

Articles by Elliott VanRyn

Elliott VanRyn

All material used by permission of the author, as published on
plymouthbrethren.org.

Also online at <https://plymouthbrethren.org/author/865>

KEE Ministry Library · Faithful Men
kee-ministry-library.netlify.app

"All"

"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." -- Matthew 28:18-20.

.....

The King is speaking. The King of kings and Lord of lords. It is true that we "do not as yet see all things put under Him," but all things are under Him, and "in His times He shall shew, Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (I Tim. 6:15). He speaks of the all of His power.

He tells us the sphere of His power—heaven and earth. In the beginning, He created the heaven and the earth, and He is the final and total authority in both. They are united, because God's purpose in creation, linking them, will be ultimately realized by His redemptive work.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them..." (2 Cor. 5:19). "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:2).

Some day, all in heaven and earth will be brought into perfect conformity with the will of God, with every mark and vestige of sin removed forever. His authority will be owned even in hell, for "at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth (hell); And that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11).

We do not yet see all things put under Him. It seems, as James Russell Lowell put it, that "Right is on the scaffold, and Wrong is on the throne."

Man is proving his inability to govern himself or others. Ultimately, all his efforts at self-rule, rejecting the government of God, are doomed to fail.

It is only when the Lord Jesus comes, the One Who has the right to reign, that real peace will come to this troubled old world.

He is the only One Who can now bring peace to a troubled heart. In John 17:2, the Lord said to the Father in prayer, speaking of Himself in the third person: "Thou hast given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him."

He "made peace by the blood of His cross," and all who trust Him enjoy peace with God. Heaven and earth are thus once more united. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

"Peace with God is Christ in glory;

God is just and God is love;

Jesus died to tell the story,

Foes to bring to God above."

In verse 19 we have the "all" of His purpose. There is a "go" in the gospel—"Go and teach all nations." All nations are not going to be saved, but God is taking out of all the nations a people for His Name (Acts 15:14).

God is not willing that any should perish. He willeth not the death of any. He wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth; yet, not all men will

be saved. The Lord Jesus said to some in His day, "You will not come to Me that you might have life." He declared, "O Jerusalem...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37)

Men are saved because they accept the will of God; and men are lost because they resist God's will. Yet, in spite of the wickedness and rebellion of men, the gospel of the grace of God will triumph, for some from all nations, tribes and languages will be in heaven, having trusted Christ as Saviour and Lord. Listen to the song in heaven! Will you be there to join in this anthem of praise?

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9).

Not one will be there because of the life he lived here on earth. Our only title to glory we read in His blood.

The Lord instructed that those who believed were to be baptized. They were not saved because they were baptized, but they were baptized because they were saved. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians: "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Baptism follows believing the gospel message. It is not itself any part of the gospel.

In I Cor. 15:1-4, the apostle defines the gospel. It rests on three facts for faith: (1) Christ died for our sins; (2) He was buried; and (3) He rose again the third day,

fulfilling the Scriptures. The gospel tells us all that He did. Baptism is a figure of our response to the gospel.

"Unto Thy death baptized,
We own with Thee we died;
With Thee, our life, we're risen
And shall be glorified.
From sin, the world and Satan,
We're ransomed by Thy blood;
And here would walk as strangers,
Alive with Thee to God."

The formula for baptism is given us: "baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The triune God has a threefold interest in each believer, and this threefold cord cannot be broken.

The Father chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world! The Son loved me and gave Himself for me; I have been sealed by the Spirit of God until the day of redemption; and He now works in me both to will and to do God's good pleasure. "Oh, what a salvation this—that Christ liveth in me!"

The Lord next instructs His disciples to teach those baptized "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." He also said, "If you love me, you will keep My commandments." It's an appreciation of His love that enables the believer to obey His Word.

In verse 20 we have the "all" of His precepts. His mother, Mary, said, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." The Father opened the heavens to say, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

The Lord said, "My sheep hear My voice...and they follow Me!"

"You are My friends if you do whatsoever I command you." Obedience is the mark of reality.

"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another" (Col. 3:16).

There's one sensible question for the whole of life's journey: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

"Master, speak and make me ready

When Thy voice is truly heard;

With obedience glad and steady,

Still to follow every word."

Finally, we have the "all" of His presence (Matt. 28:20).

He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

We may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Though we may sometimes feel lonely, we are never alone. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and still walks with lonely and discouraged souls, speaking words of comfort to those who have ears to hear.

"I have Christ! What want I more?"

THOU REMAINEST

When from my life the old-time joys have vanished—

Treasures, once mine, I may no longer claim,

This truth may feed my hungry heart and famished:

Lord, Thou remainest!

Thou art still the same!

When streams have dried, those streams of glad
refreshing—

Friendships so blest, so pure, so rich, so free—

When sun-kissed skies give place to clouds depressing,
Lord, Thou remainest!

Still my heart hath Thee!

When strength hath failed, and feet, now worn and
weary, On gladsome errands may no longer go, Why
should I sigh, or let the days be dreary?

Lord, Thou remainest!

Couldst Thou more bestow?

Thus through life's days, whoe'er or what may fail me—

Friends, friendships, joys, in small or great degree,

Songs may be mine—

No sadness need assail me,

Since Thou remainest,

And my heart hath Thee!

... J. Danson Smith

A More Excellent Name

"God...Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds...Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they." -- Hebrews 1:1, 2, 4.

"...We have such an High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens...But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry..." -- Hebrews 8:1, 6.

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain..." -- Hebrews 11:4.

Christ has an inheritance in His people, those whom He has redeemed—the fruit of His work at Calvary.

The divine announcement to Joseph, before His birth in Bethlehem, declared: "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

There was none other good enough in earth or heaven to pay the price. God sent His Son into the world on a mission of mercy: "not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).

The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. His Name means Saviour; and when He hung on the cross, He knew that the mission on which He was sent had been accomplished. John 19:28 states: "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." And He said, "I thirst," to quench His parched throat for His

triumphant shout: "IT IS FINISHED!" Not, "I am finished," but all that was necessary for our salvation was done.

He has been given a Name above every name, a more excellent Name than any angel—the Name of Saviour.

"No angel could our place have taken,

Highest of the high though He;

The loved One, on the Cross forsaken,

Was One of the God-head

Three!

Who saved us from eternal loss?

Who but God's Son upon the Cross?

What did

He do? He died for you!

Where is He now? Believe it thou,

In heaven interceding!"

He came to do the Father's will, "for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Because He was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, "God hath also highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow...and...every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

"There is no Name so sweet on earth,

No Name so sweet in heaven;
The Name, before His lowly birth,
To Christ the Saviour given.
We love to sing around our King,
And hail Him, blessed Jesus;
For there's no word ear ever heard,
So dear, so sweet as Jesus."

The "more excellent Name" is Jesus—Saviour. God has highly exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour.

"Jesus, Saviour, we adore Thee;
Christ of God ascended high;
Heart and soul we bow before Thee,
Glorious now beyond the sky.
Thee we worship, Thee we praise!
Excellent in all Thy ways!"

He not only has been given, by God, a more excellent Name than the angels, but to Him alone the Father has said, "Thou art My Son!" Twice, while He was on earth, God opened the heavens to declare, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." He said of His Son alone, "Let all the angels of God worship Him...Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Hebrews 1:6, 8).

He has been given a more excellent service (ministry) than any high priest ever had on earth. All priests' service was only temporary, and they served on earth; but Christ's priesthood is heavenly and eternal. The Old Testament priests were not permitted to continue

because they died, but the Lord Jesus lives in the power of an endless life.

"But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:24-25).

"The atoning work is done,
The victim's blood is shed;
And Jesus now is gone,
His people's cause to plead.
He sits in heaven, their Great High Priest,
And bears their names upon His breast.
And though a while He be
Hid from the eyes of men,
His people look to see
Their Great High Priest again;
In brightest glory He will come
To take His waiting people Home."

We are invited to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. He is able to succour, and He is able to save.

Abel's sacrifice was a more excellent sacrifice than Cain's. Cain brought of the fruit of his own labors to God, and was rejected; but Abel brought the life of

another given up. God has decreed that "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

The Bible teaches plainly that it is not the life we live, but the death Christ died that fits a soul for heaven.

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

The blood of Christ "speaks better things than that of Abel." The sacrifice Abel brought, and all the sacrifices ever offered on Jewish altars, could never put away a single sin: "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this Man (Christ Jesus), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:11-12).

He rested in His finished work, and so can we.

"His precious blood has spoken there,

Before and on the throne;

And His own wounds in heaven declare

The atoning work is done.

'Tis finished!— here our souls can rest;

His work can never fail;

By

Him, our Sacrifice and Priest,

We enter through the veil."

Praise God, He has a more excellent Name—SAVIOUR (Jesus)! All who acknowledge Him as such lift up His Name. Let us exalt His Name together!

Praise God, He has a more excellent service—as our
Great High Priest at the Father's right hand in heaven.
He ministers to us in our weakness.

"Here below, in weakness,
We onward speed our way;
In sorrow oft and sickness,
We scarcely dare to pray."

Praise God, He made the more excellent sacrifice.
Nothing more remains to be done. "By one offering He
hath perfected for ever them that are
sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

"Sweetest rest and peace have filled me,
Sweeter praise than tongue can tell;
God is satisfied with Jesus;
I am satisfied as well!"

THE LORD'S WAY

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith and love and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.
'Twas He Who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.
I hoped that in some favor'd hour
At once He'd answer my request;

And, by His love's constraining power,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.
Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.
Yea, more, with His own hand He seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Cross'd all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds, and laid them low.
"Lord, why is this?" I trembling cried:
"Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?"
"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for grace and faith.
"These inward trials I employ,
From self and pride to set thee free
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou mayst seek thy all in Me."

Affliction and Learning

"Before I was afflicted I went astray..." Psalm 119:67

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes." Ps. 119:71 "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." Phil. 1:12 -----

Sometimes we have to go backwards in order to better go forward. Life's reverses—its setbacks—are often our biggest helps in advancing. We have to retreat in order to go ahead. We have to put it in reverse to go ahead afterwards.

We have a great problem in distinguishing between friend and foe, for some of our setbacks prove to be our greatest friends. Jacob was a better man for the Lord when his thigh was thrown out of joint and he learned to lean more heavily on the Lord.

It is the tests of faith that the Lord uses to strengthen us and to prove that His grace is sufficient and that His strength is made perfect in weakness. Our "enemies" turn out to be "friends" in disguise.

Job said, "When I am tried (tested), I shall come forth as gold."

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,

My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;

The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design

Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine."

Sometimes the Lord gives us some "cross" to bear to prevent greater problems that might beset us. The apostle Paul declares that the Lord graciously permitted Paul's thorn in the flesh as a pride preventive: "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelation, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Cor. 12:7).

Even the enmity of Satan could only serve as an aid to Paul in overcoming pride over his being caught up to the third heaven.

The Lord Jesus Himself expressly warned Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

Peter had no conception of the danger he was in, trusting in his own strength, but the Lord was praying for him, as He prays for each of His own.

In John 17, He said of the twelve, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word" (John 17:20). Praise God, "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

"Who saved us from eternal loss? Who but God's Son upon the Cross? What did He do? He died for you! Where is He now? Believe it thou! In heaven, interceding!"

"It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again,
Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh
intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34).

Peter would fail. His courage failed, for he was trusting
in his faithfulness, but not in the Lord's faithfulness.
There was no doubt that the Lord would bring him
through this trial where he learned two things: (1) His
utter weakness and (2) the Lord's strength. Three times
Peter denied the Lord, but the Lord's faithfulness to him
brought him through. He said, "When thou passest
through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the
rivers, they shall not overflow thee..." (Isa. 43:2).

He abides faithful. He cannot deny Himself, and every
believer is a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His
bones. We, by God's grace, are "bound up in one bundle
of life with the Lord our God."

The Lord did not say to Peter, "If thou art converted" (He
was not speaking of his soul's salvation, for Peter was
already a believer), but "when thou art converted."
There was no question that the Lord was going to bring
Peter safely through this experience. It was only a
question of when and how.

"When I fear my faith will fail,
Christ will hold me fast;
When the tempter would prevail,
He can hold me fast.
I could never keep my hold,
He will hold me fast;
For my love is often cold,

He must hold me fast.

He will hold me fast, for my Saviour loves me so,

He will hold me fast."

Many of our greatest gains have come through our losses. Many have come to Christ as a direct result of the loss of health or wealth, or family members or friends. Many can say with the Psalmist, "It was good for me that I was afflicted; before I was afflicted, I went astray."

The greatest setback that our Lord knew on earth was the desertion by His own apostles and the hatred of men whom He had come to save. His sufferings won our hearts to Him and created a desire in us to live for Him.

"That Man of Calvary

Has won my heart from me,

And died to set me free;

Blest Man of Calvary!"

In 2 Cor. 11, Paul recounts all that he had gladly suffered for Christ. He glories in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest on him.

The history of the Christian church shows that the Lord used the very weakest to effect His greatest triumphs. It is all too easy to lean upon an arm of flesh, but I can only do all things through Christ. Who can possibly estimate what past, present and future blessing has come to God's people through sickness, sorrow, and imprisonments? The lives of Paul, Martin Luther and John Bunyan attest to this.

"Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill,

He treasures up His bright designs

And works

His sovereign will."

Time would fail to tell of the blindness of a Fanny Crosby and the physical infirmities of others that God has turned to good account.

