting and watching first to see his leading, his will, in every matter before presuming to touch things that often involve so much? So the Psalmist suggests, saying, "I was dumb with silence: I held my peace, even from good [even from doing or saying what seemed good in my own sight]; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, and in my self-communing there burnt a fire [description of a fiery trial]. Then spake I with my tongue"--not to the revilers, nor to others, but to the Lord. R. 1937

Wait on the LORD, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the LORD!

Psalm 27:14

For a time David and his company had the cave of Adullam as a stronghold. It is greatly to his credit that he refused to plunge his nation into civil war, as he would have been abundantly able to do. Evidently the majority of the people would have sided with him from the first, and his victory over King Saul might have been easily accomplished. And how easily he might have deluded himself into thinking that such would be God's will! He remembered that the Lord, through the Prophet Samuel, had anointed him to be the king; but he remembered also that it was not for him to take possession, but to abide God's time, when Divine Power would overthrow Saul's kingdom and give the control to himself as Saul's successor as king.

How blessed it would be if all of God's people would thus remember to wait upon the Lord! "Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until that Day when I rise up to the prey." The Lord's times and seasons are best for us, and any attempt on our part to push ourselves in advance of the Lord's will would be sure to react unfavorably. It was because David was thus full of faith in God and possessed of the spirit of obedience to Him that he was called a man after God's own heart--not that he was perfect--not that he always did the Lord's will, but that the Lord's will was his real heart's desire; and whenever through weakness of the flesh he took a different course, he was prompt to repent on seeing the mistake, to implore Divine forgiveness and to change his course.

R. 5672

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

Psalm 118:1

Thankfulness would seem to be one of the least costly of the graces: it implies the reception of favors, and is merely a proper acknowledgment of them. No one can be a true Christian and be unthankful. With the Apostle he will soliloquize, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1Cor. 4:7), and the first response of his heart must be gratitude, thankfulness. It is this thankfulness which leads on to service, and to sacrifice in the Lord's cause as a manifestation of gratitude.

R. 2459

Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples!

Psalm 105:1

While sojourning with his followers at the cave of Adullam, David, in a fit of homesickness, referred to the fine well water of his Bethlehem home, intimating how much he would relish it if he could have it here. Thereupon three of his faithful followers, one of them his nephew, undertook the perilous journey, unknown to David. It was perilous for two reasons: first, they were outlaws from King Saul; second, Bethlehem was in the hands of the Philistines at the time; but notwithstanding these difficulties these brave men manifested their love and loyalty to their leader, and brought a water-skin from the favored well.

When they arrived and presented it to David, he showed a wonderful loyalty of heart. Not only did he appreciate the great devotion that they had shown, the risk that they had run and the water that they had brought, but he declared it was too precious and gotten at too great a cost to be lightly used. He poured it forth upon the earth in oblation, a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord for the blessings they were enjoying and for the comfort and support of such loyal associates. Surely the greatness of David and his devotion to the Lord and his faith were well manifested again in this transaction!

R. 5672

For the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed.

1 Samuel 26:23

Not only would [David] not kill Saul, but he would not sanction another's doing it, not even by a half-hearted protest. On the contrary he would act as Saul's protector, so that the author of the bold scheme might have no opportunity for its execution. David went with him to carry out a different project; namely to bring away from the camp something that would prove to the king that he had been entirely within David's power, and that at heart David had no desire for Saul's injury, but the contrary.

It was the king himself who recognized David's voice and also the facts related--that his spear and cruse were gone. These David offered to return through a messenger, explaining that he had taken them merely to prove that he had no ill will to the king, no wish to do him injury. King Saul was honest enough to admit that he was in the wrong, and said, "I have sinned. Return, my son, David; for I will no more do thee harm because my life was precious in thine eyes this day. Behold, I have played the fool and have erred exceedingly."

David's reply to the king is very noteworthy, and shows us that the center of the man's character and the guidance of his conduct was his reverence for the Lord, his faith. He said, "The Lord shall render to every man [according to] his righteousness and his faithfulness....It was the Lord that delivered thee into mine hand today and I did not put forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed. And behold, as thy life was precious today in mine eyes, so let my life be precious in the eyes of the Lord and let him deliver me out of all tribulation." (Vs. 23,24.) How wonderful this expression! In it there is no appeal to Saul for mercy, no expression of dependence upon him, but an appeal to the Lord, an expression of absolute confidence in the willingness and ability of the Lord to deliver him.

David's course and language show [also] that he understood that portion of the Lord's prayer which says, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"-- have mercy upon us as we have mercy upon others. This is the essence of David's statement, As I have shown mercy to you, King Saul, so may the Lord show mercy to me. R. 4225

A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD, who spoke to the LORD the words of this song on the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said: I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer. My God, my strength, in whom I will trust, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Psalm 18:1-2

In David's thanksgiving for victories over his enemies we observe that those enemies were the enemies of the Lord and his people, whom David was commissioned of God to conquer. These battles he undertook in the strength, which God supplied, and the victories he properly ascribes to God, the rock of his salvation. The words, regarded from the standpoint of the future, are also prophetic of the victories of Christ, of whom David was a type, and to whom Jehovah will grant victory full and complete over all his enemies--the enemies of God, the enemies of truth and righteousness. The whole strain of thanksgiving, thus viewed in its wider application to the conquests of Christ, is eloquent in its prophecy of his glorious victory, as well as in praise to Jehovah. (1Cor. 15:27-28.) [This text] is a blessed assurance applicable to all of the Lord's people, and it is amply verified to all those who delight themselves in the Lord, who meditate upon his goodness and render to him the praise that is due to his holy name. --"The Lord is my rock [upon which I may safely build my hopes], and my fortress [in which I may safely hide], and my deliverer [in every time of trouble]." R. 2031

It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect.

Psalm 18:32

All this abundance of grace and glory is the possible inheritance of even the weakest saint who, trusting not to his own ability to make his calling and election sure, humbly looks to God for strength from day to day to endure hardness as a good soldier. If any man attempts to do this in his own strength, he must surely fail; for the fiery trial that is to try **every one** will prove too much for the mind of the flesh; but God who worketh in the consecrated to will and to do his good pleasure, will so fortify and equip those who depend upon his grace, that, with the Psalmist, they can say, "It is God that girdeth me with strength....By thee I have run through a troop, and by my God have I leaped over a wall;" and with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."—Psa. 18:32; Psa. 18:29; Phil. 4:13. R. 2154

**But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD. I say, "You are my God."
Psalm 31:14**

David, as the captain of his band of six hundred men, had been making his home at Ziklag, southwest of Judah. When David heard of the death of Saul, instead of determining what he should do according to his own judgment, he inquired of the Lord. It seems remarkable to us that a young man, driven from home, an exile, hunted as a bandit, and cut off from all the refining influences of life, should retain his reverence for the Lord to such a degree. Alas! how many Christians with every condition favorable, with Bibles in their hands and Bible study helps, etc., manifest a much less loyal disposition! How frequently the Lord and his will are forgotten, while self decides and directs. Indeed it may be considered an evidence of a quite thorough submission to the Lord and development in grace to find a Christian earnestly seeking to know the will of the Lord in all the important undertakings of his life. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
R. 4235

**Be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart all you
who hope in the LORD.
Psalm 31:24**

THE Scriptures everywhere encourage the Lord's people to be full of faith, hope, confidence, trust. As we look out into the world we see particular reasons why this should be so. The majority of the world are full of fear, apprehension, distrust, worry. For this reason they fail to get the best out of the opportunities they have. They know of pitfalls of sin and trouble in different directions, and therefore they have reason to be distrustful, to be fearful.

But the Lord's people have come into special relationship with Him and He with them. He has assured them that He will have a supervision of their affairs, as would not have been their experience had they not come into relationship with Him. They are, therefore, to hope in the Lord, to trust in Him. They are to heed the things which He has said, and to take courage in the thought that their affairs are under His supervision.
R. 5329

For you have rejected the word of the LORD and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.

1 Samuel 15:26

The miserable last years of Saul, haunted and hunted as by a demon by his own indulged and swollen rebellion and unsleeping suspicion, are an example of the sorrows that ever dog sin. Saul's difficulty, which led to all this disaster, was his selfishness--and he was not unusually selfish either. The great majority of mankind are equally selfish-- self-willed; and the great majority, like him, make a failure of whatever possibilities were before them at the first. As David's career illustrates the wisdom and advantage of an early consecration to the will of the Lord, and the blessing which must surely attend such a course--even though those blessings be accompanied with trials and difficulties--so Saul's course in a general way illustrates the error of those who measurably ignore the Lord and attempt to direct their own paths.

It may be argued that King David also erred and did contrary to the Lord's will on several occasions, but we are to notice the wide difference between these two characters, in that David's heart was apparently always loyal to the Lord, and that when overtaken in a fault his sorrow therefor was sincere and led to greater carefulness in the future. With Saul, on the contrary, the difficulty seems to have been with the heart--that at heart he was not submissive to the Lord's will but was guided by his own will, and merely repented and apologized through fear of consequences and not from sorrow at having deviated from the Lord's way.

The truly consecrated may stumble, may err, but at heart they are ever loyal to the Lord and wish to serve and please him. These are spiritual Israelites indeed, and the blessing of the Lord is upon them. The other class professes to be the Lord's people, but at heart are far from him, and merely draw nigh with their lips and outward ceremonies.

R. 3240

A friend loves at all times.

Proverbs 17:17

It was on the occasion of Jonathan's death, with his father on the field of battle shortly after, in conflict with the Philistines, that David expressed the beautiful words:

"O Jonathan, on thy high places thou wast slain!
I am distressed for thee, my Jonathan, my brother!
Pleasant hast thou been to me exceedingly!
Wonderful was thy love to me, passing the love of women!"

We trust that none can read this story without being influenced favorably toward friendship, to be a truer, a nobler, a more faithful friend than otherwise; but especially should Christians get a blessing from this story of Jonathan's love, leading on as it does to the love of Christ and to the injunction that they should be copies of God's dear Son; and that their friendship should be loyal, true, enduring, especially one for the other, as the Apostle exhorts, "Doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially unto the Household of Faith."

It is a beautiful friendship which in stress forgets self and thinks only of the interests of the friend. As though in contrast with all the human loves and friendships, we read of Jesus, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Nevertheless, in the case of Jesus, it meant more than any earthly love or friendship; for "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The Apostle declares that the Lord thus set an example to all Christians, that they should "lay down their lives for the brethren," be ready to die the one for the other. This is the Heavenly love, the Divine friendship, of which the love of Jonathan may be taken as a sample, next to the example of our Lord and the Apostles.

R. 5664

Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, and he told them to teach the children of Judah The Song of the Bow. "The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen! Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. They were swifter than eagles. They were stronger than lions."

2 Samuel 1:17-19,23

A young Amalekite, thinking to curry favor with David, and knowing something of how he had been persecuted by Saul, brought him the news of the death of Saul and gave him Saul's crown and the bracelet that was on Saul's arm, telling that he had dispatched King Saul at the latter's request--probably, however, manufacturing this part of the story to bring honor to himself. At all events, David received the matter in a totally different way from what was expected, saying to him, "How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" David then commanded him to be put to death. But for Saul and Jonathan he mourned until evening.

David in every instance [spoke] of King Saul in considerate language, not merely because it would be wrong to speak evil of any man, but also because, as king, Saul had been God's representative, "The Lord's anointed," as David himself styled it. When David heard of the results of the battle, his sympathy for Saul and for Jonathan was expressed in a beautiful poem, which is remarkable for the fact that it contains not a single suggestion of how Saul had persecuted him or sought his life. It compliments Saul for what good he had accomplished. It tells of the tender love of Jonathan, surpassing that of women. This ode is recorded in 2 Sam. 1:17-27. The Dead March from Saul* is an attempt on the part of the musician to put the sentiment of David's Song of the Bow for Jonathan and Saul into the music of our day; and thus it has become identified with the funeral services of the great, today.

R. 5674 and R. 4234

*Referring to Handel's *Funeral March from Saul*

For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.

John 3:20-21

SAUL and David were both men of strong character, but the former neglected the divine word and counsel and undertook the management of his own affairs, while the latter accepted the Lord and his leadings and by faith sought to follow him. The results showed in both cases: Saul came to an ignominious end. David prospered and exhibited a wisdom and strength of character quite beyond his times.

Our Lord referred to such a condition of things in the end of the Jewish age, which was certainly a type of the end of this age. He said of the religious people of that time: "The darkness hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest its deeds be reprov'd; but he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." Thus, as a separation was made between Saul and David, and between those who loved the darkness and those who loved the light at the Lord's first advent, so a separation is rapidly going on today between those who love the light, the truth, and who are guided by the holy Spirit, and those who are of a different mind or disposition.

R. 3231

His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

Psalm 91:4

"His truth shall be thy shield and buckler"--thy protection. Yes, his Truth--that grand system of truth comprised in the divine Plan of the Ages--is an ample shield and buckler to all who in simplicity of heart receive it and prove faithful to it. It is the armor of God which the Apostle urges all the faithful to put on--to appropriate, to meditate upon and to store up the Truth in mind and heart--that they may be able, by its use, to withstand error and evil in every form presented to them in this evil day.

R. 3331

Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

James 3:10

Quite probably King David expected after his recognition by the tribe of Judah that very speedily other tribes would rally to his banner. Nevertheless we are not informed respecting any move he made to accomplish this. He was waiting on the Lord. Surely it was a long wait, too. Abner, as the general of King Ishbosheth of the eleven tribes of Israel, waged war against the enemies of Israel and to some extent gained victories. King David had plenty of opportunity of wondering whether or not the Lord intended to carry out the program instituted in his coronation. With the prestige of victories over outside enemies, King Ishbosheth turned attention to the tribe of Judah, claiming it was in rebellion against the lawful head. The result was a civil war, instead of an entrance upon a reign of prosperity. Brothers fought against brothers--one party of God's favored people against another. And this continued for two years, gradually, however, bringing successes to David and his army. Thus we read, "David waxed stronger and stronger and the house of Saul weaker and weaker."

In considering the period of civil war and how one section of the Lord's people sought to injure others, we are reminded of Spiritual Israel and the fact that brethren in it sometimes become so estranged and so out of the leading of God's providence that they also become antagonists to each other. Alas, that this should be so!--that the love of God should at any time fail to constrain us so that we would not only turn from his love and fellowship, but that the sword should be used to smite down brethren! Get the picture impressed in our minds and sealed in our hearts of coming days with Spiritual Israel, when brother shall be against brother, which the Lord will permit just prior to the establishment of the Kingdom. Let us resolve that however others may fight, the weapons of our warfare shall not be carnal and that our battling shall not be against those who are the Lord's by covenant, but against the great Adversary. Carnal weapons are not merely guns and swords--but more injurious and death-dealing is the tongue when used to slander and wound. God forbid that our tongues, wherewith we praise God, should work injury to any man, but particularly to any of the household of faith.

R. 4234

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Romans 8:28

Ultimately King Ishbosheth and his general Abner were both foully murdered and we carefully note that David had no complicity in the matter, and that so far as the sons of Saul were concerned, David's oath of friendship with Jonathan was quite sufficient protection to them. However, the death of these men opened the way for the people of Israel to consider matters further and, as they considered, they perceived that God's favor was with David; that he was a man after God's own heart, and that as a ruler he was doing valiant service to the people who had accepted him as their king. The saner thinking amongst the tribes of Israel brought them to the conclusion mentioned in this lesson -- "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel." Finally they had come to hearken to the voice of the Lord. No doubt the Lord could have brought to pass such a condition of things before. There was no divine purpose in the way. And so it is with all of our affairs, if we only knew it. God, who knows the end from the beginning, is wisely guiding for the good of his people and particularly of those who are individually his of the anointed class.

R. 4235

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation. On You I wait all the day.

Psalm 25:5

David waited upon the Lord those many years, fully confident that in the end he should be the king of Israel, but not hastening the event in any way, simply standing ready for the responsibilities and the power of the office where the Lord should put him. What a wonderful example we have in David's course!

He realized that the time had probably come for himself and his companions to move from the Philistines' country, and he inquired of the Lord by the priest and the ephod. The answer was that he should go into Judea. Next he made inquiry, Into which city? and the answer was, Hebron. Thither David and his companions removed with their families; and the tribe of Judah, his own tribe, promptly recognized him as their king. It was over seven years after this, however, before he became the king of all Israel.

King David was thirty-seven years old when finally the eleven tribes sent a delegation to confer with him, indicating that they would appreciate having him as the king over all Israel. This was seven years and a half after the death of King Saul, and probably about seventeen years after David had been anointed first by Samuel. Faith and patience mark every step of those years and show us King David's character as we could not otherwise have known it. Its grandeur was chiefly shown in that it manifested a devotion to God and a submission to the Divine will.

R. 5674

David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him.

2 Samuel 5:10

Now that the Lord's time had come to establish the throne of David, not only over Judah, but over all Israel, David was not only the Lord's choice, but he was also the people's choice, and by their representatives they came to him with arguments in favor of his immediate acceptance of the office over the whole nation.

David chose Jerusalem for his new capitol of the now united kingdom, because, while within the boundaries of his own tribe, Judah, it was near the border, and central as a capitol for all Israel.

It was a fortress also which had withstood the Israelites from the days of Joshua, and was considered by its possessors impregnable.

Our sentiments of patriotism must be reserved for that one and only righteous government which is worthy of our devotion; **viz.,** for the Kingdom of God, which in due time shall bless all the families of the earth. True, that Kingdom is not yet established, except in the hearts of God's people. Over them Jehovah's Anointed is now the reigning King, and by and by his dominion will extend over all the earth. To this worthy King they owe all their allegiance; to the lofty principles of his government and to all the interests of his Kingdom they should be devoted with a holy zeal and patriotism, which know no limit except their ability to serve it.

If we were now under a theocracy, a divine kingdom such as was established in Israel, and of which David was appointed king, then as Christians we should have the most patriotic feelings toward it. But we should remember that God abolished his typical earthly throne and declared that it should no more exist until Christ should come and set up his Kingdom, the antitype of the throne and kingdom of David. And to as many as believe this testimony and consecrate themselves fully to the cause of the new King, whose dominion begins in their hearts long before its establishment in the earth, will be granted the privilege of heirship with him when, in due time, his kingdom is established.

R. 2001

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things.

Psalm 98:1

With the inauguration of King David came the usual mirth and songs and exhibitions of joy. Indeed nearly every nation has its national anthem in which it memorializes the king and the kingdom. And is it not so with our Lord's Kingdom, which is shortly to be introduced with most wonderful demonstrations? Is not the glorious temple of God--the Church--the living stones of which are now being shaped, hewn and polished, hailing the great Capstone? The Head of the Church is Christ. Already we hail and crown him Lord of all in our hearts and look forward with joyful anticipation to the time when "every knee shall bow" to the Lord.

Meantime we who hope to be members of the Bride class and "joint-heirs with him" are here expected to learn to sing the song of Moses the servant and the song of the Lamb, for "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor and glory, and blessing." "And they sang a new song before the throne: and no man could learn that song," except the anointed. And the Lord will be with him in Mount Zion, the Kingdom. Realizing that this song is the tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, we are correspondingly interested to know to what extent we have learned--to what extent we can sing it now. We find indeed that it is a life study to learn this lesson. We rejoice in the privilege to bear witness of our God to all those who have ears to hear, even though doing so brings reproaches, frowns, opposition. Our patience and our faith are to continue, and we are to wait for the Kingdom in its beauty and the glorious "change" in ourselves to tell to others more effectively than ever the blessed tidings.

R. 4236

In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

2 Samuel 5:5

Earth's king for the Millennial Age will be a spiritual ruler, invisible to the natural eye of men--visible only to the eye of their understanding as they shall become able to recognize him.

David's throne or dominion over Israel was a type of Christ's subjugation of the world and his dominion over it. We have seen that the dominion of earth was given to Adam, who was robbed of it by the present usurper-- Satan. While it was yet in Satan's control, God separated one small nation from others. Of Israel he made many types. Their Levites typified the justified; their priests typified the little flock or royal priesthood; and Israel itself is often used to represent the world of mankind.

God established his kingdom in the hand of David, first over Judah (type of all fleshly Israel), and secondly over Israel as a whole (type of the whole **world**); for thus shall it be in the establishment of the real kingdom of God which David's shadowed forth. It will be over **Judah** first (over Israel according to the flesh), and afterward the whole world shall receive and own him Lord of all. R. 452

And when all the kings who were servants to Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them.

2 Samuel 10:19

While the wars of David were not undertaken for conquest or plunder, but in defense of God's people, they nevertheless resulted in the enlargement of their territory, so that now, for the first time, was fulfilled the promise made to Abraham (Gen.15:18), that his seed should possess the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. The spoils taken from their enemies were also very great. There were shields of gold and vessels of silver, gold and copper. These were dedicated to the Lord, and reserved for the temple that Solomon was to build. R. 2015

David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.

2 Samuel 5:12

Our lesson tells us that King David made a covenant or league with the people of Israel. By this is signified that he agreed to serve as king with a limited monarchy, under a constitution. He made a covenant, a constitution, which was explicit as to what constituted the rights of the people and a delineation of what were the rights of the king. This institution in Israel indicates that they were the most advanced people in the world, for, so far as we can learn from history, the kings of that time were despots, who governed according to their own ideas, trampling upon the rights and liberties of the people. The interesting ceremonies connected with the exaltation of David as king over all Israel and the joy amongst the people in connection with David is amply recorded in 1 Chron. 12:23-40.

David's experiences in waiting for the kingdom and the lessons learned and the character developed and the preparation, which made him wise and moderate, all serve to illustrate a great lesson to the Gospel Church. We also are called to sit upon the throne of the Lord-- to rule in his name. We also have been anointed to the office by the holy Spirit, which the Apostle declares is a foretaste of the glory and joys into which we shall enter when the crowning days shall have come. If discipline, self control, faith, moderation and hope were all requisite to make David a king over the Lord's people and to properly represent him in government, how much more severe lessons should be for us, who are called to so much higher a station--to the throne of earth as God's representatives and to the Royal Priesthood, ruling, judging and trying mankind, to the intent that as many as possible of them may be rescued from their degraded condition and be brought into full harmony with God! Surely we may say as David did, that our trials and testings are much less than we expected them to be.

R. 4236

**The LORD is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?
Psalm 27:1**

WHILE it is true that David's reign was largely a succession of wars, with only occasional intermissions of peace, it should be noticed that these wars were not aggressive wars, or wars for conquest, but that they were always defensive. While David's policy toward the surrounding nations was wise and kind, they were not so disposed toward Israel. They were jealous of Israel's growing power and prosperity, and thus prompted, they made the attacks, which David must of necessity repel as a loyal and patriotic servant of the Lord's people. The disposition of those nations was to exterminate or drive out the Lord's chosen people, and therefore the only righteous course for David to pursue was to fight.

To all who are thus in the conflict, nobly contending--by their words, their actions and their general conduct--for truth and righteousness, against all who oppose themselves, we would say in the words of Joab to the hosts of Israel, "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good." (2 Sam. 10:12.) If the battle is the Lord's, it is sure to be victorious. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him."

The golden text of this lesson suggests the proper frame of mind for all the Lord's people who are now fighting the good fight of faith. Though the situation may look dark and dangerous, and though foes may multiply and perplexities increase, it bids them fear not--"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" David said, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." --Psa. 27:1-14.

R. 2015

The LORD will give strength to His people. The LORD will bless His people with peace.

Psalm 29:11

While it is written, "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God," it is also written, "Blessed be the Lord, my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." The suggestion is plainly that there is such a thing as an ignoble peace --a peace which comes from indifference to the principles of righteousness and truth, a peace dearly bought and ignobly maintained. But, on the other hand, it should be remembered that no battle is a righteous battle except when the Lord gives strength and teaches our hands to war and our fingers to fight, when the battle is the Lord's battle, for the maintenance of his honor, the establishment of the principles of his righteousness and the protection of his cause and his people.

Under the typical Jewish dispensation this was done, properly, with carnal weapons; but under the dispensation of the spirit of God we are instructed that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but [nevertheless, they are] mighty to the pulling down of strongholds." (2 Cor.10:4.) And happy is the man who can always realize that the Lord's strength and skill are given to him while, with heroic Christian fortitude as a good soldier of the cross, he goes forth to fight the good fight of faith against the powers of darkness strongly entrenched on every side. Thus, indeed, he may win the reward promised to the overcoming soldiers of the cross (Rev. 2:7; Rev. 2:11; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 2:26; Rev. 2:28; 3:5,12,21), and also the blessing that is sure to the peacemaker; for the glorious peace that is won by the good fight of faith is a blessed peace, a peace resting on the sure foundations of the eternal principles of right. But beware, O Christian, that you never go to the battle without the assurance that the battle is the Lord's. Like David's, let your inquiry be, Lord, shall I go up to the battle? (1 Sam. 23:2; 1 Sam. 23:4; 30:7,8; 2 Sam. 5:18-19; 2 Sam. 5:22-23), and then, like him, wait for the answer in the assurance that the battle is the Lord's.

R. 2015

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Psalm 133:1

The Golden Text is an excellent one, and applied to this lesson we see it illustrated in David's course. Although he was a man of war, courageous and aggressive toward the enemies of the Lord and of Israel, David was most emphatically a man of peace toward his brethren of all the tribes--careful to treat them as brethren, and to do all in his power to maintain unity and brotherly love and friendship. Although misunderstood and persecuted by them for a time, he finally was appreciated and proclaimed king of all Israel, with the result that all the brethren, thus united by his wise counsel and conduct, did dwell together in unity, and Israel had peace and prosperity, whereas by a different course on David's part a fierce and long-lasting civil war might readily have been enkindled.

We are reminded, too, of the fact that it was the Lord's own brethren who persecuted him, but that, as the Apostle explains, "in ignorance they did it." We rejoice to know that when the Lord shall have fully established his Kingdom, all who are the Lord's people, all desirous of being on the side of righteousness, will hail him gladly as their King; and that the unity and peace and blessing of that glorious Millennial age will far exceed anything that our minds can grasp or our tongues express. Like our Lord, let us seek to be peacemakers, and to dwell together with all the brethren in the unity of the Spirit, in the bonds of peace.

R. 3245

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.

1 Samuel 15:22

The carrying of the Ark upon the shoulders of the four Levites might not have been as majestic a procedure as the one attempted with the cart; it would nevertheless have been more pleasing to the Lord, because it was according to his directions. Let us apply this lesson carefully, and see to it that we not only desire to do the Lord's will, but that we so desire to do it in his way that we will give close attention thereto, hearkening to the statements of his Word, or, as the prophet expresses it, let us be amongst those who tremble at his Word--who are extremely careful to note and particularly follow the Word of the Lord in every matter.

Hearing of the blessing of the Lord upon the home of Obed-edom, King David took fresh courage, and realized that these different experiences of Uzzah and Obed-edom taught the lesson that those who reverently and carefully sought to know and to do the will of the Lord would have a blessing in proportion to their nearness to him, while the careless and the irreverent only need be in fear. Again the king assembled the representatives of the nation from all quarters, the chief men of the tribe and the chief representatives of the army, etc., and apparently this day of the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem was the most joyful and the most notable day in David's entire experience. See an account of this in 1 Chron. 15:1-29 & 16. On this occasion care was taken to follow the divine direction, and the Ark was borne on the shoulders of the Levites, frequent stoppages being made, during which sacrifices were offered to the Lord.

On the whole we discern that the Lord's dealing in this matter taught David and all Israel a great lesson, and was very advantageous to the nation as a whole. Thus it is with all the corrections in righteousness, which the Lord may at any time give to those who are truly his; rightly received they will bring forth peaceable fruits of righteousness, reverence and obedience.