It is very highly probable that we will, in a future day, thank the Lord more for the hindrances of life than the "good" things. "Blest is the sorrow and kind the storm that drives us nearer Him (Home)." We need to remember, when we're "on the shelf," that God, like ourselves, uses things He puts on the shelf for His honor and glory.

Some glad day, in clearer light, we'll bless the hand that guided, and bless the heart that planned, as we make the happy discovery that He had indeed worked all things together for good in our lives. He had used the circumstances to get rid of the chaff and to retain the wheat. The worthwhile replaced the worthless. We can ever trust Him to do in us, for us, and through us, "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think."

Our times are in His hand, and we should heed His Word: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5-6). "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

ALL THOSE THINGS

In a factory building there are wheels and gearings,

There are cranks and pulleys,
Beltings tight or slack;
Some are thrusting forward,
Some are pulling back.
Some are smooth and silent,
Some are rough and noisy,
Pounding, rattling, clanking,
Moving with a jerk;
In a wild confusion, in a seeming chaos,
Lifting, pushing, driving,
But they do their work.
From the mightiest lever to the tiniest pinion,
All things move together for the purpose planned;
And behind the working is a Mind controlling,
And a force directing, and a guiding hand.
So all things are working for the Lord's beloved;
Some things might be hurtful if alone they stood;
Some might seem to hinder;
Some might draw us backward;
But they work together,
And they work for good.
All the thwarted longings, all the stern denials,
All the contradictions, hard to understand.
And the force that holds them,

Speeds them and retards them,
Stops and starts and guides them,
In our Father's hand.
... Annie Johnson Flint

Choosing, Chewing, and Feeding on the Word of God

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." -- Psalm 103:1-5.

This is a beautiful soliloquy of David's. Sometimes when men speak to themselves, they say very unwise things.

The rich farmer in the parable of Luke 12:16-21 said: "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

He prepared for a future he didn't have, and did not prepare for a future he did have. Time had run out for him.

David, however, did not bless himself, but he blessed the Lord. He did not speak of what he had, but Who he had.

The rich farmer of Luke 12 mistook his soul for his body. He spoke of his creature comforts, but forgot his soul altogether.

David begins and ends this Psalm on the same note: "Bless the Lord, O my soul." He appealed to his soul for no half-hearted devotion to the Lord, but "all that is within me, bless His holy Name."

"No half-way measures does His grace provide," and we should not be content with a half-hearted response to Him and "His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins."

"Bless His holy Name." Our Saviour has been given a Name which is above every name. No name can compare with His Name among the sons of men, for "there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The Psalmist addresses himself: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." In this, he does not ask the impossible. He does not ask that he remember all His benefits. "Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered" (Psalm 40:5).

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,

My rising soul surveys;

Transported with the view, I'm lost

In wonder, love and praise.

Ten thousand, thousand precious gifts

My daily thanks employ;

Nor is the least a thankful heart,

That tastes God's gifts with joy."

We cannot remember all His benefits, for He daily loads us with them, but let us not forget them.

John Newton had this text hung on the wall of his study: "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee" (Deut. 24:18). He did not want to forget, nor should we.

"Oh, that we never might forget

What

Christ has suffered for our sakes,

To save our souls and make us meet

Of all His glory to partake!"

The Psalmist speaks of five primary blessings that he received from his Redeemer. Notice that they are all stated in the present tense, for they are present and perpetual realities for every child of God:

(1) "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." His grace is greater than all our sins. The Lord Jesus prayed on the Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That prayer is effective for both past and present guilt.

"Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood will never lose its power Till every ransomed saint of God be saved to sin no more."

The believer in Jesus is fully covered, for "through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).

(2) "Who healeth all thy diseases." I heard an esteemed brother in Christ say: "I most certainly believe in Divine healing. I believe that the Lord heals from every sickness except the last (death)."

However, the Scripture shows that death itself is a servant in God's employ that delivers from every possible disease. When death calls believers from this world, they are forever beyond any and every disease encountered here, for "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. To depart and to be with Christ is far better." We are then forever beyond sickness, sighing, stress, suffering, sin, etc., and only grace and glory are ahead.

(3) "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction (from being a waste)." A life lived for self is a waste. Judas considered Mary's sacrificial gift to Christ—that alabaster box of very precious ointment—a waste; but the Lord called him the son of perdition (waste), and said: "It were good for this man that he had never been born." He had missed the meaning of his very existence.

(4) "Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." Truly, the Lord is good, and doeth good for His people. Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him. David testified of the Lord: "Thy gentleness has made me great."

It is the Lord's tender, loving care that crowns each day, each year with His goodness. "'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home," is the language of the Lord's redeemed people.

(5) "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." He satisfies the longing soul. He is the living Bread that came down from heaven so that men might live forever. He declares: "I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

It is not enough to admire the Bread of Life; we must eat to live. The Lord Jesus said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Jeremiah testified: "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and they were unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15:16).

For food to satisfy, you must make it your own, by choosing it, and by chewing it. As we feed on the Word of God, we are kept perpetually young, for "though the outward man perisheth, the inward man is being renewed day by day." By feeding on Him, our youth is renewed like the eagle's; and we will mount up and up to enjoy sweet communion with our Lord in the heavenlies.

"Thither by faith we upward soar,
And time and sense seem all no more;
Fresh strength to run our pilgrim race,
We gather from His throne of grace."

PRAISE TO JESUS

Jesus, the sinner's Saviour,
Jesus, the saved one's friend,
Jesus, whose mighty favour
Shall keep us to the end:
Jesus, High Priest in heaven,
He bears us on His heart;
By God to Jesus given,—
Who us from Him shall part?
Jesus, our faithful Shepherd,

He watches o'er His sheep;
From lion, and from leopard,
His own He safe will keep:
How tenderly He careth!
How well He knows our names,
And in His bosom beareth
The weakest of His lambs!
We hear the Bridegroom telling,
"Behold, I quickly come!"
O joy! All thought excelling,
He'll take us to His home!
To see His face all-glorious,
To hear His long-loved voice:
By Him o'er all victorious,
Oh, how should we rejoice!
All praise to Thee, our Saviour!
We glory in Thy Name;
Our boast is in Thy favour,
Our songs Thy worth proclaim:
E'en in this vale of sorrow,
We'll sing, as on we roam;
But, oh, the glad tomorrow!
We'll be with Thee at home!

... James G. Deck

Do All to the Glory of God

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." -- I Cor. 10:31.

It is not simply what we do that concerns the Lord, but why we do it. The single overriding consideration in every detail of our lives—even the simplest, like eating and drinking—should be done to glorify the Lord. It is impressive to learn that, even in these simple, necessary and mundane things of life, we can glorify Him by receiving, thankfully, His provision for us, whether great or small.

Since gold, in Scripture, is symbolic often of the glory of God, it is interesting to notice that the first of the three gifts the wise men brought was gold. The primary focus of the Lord Jesus' life on earth was the glory of God. At the close of His earthly service, He said to the Father in prayer: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4).

In I Cor. 3, when the apostle speaks of that which is built on the Lord Jesus Christ, he notes that the wood, hay and stubble will not stand the test of His judgment. However, the gold, silver and precious stones will abide!

The gold is that which is done to the glory of God. The silver (symbol of redemption) represents that which is done for the salvation of sinners. The precious stones refer to that which is done to build up the people of God (living stones) in their most holy faith.

We read that Solomon built the temple of great and costly stones. In I Peter 2:4-9 the apostle reminds us

that there is only one foundation for faith: the Lord Jesus, "To Whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as living stones are built up a spiritual house..."

Paul writes, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

"On Christ salvation rests secure;

The Rock of Ages must endure;

Nor can that faith be overthrown

Which rests upon the Living Stone."

We can seek the glory of God in prayer, praise and worship, for He said, "Whoso offers praise glorifies Me."

We can seek His glory in the salvation of sinners, and we can seek His glory in His saints.

It should be our supreme desire that He might be glorified in all things. Since all that we are and have has come to us from the Lord, Who gives to all life, and breath, and all things, our constant aim should not be to seek great things for ourselves, but great things for Him. Four times we read that "Jonathan loved David as his own soul." It was his love that caused him to lay everything at the feet of David: "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle" (I Samuel 18:4).

David's great victory over Goliath endeared him to Jonathan. David's far greater Son won a great victory at Calvary over sin, death, hell and the grave. He won the battle for all His people.

"That Man of Calvary
Has won my heart from me,
And died to set me free—
Blest Man of Calvary!"

Jeremiah warns us not to boast in the only three things man can boast in—what he knows (or thinks he knows), what he does, and what he has. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 9:23-24). (Notice in this verse that He reverses them in the order of their importance.)

The Lord would appeal to all men everywhere to boast in Him.

The Lord exercises lovingkindness—in this we see His riches. How the Word of God delights to tell us of the riches of His grace and the riches of His mercy! II Cor. 8:9 tells us that He became poor at Calvary to enrich us eternally. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

"Great God of wonders! All Thy ways
Are matchless, God-like and Divine;
But the bright glories of Thy grace
Above Thine other wonders shine.
Who is a pardoning God like

Thee?

Or who has grace so rich and free?"

"He delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18), for "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:7).

The Lord exercises judgment. Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne. He knows both the actions and the hearts of all in His domain. All His actions are based upon His infinite wisdom. (Men's decisions are often based on inadequate information.) He knows the end from the beginning. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13); or, as the Apostle Peter put it, "Lord, Thou knowest all things."

The Lord exercises righteousness in the earth. In human government, in spite of what they say, often it is "MIGHT makes RIGHT." In the economy of God, it is RIGHT that makes MIGHT.

"What now baffles us finds its solution

On higher planes of life, in clearer light—

That all things make their costly contribution

To serve the purposes of good and right."

(Max Reich)

Scripture singles out three men, among many, who sought their own glory in wisdom, power and riches: (1) Herod (Acts 12:21-23) — His speech was said to be "the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the Angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory..." He was not smitten because of what the people did, but because of what he failed to do.

(2) Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:30-31) — "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built...by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee!"

(3) The Rich Man of Luke 12 (verses 19-20) — He said, "I will say to my soul...thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said...Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be...?" How foolish it is for men to boast of anything that they have, for all, without exception, has come to us from God—our intelligence, our health, our opportunities. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" (I Cor. 4:7). What we sing is far truer than we may honestly acknowledge: "Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow!"

All of us are prone to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, but none of us can think more highly of the Lord than we ought to think. As the Psalmist (34:2), we should say, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord." We should be like the Apostle Paul, who wrote, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14).

Let us, like Paul, glory in our infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us, for His grace is sufficient for all the way to the glory He has prepared for all His own to share. "The Lord will give grace and glory" (Ps. 84:11), for "the God of all grace hath called us to His

eternal glory," where He will be glorified in all His saints.

"Oh, that will be glory for Thee;

When by His grace I shall look on His face,

That will be glory for Thee!"

Perhaps today! "...Abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." -- I John 2:28 THAT I MAY KNOW HIM O for a deeper knowledge of Thy ways!

More heart-to-heart communing, Lord, with Thee;

Like Mary would I hear Thy words, and gaze

Upon Thy face, Thy glory there to see;

Bask in the sunlight of the realms above,

And learn the depth and height of Thine exhaustless love.

Anoint mine eyes Thy lowly path to trace,

Thou Blessed One, from childhood to the cross.

Thou wast made poor, that we, enriched by grace,

Might count our former gain but dung and dross.

No place earth found Thee where to lay Thy head,

Yet for earth's guilty ones Thy precious blood was shed.

Let Thy dear service be our heart's delight;

On Thee be spent our spikenard-casket choice;

Renew our strength throughout the weary fight,

Nor let earth's tumult drown Thy gracious voice.

Faithful to Thee whilst Thou art still away,

Oh, let us watch to hail the first glad streak of day.
Yes, precious Lord, the moment draweth near,
When we no more in stranger-guise shall roam;
Caught up to meet Thee—past the desert drear—
The twinkling of an eye shall take us home.
Let us meanwhile in patience pass along,
Sure of the crown, the palm, the victor's triumph-song!
... Hannah K. Burlingham

Fear Not

"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." -- Genesis 15:1 It is said that there are 366 "fear not"s in the Bible—one for every day in the year, including Leap Year.

How often, in the experiences of life, are we beset with fears of one kind or another: fear of illness, of heights, of the darkness, of the future, of loss of employment, of flying, of death, and many more besides. Many of our fears are called irrational fears, but who would deny that they are very much a part of our lives?

Our text is the first recorded "Fear not" of the Bible. When Abram had every reason to fear the wrath of the king of Sodom because he had spurned his gifts, the Lord spoke this comforting word to him: "Fear not: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." "I am your protector and provider." When a man has God for his protector and provider, he needs no other.

Even Satan himself is keenly aware of God's protection and provision. The Lord said to Satan: "Hast thou considered My servant Job...one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" Satan answered: "Does Job fear God for nought? Hast Thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he has on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land."

Satan said, in effect, "No wonder Job serves You. You have been his protector and provider." Even Satan cannot deny that the Lord protects and provides for His people: "Yea, happy is that people whose God is the

Lord." He provides and protects His people presently and eternally. "There is no trial taken you, but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tested above that you are able, but will, with the trial, make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,

My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply.

The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design

Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

Fear not, I am with thee;

Oh, be not dismayed,

For I am thy God; I will still give thee aid.

I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand."

When Daniel was on the menu for hungry lions, he prayed and praised God three times daily, as he did aforetime. God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths. They decided that eating Daniel was a "non-prophet" venture.

When the three Hebrew children were thrown into the burning fiery furnace, they were preserved by one "like unto the Son of God," Who was with them in the trial. His Word is sure: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee...when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned" (Isa. 43:2). There wasn't even the smell of fire upon them.

Peter began to sink beneath the waves when he saw the wind boisterous, but cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately, Jesus stretched out His hand to protect Peter from sinking and to provide the strength to stand with His support.

There are three appeals in Psalm 115:9-11: (1) "Israel, trust thou in the Lord;" (2) "House of Aaron, trust in the Lord;" and (3) "Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord." After each appeal, there is an affirmation concerning each: "He is their help and their shield." Praise His Name, He is the provider and protector of His people.

He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6).

In Psalm 115:12-15, to the three affirmations are added three promises: "The Lord hath been mindful of us: He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great. The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children. Ye are blessed of the Lord which made heaven and earth."

In Psalm 121:2, the Psalmist declares: "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." The Lord is my provider, and the greatest problem I have is simple to Him Who made heaven and earth, for my needs and more He will provide. "He giveth to all life and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25). "He giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (I Tim. 6:17).

Praise God, as the Lord said through the lips of the prodigal son: "In my Father's house, there is bread enough, and to spare."

He is also my protector. He neither slumbers nor sleeps--"ever watchful is His care." "The Lord is thy

keeper...The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. He shall preserve thy soul." Not one sheep of His will ever be lost. He is carrying His own on His strong shoulders all the way Home. "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Psalm 121:8).

The Good Shepherd of the sheep knows how to take care of His own. He promises eternal security to each one. "I give unto them eternal life (what a provision!), and they shall never perish (what protection!), neither shall any man (or devil) pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28). He says, "I am the Good Shepherd, Who gives His life for the sheep." That's what He is doing today for you, and because He lives, "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7:25).

He says, "I am the Good Shepherd. I know My sheep, and am known of Mine." What assurance there is in that! "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (II Tim. 2:19).

Yes, the Lord preserves my going out and my coming in, for He says, "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9).

He has pasture for His sheep when they go in to worship through Him, and when they go out to witness for Him.

The Lord has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and a sound mind. He certainly does not want His children beset by fears, for our times are in His hands. We should, therefore, "bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in our mouths: (Ps. 34:1).

He is in control, no matter how things may appear to us. Ultimately, we will see that all His ways are perfect (Ps. 18:30). By faith, we put our trust in the Lord and believe that He, Who works all things according to the counsel of His own will, is working all things together for the good of those who love Him. No one can ever thwart His purpose of blessing His own and ultimately conforming all to His blest likeness. "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth; Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up" (Psalm 94:17-18).

"We comprehend Him not,

Yet earth and heaven tell

God sits as

Sovereign on the Throne,

And doeth all things well."

MY PRESENCE (Ex. 33:14)

Our hearts would ask a Programme—

An outline sent from Heaven—

But no such chart is granted—

A life-map is not given;

Instead, there comes a Promise—

A promise for each day—

"My Presence shall go with thee—

My presence all the way."

Our human hearts might urge us

For Person meet to ask;

Some kindred soul to join us,
In life's stupendous task;
This, too, may be ungranted—
Perchance that we might know
The greatness of His Presence,
While toiling here below.
Provision and Protection we rightly seem to crave;
Were we of these quite certain,
We think we could be brave;
But, greater than these portions
Can this Word come to be—
"My Presence shall go with thee—
My Presence! Mine! With thee!"
Oh, give us ears to listen!
Oh, give us hearts to long
To hear Thy wondrous promise!
To heed it, and be strong!
To know Thy constant Presence—
And all its promised rest;
To know it as sufficient—
And knowing it—be blest.

Forever With the Lord

"Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."... John 11:25-26.

When we come to the end of another year, it does not mark the end of our lives. Even death itself, whenever it comes, cannot mark the end of a believer's life. Christians may, and do, go to "sleep" here in any given year, but this is not the end. Death is only another milestone in life.

Death is very real. The loved one who knows Christ (husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, or friend) is moved through death to another location of life, for "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."

When the Lord told His disciples, "Let us pass over to the other side," there was never any question that they would make it there. True, there arose a great storm of wind. True, the Lord was at the stern of the ship, fast asleep on a pillow. True, they asked, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" But He showed them that He did care, for He arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still."

"Oh, yes, He cares! I know He cares;

His heart is touched with my grief.

When the days grow weary, and the long nights dreary,
I know my Saviour cares!"

"No water can swallow the ship where lies the Master of ocean and earth and skies!" He has given His unchanging word that not one of His own will ever perish (John 10:27-28). He will bring each one safely to the other side. He has not promised anyone a smooth trip, but He has promised every one of His own a sure trip.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life." He has defeated death. He declared triumphantly: "Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:17-18).

"He rose, a victor o'er the grave;

He lives eternally to save;

He lives to bring me to the sky,

And I shall see Him bye and bye."

He is now on the other side of death. He lives in the power of an endless life. "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

He told Martha (and us): "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." He did not say, "yet shall he live again," but "yet shall he live."

When the believer dies, he does not cease to be, but lives on, beyond death, in the presence of the Lord. True, his body goes to the grave and to corruption, but his body is not him. His spirit goes to be with the Lord.

D. L. Moody declared: "Some day you will read in the newspapers that D. L. Moody is dead. Don't believe it! I will never be more alive than the moment after I die."

The apostle Paul affirmed that "to depart and to be with Christ is FAR BETTER" (Phil. 1:23).

There are only two classes of believers in the world: those who pass through the portals of death, and those who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord. This is the grand event which they both await. The Christian is never told to look for death, but for the coming again of the Lord Jesus to claim His church, composed of all true believers in Him, whom He purchased with His own blood.

In John 11:25 we read of both of these: (1) "He that believeth in Me, though he has died, yet shall he live." At death, he goes to be with Christ, forever beyond the reach of death, disease, despair, discouragement, disappointment and doom; and (2) "...whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Those living when Christ returns will never pass through death at all.

Millions of believers are now at Home with the Lord, rejoicing in His presence. Their bodies wait for the Lord's second coming. When He returns to the skies, He will raise those who have "fallen asleep" in Jesus, in bodies like unto His own body of glory. "The dead in Christ will be raised first;" then the living saints will all be changed, in a moment; and finally, they both will be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.

"Changed in a moment, like Him to be! Oh, what a daybreak that morn will be!" "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body..." (Phil. 3:20-21). "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but

we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2).

Almost 2,000 years ago, God gave His greatest gift—the Gift of His Son. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The countless millions who have received this Gift of all gifts will never get over the wonder of it all—that the Creator condescended to become the Redeemer of sinful man!

Who knows? The end of this year may bring that glorious new beginning which has no end. We await, with glad anticipation, that day of all days, that reunion which will last forever, when we meet to part no more! In view of that glad day, may we be like those Thessalonian believers who "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven."

"And though there intervene,
Rough seas and stormy skies;
Though by no mortal vision seen,
His glory fills our eyes.
There shall all clouds depart;
The wilderness shall cease;
And sweetly shall each gladdened heart
Enjoy eternal peace."

Because of that blessed hope, we can shout with the apostle Paul: "Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (I Cor. 15:57).

Sure of heaven, we can now heed the call to get to work on earth: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58).

"Let us, then, be true and faithful;

Trusting, serving every day;

Just one glimpse of Him in glory

Will the toils of life repay."

"Forever with the Lord! Amen, so let it be! Life from the dead is in that word. 'Tis immortality. Here in the body pent, absent from Him, I roam. Yet nightly pitch my moving tent, a day's march nearer home!"

SATISFIED

"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."

Psalm 17:15 In hope we lift our wishful, longing eyes,
Waiting to see the Morning-Star arise;

How bright, how glorious will His advent be,

The unclouded Sun in all its majesty!

How shall our eyes to see His face delight,

Whose love has cheered us through the darksome night;

How shall our ears drink in His well-known voice,

Whose faintest whispers make our soul rejoice!

No stain within; no foes or snares around;

No jarring notes shall there discordant sound;

All pure without, all pure within the breast;

No thorns to wound, no toil to mar our rest!

If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus' love
Lift our poor hearts this weary world above;
If even here the taste of heavenly springs
So cheers the spirit, that the pilgrim sings:
What will the sunshine of His glory prove?
What, the unmingled fulness of His love?
What hallelujahs will His presence raise!
What but one loud eternal burst of praise!
... James G. Deck

He Died For Me

"And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand, and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!" -- Matthew 27:29 They "took the reed and smote Him on the head." What vile treatment for the King of kings and Lord of lords! For the first time, en route to the cross, blood flowed--from His head. "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe." James G. Deck writes poetically and truly that "He looks so lovely wearing His crown of thorns;" yet a new glory adorns His brow. He's the King! All wisdom is His.

Because He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, "God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a Name which is above every name; that, at the Name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Oh, "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:19-23).

That head once filled with bruises is Head over all. True, we "do not yet see all things put under Him; but we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honor--He, "Who, by the power of God, tasted death for every man."

That blood that flowed from His head is the evidence of the purchase price and His right to the title "King of kings and Lord of lords," and for us there to read our title to Glory through His blood.

Mark tells us that His hands were nailed to the cross--those hands that served God and man. "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life, a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

We might ask, "What could He possibly do, nailed helplessly to the cross?" Praise God, the weakness of God is stronger than men. He was crucified in weakness, but, there nailed, "He took that which was against us out of the way, nailing it to His cross." "He came, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him." He prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done." His finest, perfect work was done at Calvary.

Three days later, two disciples saw Him as, invited into their home as a guest, He became the Host at their table. "He broke the bread and gave thanks for it." He was made known to them in breaking of bread. Still He does the same today, as two or three meet in His Name to remember Him in the breaking of bread and drinking of the cup.

His outstretched, nail-pierced hands, blood trickling down, present the clear evidence of His purchase price. He is still not only our King, but the faithful Servant of His people.

But, what about those feet of His? Luke, who writes of our Lord as the ideal Man--God and Man in one blessed Person--focuses on His feet--the way He walked here among men. At the close of that book, we see the Saviour doing what He still does in resurrection. He, on the resurrection morning, drew near and walked with the discouraged disciples.

Those feet had been pierced at Calvary. In virtue of His life's perfect walk--holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners--He had every right to go back to heaven, as a Man. But, ah, He said, "I could go alone, but I will not go out free." "Jesus, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John 13:1).

"When the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face as a flint to go to Jerusalem." He prayed, "Father, what shall I say? Save Me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour." Those feet would not stop short of Calvary. Those bloodied, nail-pierced feet tell the story--He went all the way to Calvary for you and me.

Finally, the blood of Christ flowed after His death. While the soldiers broke the bones of the two thieves on the crosses next to Christ, they did not break His bones, because they saw that He was dead already. But one of them took a spear and thrust it into the heart of Christ--a heart that could only love. His side--He's God--His love passes knowledge. From that dead body, "the blood flowed forth to save," for "without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin" (Heb. 9:22).

The blood didn't flow to show that He was dead (the soldiers had already determined that), but to show us

WHO died. Blood does not flow from dead bodies. When the heart's action stops, blood stops.

John writes to tell us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And, believing, you might have His Name. Of the four gospel writers, only John gives us a view of Christ's heart Five times over (though never referring to himself by name), John speaks of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." This is the right of every blood-bought child of God, for each can say with gratitude, "the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me!" (Gal. 2:20).

Was it for me, for me alone

The Saviour left His glorious throne,

The dazzling splendors of the sky,

Was it for me He came to die?

Was it for me He wept and prayed,

My load of sin before Him laid;

That night within Gethsemane,

Was it for me, that agony?

Was it for me He bowed His head

Upon the cross, and freely shed

His precious blood--that crimson tide,

Was it for me the Saviour died?

It was for me, yes, all for me;

O love of God, so great, so free;

O wondrous love, I'll shout and sing:

He died for me, my Lord and King!

Isaac and Jacob

"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." -- Hebrews 11:20-21
These two verses detail the actions of two dying men—a father and son. Before Esau and Jacob were born, while still in their mother's womb, she was told that "the elder shall serve the younger."

Insofar as God is concerned, there are only two men, and these are typified in Jacob and Esau. Notice that, in our verse, the older son, Esau, is mentioned last, and Jacob, the younger son, is mentioned first.

We read in the New Testament: "The first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." It is not in the first man, but the second, that God's blessing is found. We read that "in Adam, all die, but all in Christ shall be made alive."

In a sense, these two boys—Esau and Jacob—picture one person. When a person receives new life in Christ, he is really two persons. He has his own fleshly nature that he received through Adam, and he has a new life and nature received through Christ.

These two natures war against each other, and it is God's purpose that the old nature should be subject to the new nature from the moment we were born into the family of God.

"When once my all I ventured

On Christ and His atoning blood,

God's Holy Spirit entered

And I was born of God."

Here Jacob remembered the word of God to his mother that the elder shall serve the younger, and he coveted the blessing that God had foretold. We read in Genesis 48 the account of Joseph's bringing his two sons to dying Jacob for his blessing. We are expressly told that Jacob's eyes were dim—he was virtually blind.

Joseph presented his sons so that Jacob's right hand—the hand of preeminent blessing—would be placed on Manasseh's head—the older of the two. However, wily Jacob, who had deceived his old father, was not to be so thwarted by his beloved son, Joseph. We read that he guided his hands "wittingly" by crossing them, placing his right hand on the head of Ephraim, the younger son.