R. 3252

Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding and I shall keep Your law. Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

Psalm 119:33-34

When King David was ready for the bringing up of the Ark the second time, some three months after the first attempt, which failed, he had studied the matter more carefully; and this time there was no new cart, but the Divinely directed method--the Levites, bearing the Ark upon their shoulders. It is not for us to be ingenious and inventive in respect to Divine methods and services, but rather to be students of the Divine will, searching the Scriptures that we may know the will of God and do it. The lesson, which King David learned, is one which all of God's people may well take to heart.

The Record tells that, besides the thousands of warriors who acted as a guard and gave dignity to the procession, and the multitudes of people who met the Ark at various villages on the way, there were trumpeters, rattlers, and players on stringed instruments, who made joyful manifestations of appreciation of the great event of God's return to the nation as represented in the Ark's return. Another arrangement was that of having the Levites chant, one to the other, the different portions of a certain Psalm, which King David had composed for this very occasion.

--Psa. 24:1-10.

R. 5680

See also Song of Ascents—Psalms 120--134

A Song of Ascents. I will lift up my eyes to the hills--from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 121:1-2

The text reminds us...that those who need help and who realize it should look to the Lord for it--not relying upon their own strength or wisdom nor upon the assistance of their fellows. We are not to despise assistance from any quarter, but our chief reason for receiving any assistance should be our conviction that it has come from the Lord, whether through the ear or through the eye and the printed page, or however. We are to remember that we are contending against a great Adversary and wily foe, and that we are not sufficient of ourselves to conquer, but that our only hope is in abiding in the Lord's love, by seeking to do those things which are pleasing to him and heeding the counsel of his Word and the leadings of his providence. A little carelessness along these lines, and the Adversary might readily entrap us and ensnare us and then lead us captive at his will. Ah, yes! we have the assurance of the Lord that there is but one place of safety at this time--into which more and more deeply we penetrate day by day. This place of safety is under the shadow of the Almighty, which figuratively signifies very close to the Lord. "No harm can come nigh that dwelling place," so far as the New Creature is concerned. Trials, tribulations, slanders may be exercised against us according to the flesh, but these cannot harm us as New Creatures, nor even disturb our peace of soul, while we are close to the Lord.

R. 4311

**One thing I have desired of the LORD that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple.
Psalm 27:4**

DAVID was now fairly settled and prosperous in his kingdom, and the nation was enjoying a season of rest and peace; the people were united, the Ark was in Jerusalem and the religious zeal of the nation was revived. For all these blessings David was grateful; and, desiring to give some tangible expression of his gratitude, he thought of the Ark of God, the symbol of the divine presence, dwelling in a movable tent or tabernacle while he himself dwelt in a house of cedar; and he therefore conceived the thought of utilizing the present seemingly favorable opportunity for erecting a house for the Lord where the symbol of his presence might abide continually.

God showed David that his time for the erection of the more permanent residence had not yet come, and that he had given no command to that effect yet, nor inquired, "Why build ye not me a house of cedar?" etc. (2 Sam. 7:7.) It was further shown that this work of preparation would require the entire period of David's reign; but the assurance was given to David that his purpose was appreciated and that, though God's time had not yet come, nor would it come in David's time, yet his son and successor should build the house and should enjoy a peaceful and prosperous reign, while David was permitted to prepare the way for it, both by gathering and preparing the materials for its construction, and also by subduing their enemies and ordering the affairs of the kingdom. This was the work to which David was appointed.

R. 2010

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:9

We are not to conclude that, because our plans and projects are reverential and designed to be for the glory of God, therefore they must have the divine approval. With spiritual Israel, as with David, it is frequently true that "My ways are not as your ways, nor my thoughts [plans] as your thoughts [plans]; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, saith the Lord." Those who are of David's disposition--"after God's own heart"--will not only consult with those whose judgment they would consider helpful, as David consulted with Nathan, but if subsequently the Lord rejects their best judgment, and does not cooperate in the execution of their plans, will do as David did in this instance: they will uncomplainingly acquiesce in the Lord's plans, and cooperate therewith, and thus further attest that they are of the kind the Lord loves to honor and call Beloved. To these also the Lord will grant other special blessings and favors, as he did to David.

In connection with this refusal of David's proposition [to build a temple], the Lord gave him very gracious encouragement, reminding him that every step of his onward way had been guided from on high, and that it was because he had faithfully looked to the Lord as his guide and counselor that he had now reached the degree of development and relationship to the Lord and to the Kingdom occupied. So the Lord encourages all who are of this David class in spiritual Israel today. All who are looking to the Lord, and hearkening to his Word, are reminded that the Lord is attending to his own work in his own way, and that it is a far superior way to anything which we could devise.

R. 3258

Give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all these things, and to build the temple for which I have made provision.

1 Chronicles 29:19

David when anointed...was a bud of promise, a noble youth--meek, modest, gentle, faithful, courageous in the line of duty, and brave to face danger and to endure hardness in any good work, especially wherever the interests of God's cause or God's people were at stake. Seeing in him this sterling stamp of character God called him to higher service. So he has been calling and anointing with his holy spirit a similar class all through the Gospel age. They are the Lord's anointed kings; but their kingdom, like that of David, is not established: they are surrounded by enemies on every side as was David, and the whole time of their life in the flesh is a continual warfare as was his. Like David, too, they have had it in their hearts to build the temple of God in the present age, that all the world might come and worship. But this privilege is not granted to the church in the flesh, even as the building of the typical temple was denied to David, but was reserved for Solomon, to whom the Lord gave a rest, peace and prosperity, which made it an apt symbol of the reign of the glorified church. -1 Chron. 22:7-9. R. 1901

He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

2 Samuel 7:13

David himself prophetically grasps the truth of this promise, saying, "Jehovah hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from him; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." (Psa. 132:11.) The Apostle Peter, moved by the holy spirit on Pentecost, refers to this same promise, and definitely applies it to our Lord Jesus.—Acts 2:30. In the prophecy our Lord is not spoken of as the root out of David, but as the root out of Jesse, David's father; because David himself is a type of Christ, his name signifying **beloved**. Hence also the fact that in many prophecies our Lord's Millennial reign is spoken of as the reign of David, the reign of the Beloved. R. 2372

**Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—
The sure mercies of David.**

Isaiah 55:3

The New Covenant, the everlasting Covenant, the sure mercies of David [the beloved], is to be proffered to all. That New Covenant, as the Apostle points out, is the divine agreement to be merciful--to forgive, to cancel sins that are past--"I will put my law in their minds and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people.... I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." (Heb. 8:8-13; Jer. 31:29-34.) "The sure mercies of David" are the mercies guaranteed to Israel and the world through his greater Son, our Lord. The real David (the real Beloved) shall be the divine channel for the outpouring of the blessings and mercies of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Of this antitypical David it is written, "Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." This is the great Prophet, the great Priest, the great King, typified by Moses and Melchizedek and the kings of the line of David. R. 3597

I am the root and offspring of David.

Revelation 22:16

The Messiah was to be the seed of David, according to the Prophets, and the genealogical records as given by Matthew and Luke, prove that Jesus was the Son of David, with whom Jehovah made an everlasting covenant, saying, "His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me," Psa. 89:36. The genealogical records prove him to be the Son of David. The prophets foretold that the Messiah who should sit on David's throne, and order his kingdom, was to be the Son of Jesse and David. Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Psa. 132:11. The apostles believed that Jesus was the Messiah and the son of David. Peter, in his discourse on the day of Pentecost, tells the Jews that Jesus, according to the flesh, was from the loins of David; and Paul says that he was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh," Act 2:30; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8. And the glorified Jesus himself declares: "I am the root and offspring of David." R. 944

My mercy I will keep for him forever and My covenant shall stand firm with him. His seed also I will make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

Psalm 89:28-29

To those who thus heed the invitation there is a special promise given, over and above the promise of life and the satisfaction now, of receiving this gift by faith. It is this: "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." [He will make an agreement with such that they may share in those sure, holy promises, which belong to his beloved Son--the kingdom, power and glory of the world to come.] The name David signifies **beloved**; and the Apostle shows (Acts 13:33-34) that it here refers to our Lord, the Beloved Son of God. And not only is the name David sometimes used in prophecy, as here, to refer to God's beloved Son, but David himself frequently figures as a type of our Lord, as in Psa. 22:1; Psa. 22:17-18. Moreover, "the sure mercies" or holy promises here referred to as belonging to our Lord, and in which we of this Gospel age are invited to share with him, were made to King David (2 Sam. 7:8-16) and will evidently have a partially literal fulfillment, although the substance is in Christ.

These sure mercies or holy things of David (Christ) are clearly set forth in Psalm 89:20-37, to be--

- (1) That the Lord would anoint him to be a great king, and that he would establish his throne forever--as long as the sun and moon endure.
- (2) That no enemy should have advantage over him, but that all should be made subservient to him.
- (3) That God's covenant to bless all the families of the earth should stand fast with him, or be fulfilled by his reign.
- (4) That his children (by redemption and regeneration) should have such reformatory discipline under his reign as would be necessary for their correction and establishment in righteousness.
- (5) And that all the willing and obedient who shall profit by the discipline shall endure forever.

R. 1364

The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

Psalm 110:1

Paul says, Jesus died that **he might be** Lord; Peter, that he was exalted by the right hand of God who hath **made him** Lord. He became David's offspring in Bethlehem; he became David's Lord and the root from which David must receive life at his resurrection, and **by virtue** of his death. As the Apostle says again, "Jesus Christ our Lord...was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power [might and authority]...by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1:4.) The might, authority, or power, was gained by his sacrifice; it was recognized of God, and declared to men, by his resurrection. He had delegated power and prospective authority before, but not until after his sacrifice declared acceptable to God by the fact of his resurrection did he say, "All power **is given** unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18.) Having bought all, he now has power and authority over all. Wherefore it is written, "He is Lord of **all....**"

Now, looking at the words of Jesus, we can see how he was David's Son, and yet is to be David's Lord or Father. And noting the prophecy referred to by Jesus in this connection, and also referred to by the Apostles (Matt. 22:4; Heb.1:13), viz., "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool," we see that this refers the Lordship of Jesus to a time **after** his sufferings and trials were ended. After he had been accounted worthy of exaltation, then he was exalted, and before that time he could only be called David's Lord prophetically. Jehovah would not, could not, justly give him the dominion and subdue it under him until it had been released from the curse, bought with a price: And that just price he paid, and is therefore now rightfully LORD, by Jehovah's appointment.

R. 809

**Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne;
Mercy and truth go before Your face.**

Psalm 89:14

In his dealings with mankind God is manifesting to all his creatures, angels as well as men, the various attributes of his character--Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power. In his condemnation of Adam's sin, God brought forcibly to the notice of all the attribute of Justice, the basic principle of his character; as it is written, "Justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne." (Psa. 89:14; 97:2.) This feature of his character (**viz.**, Justice) God continued to make prominently manifest for more than four thousand years; until Christ came and suffered and died, the just for the unjust, by which act the beautiful, divine quality, Love, was made manifest; as it is written, "In this was **manifested the love of God** toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:9-10.) "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly."—Rom. 5:8. R. 2120

**Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in
honor giving preference to one another.**

Romans 12:10

When the days of his prosperity came at length, years after Jonathan had gone to his rest, David, remembering his covenant, began to inquire if there were yet any left of the house of Saul to whom he might show the kindness of God. He found but one, the only surviving son of his friend Jonathan, and upon him he lavished the affection and kindness which it would have been his pleasure to bestow upon Jonathan himself, had he survived. Gratefully he remembered the love of his friend, and lovingly he endeavored to requite it to the extent of his ability.

The golden text of this lesson needs no comment except the exhortation that we should each more and more endeavor to put it in practice, and to see that with each passing year we are able to note some degree of advancement in this element of godlikeness, not overlooking that sure proof of brotherly love mentioned in the last clause--"in honor preferring one another;" remembering also the similar counsel of the same apostle on another occasion--"In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." (Phil. 2:3.) If we merely say that we love one another and yet pursue a steady course of self-seeking, wherein is the love manifest? Let us not love in word only, but in deed and in truth. – 1 John 3:18. R. 2010

Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, "Mephibosheth?" And he answered, "Here is your servant!" So David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather, and you shall eat bread at my table continually."
2 Samuel 9:6-7

David's justice and generosity are both manifested in the course he pursued. Instead of coveting Saul's possessions and using his power to attach these to his own, he deliberately settled the matter that the profits of Saul's estate should all go to his son, who at the same time would be continually partaker of the King's bounty at his table. Comparatively few would have been so just and so generous. The incident gives David's character a fresh luster and helps us to understand why he was so beloved of the Lord. He was not content with merely wishing to do right, willing to do right, he went forward and dealt justice. He put his bright thoughts and generous impulses into practice, and made "footprints on the sands of time" which have helped to mark the proper pathway for the millions who have since examined these in the holy records.

The entire operation shows us the fearlessness of the King and confidence that the kingdom should not be taken away from his posterity; and it shows us also the confidence which all the members must have felt towards him and respect to his judgment as to the affairs of the home and his headship in his home. This headship we cannot suppose was used in an austere and arbitrary manner, but with loving kindnesses and generosity and in the interest of his entire household.

R. 4269

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:3-5

David's life and its results are in sharp contrast to those of Saul. Look wherever we will in [David's] checkered career, we see courage and determination exercised along right lines, proper lines. He was not a wild animal hunter, but to protect the flock he slew the lion and the bear. He was not a [boxer], nor a gladiator; yet at the proper moment he was ready to risk his life for the defense of his people.

He appreciated highly the honor that had been conferred upon him in his anointing for the kingship, yet he held this with modesty – never boasted of it and never rashly attempted to hasten the divine program. He endured patiently the opposition of the king, yet treated the members of the royal family with profoundest respect; and finally, instead of thrusting himself on the nation as king and demanding his acceptance, he still waited patiently [for] the Lord's time.

These qualities cannot be expected to come to us instantaneously. Rather they are the gradual growth and development of the new mind, but the principle must be in the heart before development can be made along these lines--the principle of loyalty and determination. The little word "will" has its very important place, then, in the Christian's character. He must be a willer, and the will must be rightly directed into full harmony with that of God.