Our text says, "By faith Jacob blessed both the sons of Joseph." It is the Cross that sets aside the man after the flesh and gives Christ—the second Man, the Lord from heaven—the place of preeminence He rightly deserves.

Manasseh's name means "forgetfulness," and

Ephraim's name means "fruitfulness." There's nothing for God in the old man, but all in the new man. In Christ, every believer has been "created unto good works (not by them), which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

"They that are in the flesh cannot please God." The purpose of the Cross is to get rid of me, so that Christ might have His proper place—the elder shall serve the younger—a divine principle.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in

the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

Our old man has been crucified with Christ. He died for my sins—to get rid of my sins—the fruit of my sinful life; but He was crucified to get rid of me, for we read: "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."

By his parable in action, Jacob shows us that the old man is set aside so that the new man (Christ) might be seen in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

It is then that Jacob "worshipped." Philippians 3:3 tells us that believers "worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Jacob worshipped, "leaning upon the top of his staff." The believer puts no confidence in the flesh, but complete confidence in the Lord, even as we are exhorted: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding."

"Leaning on Jesus, safe and secure from all alarms." His Word of truth, which shall never pass away, is the full resource of every believing child of God.

"By faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones." Genesis 50:22-26 relates the story of this verse. Joseph twice reminded his brothers, "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." He made his brothers take an oath that, when they left for the promised land, they would carry his bones with them.

The Bible later recorded that they were faithful to that promise and buried Joseph's bones in the land God promised them.

It could have been a short journey, but forty years elapsed before Israel entered the land. As they carried Joseph's bones in that coffin all during the wilderness journey, we can well imagine some of the children asking their parents, "What's in that coffin?"

They would be told, "These are the bones of our saviour. He's the one that we hated and sold into Egypt. Joseph told us that we meant it for evil, but God meant it for good and sent him before us to preserve us alive."

In a similar situation, on the very day our Lord was crucified, He ate the Passover with His disciples in the upper room. There He took a loaf of bread into His hands, gave thanks and broke it, saying, "This is My body, which is given for you." Likewise, He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:19-20).

We who know the Lord, like the Israelites, are on a journey from a world under the judgment of God to our promised land above.

Joseph's bones still lie buried in Israel; but our Saviour went through death, arose, and now lives in the power of an endless life—the guarantee that, because He lives, we shall live, also. We constantly need to be reminded that all God's blessings are contingent on Christ's death and resurrection. All along our earthly journey, He has furnished the memorial of His death. There is a time limit for these emblems. "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth (preach) the Lord's death till He come."

As long as we are here, we need these emblems; but
when we get to our heavenly home, we will have Him,
instead of the emblems of His death.

"Our souls look back to see
The burden Thou didst bear
When hanging on the accursed tree,
For all our guilt was there."

We look backward to our Lord's death; we look upward
to see Him on the Throne—"God hath made this same
Jesus both Lord and Christ;" and we look onward "till He
come!"

"The day of all days is coming at last;
The day of all days when sorrows are past;
The day of all days, when we, by His grace
Shall see, with delight, His wonderful face!"

REJOICING IN HOPE

O Lord! 'Tis but a little while,
The desert will be o'er;
And I shall see Thy heavenly smile,
And never lose it more.
It makes my heart with rapture beat,
The thought of that bright day,
When I shall worship at Thy feet,
And bask beneath Thy ray.
It cheers this weary, tempted breast,
Midst all its anxious strife;

The blessed hope of God's own rest,
The crown of endless life.
My faith anticipates the day,
When sin and Satan's power
Forever shall be swept away,
And death shall be no more.
But oh, the thought of seeing Thee,
In all Thy glorious light,
Who groaned, and bled, and died for me,
In love's mysterious might!
Thy blood has washed me from my sin,
Thy righteousness my dress;
Thine arm has led, by power unseen
Of mercy, truth, and grace.
O Lord, Thou hast prepared a crown
Of glory bright for me;
At Thy dear feet I'll cast it down,
And give all praise to Thee!
... James G. Deck

Looking Unto Jesus

"...Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." -- Hebrews 12:1-2.

One of the most valuable items we have is the rear view mirror. With it, you can look behind by looking ahead, and it is unquestionably true that the best way to look ahead is to look behind. We do it all the time without scarcely thinking about it. This is really the value of past experience. The lessons we learn from the past guide our conduct in the present and future. That man is a fool who learns nothing from his past.

One of the chief values of the Word of God is that we can learn by the past experiences of others. We can see the mistakes made by men in times past in the Word, and we can see the results of those mistakes.

We can see, as well, how it turned out for those who, in spite of doing the right thing, reaped some dire results. But "we have also heard of the patience of Job, and seen the end of the Lord." We know that, ultimately, all must turn out well for the obedient child of God, for God is both a God of justice and love, and He will see to that.

"What cheering words are these,

Their sweetness who can tell?

'Through time and to eternal days,

'Tis with believers well!"

Psalm 17:14-15 tells us that "the wicked...have their portion in this life...As for me...I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."

Our text tells us to look behind in order to run the race that is set before us. We are to "consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

We are to "look unto Jesus," to contemplate the race that He has run. He is the "author and finisher of faith." He has set us an example, that we should follow His steps. Eternal life was manifested in Christ—the only life worth living. He has shared His life with every believer, for "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12).

"Jesus" is the Name He was given before His birth. It is His earthly Name. It was in bearing that Name that He glorified God in all He thought, said and did.

If we want to please God, we must use the rear view mirror. We must look back to see how He lived in order to know how to run the race that is set before us.

Before the Lord Jesus went to the cross, at the last supper with His disciples, He instituted a Remembrance Feast. He calls on us, until He comes again, to keep using the rear view mirror:

"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come" (I Cor. 11:26).

"Our souls look back to see

The burden Thou didst bear

When hanging on the accursed tree,

For all our guilt was there.

When we think of love like this,

Joy and shame our hearts possess;

Joy that Thou shouldst love and pity thus;

Shame for such returns from us."

The Christian who doesn't use the rear view mirror constantly will never make significant progress in the Christian race. He must be constantly looking unto Jesus. He must look back to go ahead.

"The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

Even in eternity, Christians will be forever looking in the rear view mirror as they sing to His everlasting praise:

"Thou art worthy...for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9).

The past is the pledge of the future. It gives confidence for the future. When the temple was dedicated, Solomon declared, "There hath not failed one word of all Thy good promise."

The Apostle Paul argues, "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:31-32).

"His love in times past forbids us to think

He'll leave us at last in troubles to sink;

The Lamb in His glory is ever in view—

The pledge and the proof

He'll see us all through!"

We know three things with certainty: (1) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8:33).

(2) There is no legislation to them that are in Christ Jesus. "The law of life in Christ Jesus" (which is the law of Christ's love operating in us through the Spirit) "has made us free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2-4). A risen Christ, at God's right hand, interceding and, by His Spirit, indwelling each believer, empowers us to live as He lived. Oh, what a salvation this! That Christ dwells in me, and "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me!" (Gal. 2:20).

(3) There is no separation to them that are in Christ Jesus. "Neither death, nor life (nor any other thing or person) "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

The problem with Israel was that they didn't use the rear view mirror. They forgot God's great deliverances. The Passover Feast was to remind them that they were a redeemed people, brought out of slavery to be God's peculiar people, but they so soon forgot that God told them, "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee" (Deut. 15:15).

Have we forgotten that we have been redeemed at infinite cost? That we once were slaves to sin, but were redeemed by precious blood? "Bought with a price, we're not our own!"

The Lord told us to remember Him in His death for us—to keep using the rear view mirror. It is the way for progress. We will never go on for Him if we do not keep on looking back.

"Oh, that we never might forget
What Christ has suffered for our sake,
To save our souls and make us meet
Of all His glory to partake;
But, keeping this in mind, press on
To glory and the victor's crown."

Perhaps today! "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...we shall be caught up together...to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thess. 4:16-17).

LET US SEE JESUS

We would see Jesus—for the shadows lengthen
Across the little landscape of our life;
We would see Jesus—our weak faith to strengthen
For the last weariness, the mortal strife.
We would see Jesus—other lights are paling
Which for long years we have rejoiced to see;
The blessings of our pilgrimage are failing—

We would not mourn them, for we come to Thee.
We would see Jesus—yet the spirit lingers
Round the dear object it has loved so long,
And earth from earth will scarce unclothe its fingers,
Our love for Thee makes not this love less strong.
We would see Jesus—the strong Rock foundation
Whereon our feet are set by sovereign grace;
Not life or death, with all their agitation,
Can thence remove us if we seek His face.
We would see Jesus—sense is all too blinding,
And heaven appears too dim and far away;
We would see Jesus—to gain the sweet reminding
That Thou hast promised our great debt to pay.
We would see Jesus—that is all we're needing,
Strength, joy, and willingness come with the sight;
We would see Jesus—dying, risen, pleading—
Then welcome day, and farewell mortal night!
... Anna B. Warner.

Men Ought Always to Pray

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

Luke, the beloved physician, gives us the prescription of the Great Physician for disappointment: men ought always to pray. We are to pray when we feel like it, and pray when we don't feel like it. There is never a time when we are not in need of prayer. The old spiritual says, "It's not my brother, not my sister, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer."

Oh, what peace we often forfeit;

Oh, what needless pain we bear;

All because we do not carry

Everything to God in prayer.

We need Him when all is going well, and we need Him when all is going wrong. When Satan said to the Lord: "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast Thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land," Job needed Him as much when God was protecting and providing for him, as when all went awry and he suffered tremendous losses of property and all his children.

In such a trial, Job was able to look up and say, in effect, "Even so, it seemed good in Thy sight." "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

Faith in God recognizes that His ways are perfect,
though past finding out:

We comprehend Him not;

Yet earth and heaven tell,

God sits as Sovereign on the throne

And doeth all things well.

Last summer, while I was talking to Bill Hynd at Rest Haven Homes in Grand Rapids, Michigan, about his wife's Alzheimer's affliction (she no longer recognizes him), he said to me, "For God's ways, that are past finding out, for those who trust Him, He provides His peace which passes all understanding."

His Word declares, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isa. 26:3).

An elderly brother was recently asked, "To what do you attribute your longevity?" He answered, "I keep breathing!" Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, his native air. We need to keep breathing His holy Name in prayer in order to receive the strength that can only come from above, to maintain the life we have in Him in healthy form.

The deep-sea diver can walk on the bottom of the ocean because he is linked to the life-giving air that comes from above. We are told to "pray without ceasing," for prayer is the air that we must breathe to maintain life. We are sustained from above, for our help comes from above (Psalm 121:1).

In the parable that our Lord told in Luke 18:6, although the widow brought her plea to a judge who feared

neither God nor man (though he dilly-dallied for awhile), he gave her what she requested, because he did not want to be bothered by her incessant pleas. The Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?" God's delays are not His denials. He will answer speedily in His own time and way.

We read in Phil. 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts (keep emotionally right) and minds (keep mentally right) through Christ Jesus."

"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles (look above); they shall run, and not be weary (look around); and they shall walk, and not faint (look ahead)."

We look above. Our help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. Nothing is too big or too little for Him, for He is the Lord of both. We look around. We're here on a mission with a message from the Lord. Now is the time for sowing the seed. The reaping comes later:

"Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

We look ahead, for all who walk with Him have their eyes on the goal: "Looking unto Jesus the Author and

Finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). They that wait upon the Lord look upward, outward, and onward.

How many times, discouraged, we sink beside the way?

About us all is darkness; we hardly dare to pray;

Then, from the mists and shadows, the sweetest voice e'er known, Says, "Child, am I not with thee, never to leave thee alone?"

Take courage, wayworn pilgrim; though mists and shadows hide The face of Him thou lovest, He's ever at thy side;

Reach out thy hand and find Him, and lo, the clouds have flown;

He smiles on thee, Who promised never to leave thee alone!

Our Lord's prescription for today and every day is "handle it with prayer." "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint!"

Perhaps today! - "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth before the door." -- James 5:9.

POEM

Often darkness fills the pathway of the pilgrim's onward track, And we shrink from going forward—trembling, feel like going back:

But the Lord, Who plans so wisely, leads us on both day
and night, Till at last, in silent wonder, we rejoice in
Wisdom's light.

Though the tunnel may be tedious through the narrow,
darkened way, Yet it amply serves its purpose—soon it
brings the light of day:

And the way so greatly dreaded, as we backward take a
glance, Shows the skill of careful planning: never the
result of chance!

Is your present path a tunnel, does the darkness bring
you fear?

To the upright, oh, remember, He doth cause a light to
cheer.

Press on bravely, resting calmly, though a way you dimly
see, Till, at length, so safely guided, you emerge
triumphantly.

Trust the Engineer Eternal; surely all His works are
right;

Though we cannot always trace them, faith will turn at
last to sight:

Then no more the deepening shadows of the dark and
dismal way;

There, for ever in clear sunlight, we'll enjoy "The perfect
day."

No Room

"There was no room for them in the inn." -- Luke 2:7

God made man upright, but man sought out many inventions. While the inventions of man in communication, transportation and other areas of human endeavor have brought about many blessings, there is a "down" side to all of these things.

In Genesis 4, we read of three of Cain's seed. We read of him that he was of that wicked one (the devil) and "killed his own brother." His seed followed in the direction Cain took (he went out from the presence of the Lord).

One of his descendants, Jabal, was the "father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle." He concerned himself with the interests of the body—food, shelter and clothing.

His brother, Jubal, was the "father of all such as handle the harp and organ." He concentrated on things that appeal to the soul of man. You can't eat or wear music, but it has a tremendous influence on you. A modern writer has declared that music is more influential on the soul of a nation than TV, and music plays a big part on TV!

The third son, Tubalcain, was "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron." He was concerned with the spirit—the inventions of man.

Today, we are raised with a superabundance of information in this age of communication. The many voices crying out for attention have tended to squeeze

out the voice of God. He still speaks in a still, small voice, but we have no time to listen. His voice is squeezed out of schools, out of public life, out of even church life, where human philosophies are brought in to substitute for the Word of God.

In his book "Peace In the Valley," Vance Havner relates that he owed his life and ministry to two books—the Bible and a book about birds—God's revelation and creation.

Christ is virtually excluded from Christmas, where the day is devoted to revelry, with little mention of His coming and why He came. There is no room for Him at Easter. The one day He has asked us to remember—His death day—gets scarcely any mention. Nowhere in the Bible are we told by the Lord or anyone else to remember Christmas, Easter or Pentecost.

Christmas is all so pretty and nice, when we dream of a white Christmas and celebrate by exchanging gifts, lavishing all sorts of blessings on ourselves, forgetting that it was our sins that brought Him here and that cost Him His life to redeem us.

"There was no room for them in the inn." He did not come dressed in royal regalia. By choice, He came into the home of poor people. He did not come as a full-grown Man, but as a little baby on his mother's breast. While Mary was holding Him up, He was upholding the world by the word of His power!

He was rejected from His birth, when Herod sought to kill Him. He was rejected throughout His life. Wrapped in swaddling clothes, He was laid in a manger (cave). His birth was a picture of His death, for He came forth from a virgin womb at His birth and, after His death,

wrapped in grave clothes, He came forth from a virgin tomb, in which no man had ever lain.

There was no room for Him on earth, but the rejected Christ was exalted to heaven. There He had room to receive every repentant sinner, as He did that repentant thief on the cross: "Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise!"

No room for the Baby at Bethlehem's inn;

Only a cattleshed;

No room on this earth for the dear Son of God;

Nowhere to lay His head.

Only a cross did they give to our Lord,

Only a borrowed tomb;

Today He is seeking a place in your heart;

Will you still say to Him, "No room?"

Another year has almost passed. Have we not often been convicted by how little time and place we have given to Him? We have time for pleasure, time for business, but for Christ, the crucified, not a place where He can enter, in the heart for which He died.

Time for prayer, time for the Word, time for witness, but how much time? This world has the squeeze on us. The apostle appeals to us in Romans 12:1-2 to not let the world force us into its mold. The god of this age is working to squeeze every semblance of life from the believer. We are being choked to death.

When I reached the age of 70, a 92-years-old brother said to me, "From 70 on, it's down-hill all the way!" I don't believe it. It's "up-hill all the way!" The Christian

life is both a surrender and a struggle. The world, the flesh and the devil are arrayed against the believer in a life-and-death struggle.

"Finding, following, keeping, struggling,

Is He sure to bless?

Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs answer 'YES!'"

By God's grace, let us resolve in 1996 to yield ourselves unreservedly into His hands and say from our hearts:

"O Lord, in my heart there's a welcome for Thee;

Gladly I now would say,

'Come in, blessed Saviour, my heart and my life

Henceforth would own Thy sway.'"

There is no vacancy when He enters in, for He fills the heart to overflowing.

THE COMING KING

Thou art coming, mighty Saviour!

"King of kings," Thy written Name;

Thou art coming, royal Saviour!

Coming for Thy promised reign.

Oh, the joy when sin's confusion

Ends beneath Thy righteous sway;

Oh, the peace when all delusion

At Thy presence dies away!

Thou art coming, loving Saviour!

Coming first to claim Thine own.

Thou art coming, faithful Saviour!

Thou would'st not abide alone.
In Thy Father's house in glory,
Sinners saved shall dwell with Thee;
Oh, the sweetness of the story!
Love's own record we shall be.
Once Thy coming, holy Saviour,
Brought Thee to the sinner's place!
Wondrous coming—lowly Saviour,
Wonderful Thy love, Thy grace!
Thine the wisdom in the manger,
Thine the power upon the cross;
Thine the glory—as the stranger;
Riches,—though in utter loss!
Thou art coming, crowned Saviour!
Not "the second time" for sin;
Thou art coming, throne'd Saviour,
Bringing all the glory in.
All Thy Father's house, its glory,
Hangs, by sure behest, on Thee;
Oh, the sweetness of the story!
Saviour, come! We wait for Thee!
... Hannah K. Burlingham

Out of weakness Made Strong

"Who, through faith.. wrought righteousness, obtained promises... out of weakness were made strong..." --

Hebrews 11:33-34 Our greatest strength is our weakness, for the Lord Jesus said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Paul, three times over, prayed for the removal of his thorn in the flesh. He twice tells us the reason that it was given to him: "lest I should be exalted above measure."

Indeed, a pride preventive is a blessing, the value of which is impossible to calculate. We are always in danger of thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think.

The Lord's answer to Paul's requests are recorded: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul's response should be ours, as well:

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake.' for when I am weak, then am I strong."

He took pleasure, not in these things, but for Christ's sake, like those of whom we read, "They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance."

"Everything loss for Him below;

Taking the Cross where'er we go;

Showing to all, where once He trod;
Nothing but Christ, the Christ of God."

The believer can say triumphantly, "Is there anything too hard for Thee, Lord?" "With God" (not to God though true), but "with God (He and I together), all things are possible." Faith says, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?... He giveth power to the faint; and to them that hath no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:28-31).

They tell us today that we should be more self-reliant. The Word of God teaches us that we should be more reliant on the Lord: "Cursed is everyone that makes flesh his arm; but blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord."

In Phil. 3:3 we read, "For we are the circumcision (those who have put away all dependence on the flesh), which worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

The Bible declares that "he that trusts in his own heart is a fool." The flesh (self) simply cannot be trusted. Our hearts are the biggest liars we know, for "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."

The prophet Isaiah records: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon Thee, because He trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isa. 26:3-4).

There never has failed, nor ever can fail, one word of all His good promise. "He is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23).

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,

Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!

What more can He say

Than to you He hath said?

To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled.

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,

I will not, I will not desert to his foes;

That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,

I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"

"He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper. I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6).

"God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (I Cor 1:27).

Even the weakness of God is stronger than men. Christ was crucified through weakness (2 Cor. 13:4, and won over every hateful woe "In meekness and defeat, He won the mead and crown;

Trod all our foes beneath His feet by being trodden down."

"His be the Victor's crown

Who fought the fight alone;
Triumphant saints no honor claim;
His conquest was their own."

In Judges, we read of Samson, who did not know wherein his great strength lay. The Spirit of God came upon him and empowered him. He thought that his strength was in himself, and did not realize, until the Spirit of God departed, that his strength was in the Lord. We, too, are in danger of supposing that our strength is in ourselves—in our natural abilities—but our strength is in the Lord. He is the One who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

We are in danger in two ways of grieving and of quenching the Spirit of God: (1) doing, in the flesh, what we are told not to do, and (2) resisting the Spirit's doing what He desires to do in, for, and through us.

One thing no believer can do is to grieve away the Spirit of God. He is resident in every believer's life. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). The Scripture says: "Having believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance unto the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph. 1:13-14).

It is not by our power, but by His power that Christ is made real to us and through us. The Lord Himself is the strength of our lives, while we are weak in ourselves.

When Jacob was "left alone," the angel of the Lord wrestled with him till the breaking of the day. It was indeed a new day that broke for him when the Lord touched the hollow of his thigh. With his thigh out of joint, Jacob, in his weakness, clung to the angel of the

Lord, saying, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."

In Hosea 12:3 we read the prophet's comment on this incident: "By his strength, he had power with God." Jacob made the happy discovery that the way to enjoy the strength of God is to cling to Him in our weakness, for "to him that has no might He increaseth strength."

Up to this point, Jacob's life had been a struggle, but now he became a prince with God—not by being self-reliant, but by relying on the Lord. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him....in Him is everlasting strength." It is not by struggle, but by surrender, that the victory comes.

"He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20). The finished product will not look anything like what we started with, for we shall be like Him!

"Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
There to worship and adore Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise!"
ON THEE MY HEART IS RESTING
On Thee my heart is resting;
Ah! this is rest indeed!
What else, Almighty Saviour,
Can a poor sinner need?
Thy light is all my wisdom,

Thy love is all my stay;
Our Father's home in glory
Draws nearer every day.
Great is my guilt, but greater
The mercy Thou dost give;
Thyself, a spotless offering,
Hast died that I should live.
With Thee my soul, unfettered,
Has risen from the dust;
Thy blood is all my treasure;
Thy Word is all my trust.
Through me, thou gentle Master,
Thy purposes fulfill;
I yield myself forever
To Thy most holy will.
What though I be but weakness,
My strength is not in me;
The poorest of Thy people
Has all things, having Thee.
'Tis Thou hast made me happy;
'Tis Thou hast set me free.
To whom should I give glory
Forever but to Thee!
Of earthly love and blessing,

Should every stream run dry,
Thy grace shall still be with me—
Thy grace to live and die!
Theodore Monod

Pleasing God

"For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." 2 Cor. 10:18 -----

Will Rogers used to say that he loved to hear people talk about themselves because then he knew he wouldn't hear anything but good. The Bible declares, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes." Most of us are quick to condemn others, and quick to commend ourselves.

The old Quaker said, "There's something wrong in this church with everyone except me and thee, and sometimes I can't help wondering about thee!" We are all prejudiced in our own favor, and tend to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. In judging others, we are apt to judge by appearances, without having access to all the facts in the case.

A little boy was asked by his teacher to use "I" in a sentence. He started out, "I is...", when the teacher stopped him, saying, "It is not 'I is;'" it's 'I am, 'you are,' 'he is.' Now finish your sentence." He continued, "I am the ninth letter of the alphabet."

While the Christian will never have to appear before the Great White Throne for judgment for his sins (since Christ appeared once for all at Calvary, and paid the debt for his sins there), each believer will give an account at the Judgment Seat of Christ for his service, good or bad, for the Scriptures say that "we must all appear" there.

The Scriptures tell us that, in view of that day, we should all give the utmost diligence to be approved unto God,

workmen who need not to be ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15). No earthly laurels, no *cum laude* or *magna cum laude*, could ever possibly compare with, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" Not only done, but well done.

The disciples even derided Mary—Judas Iscariot leading in their fault-finding—but the Lord commended her. She heard the jeers of men, but she also heard the cheering words of the Lord, commending her sacrificial expression of heart devotion. "She hath done what she could." Not "she has done what she couldn't do." She gave all that she had to give, to Christ, holding nothing back. She broke that alabaster box of ointment, very precious, and poured it on our Lord.

He said, "She is come aforesaid to anoint My body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her" (Mark 14:8-9). Hers was a forget-me-not deed. It was a not-for-profit operation from which both she and we have profited enormously.

Judas, who sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver, engaged in a really not-for-profit venture. He did not get to keep the cash, and he lost his reputation and his soul.

The apostle Paul wrote, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self...He that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Cor. 4:3-4). The Lord does not judge by the way things appear to be. He judges righteous judgment.

The people of Enoch's day went looking for him (probably to murder him, for he preached faithfully to them of God's judgment— see Jude 14-15). We read that

they were not able to find him, because God had translated him, that he should not see death.

Enoch had only the hatred of men for his trouble, but "before his translation, he had this testimony—that he pleased God."

Can you think of any better words to be written over anyone's life: "He/she pleased God?" If you please your friends, your neighbors, your fellow men, etc., that may be commendable; but the only thing that really matters is, "Have you pleased God?"

John 5:22 tells us that God has "committed all judgment unto the Son." We read of some who "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Since all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do, it should be our constant aim to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" (Col. 1:10).

We should pray daily with the Psalmist, "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" (Psalm 139:23-24).

The Lord commended the Roman centurion (Matt. 8:5-10), and the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:26) for their great faith. God is tremendously interested in great faith and faithfulness. "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." He is not impressed by great wealth, great wisdom, or great accomplishments if they are devoid of faith. The important question in life is not, "What do you think?", but "What think ye of Christ?"

Joshua was instructed to cleave to the Lord and to His Word, with purpose of heart, for "then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good

success" (Joshua 1:8). The only prosperity that has any lasting value is the prosperity of the soul. Health and wealth ultimately fail us all. Sooner or later, disease, decay or death come to all men. We take nothing with us when we go. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."

Gaius was not a wealthy man, but he was a spiritually prosperous man, for we read: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

To lose your health is much;

To lose your wealth is more;

To lose your soul is such a loss

That nothing can restore.

For the believer, the best is ahead: a new body (Phil. 3:20-21), an eternal home, and eternal joy! He is "able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). So, labor on for and with Him. The glory lies ahead. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

THE LORD WAS WITH HIM

"The Lord was with him"!

Thus it was he prospered!

In dire affliction's place, he fruitful grew:

The wrongs consumed him not;

He o'er them triumphed;

The Lord was with him!

Thus he was kept true.

"The Lord was with him"!

Thus the thrilling story—

The chequered life, the mystery and pain;

The tragic trials—then the later glory,

When all was clear, and understood,

And plain.