R. 4255

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches.

Psalm 63:5-6

BY THE expression as to satisfying his soul with marrow and fatness, the Prophet David evidently referred to the abundance of God's favor and blessing which had come to him. He had a large portion, a fat portion, and appreciated God's goodness, God's favor toward him, taking him as a shepherd boy from among the flocks, and privileging him to engage in His service and finally bringing him to the throne as the king of Israel. For all this he was very grateful to the Lord. He appreciated all of God's blessings. It was appropriate that his mouth should give praise, that he should be joyful, that he should speak of the Lord's loving-kindness. So we find in the Psalms of David many beautiful expressions in which he gives great praise and thanksgiving to the Almighty. He speaks also of God's majesty, of His wondrous power and might, and refers to the heavens as His handiwork. Whoever has time for meditation, will receive a great blessing if his thoughts shall turn toward the Almighty, acknowledging His goodness, seeking to give praise to God for all His manifold mercies, meditating upon God in the night watches.

R. 5785

With my whole heart I have sought You. Oh let me not wander from Your commandments!

Psalm 119:10

The Father seeketh such to worship Him as will do so in spirit and in truth, and who have perfect confidence in Him as the One who is all-wise and all-loving to direct and guide their affairs. Those who do not learn this lesson of trust, will not be fit for the responsibilities to be put upon the glorified Church. Let us learn this lesson and be very positive in our endeavors to be in harmony with God.

R. 5183

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness. According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Psalm 51:1-3

This draws our attention to the darkest stain upon the history of the Prophet David--the matter of the murder of Uriah and the taking of his wife. Skeptics are wont to point to that great, double sin and to sneer: "And that was the 'man after God's own heart,' according to the Bible's grand standard of morality." But the fact is, that it was when David was a young shepherd just coming to manhood that he was after God's own heart. And yet in connection with this very matter of David's greatest sin, there is something which shows forth his better character, which was "after God's heart:" and this is brought before us by this lesson. The commendable features are:

(1) He did not attempt to justify his course by saying that all the kings around about did such things and worse, and that it was generally conceded by their subjects that a king had a right to do as he pleased; (2) he not only did not deny the wrong, but he did not even try to see what he could say in self-defense; he did not plead his peculiar temptation nor that it was above that of others, from the power he exercised as king; but he confessed fully and heartily in such a manner as convinces all that his heart was really better than his evil conduct had seemed to indicate. We have no right to condone David's crimes, but we have the privilege of noting those other qualities in him, which to some extent were an offset to his weaknesses.
R. 1397

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

2 Chronicles 16:9

Faithfulness in trial will develop the overcomers. The Lord does not wish to have in the Little Flock any who are disloyal in any sense of the word. They may be weak in many of the essentials of character, but they are all **loyal to God**. The Lord is seeking those who will **remain loyal** under trials and difficulties, and thus develop characters pleasing to Him. These are not alarmed at Satan's onslaughts, which are seen to be an occasion for an increase of faith; for greater is He that is on our part than are all that are against us! R. 5183

Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"

2 Samuel 12:7

It was at the appropriate time, after David had passed through secret mournings and travailings of the soul, that the Lord sent him a reproof through Nathan the prophet to bring the whole matter clearly before his mind. Nathan, under the figure of a parable, excited the king's sympathies and declaration of a very severe judgment--a death sentence--against the person offending, and then the Prophet brought home to him the lesson saying, "Thou art the man!"

[David] allowed his better nature to reassert itself; and [he] said unto Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said unto David, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die"--although in the judgment of the parable, David had unconsciously condemned himself to death. How gracious is God, how ready to pardon when true repentance is manifest!

David in his contrition meekly accepted both the reproof and the penalties pronounced against him; and realizing that his sin was very grievous, and that his example before the nation was very detrimental to the moral and religious interests of the people, he resolved, and carried out his resolve, to make the example of his deep contrition and repentance as far reaching in its effects for good, as his sin had been for evil.

This was a noble resolution, and in nothing does the nobility of the man shine out more clearly than in his humble and public confession of his sin, his efforts to undo, as far as possible, the wrong he had done, and his meek submission to the penalties which God in his wisdom and mercy saw fit to inflict upon him, that thus his wrath against sin might be manifest to all, and that king and people might so be warned against it. "Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." (Pro. 16:32.) So in overcoming the pride and selfishness that had taken deep root in his heart, David proved himself a greater hero than even in his youthful conflict with the giant of Gath, or in any subsequent encounter.

R. 3253 and R. 2016

Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

Deuteronomy 17:18-20

Well indeed would it have been for David had he remembered [this] command of the Lord. If in this matter even such a man as David failed, and therefore was overcome by the power of temptation, let every child of God take heed and profit by the lesson of his folly. The Word of God must be the daily companion, instructor and guide to every one who would be kept in the paths of righteousness, be he little or great. It is not enough that we read it, nor even that we study it, for the sake of mere information or for argument: it is given us to ponder and to feed upon, that its principles may be incorporated into our being, moulding our thoughts and guiding all our actions. This is what it is to have the word of the Lord dwelling in us as an energizing and moving power; and if we thus have fellowship with God through his Word and the privilege of prayer, we shall not be beguiled into sin, nor partake of the intoxicating spirit of the world. R. 2016

The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.

Psalms 145:18

The important lesson...is that we shall keep close accounts with God. No child of God should go forth in the morning without an earnest petition to Him for Divine supervision of his affairs and for help to walk in the right path. No child of God should retire at night without a retrospective glance on all the day's pathway, to discern to what extent it has been a profitable one and has brought him a day's march nearer the Heavenly Home. Or, if perchance something has occurred of which he should feel ashamed, it is none too soon to go at once to the Throne of Heavenly Grace to obtain mercy and find fresh help for future times of need. R. 5681

Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

James 1:15

Evidently this fall of David into gross sin was not altogether sudden. There had been missteps leading up to it; and the process being gradual and each wrong thing searing the conscience more and more, the climax was reached almost imperceptibly, so that two, even of the basest crimes, were at length committed, apparently without any compunctions of conscience; and the sin was concealed, unrepented of, although it was yielding its bitter fruit of restless remorse (Psa. 32:3-4), until Nathan the prophet was sent to awaken and arouse the man to a deep sense of his guilt and of the necessity of immediate repentance, confession and reformation. David had become so intoxicated with the spirit, which generally attends power, popularity and great success that he evidently did not recognize his gradual moral decline. As a king, his word was supreme among the people; all Israel waited to do his bidding; the greatest men in the nation were at his service; success had everywhere attended his energies on the field of battle; his kingdom was extended and very prosperous; but in the midst of all this success and exaltation lurked temptations subtle and dangerous which should have been guarded against with scrupulous care, and perseveringly resisted.

It would be a great mistake to presume that the blindness and spiritual stupor that result from intoxication with the spirit of the world constitute a proper excuse for the sins committed while in that state. God did not so judge in the case of David. The beginning of any sin is the first yielding to its intoxicating influence; and therefore we are faithfully warned to abstain from the very appearance of evil. (I Thes. 5:22.) David's sin, like that of all other sinners, began in giving heed to the first suggestions of evil, and having done this the subsequent steps were easily taken.

R. 2016

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

Matthew 5:17

King David, we are to remember, did not belong to the spiritual house of sons, and hence had a far less clear view of such matters than that which would properly belong to every member of the house of sons, begotten of the spirit and "taught of God." ...We of the spiritual house, under the clearer conceptions of the divine will, are to remember the higher interpretation of adultery and murder set forth in the New Testament: that whoever desires adultery, and is merely restrained from it by outward circumstances or fears, is really an adulterer in his heart (Matt. 5:28); that he that is angry with his brother, he who hates his brother, is a murderer--because the spirit of anger is that which, unrestrained, would lead to murder (Matt. 5:22); and that the person who covets the things of another and is merely restrained from taking them for lack of opportunity or fear of consequence, is at heart a thief. If these principles be applied by the New Creation in the examination of their hearts, it is entirely probable that some of the "house of sons" today may find themselves very near the plane of King David as respects sin, and so viewing matters they will exercise proportionately greater compassion in their judgment of the royal transgressor. Such, too, will find great consolation in the Lord's compassion, provided they are exercised in respect to their offences as David was concerning his. "There is compassion with thee that thou mightest be feared," is the prophet's expression. If God were wanting in compassion, as are many of our fellow creatures, there would be nothing to hope for under such circumstances. It is when we realize that there is forgiveness with the Lord for all who are penitent at heart, and who, therefore, give evidence that their sins are not wilful, but rather of the weakness of heredity and under the pressure of blinding temptations, that we are moved to repentance by a hope for better things.

R. 3253

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Psalm 32:1

In Psalm 51:1-19 David makes public confession of his sin and of God's mercy in forgiveness. In Psalm 32:1-11 he gratefully records the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile--no deceit, no hypocrisy, but all of whose doings are open and transparent, and manifestly wrought in righteousness. Here he declares, "I acknowledge my sin," and he testifies to the Lord's forgiveness (vs. 5); and for this divine forgiveness he exhorts all sinners to pray to God in a time when he may be found (vs. 6); **i.e.**, before their hearts become calloused and set in an evil course.

Then, even in the midst of the troubles consequent upon his sin, which he meekly and patiently bore, David learned by faith to rejoice in the Lord, saying, "Thou art my hiding place: thou wilt preserve me from trouble, thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance;" for he will not suffer any tribulation to overwhelm his trusting saints upon whom he has set the seal of his pardoning love. R. 2016

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalm 51:10

Here again we see why David was described as a man after God's own heart. His sins were not pleasing to God--quite the reverse; but the after appreciation of the enormity of the sins and the hearty repentance therefor to the Lord, and the desire to be cleansed from every evil way, were pleasing to the Lord. Here we have an illustration of how all things may work together for good to those who love God. By reason of his heart-loyalty to the Lord, and the principles of righteousness, even these terrible sins resulted in bringing a great blessing to David's own heart--humbling him--giving him an appreciation of his weakness and littleness, and of his need to abide close to the Lord, if he would have the Lord's fellowship and compassion and be safe from the temptations of his own fallen flesh. So, too, with the New Creation. How many of them have realized profitable lessons and blessings out of some of their stumblings--not that the stumblings were good, nor of the Lord, but that the Lord was able to overrule such circumstances for good to those who are of the proper mind--rightly exercised by them to repentance and reformation. R. 3248

I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Psalm 32:5

The King's prayers were heard--God was gracious to him, his transgression was forgiven, his sin was covered, his iniquity was no longer imputed to him, because his heart was repentant--in it there was no guile. His repentance was sincere, full, thorough. The Psalmist exultingly sings of his own restoration to divine favor, and, doubtless under divine guidance, represented his as being a sample or illustration of what God is willing to do for all who similarly have sincere sorrow for sin, true repentance, who confess their faults and make fresh acknowledgment of their faith. It is safe to say that in thousands of God's people, not only in David's own nation but in every nation, kindred, people and tongue familiar with God's Word, the King's experiences and the lessons of this Psalm, showing his reconciliation with God and the exercise of divine favor toward him, have inspired faith and brought peace and rest to those cast down through weaknesses of the flesh--some of them as grievous or more so, if possible, than David's, and some of them for sins less great in the sight of men but realized as being great in the sight of God--sufficient to separate the sinner and his Lord.

R. 3260

And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

1 John 2:1

Our Advocate is more than an advocate, more than a representative at the bar of divine justice, interested in our welfare and forgiveness; he is in addition the one who gave himself for us, who at Calvary finished the work of making a propitiation (**satisfaction**) for our sins. This is the reason why we may come "with boldness to the throne of grace," not only realizing that God is for us, and that our Lord Jesus sympathizes with and is our Advocate, but also and specially realizing the merit of the sacrifice which he has already paid to Justice, and which he has made fully applicable on behalf of all who love and obey him, on application. Those whom the Lord instructs, and who will receive his instruction...may be brought off conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood--may shout for joy as they realize the abundance of the divine provision "for the propitiation of our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."—1 John 2:2.

R. 2235

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart--These, O God, You will not despise.

Psalm 51:17

King David expressed his realization that the Lord is pleased rather with a broken and contrite condition of heart than with burnt offerings, which were but types. So, too, we learn that nothing that we can give the Lord, even after our acceptance in Christ, has any value in his sight until first of all we have given him ourselves,--our hearts, our wills.

Let us ever keep in memory that a broken and contrite heart the Lord never despises, will never spurn. Therefore into whatever difficulty any of the Lord's people of the New Creation may stumble, if they find themselves hungering for the Lord's fellowship and forgiveness, if they find their hearts contrite and broken, let them not despair, but remember that God has made a provision through the merit of Christ, which enables him to accept and justify freely from all sin, all that come unto him through Jesus--through faith in his blood. R. 3254

But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.

Psalm 130:4

In considering the story of David and other Bible heroes we are impressed with the candor of the narratives --that the evil things of their conduct are told with the same frankness as their good deeds. This is one of the peculiarities of the Bible and one of the internal evidences of its truthfulness. How easy it would have been to have glossed the history of David so as to have avoided everything that would be to his discredit; and how surely this would have been done, especially in the case of a king, had the preparation of the Bible not been under divine supervision. As some of the Lord's people have realized their own weaknesses in the flesh, having at times come short of their ideals in the battle against sin, they have found encouragement in the experiences of others related in the Scriptures--not to delve further into sin but to realize that "there is forgiveness with the Lord that he might be feared." As such have noted the failures of David on various occasions and his repentance, contrition and restoration to the Lord's favor, it has given them courage to similarly repent and to similarly trust in God's mercy and in their own forgiveness, and similarly to be encouraged to arise from their dejection and sin and start afresh in the battle for righteousness, truth, purity. R. 3238

Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me.