"The Lord was with him"!

Blessed, hallowed record!

The secret of a life blest much to men;

Of use to God in helping fill His purpose;

And shall He not a like thing work again?

Soul—couldst thou wish for greater, richer treasure

Than that the Lord Himself shouldst be with thee—

Shouldst crown thy life in rich, unstinted measure

With His sublime and sovereign company?

Couldst thou desire a record nobler, grander,

Than that, throughout life's strangely chequered way,

The Lord, in thee, found such unsullied pleasure,

That He Himself was with thee day by day?

Remembering and Rejoicing over Christ's Birth

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given..." -- Isaiah 9:6.

"This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me...also the cup...saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." -- Luke 22:19-20.

It is ironic that it is in the last month of the year that the birth of our Lord Jesus is celebrated; yet it is, without question, the biggest holiday of the year.

It is the season for giving: parents give gifts to their children; children give gifts to their parents; friends give gifts to each other; charities focus attention on efforts to get people to give to their causes; businesses give bonuses to their employees. This month there's a good deal of hype about giving.

Yet, the focus of God's giving is not on the birth of His Son into the world, but on His death and His giving Himself, a ransom for us all.

Not once does the Lord, or the Scripture, suggest that we should celebrate His birth; but, instead—on the very eve of His betrayal by Judas, His desertion by His apostles—His crucifixion on the Cross, rejected by those whom He came to save. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..." (1 Tim. 1:15).

"Not to condemn the world
The Man of Sorrows came;
But that the world might have
Salvation through His Name."

His very Name, Jesus, means "salvation". Indeed He is the only hope for men, for it is not the life we live, or even the life He lived; but the death He died makes salvation possible and actual for all who trust Him as Saviour and own Him as Lord.

While He did not, does not, ask us to remember His birth, He did ask us to remember His death, and we are told that, "as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death until He come."

It is the season, year-round, for giving and receiving. His gift is absolutely meaningless to any of us until we receive Him—"the gift of God, which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Lord does not ask us to remember His birthday; but He does ask us to remember His death day, for "Christ also has once (once for all) suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

The gospel is defined for us in 1 Cor. 15:1-4. It is by means of this gospel that we are saved. It is the gospel that Christ told His disciples: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

The gospel of Christ vaults over all race boundaries, all natural boundaries, and all language boundaries, for "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes" (Rom. 1:16).

The gospel (good news) is that "Christ died for our sins."
He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

"All thy iniquities on Him were laid;

All thy indebtedness by Him was paid;

All who believe on Him, the Lord hath said,

"Hath everlasting life."

"He was buried." His death was the death of death, for He arose again in the power of an endless life. God reckons His death and resurrection as the death and resurrection of everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. Of all such, it can be said, "Death and judgment are behind; grace and glory are ahead!"

There is only one sensible thing to do with the Gift of God—receive it! "To as many as receive Him, God gives the power (right) to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1:12).

God's greatest gift is His Son, for "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead...and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

Christ's greatest gift is Himself. "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." Each believer can also say, "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me." Such great love demands a loving response.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,

That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my heart, my life, my all!"

Any time of the year should be a time for both giving and receiving gifts. The place to begin is by receiving God's greatest gift—His Son. What a mockery it is for men and women or boys and girls to exchange gifts and then to neglect to receive God's choicest Gift, His beloved Son!

"Oh, what a gift the Father gave,
When He bestowed
His Son,
To save poor ruined, guilty man,
By sin defiled, undone!"

A well known cartoonist, one Christmas time, drew a picture depicting a rude cross with, at its base, a little gift-wrapped box with a tag attached: "Eternal Life." The caption under the picture said: "The gift, still waiting at the tree." Of that tree, and that Saviour, the apostle Peter wrote: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." No tree ever bore richer fruit for needy men and women than that one tree at Calvary. God's gift of eternal life is available to all who simply trust that Saviour.

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place, condemned, He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood;
Hallelujah! What a

Saviour!"

It is His atoning death that He asks us to remember.

"Oh, that we never might forget

What Christ has suffered for our sake,

To save our souls and make us meet,

Of all His glory to partake!"

Our giving can never measure up to what we have received from Him; but it should elicit a sacrificial response from us, like the Macedonian believers, who "first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8:5).

He said to His disciples, of that memorial bread: "This is My body, which is given for you," and implied that, having been bought (Acts 20:28) by such a price, they (and we) should glorify God in our bodies (1 Cor. 6:19-20). So, the apostle calls to each of us today: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world..." (Romans 12:1-2).

"I gave My life for thee,

My precious blood I shed,

That thou might'st ransomed be,

And quickened from the dead;

I gave, I gave My life for thee;

What hast thou given for Me?

And I have brought to thee,

Down from My home above,

Salvation full and free,
My pardon and My love;
I bring, I bring rich gifts to thee;
What hast thou brought to Me?"

POEM

Oh, wretched man! Where can I go?
What arm can help or save?
I look behind, around, below—
Naught see, or hear, but deepening woe;
Before me yawns the grave;
Beyond the darkness of the tomb,
The horrors of eternal doom!
"Look unto Me," the Saviour cries.
Behold! Upon the tree,
Between two thieves, Emmanuel dies,
The Lamb of God, a sacrifice,
He bears the curse for me;—
Oh, love unsearchable, divine,
His life He gives to ransom mine!
Oh, how my inmost heart doth move,
While gazing on that tree;
The death of the Incarnate Love!
What shame, what grief, what joy I prove,
That He should die for me!

My heart is broken by that cry,
"Eli, lama sabachthani?"
Worthy of death, O Lord, I am;
That vengeance was my due;
Thy grace upon Thy spotless Lamb,
Laid all my sins & guilt & shame;
Justice my Surety slew;
With Him I in my Surety died,
With Him I there was crucified.
Quickened with Him with life divine,
Raised with Him from the dead,
His own—and all His own are Thine!—
Shall with Him in His glories shine,
His Church's living Head;
We, who were worthy but to die,
Now with Him, "Abba, Father," cry!

The Way and God's Leading

"...God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness..." -- Exodus 13:17-18.

They taught us in school that "the shortest distance between two points is a straight line." On the roadway of life, however, the roundabout—not the direct—is often the shortest way home.

God leads His people out another way that often defies reason.

The wise men, who visited the newborn Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus, went out another way (Matt. 2:12).

The quickest and best way for Joseph to rise to prominence in Egypt was by the famine that came and by his brothers' selling him as a slave. They meant it for evil, but God meant it for good and sent Joseph before them to preserve life.

Moses spent forty years in the backside of the desert, tending sheep, to fit him for the herculean task of caring for the people of Israel in their prolonged journey through the wilderness.

Moses' life of 120 years is divided into three distinct parts. The first forty years, he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. As the son of the daughter of Pharaoh, he became a somebody in Egypt.

Next, he was at the backside of the desert with the lowly task of tending sheep. (Every shepherd, we read, is an

abomination unto the Egyptians--Gen. 46:34.) Moses learned that a somebody, to be useful for God, had to become a nobody.

When he took things into his own hands to deliver the people of God, he was able to destroy one Egyptian; but when God delivered His people Israel, Pharoah and all his hosts perished in the Red Sea. God brought them forth with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm.

The detour into the wilderness was the long way around, but it was necessary to fit Moses to be a deliverer.

Recently, while I was flying home from New York to Miami, the pilot announced, "Look out to the left and you'll see Andros." Now, Andros is about 170 miles southeast of Miami. He had gone way out of his way in order to spare the passengers a very bumpy ride through some thunderclouds.

The Lord also often brings us to our destination in another way. His paths are in the sea, where "We cannot always trace the way where Thou, our gracious Lord, dost move; But we can always surely say that God is Love."

The long way around may not be the shortest, but the safest way home. We read, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

He knows what we can endure. He remembers that we are but dust.

"I know my heavenly Father knows

The storms that would my way oppose;

But He can drive the clouds away

And turn my darkness into day.

He knows the storms that would my way oppose;

He knows, and tempers every wind that blows."

Every doctor knows that the very medicines he gives you might kill you in large doses, but will be a help to your health in small doses. The Great Physician is even more keenly aware of this, and is working all things together for good to those who love Him.

Through Samuel, God anointed David to be King of Israel. For years, he knew nothing but trial and heartache on the way to the throne. God's promise was sure of fulfillment, although, in the intervening years, he was hunted as a wild animal, even though he was son-in-law to the king.

Out of these varied experiences, David learned to sing praises to the Lord, which he otherwise would not have done. In Psalm 40:1-3 we read: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

The song the Lord planted in David's heart had a two-fold effect: (1) praise to the Lord, and (2) led others to trust in the Lord.

Paul and Silas, in the prison at Philippi, could have been sighing (their backs cut with the cruel whip), but they

sang instead, and their fellow prisoners were listening. When we are singing, instead of sighing, the world will sit up and take notice and put their trust in the Lord.

"What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought
Since Jesus came into my heart!

I have light in my soul for which long I had sought,
Since Jesus came into my heart!"

"I have a song that Jesus gave me;
It was sent from heaven above;
There never was a sweeter melody—
Tis a melody of love.

In my heart there rings a melody of heaven's harmony.
In my heart there rings a melody of love!"

God prepares His people for the work He intends for them to do. David's time spent tending his father's sheep; his time with King Saul; his time as a rejected king, being hunted unjustly, were all steps to the throne.

The most direct way to the accomplishment of His purposes is often the long way around.

Most of our Lord's life was spent in preparation for His public ministry. Those unseen years were not wasted years. Eighty years of Moses' life were spent to prepare him for those forty years of service in the wilderness.

Saul of Tarsus' training at Gamaliel's feet, and his persecution of the early Christians were all steps on the way to his becoming—with the exception of the Lord Jesus Himself—the greatest missionary the world has ever known. While Paul deplored these early years, they

played a vital part in his development, for the Lord is able to turn the very curses of our lives into blessings.

No one better understood the Pharisees than Saul of Tarsus, who, before his conversion to Christ, was "a Pharisee of the Pharisees, as touching the law blameless."

Peter's experience of denying the Saviour with oaths and curses was humbling to him, but was the God-override means—using even Satan—of getting rid of the chaff in Peter's life. The Lord said to him, "Satan hath desired to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when (not if) thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Peter later writes: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth...might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:7).

Job was led the long way around, for it was when he prayed for his friends that the Lord turned the captivity of Job.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,

My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply;

The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design

Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine."

BY A WAY THAT THEY KNEW NOT

"By a way that they knew not"—

A way quite new—

And their faithful Guide

Took them safely through;
And their joy would be,
Through the tracts unknown,
That the road was chosen
By Him alone.
"By a way that they knew not!"—
Is that for me
Who have always loved
Both to know and see;
Who by sight and sense
And by human skill
Have followed the path
Of my own free will?
By a way that I know not!
Shall life lose charm?
Shall it be attended
By loss or harm?
Though the things familiar
May pass from view,
Shall I be less blessed
With God's wonders new?
"By a way that they knew not!"
He says He will bring
Those safely through

Who to Him but cling;
Be it dark or light,
Indistinct or clear,
With our God as Guide,
There is naught to fear!
... J. Danson Smith

Trials Come and Go

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God..." -- Isaiah 43:2-3a.

God has only one route for every child of God. It is through. Every trial, no matter how severe and long, is only temporary. We're going through.

"Through waves, through clouds and storms,

God gently clears the way;

We wait His time; so shall the night

Soon end in blissful day."

Three times over, our text says "through". God did not lead Israel around the wilderness, but through it. We must needs go through tribulation. There is a needs-be to every trial of the way. His ways with us are past finding out, but the destiny is unmistakable—we're going Home eventually.

It is true of everyone at all times, in all places, who can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd": "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Not only is this so, but we have the assurance that His presence will go with us for every step of the journey. We can say with confidence, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me" (Psalm 23:4).

He has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6).

It is not "if" thou passest through the waters, but "when". It is absolutely certain that no child of God will enjoy clear sailing through life. The Father loves His children far too much for that: "If ye be without chastisement, ye are bastards and not sons...whom the Lord loves, He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives."

Even fathers after the flesh correct us (sometimes just for their own pleasure), but God disciplines us for our profit.

His purpose is to conform us more and more to the image of His Son.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."

Those three Hebrew children, who were thrown, bound, into the burning, fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar, were set free of their bonds by that very fire; and not only that, but the Son of God walked with them in the fire. The king elevated them to a higher position because of their loyalty, under fire, to the Lord.

The apostle declares: "No chastening, for the moment, seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11).

There are three ways that we can take discipline: (1) We can take it like a chicken, which droops when rain falls on it; and we can faint when we are rebuked of the Lord; or (2) we can take it like a duck and despise it—just let it roll off our backs with no concern; or (3) we can take it like a robin that lets the rain run off its back and is so exercised by it that it lifts its beak to heaven and sings.

"There is never a day so dreary,

There is never a night so long,

That the soul that is trusting Jesus

Will somewhere find a song;

"A song of deliverance, of courage, of strength;

In the heart He implanteth a song."

Just as the refiner sits over the fire to end the "suffering" when the work is done, so the Lord sits over our lives and will not suffer us to be tested above what we are able to bear. God is faithful (1 Cor. 10:13).

Faith says with Job, who was so sorely tried (far more than most of us will ever know): "When I am tried, I shall come forth as gold."