Psalm 19:12-13

All Christians of experience in the good way and in the battle against sin and self have learned that there can be no outward or presumptuous sins that have not first had their beginning in secret faults of the mind. The sinful thought may be one of pride suggesting self-exaltation; it may be one of avarice suggesting unlawful acquisition of wealth; or it may be some other fleshly desire: the mere suggestion of the thought before our minds is not sin; it is merely the operation of our faculties, and of the influences which surround us, inquiring of our wills whether or not we will consent to such thoughts.... but if the thought be entertained it is a secret fault, and the growing tendency would surely be toward the more outward and presumptuous sinful conduct, the tendency of which is always from bad to worse.

[The spirit of the world] is blind to the highest interests and noblest ends of life; it intoxicates the mind and heart and sends the man staggering along the downward way to destruction, wise only in his own conceit. Against the intoxicating spirit of this world it is the duty of the Christian to set a vigilant guard. He has covenanted to live apart from the world with all its ambitions, pride and vainglory, and apart, too, from its selfishness, greed and strife. Let us, therefore, be sober and watch unto prayer; and let the burden of our prayer be, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults [show them to me that I may put them far from me]. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me." "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." --Psa.19:12-14; 139:23,24....We need to know and clearly recognize our errors, if we would indeed be cleansed from every secret fault.

R. 2248 and R. 2094

I delight to do your will, O my God, and your law is within my heart.

Psalm 40:8

This delight in the Lord is a still more advanced step in the Christian life. It is a blessed thing to learn to trust in the Lord; but it is when continued trust and responsive providences have ripened into personal acquaintance and fellowship with God that we learn to delight in him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the divine care and love are specially seen in the guidance of our way: in a word, when we come to feel that the Father and the Son have so clearly manifested themselves to us that we can recognize their abiding presence with us. Ah! then it is that we begin to delight ourselves in the Lord. Then, however dark may be the way, or however heavy may be the storm that rages about us, the balm of divine consolation is always there, so that the child of God, though often troubled on every side, is not distressed; though perplexed, he is never in despair; though cast down, he is not destroyed; and though persecuted, he is never forsaken.

To delight thus in the Lord is to have the affections centered in him; it is to have the heart in such sympathy with righteousness and truth as to see in God the fountain of all goodness and truth, the one altogether lovely. The Psalmist expresses such an attitude of heart when, personifying our Lord Jesus, he said, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

R. 1840

**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. As I have loved you, that you also love one another.
John 13:34**

Absalom took upon himself to be his sister's avenger. He made a feast, to which were invited all the King's children by his several wives. In the height of the feast, in disregard of the rules of etiquette and the claims of natural affection, Absalom slew his brother and then fled, from fear of justice, which, under their code, centered in his father, the King. What lesson is there in this experience for us? What should we copy? What avoid? In Spiritual Israel we are all princes, sons of the Great King, who is also the Judge. The lesson to us would properly be that the authority and responsibility for meeting out justice is not in our ambitions, but with the Father.

As the Scriptures declare, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." We are not to wait what seems to us a proper length of time, and then, if we see no divine punishment for what we consider to be no longer tolerable, to take the matter in our own hands--to murder one another. Nay, the command of our Great Teacher is, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." The lesson for us to learn is expressed in the Master's words, See to the beam in thine own eye, rather than put thyself to too much inconvenience examining the mote that is in thy brother's eye. To his own Master he standeth or falleth.

The parallel would not imply that literal murder would here be accomplished amongst the Lord's children. No, thank God! The world is too far advanced in civilization to make such a course practicable; but where the Absalom spirit is--the spirit of hatred, anger, envy, bitterness--strife is also. There is a modern method of assassination by the use of slanderous words, by insinuations, by the shrugging of the shoulders, etc. And this modern kind of murder is oftenest committed in the presence of the members of the royal family, the heavenly brotherhood. How terrible! do we say? Let us take heed that such blood-guiltiness, such "works of the flesh and the devil," be not upon us, else we shall never inherit the Kingdom.

R. 4275

As for me, I will call upon God, and the LORD shall save me. He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me, for there were many against me. Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you. He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

Psalm 55:16,18,22

KING DAVID, thoroughly unsuspecting Absalom's duplicity, was completely taken by surprise with the proclamation that Absalom was King of Israel, with Hebron as his capital. "To the pure all things are pure," writes the Apostle, and as David's heart was guileless towards his son, it was far from his thought to imagine such deceit and treachery as had been practiced against him in a cunning and underhanded manner for two years preceding the opening battle.

For three months the rebellion seemed to grow and prosper. The seeds of slander and disloyalty which Absalom had so carefully sowed through others, while quiet himself, had taken deep root in the hearts of many, who joined their cause with Absalom as rebels against the Lord and his anointed. Into the conspiracy was drawn King David's most valued counselor, Ahithophel, whose presence with the prince as one of his friends on the occasion would mean a tower of strength to his position and the attainment of his ambition. The army of Absalom was increased rapidly from various quarters, while few came to the cause of King David.

What may have been David's sentiments during these three months of trial of faith and love, we can merely conjecture; but we have every reason to believe that he was a victor along all these lines. His patience certainly was manifested. His faith must have held secure to the Divine promises that the Lord would not take from him his sure mercies; but that he would deliver him out of all evil. And as for his love, even for his wicked, treacherous son, it surely was very great.

R. 4275 and R. 4277

Now a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."

2 Samuel 15:13

Hearing that Absalom had started on his march of twenty miles toward Jerusalem, intent upon the capture of his father and the overthrow of his kingdom, King David hastily retreated, accompanied by his bodyguard of 600 men and a comparatively small number of people who manifested sympathy for him and went with him to share his fortunes. Doubtless several motives combined to lead up to this decision to retreat. (1) He wished to avoid, especially in his capital, the horrors of civil war. (2) He was overwhelmed with grief that his antagonist, his enemy, was his own son. (3) The evidences were plentiful about him that Absalom had stolen the hearts of the people and that his former friends had become his enemies, who now jeered at his discomfiture, and anticipated with evident pleasure the oncoming of Absalom and the establishment of his kingdom. "God is not in all his thoughts," says the inspired writer. (Psa.10:4.) So evidently the people of Israel failed to think of what would be the Lord's will in the matter, and this was their great mistake.

That must have been the darkest day of King David's eventful life. Accompanied by his bodyguard, most of whom were foreigners--and of his own nation comparatively few with him--he fled from his own family and the capital city of his kingdom, which he had established, and from the people in whose interests he had given the best years of his life in harmony with the divine anointing. He fled from the face of the people who some years before had sung his praises as their deliverer from the hand of the Philistines--"Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands."

Here certainly was an occasion for the trial of David's faith and patience and love. What he would have done in earlier life we cannot tell. His history in every place shows him to have been a man of well-balanced mind, but his chief protection was his possession of a Spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of consecration to the Lord, the spirit of faith and trust and loving devotion. Instead of threatening the mob or returning railing for railing, or in any way defending himself, King David gave instructions to his guard that no harm should be done to those who were speaking evil of him, slandering, smiting. "The cup which my father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it," were our Master's words in his dying hour (John18:11), and we can see his spirit exemplified in King David, who typified him in some respects.

R. 4277

But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head.

Psalm 3:3

It is supposed that the 'fourth Psalm' and portions of the 'third' were written from the standpoint of David's experiences as an exile from his capital. Dean Stanley says, "It has been conjectured with much propriety that as the first sleep of that evening was commemorated in the 'fourth Psalm', so in the 'third' is expressed the feeling of David's thankfulness at the final close of that twenty-four hours." The king's objective point was a fortified city, Mahanaim, on the east side of Jordan; but the little army camped on the west side for the night. R. 4277

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 1:6

THE successful conspiracy of Absalom, so artfully planned and skillfully executed, finally drove David from Jerusalem and planted Absalom there. But the victory of the conspirators was not yet complete while David, the rightful sovereign, lived. So Absalom and his counsellors conspired further against the life of the king.

But the Lord raised up in Hushai, a friend for David, and placed him among the counsellors of Absalom, and thus through his counsel brought to naught the foolish and wicked conspiracy. In the pride and wickedness of his heart, bent on the slaying of his father, Absalom placed himself at the head of a great army and went forth to fight. In contrast with this wickedness mark the father's love, even under these extremely trying circumstances, saying to his men as they went forth to meet Absalom, "Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom."

In the lesson which these circumstances afford let us mark well how short is the triumph of evil doers. Though their eyes stand out with fatness and they have more than heart could wish (Psa. 73:7); and tho now the world calls the proud happy and they that work wickedness are set up, and they that tempt God are even delivered (Mal. 3:15), yet soon they will all be as stubble under the feet of the righteous. (Mal. 4:1.) The time may indeed seem long to those burdened by oppression; but it is not long in God's estimation. He will bring forth judgment unto victory just as soon as the wisdom of his purposes will permit. If justice be delayed, it is only for the development of some greater good than could be accomplished by a speedy adjustment. In this confidence, therefore, let the Christian rest, assured that all things--even the seeming delays--shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28.) R. 2025

If God is for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:31

It was in view of the Lord's providences and of his many deliverances from the power of his enemies, and of the uniform kindness and mercy of God as he meditated upon them, that David exclaimed, "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" This consolation, variously expressed throughout the Scriptures, comes with all its blessed potency in our times of greatest need: the more desperate and determined the foes we encounter and the more fierce the conflict with the powers of darkness, the more glorious is the deliverance and the clearer are the manifestations of divine grace. And, as a consequence, faith takes deeper root, and, with renewed confidence and assurance, lays hold upon all the precious promises of God; and love and gratitude well up from hearts refreshed with an increased sense of the divine favor and blessing. So it was with David; and so it is with God's faithful people who lead a life of prayer and faith and close fellowship with God. R. 1914

Trust in the LORD and do good. Dwell in the land and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass. Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret.

Psalms 37:3-5,7

It is to the faithful soldiers of the Lord that the above words of the Psalmist are addressed--to the persecuted, tempted and tried. Hear them, tempest-tossed and fainting souls: they were long ago penned by the Lord's prophet for your edification--"Fret not thyself," but "trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." How strong is the Lord, how wise and good! His promises have never failed to those that put their trust in him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do good are very unproductive, and that the opposition from within and without is very strong; but it is when we are weak--when we thus realize our own incompetency --that we may be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Let us endeavor to make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, and then lay hold of the Lord's strength to help us pursue our course in the narrow way of difficulty and trial. The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of God; for "he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." R. 1840

O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!
2 Samuel 18:33

The good messenger broke the news as gently as possible to the King. He knew of the general rout of the enemy and of the concourse in connection with Absalom; but instead of telling all that he knew and, drawing upon his imagination for details, his goodness of heart led him to say little except that there had been a victory and that it seemed a great tumult, but did not know all of the particulars. Presently Cushai, a second runner, came, announcing the death of Absalom. King David's heart was bowed with great grief. This was what he evidently had feared. He betook himself to a room in the tower, on the way sobbing, "O, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Of these words one writer says, "There is not in all of the Old Testament a passage of greater pathos than this. The simple beauty of the narrative is exquisite; we are irresistibly reminded of him who, while he beheld the rebellious city of Jerusalem and thought of the destruction it was bringing upon itself, wept over it."—Luke 19:41.

If in Absalom's perverse course of vanity, treacherous sedition, and in its ruinous end we find a lesson respecting the undesirable, evil, godless way, in King David's course we find the opposite lesson of faith and submission and growth in grace, knowledge and love.

R. 4277



Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."

John 10:7,11

JEHOVAH is my Shepherd, is the Prophet's sentiment, and our Lord's explanation of the matter further is that the great Shepherd's Son has been given full charge of the sheep. (John 10:1-16.) Not all mankind, however, are sheep, or have the Shepherd's care. In the present time only those who have heard the Shepherd's voice and responded to his call to become his sheep are of his flock, and his word on the subject is that it is a little flock, to whom it will be the Father's good pleasure eventually to give the kingdom in joint-heirship with his Son, their "Chief Shepherd." Then will come the time referred to by our Lord when "other sheep" will be found. The entire Millennial age, with all the forces and blessings of the heavenly kingdom, will be devoted to the finding of the other sheep. Our Lord's words are,-- "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold [not of the little flock of this Gospel age]; them also I must bring [in due time to a knowledge of the Truth and to the full privileges of sheep], and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." (John 10:16.) Eventually all of God's creatures on various planes of being shall be recognized as one family of God, as it is written of our Lord, "In whom the whole family of God both in heaven and in earth are named." (Eph. 3:15.) And again, "He shall gather together in one all things in Christ both in heaven and on earth." (Eph. 1:10.) However, though it may be interesting and helpful and profitable to understand something of our great Shepherd's generous plans for the future, our interest centers chiefly in the little flock of the present time, to which alone this lesson refers in many of its particulars.

R. 3268

Psalm 23: A Psalm of David.

OF ALL the beautiful symbolic pictures which the Lord gave us through the Prophet David, none seems more forceful than that of the Psalm which constitutes our lesson. The eastern shepherd and his love and care for his sheep are given us as an illustration of our heavenly Father's care over us. It is true that our dear Redeemer was sent forth as the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, and by his death opened the door into the sheepfold of divine love and favor and rest and peace. This was a favorite picture that our Lord Jesus gave us of himself: "I know my sheep, and am known of mine"; "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me"; "A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of a stranger."

Applying the psalm to the little flock, all of its provisions fit most minutely. Because the Lord is our Shepherd, we shall not want. Those who are proper sheep will submit their wills to the shepherd's will and trust wholly to his guidance, and so doing are relieved of that anxious craving so common to the children of the world and which is never satisfied, but the more it gets the more it wants. The Lord's sheep appreciate the heavenly things more than the earthly, and their wants in this respect are more than supplied when they accept by faith the divine assurance that "No good thing will He withhold from sheep which stray not from His fold." They have given up every earthly interest in exchange for the heavenly, and, realizing their own insufficiency and lack of judgment, they are trusting to the Lord to grant them such experiences, leadings, trials, difficulties, blessings, etc., in this present life as will be for their highest good, and as would work out for them a share of the glorious things of the future to which they have been called.