Peter prayed for the suffering believers uprooted from their homes and scattered through various provinces of the Roman Empire, "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, Whom, having not seen, ye love" (1 Peter 1:7-8a).

It is a paradox of church history that Christians have prospered more under persecution than at any other times. Persecution, trials of every sort, draw the hearts

of the people of God to one another and to the Lord. The Psalmist declares, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray" (Ps. 119:67). Adversity unites the people of God, while prosperity divides them from Him and from one another. In Psalm 119:71, the Psalmist declares, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes."

The very last verse of the longest Psalm (Ps. 119—176 verses) is both a confession and a prayer: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep (he was not one); seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments."

"Saviour, lead me lest I stray;

Gently lead me all the way;

I am safe when by Thy side;

I would in Thy love abide."

We probably learn more by our failures than by our faithfulness. Who would dispute that Peter learned more by his threefold denial than by any other single experience in his life? He learned more to trust in the Saviour's word than in his own word. We all, like Peter, have the tendency to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, and the Lord even permits the devil himself to test us—not to discourage or dishearten us, but that we may learn the lesson that "cursed is everyone that makes flesh his arm, and blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord."

We are weakest when we think we are strong, and we are the strongest when we cling to Him in our weakness. Like Jacob, we say to Him, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."

It was just then that the Lord changed Jacob's name to "Israel", when he relied completely on the Lord, for Israel means "a prince with God". The man who clings to God in his weakness has power with God and with men (see Gen. 32:28).

"To

Him our weakness clings

Through tribulations sore;

And seeks the covert of His wings

Till all be o'er."

"Under His wings I am safely abiding,

Though the night deepens and tempests are wild;

Still I can trust Him; I know He will keep me;

He has redeemed me and I am His child.

Under His wings, what a refuge in sorrow;

How the heart yearningly turns to His rest!

Often, when earth has no balm for my healing,

There I find comfort, and there I am blest."

TRIALS COME AND GO

"And it came to pass..." Luke 20:1

It came to pass—the cheerless night;

The morning breaks with roseate light;

The sunbeams dance with sparkling dew;

And bathe the earth with golden hue.

It came to pass—the tempest wild;

With nature calmed like sleeping child;

The billows cease to leap and roar;
And gentle wavelets lap the shore.
It came to pass—the sorrows deep;
The reddened eyes now cease to weep;
And, underneath, God's loving arms
Now rest the soul and quell alarms.
It came to pass—the heavy care
That seemed beyond the strength to bear;
Till shared by One on yonder throne,
Who bore the greatest burden known.
It came to pass—the shattering blow
Which taught the troubled heart to know
A deeper sense of God's great grace,
The rainbow in the storm to trace.
It came to pass—this changeful life,
And soon will end the battle strife,
When Jesus comes, or death draws near;
Begone for aye all doubt and fear!
No death nor sorrow, tears nor pain,
No curse nor night return again;
The former things are passed away—
At Home with Christ through endless Day!
... Bernard Fell

True Peace

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." --John 16:33.

These are our Lord's last recorded words to His disciples before His trial and crucifixion. There is nothing men desire more than peace, and nothing that is quite as elusive as peace. There are so many things to disrupt our peace, both at home and in the world in which we live.

One soldier was so hounded by his wife at home that he wrote her, "Why won't you let me fight this war in peace?"

Peace cannot be found in circumstances, because our circumstances are as changeable as the weather. The one thing that is certain in life is its uncertainty. We do not know what a day may bring forth, so we rightly pray: "Change and decay in all around I see; O Thou Who changes not, abide with me."

Peace can only be found in the Lord of our circumstances, for our times are in His hands—both good and bad times, for He has set prosperity and adversity over against one another. In both, there are profitable lessons to be learned.

The Psalmist declared: "It was good for me that I was afflicted. Before I was afflicted, I went astray."

Job exclaimed: "When I am tried, I shall come forth as gold." We read in Proverbs: "The refining pot is for silver,

and the furnace for gold." God is glorified in the trials through which He brings us.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were different men as the result of their fiery experience. God brought them through that intense time of testing.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,

My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply.

The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design

Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."

We read in Hebrews 12, "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth...Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

The Word of God affirms: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee. Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." "When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my hope and stay."

Did He not leave His own a legacy of peace? "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

As they were assembled for fear of the Jews, behind shut doors, Jesus came and stood in the midst, saying, "Peace be unto you;" and when He had said this, He showed them His hands and side—"blest emblems of the Crucified."

Shortly before, His nail-pierced hands had been fastened to the Cross at Calvary. What a paradox—that the mightiest work ever accomplished in the history of the universe was done when the Saviour was nailed to the tree! Peter writes that "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree." Paul writes that "He took that which was against us out of the way, nailing it to His Cross."

"My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought;

My sin, not in part but the whole

Is nailed to the Cross, and I bear it no more;

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!"

"All my iniquities on Him were laid;

All my indebtedness by Him was paid.

All who believe on Him, the Lord hath said,

Hath everlasting life."

Nailed helplessly on the Cross, yet He wrought our redemption, for "the weakness of God is stronger than men." It was while He hung helplessly on the Cross that He shouted triumphantly: "IT is finished!"—not "I am finished!"

He first showed them His hands, for He had the power to do the work; and then He showed them where the spear had pierced His heart, to tell us that, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin, and that He loved us and gave Himself for us. Yes, blessed be His Name, He made peace for us by the blood of His Cross.

Then He said to them again, "Peace be unto you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." He has called

believers out of this world to be His own, and He has sent us back into the world to declare the glorious message of the gospel to whosoever.

He then breathed on them to let them know that, through His Spirit, He would provide the power that they all needed for Christian life and witness. He told them later, just before ascending to heaven, to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with the power of the Spirit of God. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth."

He put them in trust with the gospel and empowered them by His Spirit to carry the message of the glory of Christ everywhere in the world. They had Divine authority to proclaim to men everywhere life and blessing through His Name to all who trusted the Saviour; and, with equal authority, to warn all Christ-rejecters and neglecters of their awful fate.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, was absent when Jesus came. He missed seeing the Saviour, he rejected the testimony of 10 apostles, he remained in unbelief for another week. The Lord said to him: "Because ye have seen, ye have believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Peter writes, "Though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Unseen, we love Thee; dear Thy Name;

But when our eyes behold,

With joyful wonder, we'll exclaim:

"The half had not been told!"

I AM WITH THEE!

"I am with thee!" He hath said it
In His truth and tender grace;
Sealed the promise, grandly spoken,
With how many a mighty token
Of His love and faithfulness.
He is with thee!—In thy dwelling,
Shielding thee from fear of ill;
All thy burdens kindly bearing,
For thy dear ones gently caring,
Guarding, keeping, blessing still.
He is with thee!—In thy service,
He is with thee certainly,
Filling with the Spirit's power,
Giving in the needing hour
His own messages by thee.
He is with thee!—With thy spirit,
With thy lips, or with thy pen;
In the quiet preparation,
In the heart-bowed congregation,
Nevermore alone again!
He is with thee!—Thine own Master,
Leading, loving to the end;
Brightening joy and lightening sorrow,

All today, yet more tomorrow,
King and Saviour, Lord and Friend.
He is with thee!—Yes, forever,
Now, and through eternity;
Then with Him forever dwelling,
Thou shalt share His joy excelling,
Thou with Christ, and Christ with thee!
... Frances Ridley Havergal

Trust

"Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from Him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation...My soul, wait thou only upon God...He only is my rock and my salvation...Trust in Him at all times...power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy..." -- Psalm 62:1-2, 5-6, 8, 11-12.

The Bible says, "Cursed is everyone that maketh flesh his arm." The Lord told Peter: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Who is there that has not often been disappointed in others, and so very often disappointed in ourselves?

The flesh—self—in ourselves or others simply cannot be trusted. Often we have to learn from painful experience that there is only One upon whom we can lean with confidence. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men.

"Earthly friends may fail or leave us;

One day soothe, the next day grieve us;

But this Friend will ne'er deceive us;

Oh, how He loves!"

The Psalmist prophetically speaks of Judas, in relation to the Saviour: "Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, hath lifted up his heel against Me."

There is no better prescription for our lives than that given in Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine

heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

We must part with even those help-meets that God brings into our lives (or they must part with us). It is good to have a loving partner on whom to lean, but it is far more important to lean on the Lord. He only is our rock and salvation. We can trust in Him at all times.

"When other helpers fail, and comforts flee;
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me."

When our son David, at the age of 29, was called Home, a friend sent us a tape of Vance Havner, speaking after his beloved wife of many years was called Home. It was entitled, "Now Thee alone I seek."

"He's the One, the only One; when you need a Friend to help you, He's the One." He's the One Who sticks closer than a brother. He's the only one Who will never leave nor forsake His own. Surely His goodness and mercy will follow—chase—each of His sheep all the days of this life, until all are in the eternal fold, forever to dwell in the house of the Lord.

The Psalmist is having a confession. He speaks of himself: "Truly, my soul waiteth upon God; from Him cometh my salvation. He only is my Rock and my Salvation." Let us ask ourselves: Can I honestly say this is true of me? Am I looking only to Him for salvation from the penalty and power of sin?

"I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus!

Trusting only in Thee!

Trusting Thee for full salvation,

Great and free. I am trusting Thee to guide me:

Thou alone shalt lead;

Ev'ry day and hour supplying

All my need. I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus!

Never let me fall!

I am trusting Thee for ever,

And for all."

"He only is my rock and my salvation." He is my stability and my ability. He is a solid Rock. No other foundation can be laid.

"No other hope shall intervene;

To Him we look, on Him we lean;

Other foundations we disown,

And build on

Christ, the Living Stone!"

"To Whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:4-5).

He is my salvation. Without Him, I can do nothing, but "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). He is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation. I need to "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord" (Exo. 14:13), Who is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think..." (Eph. 3:20).

Praise God, salvation is of the Lord. He alone is able to save, and "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25). In Psalm 62:7 we read: "In God is my salvation and my glory: the Rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God." Ah, yes, "the eternal God is thy refuge (a place of safety in which to hide), and underneath are the everlasting arms (a power of security to hold)."

"When I fear my faith will fail,

Christ will hold me fast.

When the tempter would prevail,

He can hold me fast."

Verse 8 says, "Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him." "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

"Oh, what peace we often forfeit;

Oh, what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry

Everything to God in prayer."

Psalm 31:15 declares: "My times are in Thy hand."

Everything is in the ultimate control of Him Who

"maketh even the wrath of man to praise Him" (Ps.

76:10); "Who works all things according to the counsel of His own will; and Who works all things together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

He takes the bitter and the sweet, the good and the bad, and works all together for present and eternal good. His ways are past finding out, but "as for God, His way is perfect" (Ps. 18:30).

Since this is true, that my times are in His hand, then I can "trust the Lord at all times, and I can bless the Lord at all times" (Ps. 34:1). "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy Name" (Ps. 103:1).

Every trial draws Him nearer,

Peace, peace is mine!

All His strokes but make Him dearer;

Peace, peace is mine!

Bless I, then, the hand that smiteth

Gently, and to heal delighteth;

'Tis against my sins He fighteth;

Peace, peace is mine!

A RETROSPECT OF THE JOURNEY

Lord, when the journey's over,

And we the road survey,

What grace shall we discover

Has led us all the way;

Where we were once so fearful,

The dangers seemed so vast;

Where we were sad and tearful,

The skies so overcast,

Because of weak faith's blindness

So slow Thy love to learn;—
We shall Thy watchful kindness
In every stage discern.
The world's vain, worthless pleasures,
Its treacherous hopes and lies,
Its rusty worn-out treasures,
As baubles we despise:
We look for His appearing,
The Morning Star so bright;
This hope our spirits cheering
Beguiles the hours of night:
We know by many a token
We soon shall reach our home;
For our "Beloved" has spoken,
"Behold, I quickly come!"
But, oh, most blessed Saviour,
Before we see Thy face,
Grant us each day this favour,
To live upon Thy grace!
While groaning in this prison,
With many a grief opprest,
To look, with faith's strong vision,
To our eternal rest;
Time's seen-things all are wasting,

Night's shadows quickly flee;
O joy! The day is hasting,—
Eternity with Thee!

Trust in the Lord

"O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord: He is their help and their shield. Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord: He is their help and their shield." -- Psalm 115:9-11.

Three appeals are made: to the people of God, the priests of God, and the penitents who feared the Lord. All are called to trust in Him. Trust in the Lord is not a one-time thing, but an abiding confidence in Him.

Trust is a MUST, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes" (Ps. 118:8-9).

"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me..." (Ps. 118:6-7a).

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

"Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

Two very great reasons are given for trusting in the Lord, the very same two reasons that God gave Abram, and because of them we read: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3).

"The Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1). Abram latched onto what God said last: "thy exceeding great reward."

He asked the Lord for an exceeding great reward. Help, Lord, I want a son. God showed him the starry heavens and said, "So shall thy seed be," and Abram believed God. He took Him at His word, though humanly it looked unlikely, if not impossible. Genesis 15:6 declares, "And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." God told Abram that He would be his protection (his shield) and his provider (his help).

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees, And looks to God alone;

Laughs at impossibilities and cries,

"It shall be done!"

Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God...being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:20-21).

So, the Scripture exhorts us all, no matter what our circumstances are, to "trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5-6).

He is our Help and Shield. It is repeated here three times, for "a threefold cord is not easily broken."