In the precious and true sentiments of this Psalm, David doubtless took great consolation in the midst of his temptations and trials, and of the realization of his own infirmities and shortcomings. As he looked back to his early shepherd life and remembered his own care for the dependent sheep of his flock, the thought of the Lord's similar care over his people came to mind. And, doubtless, with this realization of the Lord's goodness and care, came also a renewed determination on David's part to be henceforth a true sheep, that he might always remain under the shepherd's care. While such was the significance of these words to David, to us the Church, under the care of the Anointed

Jesus, our Good Shepherd, they mean more; for, as the Lord's inspired prophet, David puts these words into the mouth of all of the Lord's "little flock" of consecrated followers who obediently hearken to his voice and who in meek humility take comfort both in his chastening rod and in his blessed staff of promise and hope.

R. 1396, R. 3268 and R. 4278



IT IS safe to say that no other collection of poems has accomplished as much good as the Book of Psalms. Its sentiments seem to touch the soul at every turn--in joy, in sorrow. Referring to the 'Twenty-third Psalm', Beecher wrote, "It is the nightingale among the Psalms. It is small, of a homely feather, singing shyly out of obscurity; but it has filled the air of the whole world with melodious joy"; and Spurgeon said, "This is the Pearl of Psalms, whose soft and pure radiance delights every eye." R. 5653

The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.

Psalm 23:1

DAVID, THE PSALMIST, wrote prophetically, "Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psa. 23:1-6); for in David's day the arrangements for the Shepherd and the flock of this lesson had not been completed. True, the heavenly Father had purposed his entire plan as respects humanity's redemption and return to his care as his flock, but he had not yet sent his only begotten Son, the Good Shepherd, to give his life for the sheep, to call the flock, to open the door and to lead them out and into pasturage and to rest. Nevertheless, in the Lord's providence the nation of Israel had already been gathered, as those who would be prepared to be the flock of the Good Shepherd when he should come. These were "shut up under the Law" (Gal. 3:23), waiting for the coming of the Good Shepherd to open the door and to call them by name as his own sheep. R. 2672

The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.

Psalm 23:1

It is only when the individual can say in his heart, The Lord is **my** Shepherd that this blessed ministry of the good Shepherd can be realized. It is when we become his sheep that we learn the value of the Shepherd's care; and the man who has had experience under the care of the good Shepherd can truly say with the Psalmist, "I shall not want." He shall not want for the temporal necessities of the present life--"Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." (Isa. 33:16; Matt. 6:33-34.) He shall not want for light and be left to walk in the darkness of this world, but unto him shall be given the light of life. (John 8:12.) He shall not want the necessary care and discipline to fit him for the future life; "for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. 12:6.) He shall not lack the consolations of divine grace in times of trial and affliction; for it is written, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2Cor. 12:9.) He shall not want for fellowship and sympathy; for the Lord himself hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5); and again, "Lo, I am with you alway."—Matt. 28:20.

Surely no **good** thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly--as true sheep. He will protect them in every danger, and guard them with a shepherd's care.

R. 1745

He makes me to lie down in green pastures.

Psalm 23:2

The Psalm assures us that, as the Lord's sheep, we shall be provided with green pastures and the cool, refreshing waters of Truth. Moreover, while thus being spiritually fed and refreshed, we shall have the peace of God, as is implied in the suggestion that the sheep will lie down in the green pastures. Although the experiences of the Lord's sheep include many trials in the parched wilderness of sin, yet he graciously gives them restful experiences in oases of divine favor. These are not always accompanied with immunities from trial, as the world would view the matter, but certainly are seasons of rest and refreshment--to such an extent that the Lord's sheep may truthfully say that they have "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" ruling in their hearts, notwithstanding outward trials, difficulties, perplexities and adversities.

More and more as "New Creatures" we are learning to appreciate the barrenness of worldly hopes and ambitions and knowledge. And more and more we should be giving heed to the leadings of the "Good Shepherd," who is guiding his flock of "New Creatures" for their spiritual refreshment through the labyrinth of the "present evil world." Those sheep, which keep nearest to the Shepherd, secure the fattest and richest experiences and refreshments. On the contrary, the sheep which stray looking for pastures green on their own account, or following the voice of false shepherds, are the ones that are likely to become hungry and eat of the poisonous growths and fall into the pitfalls of sin and be devoured by the ravenous beasts of passion and worldliness. Happy is the sheep who learns to know the voice of the true Shepherd, and whose faith is such that he follows closely and not afar off!

To lie down is to be at rest, to be happy. This is the privilege of all the Lord's true sheep. Outwardly they may be distressed and "on the run," assailed by the world, the flesh and the Adversary, but as "New Creatures" they may be at rest, at peace, because of their nearness to the Lord, the Shepherd, and because of their faith in his overruling providence, which is able to make "all things work together for good." "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend (stumble) them." These let the "peace of God rule in their hearts...and are thankful." It is to these that our Lord's words apply, "My peace I give unto you....Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

R. 5653, R. 3268 and R. 4278

He leads me beside the still waters.

Psalm 23:2

The "still waters" are contrasted with the rushing torrent of the mountain slope--still, not in the sense of stagnancy, but rather smooth flowing. At the latter only could the sheep receive proper refreshment. So applying the thought to the little flock, we find that the great Shepherd leads us away from the strifes of worldly ambition, from greatness and power and riches and honors highly esteemed amongst men, but does not lead us to stagnancy--rather to spiritual ambitions which bring with them a restfulness and refreshment of soul obtainable from no other source. The streams of truth and grace are living, but comparatively quiet, waters. As the Prophet intimates, these are not to be found by the sheep alone; to find them requires the leading of the Spirit. Let us give diligence to his voice, remembering his Word--that his sheep hear his voice and follow him. Let us discriminate, discern his voice, with its truthful accent, so different from the voice of error. Strangers true sheep will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. R. 3268

He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Psalm 23:3

The prophet does not refer to a restoration of body or of physical health, but a restoration of soul, being. Some of the Lord's most precious saints have been weary and faint and troubled--even the dear Redeemer fainted under his cross, and was neither kept whole or made whole miraculously on the occasion. The application of the Prophet's words to the Christian experience would make these experiences, called restoring of soul or being, to correspond with our justification to life. All our lives were forfeited under the divine sentence, and by faith a complete restitution or restoration of soul is granted to the believer, that he might have something to offer in sacrifice to the Lord, "holy, acceptable" (Rom. 12:1), and that in this sacrifice service he may walk in the footsteps of the great Shepherd who lay down his life for the sheep. Thus are the true sheep led in right paths, in proper paths, advantageous to their spiritual development, though frequently trying and difficult to them according to the flesh. This favor and blessing and opportunity comes to them not for their own sakes or worthiness but through the Lord's grace-- "for his name's sake." R. 3268

**Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for You are with me.**

Psalm 23:4

The whole world is walking in the valley of the shadow of death. Mountain tops of life, of affection, were left by the race six thousand years ago, when Father Adam fell from his harmony with God to the plane of sin and death. The valley of sin carries with it the shadow of death, the penalty of sin. In the broad road the whole human family still walks; and even though the Shepherd leads his flock upward, and in the reverse direction from the course of the world, nevertheless, according to the flesh, they are still in the world, in this valley of the shadow of death. However, the true sheep, hearing the voice of the good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, have learned to be neither careless and indifferent as are some, nor to be in fear and doubt and perplexity as are the majority. These on the contrary fear no evil. They realize indeed that the penalty of sin is upon the race, but they realize also that divine love has provided a redemption.

The sheep of the little flock fear no evil because of the Lord's favor, because he is with them, on their side, and has shown his favor in the redemption price already paid. He is with them, too, in his word of promise--his assurance that death shall not mean extinction of life, but merely, until the resurrection, an undisturbed sleep in Jesus. What wonder that these can walk through the valley of the shadow of death singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord, calling upon their souls with all that is within them to praise and laud and magnify his great and holy name, who loved us and bought us with his precious blood, and has called us to joint-heirship with our dear Redeemer.

The end of this Valley of Shadow is near, not merely in the sense that we shall soon reach the end of life's journey, but especially in the sense that the New Day is about to dawn, of which the Lord, our Shepherd, declared the result: "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His beams." (Mal 4:2.) The final result will be that there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying; but the whole world will begin to emerge from the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

R. 3268 and R. 5653

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 23:4

As the Shepherd's crook was used to assist the sheep out of difficulties, to defend it from its too powerful enemies and to chasten it when inattentive, and as all of these uses of the rod were for the sheep's interest and welfare, so with the Lord's little flock and their Shepherd and his rod of help, defense and chastisement. The true sheep learn to love the providences of the Shepherd and are comforted by them. Knowing the Shepherd's power and his watchful care, they realize that all things are working together for good to them because they are his sheep. Why should they not be comforted, strengthened, encouraged?

The shepherd's rod or club was of hard wood, sometimes open and preferably of the shape of a golf stick, except that it was shorter and much heavier. With it the shepherd was prepared to defend the flock, combating every foe. The staff was lighter and more like a cane and longer, with a crook at the end. With its point the shepherd at times prodded the sheep that were careless, and with the hook he sometimes helped out one that had stumbled into the ditch, by putting the crook under its forelegs. Our Shepherd, too, has a rod for our enemies and a staff for his sheep--the one for our protection, the other for our relief and assistance and correction.

But alas! Not all of the sheep have full confidence in the Shepherd and are fully resigned to have no will but His. Some are continually getting into difficulty. Yet even such straying sheep the Shepherd will not leave, if they have become truly His. He goes after them, as the Psalm represents. His rod and His staff are their comfort. With the rod he beats off their enemies, the wolves that would injure; and with the crook of His staff He wisely and carefully assists the entangled sheep out of its difficulties--out from amongst the cares of this life, the entanglements and deceitfulness of riches, and the besetments of sin and of Satan. Many of the sheep of the Lord's flock thus can sing, "He restoreth my soul"--He brings me back to Himself; He makes me again to know, to appreciate, to enjoy His provision for me and to see how much better it is than anything I could have provided for myself.

How glad we are to know that all power is committed unto him in heaven and in earth and that under his protecting care nothing shall by any means harm us! What a comfort is here! No wonder that under such circumstances the sheep may enjoy "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," resting themselves, comforting themselves in the assurance that all things shall be overruled for their eternal welfare!

R. 3268, R. 4278 and R. 5653

**You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
Psalm 23:5**

The Psalm diverges here and leaves the figure of the sheep and the Shepherd, adopting instead the illustration of a mighty lord who spreads a sumptuous feast for his humbler friend. In olden times an active hospitality meant much, and for a nobleman to receive one as his guest meant responsibility for his safety; and so the thought is that we, as the Lord's people, are accepted of him, counted as friends, are made to sit down to a bountiful feast, secure from the enmity of those who would injure us--secure from the great Adversary and all the wicked spirits in high places mentioned by the Apostle (Eph. 6:12) --secure so long as we are under the care of our great friend, our heavenly Father. The bounties of our table may indeed include some earthly good things, better or worse than those of the natural average man; but all of these, whatever they may be, accepted with joy and thanksgiving, are appreciated by those who recognize them as part and parcel of the bounties of the Friend above all others.

This table is open to all those who love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul and strength--better than they love houses or lands, parents or children, husband or wife, lodge or society or sectarian system or self.

Is it strange that those so highly favored of the Lord and recognized as his guests and fed at his table should be hated by enemies? It would seem strange to us if it were not for the assurance of the Master himself, that whosoever will live godly will suffer persecution in this present time, and for the illustration of this in the Master's own experience, that it was the professedly godly, influential, great and nominally religious that persecuted him to death. We are not surprised, then, to find that our table is spread in the midst of enemies that now surround us on every hand.

R. 3268

You anoint my head with oil. My cup runs over.

Psalm 23:5

The anointing of the head of the guest with oil was a part of the hospitality of olden times. The antitype of this with us is the outpouring of the holy Spirit upon all this class--this little flock, the body of Christ, of which he is the Head, Chief, the Shepherd, the Leader. Jesus, the Head of the Church, was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. That holy anointing oil used on the priests and kings of Israel typified the Holy Spirit, which came upon the Church representatively in Jesus. And this same anointing oil has come down over all the members of the Church, which is the Body of Christ, as we read in Psa. 133:2. Let us appreciate this anointing and abide under it, allowing it more and more to be what the Apostle terms an unction from the Holy One, affecting our every talent and power and bringing them all into subjection to the divine law of love.

The fullness of the cup, running over, has a double signification. It is a cup of joy and a cup of sorrow, and in both respects it overflows. He who would partake of the joys of the Lord must also partake of his cup of suffering; we must suffer with him if we would reign with him. It is sweet and precious, in many senses of the word to be privileged to participate in the sufferings of Christ, in any sacrifices or services for the Lord and His Cause. The sweet mingles freely with the bitter. But the Lord promises that in the future the Cup of new wine in the Kingdom shall more than compensate for any bitterness of the present time. Our Cup is full, but we would not wish it one drop less. [We] count the sufferings of this present time as not worthy to be compared with the glories that shall be revealed in us, and hence we are enabled to rejoice in tribulation, so that as the tribulations will overflow the rejoicing likewise overflows, and with the Apostle we can say, Rejoice, and again I say rejoice!

R. 565, R. 3268 and R. 4278

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Psalm 23:6

The goodness and mercy which we anticipate beyond the veil has its beginning here already and is thus to be appreciated. Whoever knows nothing of the joys of the Lord in the present time will evidently not be prepared for the joys of the Lord in the Kingdom, whatever blessings and joys he may attain to under the administration of the Kingdom during the Millennial age. There is then joy and rejoicing granted to the Lord's faithful ones, not a momentary matter connected with their first acceptance of the Lord and their consecration of themselves to him. The goodness and mercy of the Lord is not to be looked back to as a thing of the remote past, but is to be recognized and appreciated as a thing of the present. How precious the thought--God's goodness, God's mercy, with all those who are truly His in Christ--following us day by day, moment by moment. Day by day God's goodness and mercy follow us, refresh us, strengthen us, bless us.

The conclusion of the whole matter--the end of the journey, is what? To occupy a place in the heavenly mansions in our Father's house! What a glorious consummation to the grandest of all hopes! Why should we murmur or complain at the roughness of the journey which will bring us to such a glorious goal?

Let us say with the Psalmist:

"What shall I render unto the Lord my God for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Most High!"

R. 3268, R. 5653 and R. 4278



You are my brethren, you are my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?

2 Samuel 19:12

Just so it is in the world today. Earth's rightful King is not upon its throne, nor has the world recognized his right to it or desired his return. Men have been busy with their own schemes and plans of government. They have anointed various kings of their own choosing: in fact, they have tried every experiment of self-government; and, one after another, all have ended in failure. And now, after six thousand years of human experiment, the whole world is on the verge of a revolution, in the outcome of which they have nothing to expect but anarchy.

Under the various disintegrating influences of our peculiar day the old creeds are fast crumbling into ruin, and the old institutions which they held together are being terribly shaken; and the various attempts at reorganization on other grounds are all open to a thousand objections. The faith of all is being tested, and many who really care to have a faith, and who long for a firm establishment in divine truth, are indeed in dismay.

It is in view of this clearly discernible trend of present events that the thrones of earth are trembling, and that statesmen are greatly perplexed in seeking measures of policy to avert the impending disaster. The sea and the waves (the restless masses of humanity) are roaring, and the mountains (kingdoms) are shaking with the swellings thereof—Psa. 46:3.

We wait not for the King as the sweet babe of Bethlehem, nor yet as "the **man** Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all;" but we wait for him who, having been "put to death in flesh, was quickened [made alive] in spirit"-- who was raised from death a spirit being--highly exalted above his condition as a man, higher even than his condition as a spirit-being before he humbled himself to become a man--highly exalted, even to the divine nature, far above human nature and angelic nature and every other nature. Such is the nature and majesty of the King for whom we wait, and whose presence and Kingdom we are assured can and will bring order out of earth's confusion, and bring to the world the blessings purchased with his own precious blood, given when he was a man, once for all and forever as man's redemption-price.

R. 1690

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.

2 Samuel 24:24-25

The site of the Temple was Mount Moriah, and one of the most prominent spots on that mount is supposed to have been the site of the altar. This place selected for the altar, under divine guidance, is believed to have been the same spot upon which Abraham offered his son, Isaac, the type of Christ, and received him again as from the dead in a figure, the Lord providing as his representative, upon the same spot, the ram caught in a neighboring thicket. –Gen. 22:3-13; Heb. 11:17-19.

It is supposed that this same spot was subsequently the threshing-floor of Araunah, where David offered the acceptable sacrifice to the Lord which stayed the plague. (2 Sam. 24:21-25.) The Mosque of Omar now occupies the site of the ancient Temple built by Solomon; and the Mohammedans, who have great respect for the holy places, have left the site of the ancient altar exposed to view, protecting it with a railing. The visitor may there see today, the very spot on which thousands of typical sin offerings were sacrificed, the base of the various altars which were erected from time to time. It is of solid rock, and has a rather distinct groove or trench about it, which probably conducted the blood of the slain animals to what seems to be a natural drain or sewer by which the blood flowed in the direction of the Valley of Jehoshaphat--the valley of graves.

As we viewed this historic rock some years ago, and thought of the thousands of beasts slain there as types of the great ransom sacrifice, and noted the natural passageway by which the blood was carried off, our thoughts reverted to the Lamb of God, the great sacrifice for sins, and how the life which he laid down became a fountain or stream of life, not only for the dead of Israel, but all who died in Adam. The flow of blood toward the valley of graves seems to speak symbolically of life for the dead, secured through our dear Redeemer's sacrifice.

R. 2510

As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.

1 Chronicles 28:9

It was doubtless due to David's increasing reverence for the Lord, and his realization of the mistakes made in the training of his other children, and his desire that his successor to the throne should honor the Lord and carry forward the interests of religion--these things doubtless led the king to put his son Solomon under the special care of the Prophet Nathan, with the view to his preparation to serve the Lord and his kingdom righteously, and to build the temple of the Lord which David had purposed to build but was not allowed.

There is a golden sentiment expressed in these words. Outward service is not sufficient in our dealing with the Lord. "He seeketh such to worship, as worship him in spirit and in truth." Solomon's excellent start in his high office and the favor of God, which then came upon him had been preceded by years of study. Under the Prophet's direction and under his father's suggestions he was enabled to enter into the spirit of his father's plan respecting the erection of the great temple at Jerusalem which would put religion, the true religion and worship of God, in the most prominent position before the nation of Israel. He got, sympathetically, the spirit of his father which discerned that the whole nation of Israel would be specially blessed in putting God and his worship in advance of every other thing and interest. He was informed respecting the stores of material and wealth gathered by his father for the temple purposes and consecrated to that service. In these things Solomon found abundant opportunity for the exercise of his intelligence and his ambitions along proper and helpful lines, which drew him nearer to the Lord and taught him how better to serve the Lord and his people Israel as his father's successor.

So we see, as we seek the Lord with all our hearts as "dear children," and with willing minds, that he makes known to us his great plans and purposes respecting the future. He makes known to us his purpose to have a temple, and preparations already made therefor, and how and when it will be built and its object: the blessing of all the families of the earth. At each step of the way, as we the more fully enter into sympathy with God's great plan of the ages, it serves to develop us the more and to prepare us for the share in that Temple and Kingdom. R. 4286

Oh bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard, who keeps our soul among the living and does not allow our feet to be moved.

Psalm 66:8-9 (To Natural Israel)

IN THIS Psalm the Prophet David calls upon all the world to praise the Lord. In prophetic language he exclaims: "All the earth shall worship Thee; they shall sing to Thy name!" Then he recounts the wonderful manifestation of the Power of God in His dealings with Israel; he calls upon the people to bless the Lord and sound His praises abroad. Taking a retrospective view of the dealings of Jehovah with His people, he continues: "For Thou, O God, hast proved us, Thou hast tried us as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place!" -- vs.10-12.

The Psalmist then declared that he would enter into the house of the Lord, and would pay unto the Lord the vows which he had made in the time of his trouble. He recounts the goodness of God to himself. He tells that he had cried unto the Lord and extolled His praises, that his prayers had been answered, and that he had been lifted up and blessed and delivered. He calls upon Israel to remember all the leadings of the Lord in their past history and all His goodness to them as a people, and exhorts them to sound forth the praises of His great name. God had brought the people of Israel up out of bondage to Egypt; He had protected them through all their wilderness journeyings and ever since.

King David reminds them that they had been kept alive, that God had not permitted them to be exterminated --He had "suffered not their feet to be moved." They were not vanquished by their enemies, so long as they had trusted and obeyed.

R. 5500

Oh bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard, who keeps our soul among the living and does not allow our feet to be moved.

Psalm 66:8-9 (To Spiritual Israel)

Although this Psalm has a primary significance as relates to Natural Israel, our thought is, in harmony with the applications made by our Lord and the Apostles, that these words are even more appropriate in their application to Spiritual Israel. The Lord has brought us up out of the world. He has delivered us from the great taskmaster, Satan. He has guided us through the wilderness journey; He has fed us with the Manna from Heaven; He has brought us forth the Water of Life from the great Rock of Ages smitten for us, that we might drink and live. He has washed our feet from the dust of our wilderness way. He has faithfully disciplined and chastened us as His sons; He has gone before us through all the toilsome march, and has been our Rearward as well, to protect us from all danger and harm. If Natural Israel had great cause for thankfulness and praise, what should be **our** attitude, for all the marvelous manifestations of His love and care for us, His Spiritual Israel!

Our God never fails His children: His name is Faithfulness! He has never permitted His Church to be exterminated, notwithstanding all the assaults of error and of the powers of darkness. There are still true people of God in the world, and ever have been. Throughout the Dark Ages, the great fact of our Redeemer's sacrifice for sin was still held by some of the true saints of the Lord. This precious truth was never completely lost during those years of darkness and obscurity, and in God's due time His Church emerged from the wilderness, "leaning upon the arm of her Beloved." The light has since grown brighter and brighter to the faithful, watching ones. And what a flood of glory now shines upon the path of the saints!

The saints of God during the past centuries did not need these additional blessings which are supplied to the faithful of today, but their every need was supplied. We are living in the days of the "cleansed Sanctuary." More Truth is now due than at any time in the history of the Church. Truly, our Lord has "brought us into His banqueting House, and His banner over us is Love!" (Songs 2:4.) Truly, "He holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."
R. 5500

David said: “Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty. For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all. O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people and fix their heart toward You.” Then David said to all the assembly, “Now bless the LORD your God.” So all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers and bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king.

1 Chronicles 29:10-11,18,20

The prayer and thanksgiving of David to God, recorded in 1 Chron. 29:10-19, ascribing praise to him for the privilege of collecting the materials for his temple and humbly acknowledging that all their gifts were only returning to God that which was his own, expressing his joy in the freewill offerings of the people and praying that their hearts might ever incline to him, and that he would give unto Solomon a perfect heart, is full of touching pathos, reverence, meekness and holy enthusiasm. Read it and underscore its touching phrases, that again and again you may be refreshed and instructed by it. Then mark (vs. 20) how he led all the people to fervently bless the Lord, and how the enthusiasm thus kindled anointed Solomon a second time to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord. (vs. 22,23.) This second anointing was like the grand Amen! of the whole nation to the first anointing (1 Kings 1:38-40), which was, comparatively speaking, done in a very quiet way. R. 2030

Blessed are those who dwell in Your house. They will still be praising You.

Psalm 84:4

Psalm 84:1-12, from which the Golden Text is taken, is another expression of David’s devotion and zeal for the service of the Lord. While we thus contemplate the typical temple which kindled such an enthusiasm among the worthy saints of the Jewish dispensation, with what intensity of zeal and fervor should we regard that antitypical temple, the Church of the living God, whose living stones shall to all eternity show forth the praises of him who quarried and polished and fitted them together until it grew into a holy temple for the Lord in which he is pleased to dwell, and of which Christ Jesus is the chief corner stone. —Eph. 2:19-22. R. 2030

And David said to his son Solomon, “Be strong and of good courage and do it. Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God—my God—will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”

1 Chronicles 28:20

This counsel to Solomon may also with equal propriety be accepted by every Christian in the service of the Lord,--"Be strong and of good courage." Both strength and courage are necessary to faithful service and to success in the good fight of faith; and both are developed by patient endurance and faith in God under the various trials to which the Christian is exposed. The counsel of the Apostle Paul to the Church also tallies with that of David to Solomon, when he says, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;" and again,--"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." — Eph. 6:10; 1 Cor. 16:13. R. 2030

Your throne shall be established forever.

2 Samuel 7:16

David's throne was perpetual through the line of Solomon down to Zedekiah, and when the Lord rent the Kingdom from the hands of Zedekiah he did not give it to another family, but proclaimed an interregnum--a suspension of David's Kingdom, which might not go to another. The language of the prophecy concerning Zedekiah is, "O thou profane and wicked prince, whose time is come that iniquity should have an end: remove the diadem, take off the crown; this shall no more be the same. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it unto him." (Eze. 21:27.)

There has been no King of Israel, from Zedekiah's day to the present --the overturning of the Kingdom has been very thorough. The kings who reigned over Israel at the time of the first advent, and previously and subsequently, were not Israelitish kings, nor of Israelitish birth, but were appointees of Gentile governments, which, from Zedekiah's day to the present, have trodden under foot the sacred land. The fulfillment of this promise to David is nevertheless secure, sure as the word and oath of the Almighty; and we who were by nature Gentiles, but who have been betrothed to Abraham's great Son and David's great Son and Lord, are still looking forward to and praying and patiently waiting for the fulfillment of this promise, saying, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"--even as our Lord taught us to do. As soon as this antitypical David, "Beloved," shall have assumed the reigns of government at the time appointed of the Father, he, as the antitype also of Solomon, on the natural plane, will build the Lord's house, and his throne shall be established forever--for it is the throne of the Kingdom of Jehovah. R. 3258

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. And the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 9:6-7

This prophesy seems to be a continuation of that in Isaiah 7:14--"A virgin shall conceive and bear a son." And thus we read, Matt.1:21-23; also, in Luke 1:27-35. "Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee, **therefore**, also, that **holy** (sinless--undefiled-- pure) thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Peter asserts that David knew "That God swore to him, with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins he would cause one to sit upon his throne." (Acts 2:30 --**Diaglott.**)

Thus, Christ Jesus shall become, not only the recognized ruler and governor of Israel (over which David's throne extended), but more--over all the nations and families of earth. Hence, we read of "**the increase of his government**" over that of David; and his government, unlike David's, shall not be disturbed by rebellions, etc., but it shall be at peace and in control of all. In all the increased government he shall have lasting peace, and his government not come to an end forever, (to the **age**) **i.e.**, until he shall put down all opposition and subdue all things to his will. Then, in the end of the Millennial **age**, he shall deliver up the kingdom (control) to God, even the Father--presenting to him the justified and perfectly restored of the human race, who thereafter shall be directly amenable to the Father. (See 1 Cor. 15:24-25.)

R. 452

The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice! Let the multitude of isles be glad! Clouds and darkness surround Him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. Psalm 97:1-2

GOD'S holy Prophets of the Old Testament and of the New give us numerous pictures of our day and the events now taking place in the world. The Psalmist David, taking prophetically a standpoint of observation future from his day declared, "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof!" (Psa. 97:1.) [This] began to be true when our Lord Jesus, having returned to earth to set up His Kingdom, took unto Himself His great power. Yet not until His Kingdom has been fully established in the earth will His glorious Reign be clearly recognized. How true it is that the storm clouds are all about us in this Day of the Kingly presence of Jehovah's great Representative, the Executor of His great Purposes!

He is judging the nations and weighing them in the balance. Judgment is being laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet (Isa. 28:17), to the intent that ere long the equitable principles of His Government may be established in all the earth. Not only will all unrighteousness be made manifest, but "a fire goeth before Him and burneth up His enemies." (Psa. 97:3.) This work of judgment and the consequent Time of Trouble being a necessary preparation for the glorious Reign of Righteousness that shall immediately succeed it, and all being wisely directed by the High and Holy One, who is "too wise to err, too good to be unkind," the Prophet bids us discern in it an abundant cause for rejoicing and gladness. (See Psa. 96:9-13; 98:1-9.) Indeed, there is great cause for rejoicing, not only among the saints, but in the whole earth; and it is the privilege of the saints to tell the glad tidings to all who will hear.

But whether men hear or whether they forbear, let us tell it out, and by and by when the great afflictions of this Judgment hour begin to seal the instruction upon the hearts of men, then the blessed testimony will be as healing balm. They will see that He who smote them in His wrath, and scourged them in His hot displeasure, is also merciful and gracious, and unwilling that they should perish, but desirous rather that they should turn unto Him, obey His counsels and live.

R. 5989

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Psalm 24:3-5

IN this psalm the prophet David takes the standpoint of the dawn of the Millennial age, when, after the great time of trouble, the kingdoms of this world will have become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ (Rev. 11:15)....And he will set his King upon his holy hill of Zion, and give to him the nations for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. (Psa. 2:6; Psa. 2:8.) Then indeed shall the King, the Lord's anointed, reign in righteousness; and princes shall decree justice (Isa. 32:1); and, in consequence, there shall be abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. -Psa. 72:7.

There will then be but one Kingdom (mountain or hill) in all the world --the Kingdom of God; and his Anointed will be King in all the earth in that day. (Zech. 14:9.) This hill or kingdom of the Lord is that to which the Psalmist refers when he raises the question, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place?" To ascend into the hill of the Lord is to come into his Kingdom as loyal and obedient subjects, as true citizens, worthy of all its blessings and privileges, and not as aliens and foreigners, having no part or lot in the common interests and inheritance of all the true and loyal people of God, viz., eternal life and all its blessings of righteousness, peace and everlasting joy. Who indeed shall be counted worthy thus to ascend into the mountain of the Lord? "And who shall stand in his holy place?"

The answer to both inquiries is the same--He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." These will be the required qualifications for **citizenship** in the Kingdom, when the Kingdom is established; and they are also the qualifications required now of all those who would be heirs of that coming Kingdom. The prophet does not ignore faith, but points to that character which is the legitimate consequence of a true faith exercised unto godliness. A faith which does not produce character is null and void. (Jas. 2:17.) Therefore it is plain that both the heirs and the subjects of the Kingdom of God must have that character which is both begotten and developed by the faith of the gospel; for if the faith of the gospel be held in unrighteousness there is no place in the Kingdom for any such. (Rom. 1:18.)

R. 1744

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place?

Psalm 24:3

He who has clean hands.

Psalm 24:4

That means clean actions, clean conduct. If bad habits of any kind have been cultivated, they must be promptly forsaken. The hands must not be defiled with the holding of bribes, nor with the gain of oppression, and every evil thing must be resolutely put away.

(Isa. 33:15.) It is in vain that any profess loyalty to God and to his anointed King and Kingdom while they continue in a sinful course of action. Loyalty to the Kingdom signifies determined opposition to sin in all its forms, and a firm resistance of it.

R. 1744

He who has a pure heart.

Psalm 24:4

That signifies purity of will, intention or purpose, which, like the needle to the pole, always turns toward righteousness. Though some sudden or strong temptation may for an instant, through the weakness of the flesh, draw it to the right or to the left, yet quickly it recovers its normal position which is true to righteousness and truth. A pure heart loves righteousness and truth, and hates iniquity. It loves purity, and despises all that is impure and unholy. It loves cleanliness of person, of clothing, of language and of habits. It delights only in the society of the pure, and shuns all others, knowing that "evil communications corrupt good manners."

R. 1744

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place?

Psalm 24:3

He who has not lifted up his soul to an idol.

Psalm 24:4

Pride is an abomination to the Lord and to all those who partake of his spirit. It is a weed, which, if once permitted to take root in the heart, will soon crowd out every grace. The Psalmist says, "I hate vain thoughts;" and such should be our sentiments. The grace of humility, meekness, is one of the most beautiful that can adorn the character. It takes a sober estimate of personal qualifications, is not puffed up, does not behave unbecomingly, and seeks to exercise its talents, not for pride and vain glory, but for the joy of doing good. It is modest, candid and sincere, both in consideration of its own qualifications and those of others. What comfort and pleasure are found in the society of those possessed of such a spirit.

R. 1744

He who has not sworn deceitfully.

Psalm 24:4

Those who make a solemn covenant with the Lord, and who thereafter willfully despise or ignore it, have sworn deceitfully; and surely no such disloyal subjects can be admitted either to citizenship or heirship in the Kingdom of God. But those who, in this age, have made a solemn covenant with God and who are true to their covenant, even unto death, they shall ascend into the holy place, the temple of God--they shall be the heirs of the Kingdom, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; while all such, in the age to come, shall be recognized and privileged citizens of the Kingdom. These shall receive the blessings of the Lord promised in his Word. After first receiving the imputed righteousness of Christ through faith, they may, under divine grace, be made perfect in righteousness and worthy of eternal life.

R. 1744

LORD, make me to know my end and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You. And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.
Psalm 39:4-5,7

Yes, it is always our blessed privilege to carry our sorrows and vexations to the Lord; "For he knows how to steal the bitter from life's woes." He does it, as the Psalmist suggests (vs. 4-6), by showing us, through experience, the vanity of all earthly things and their utter inability to satisfy the soul's cravings, or to comfort the wounded spirit. Then comes the thought that the present life, with its cares, vexations and sorrows is passing away, that our days are but as a handbreadth, and however vexing our experiences, they will soon be over; and if we permit them to do so they will only work out in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and develop in us strong and noble characters, disciplined to thorough self-control, thoughtful consideration, patient endurance of affliction and loving loyalty and faithfulness and trust in God. Then the assurances of the blessed rewards of righteousness in the life to come begin to have a new and deeper significance, and we are made to realize that this is not our continuing city, but we seek one to come. Thus the heart is separated from earthly things, and made to realize the superior worth of heavenly things. Nothing but the Lord himself can satisfy the longings of the soul, which, tempest-tossed and tried, comes to realize--

**"How vain is all beneath the skies,
How transient every earthly bliss,
How slender all the fondest ties,**

That bind me to a world like this!" Thus chastened and comforted, we learn to look beyond the present to the glory that shall by and by be revealed in the faithful overcomers, who, by patient continuance in well-doing in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, seek for the prize revealed to faith alone. Thus disciplined and blessed under fiery trials by going to the Lord for comfort and help, the child of God begins to realize what it means to be dead to the world and alive toward God, with a keen appreciation of his love and goodness and grace; and being thus separated from the world, and more firmly united to Christ, the language of the heart is, as the Psalmist further suggests, "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee." R. 1937

The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places. Yes, I have a good inheritance.

Psalm 16:6

It is only the faithful who are thus kept. We are not to understand that the Lord keeps any who do not themselves make the proper effort to **know** the will of God that they may **do** it; it is those who are following in the footsteps of Jesus, doing all in their power to please the Lord as they are able to discern the way wherein He would have them walk. These are today causing the voice of His praise to be heard, and grace sufficient is their portion. If the trials of faith, submission and trust shall be greater in the near future than they have yet been, these faithful ones will not fall. Their feet shall not be moved, even though a host encamp against them, and thousands fall at their side. "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." These will be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, even though they be required for a time to follow where they cannot see.

Let us therefore go forward with good courage, knowing that He who hath led us thus far will continue to lead. He who favored us first will favor us last; and "He that is on our side is greater than all they that be against us." Thanks be to God that His grace has preserved us, that He has kept us from falling, that so many of us are still of one heart and one mind to go forward unflinchingly, whatever the coming days may bring! If they shall bring hardship and persecution, pain and trial, His grace will uphold us still. If they shall bring us tests of faith and endurance, His promises will not fail. Let our entire trust be centered in God. Let us continue to rejoice in Him. "Let Him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord, which exerciseth loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord." (Jer. 9:24.)

R. 5500

O God, You are my God. Early will I seek You, my soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land.

Psalm 63:1

THE inspired Psalmist in loftiest strains of devotion and fervor puts into the hearts and minds of God's consecrated people sentiments of faith and trust and love and adoration to God, who is worthy of all praise. While many of these sentiments were based upon his own checkered experience, they were uttered under divine inspiration for the instruction and edification specially of the true spiritual Israel of God. Thus the Lord himself would indicate to us the sentiments of fervent devotion to him that should fill our hearts; and in this view of the matter we see how closely he would draw us to himself in love and faith and childlike confidence. While reason and common sense have their rightful place and are indispensable to a religious life, the soul that never mounts upon the wings of holy and fervent emotion, that is never stirred to its depths by a sense of the divine goodness and beneficence, has never yet experienced the blessedness of the relation of sonship. A true son of a beloved and approving father naturally experiences the fervor of tender emotion. Especially is this so of a true son of God who recognizes in his heavenly Father the perfection of every grace, the crowning glory of all excellence, and who lives in close communion and fellowship with him and has the constant witness in himself of his love and approval. Ah, those were no empty words of our blessed Lord Jesus when he said,--"The Father himself loveth you." R. 1914

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy.

Psalm 103:8

God's grace and mercy are to extend to the whole world of mankind--every creature for whom Christ died. The time for dealing with the world and giving them their opportunity of sharing in God's grace and mercy has already been appointed by the Father. It will be during the Millennium--the thousand years of Christ's Reign. He will be the great spiritual King of the earth; and His Church will be associated with Him as His joint-heirs and assistant rulers, teachers, healers, uplifters, rewarders and punishers of mankind during the Millennium. All this service of the world will be with a view to bestowing upon them, if they will, the grace of God, the mercy of God, which He purposed from the beginning, and which is to be brought to mankind through Messiah's Kingdom of Glory. For a thousand years the rising Sun of Righteousness will bless the world, flooding the earth with the light of the knowledge of God. Every creature will have his eyes of understanding opened to see, to know and to understand the Love of God, His tender Mercy and His Wisdom, all centered in and manifested through our Lord Jesus Christ. R. 5817

I remember the days of old, I meditate on all Your works, I muse on the work of Your hands. I spread out my hands to You. My soul longs for You like a thirsty land.

Psalm 143:5-6

We observe that in Israel the spirit of praise was cultivated by calling to mind and recounting what the Lord had done for them. "If I do not remember thee," says David, "let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."—Psa. 137:6. See also Ex. 15:1-21; Deut. 7:17-18; 8:2; 15:15; 32:7; 1 Chron. 16:12; Psa. 20:7; 63:5-7; 143:5,6; 77:10-12.

So must the Christian continually call to mind the works of the Lord, especially his own individual experience of the Lord's leading and care and deliverances from dangers and snares and the wiles of the adversary. If we keep these things in mind and meditate upon them, our appreciation of God and his goodness grows, and the spirit of love and praise takes possession of the heart, and thus we are made to rejoice in the Lord always, and in everything to give thanks. So also the soul is made to hunger and thirst after God and to realize that God alone is its satisfying portion, and to desire more and more of his fullness. Thus, as the Psalmist suggests, our prayer will be, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."—Psa. 42:1. R. 2031

Praise the LORD! I will praise the LORD with my whole heart!

Psalm 111:1

As we thus consider that, by the voice of inspiration, the whole human race is called to praise and worship and thanksgiving, we are led to consider further the relationship which the spirit of praise has to the Christian or godly character. David says, it is "comely for the upright." But why so? It is because loving gratitude is one of the divinely implanted instincts of a soul bearing the image of God, and one which should therefore be cultivated. It is this element of the intelligent creature that is designed to be responsive to the divine goodness and benevolence; and it is this element of character in man, which makes fellowship and communion with God possible. If the goodness of God could awaken in us no sense of grateful appreciation; if we were wholly dead to such sentiments, there could be no pleasure on God's part in manifesting his goodness to us, and there would be nothing in us to call out his love; and so also nothing, of all his goodness and grace, would awaken love in us. But since for the divine pleasure we are and were created (Rev. 4:11), God endowed his intelligent creature with this element of character which, being responsive to his own goodness, institutes a lively and delightful fellowship with himself, which is the chief end of human existence, both on the side of the creature and of the Creator. Psa.16:11; Pro. 11:20; Pro. 15:8. R. 2031

Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to Your name. Great deliverance He gives to His king, and shows mercy to His anointed, to David and his descendants forevermore.

Psalm 18:49-50

THIS entire chapter is one of David's songs of praise and gratitude to God for his goodness and his loving providences which had been so manifest toward him ever since his anointing by Samuel the prophet, and doubtless before that as well. It calls to mind another expression of one of his psalms-- "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright." (Psa. 33:1.) Indeed, the writings of David, and all the prophets and apostles as well, abound in fervent expressions of praise and thanksgiving to God. They not only praise the Lord themselves, lovingly and gratefully recounting all his mercies, but, with impassioned eloquence and holy enthusiasm, they call upon all the sons of men, and every thing that hath breath, and even inanimate nature, to laud and magnify his holy name. The worshippers are also bidden to bring with them to the concert of praise every musical instrument of human device; and grateful reverence exclaims-- "Blessed be his glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen!"—Psa. 33:2-3; 50:1-6; 72:19. See also Ex. 15:1-21.

It is plain, therefore, that in the cultivation of the spirit of praise, thanksgiving and loving appreciation of all the manifest goodness of God, is the Christian's secret of a happy life. And in order to the cultivation of such a spirit it is necessary that we continually call to mind his acts of mercy and of grace; that in our prayers we frequently tell him how all his goodness is remembered, how every fresh evidence of his love and care causes faith to take deeper root and makes the sense of his presence and favor more fully realized; and how through such experiences our love and joy are made to abound more and more. We love him because he first loved us; and every time we see some new mark of his love, our love, if we have truly appreciative hearts, is called out more and more, and we are made to rejoice in God, in whose presence is fullness of joy. It is to this end that our Lord encourages our frequent coming to God in prayer with large requests for his favor, saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive, **that your joy may be full.**"

—John 16:24. R. 2031

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