Even the devil admitted that He is the Help and Shield of His people when he said to the Lord, in effect: "No wonder Job trusts you, because You have put a fence

about him and all that he has (his shield), and You have blessed the work of his hands (his help)." See Job 1:9-12.

When the Lord allowed Satan to test Job, stripping him of his property and children, this saint of God still trusted in the Lord and did not lean unto his own understanding, but said: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

The lesson?

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,

But trust Him for His grace;

Behind a frowning providence,

He hides His smiling face."

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11).

What He did in Job's case, He does in the lives of all His children, as Heb. 12:5-11 so clearly teaches us, for "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11).

This 115th Psalm goes on to declare that the Lord "will bless the house of Israel (His people); He will bless the house of Aaron (His priests). He will bless them that fear the Lord (the penitent), both small and great" (Ps. 115:12-13).

It is in view of the fact that He is committed to blessing His people that a suitable response should be seen in His people. So, it is not at all surprising to read the appeal in Ps. 135:19-20: "Bless the Lord, O house of Israel." Surely, it is altogether fitting that those who recognize His claim upon His people should do so.

"Once I was foolish and sin ruled my heart,

Causing my footsteps from God to depart;

Jesus has found me! Happy my case;

I now am a sinner saved by grace!"

I have, like Jacob, had my name changed, for Israel means "God governs." There's a new Captain of salvation for the believer, Who is leading many sons to Glory.

He is the Help and Shield of the people of God and of the priests of God, for all who now trust Him are a part of a "holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," and a part of "a royal priesthood...that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (I Pet. 2:5, 9).

He is also the Help and Shield of the house of Levi (all who are involved in His service) and of those who reverence the Lord. All rise up as one to bless the Lord, and each individual with a grateful heart says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name!"

We know that when we get to heaven, we shall praise Him as we ought; yet even now our song shall be, "Jesus gave Himself for me!"

Psalm 118:2-4 calls upon us to declare to Him and to others our great appreciation for His rich mercy that has brought us present and eternal blessing. "Let Israel NOW say, that His mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Aaron NOW say that His mercy endureth forever. Let them NOW that fear the Lord say, that His mercy endureth forever."

"Great God of wonders! All Thy ways display Thine attributes Divine; But the bright glories of Thy grace above Thine other wonders shine. Who is a pardoning God like Thee?

Or who has grace so rich and free?

Yet, Saviour, Thou shalt have full praise.

We soon shall meet Thee on the cloud.

We soon shall see Thee face to face,

In Glory praising as we would."

While we await that day, we would be found trusting, receiving Thy blessing, blessing Thee for Thy blessing, and declaring now Thine infinite worth!

TODAY? PERHAPS!

Today? Perhaps! Perhaps today!

The Lord may come and catch away

His ransomed Church, His blood-bought Bride,

To take her place at His blest side;

When dead and living saints shall share

One trumpet summons to the air.

Today? Perhaps! 'Tis true! Today!

Ere nightfall we may be away;
Transported home! How blest, how grand!
Transported home to Gloryland!
One twinkling moment, then to be
With Him for all eternity.
We'll meet again, perhaps today,
The dear ones who have passed away--
The loved ones who now softly sleep,
Whom Jesus now doth safely keep;
Oh, wondrous joy to meet them there
At that blest union in the air!
Perhaps today! He'll come most sure!
This hope He means to keep us pure;
To have us watching, ready, free,
Untrammelled with iniquity:
That we may meet Him without shame,
Or conscious sense of guilt or blame.
Today perhaps! Perhaps today!
Yes, He may come! Then watch and pray!
This "Blessed Hope" keep much in view;
Nor deem it dead, though taught by few.
And be as urgent as you may
In winning souls while 'tis "Today."
... J. Danson Smith

Victorious in Christ

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift." -- 2 Cor. 9:15 "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." -- 2 Cor. 2:14 The Christian is always victorious in Christ.

"From victory unto victory,
His army doth He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed."

At the very outset of faith, every believer enjoys the victory that Christ has won through His death. "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). All our inglorious past has been taken care of forever. "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

The question of punishment for my sin can never come up again, for "by suffering, He has perfected forever" all who trust Him as Saviour.

"Settled forever sin's tremendous claim;
All glory to Jesus; yea, blessed be
His Name;
No half-way measures doth His grace provide;
Settled forever, when Christ the
Saviour died!"

Jesus paid it all in full. In John 19:30, He announced from the Cross: "It is finished!" Not "I am finished!" His death spelled the death of sin and death.

It is true that "we see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus... crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).

God is now perfectly righteous in justifying everyone who trusts His Son. He is "just and the Justifier of everyone who believes in Jesus" as Saviour (Rom. 3:26).

"'Tis in the Cross of Christ we see

How God can save, yet righteous be."

"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."

The potential for saving the whole world is inherent in the sacrifice of Christ. His saving work is actual for those who trust Him. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

It is not the greatness of your sin that excludes you from God's salvation. His great grace is sufficient for all, but efficient only for those who believe. God's salvation hinges on His Son. Those who accept Him are saved eternally, and those who reject Him are lost forever.

"As Jesus appears to your view,

As He is beloved or not,

So God is disposed as to you,

And mercy or wrath is your lot."

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift!" Receive Christ, God's Gift, and don't forget to say "Thanks!"

As to the rest of your time on earth, say with the apostle: "Thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ."

While it is often true that each of us may know defeat after defeat personally, there is no such thing as defeat in Christ. The course of the believer is constant victory.

We cannot know defeat, really, because the Lord's portion is His people, and He is always on the side of His own. The Scripture declares: (1) "The eternal God is thy refuge" (Deut. 33:27). We have a secure place in which to hide in the storms of life.

"O, safe to the Rock that is higher than I,
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly;
So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine would I be;
Thou blest Rock of Ages,
I'm hiding in Thee."

(2) "And underneath are the everlasting arms" - Every believer is forever held, kept by the power of God. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

(3) "He shall thrust out the enemy from before us" - We have One to help, for our God shall fight for us, and "if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

The devil may be mighty and wily, but our God is Almighty and always victorious. He cannot be defeated.

"Though the enemy accuses—

Sins recounting like a flood,
Every charge our God refuses;
Christ has answered with His blood!"

He always causes us to triumph in Christ. What a location! That's where God sees us—accepted in the Beloved.

"So near, so very near to God,
I cannot nearer be,
For, in the Person of His Son,
I'm just as near as He! So dear, so very dear to God,
I cannot dearer be;
The love wherewith He loves His Son—
Such is His love to me!"

What about the future? Neither death nor life can separate the believer from Him. Even now, we claim the victory over death. For the believer now, who passes through the portals of death, it is simply "absent from the body and present with the Lord." It is "to depart and to be with Christ, which is very far better." No more sickness, no more struggle, no more sorrow, no more stress. The believer immediately goes to the land of "no more" and "much more."

"What will it be to dwell above,
And with the Lord of Glory reign,
Since the blest knowledge of His love
So brightens all this dreary plain?
No heart can think, no tongue can tell

What joy 'twill be with Christ to dwell!"

And then, of course, for every step of life's way, we have the blessed assurance that there is not one word of Scripture that needs to be fulfilled! The Lord may come at any time to "gather His loved ones Home."

"The Lord may come at evening twilight,

Or at midnight's deepest gloom;

Perhaps at crimson flush of morning,

Or the brightness of the noon."

Then the believer will share "the last laugh" at death and the grave. No believer then living—no matter how close to death—will die. He'll laugh at death, which cannot then touch him: "O death, where is thy sting?"

All then who are in their graves will rise first and say, O grave, where is thy victory? You thought you had us, but now we have received a body like unto His own body of glory. His victory on the Cross was the death of death forever. Our bodies may have crumbled to dust, but Christ our precious dust will take and freshly mold. He'll give these bodies vile a fashion like His own. He'll bid the whole creation smile, and hush its groan."

The celebration that shall never end will start then, for forever we will be saying:

"Thanks be unto God, Who gave us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

A DEATH BED

As I lay sick upon my bed,

I heard them say, "in danger;"

The word seemed very strange to me;

Could any word seem stranger?
"In danger?"—of escape from sin
Forever and forever!
Of entering that most holy place
Where evil entereth never!
"In danger?"—of beholding Him
Who is my soul's salvation!
Whose promises sustain my soul
In blest anticipation!
"In danger?"—of soon shaking off
Earth's last remaining fetter!
And of departing hence to be
"With Christ," which is far better!
It is a solemn thing to die,
To face the King Immortal,
And each forgiven sinner should
Tread softly o'er the portal.
But when we have confessed our sins
To Him Who can discern them,
And God has given pardon, peace,
Tho' we could ne'er deserve them,
Then, dying is no dangerous thing;
Safe in the Saviour's keeping,
The ransomed soul is gently led

Beyond the reach of weeping.
So tell me with unfaltering voice
When Hope is really dawning;
I should not like to sleep away
My few hours till the morning.

Walk and Do Not Faint

"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." -- Psalm 27:13

Every believer has a hope—not a wish, but a solid hope for the future founded on the word of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who cannot lie. He declared, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

We are presently in the land of the dying, for until Christ returns for His own, not one person will leave this world without dying. It is appointed unto men once to die, but it is not appointed unto all men, for those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord will never pass through the portals of death (I Thess. 4:13-18).

But all those who are "dead in Christ" are very much alive with the Lord when their eyes close in death. The Bible assures us that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, without missing a single beat. Absent here—present there.

"When fadeth the day and dark shadows draw nigh,

With Christ close at hand, it is not death to die;

He'll wipe every tear, roll away every care;

We'll say

‘good night’ here, but ‘good morning’ up there.

‘Good morning’ up there, where Christ is the Light;

‘Good morning’ up there where cometh no night;

When we step from this earth to God’s heaven so fair,

We'll say 'good night' here, but 'good morning' up there!"

Praise God, while believers are now in the land of the dying, we are going to the land of the living, where the saved will never die!

We read that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4-5).

To the Sadducees, who did not believe in the Resurrection, the Lord reminded them of the words God spoke to Moses at the burning bush: "I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." These words were spoken hundreds of years after these men had been buried in their gravesite at Machpelah. God did not say, "I was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;" but "I AM their God;" and the Saviour added: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

The Lord told the thief on the cross, "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." The moment a believer leaves this land of the dying, he enters the land of the living, to be forever with the Lord.

To Martha, at the grave of her deceased brother Lazarus, the Lord Jesus promised: "Thy brother shall rise again." He also told her: "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, though he have died, yet shall he live." Neither death nor life can separate the believer from the Saviour, Who said: "Verily, verily I say unto you; he that believeth on Me shall never see death..."

Fanny Crosby, the blind poetess, wrote:

"Some day the silver cord will break,
And
I no more, as now, shall sing;
But, oh, the joy when I shall wake
Within the palace of the King.
And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story—'Saved By
Grace.'"

Romans 14:8 declares: "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

"And round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever;
For I am His, and He is mine
Forever and forever."

The outlook here in this world is often discouraging and dismaying, but when we look up, we encourage ourselves in the Lord and His sweet and sure promises. Confidence in the Lord kept David from being discouraged, in spite of his dismal and foreboding circumstances.

The cure for fainting is reliance on His Word and compliance with it, as well. It is those who wait upon Him who renew their strength, who mount up with wings as eagles, who run and do not tire, who walk and do not faint.

David tells us in Psalm 2:2 that "the Lord is the strength of my life." Paul testified, "I can do all things through

Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philip. 4:13). The Lord Jesus said, "With God all things are possible." It does not say, "To God all things are possible (though that is true)." My weakness and His strength, for His "strength is made perfect in weakness."

"To Him our weakness clings in tribulation sore;

And seeks the covert of His wings

Till all be o'er."

Without Him, we can do nothing, but with Him, all things. He is able to do in, for and through us exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think.

The secret of David's power (this man after God's own heart) was his singleness of purpose. The Lord Jesus said: "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." David did not say, "These fifty things I seek after," but "this one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; 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 enquire in His temple" (Ps. 27:4).

The Lord Jesus said, "I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18). He says to each of His own, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). The lives of believers are "hid with Christ in God," and they have the blessed assurance that "neither death nor life...shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

He lives! He lives in the "power of an endless life," and is able to save to the very end all who come unto God by Him (Heb. 7:24-25). He declares, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believes in Me, though he has died,

yet shall he live." When the believer passes through the portals of death, he enters the portals of glory.

The Lord, by His resurrection, has annulled the power of death. The grave claims the body temporarily, until our Lord returns, but the believer departs to be with Christ, which is FAR BETTER—forever beyond the reach and power of death.

The Lord Jesus has brought to light life and immortality through the gospel. Eternal life is the believer's possession now, but he patiently awaits that new and immortal body (no longer subject to death) which will be his at Christ's return. "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour...Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body..." (Philip. 3:20).

"Jesus, we wait for Thee;

With Thee to have our part;

What can full joy and blessing be

But being where Thou art?"

A DEATH BED

As I lay sick upon my bed,

I heard them say "in danger;"

The word seemed very strange to me;

Could any word seem stranger?

"In danger"—of escape from sin

Forever and forever!

Of entering that most holy place

Where evil entereth never!

"In danger"—of beholding Him
Who is my soul's salvation!
Whose promises sustain my soul
In blest anticipation!

"In danger"—of soon shaking off
Earth's last remaining fetter!
And of departing hence to be
"With Christ," which is far better!

It is a solemn thing to die,
To face the King Immortal,
And each forgiven sinner should
Tread softly o'er the portal.

But when we have confessed our sins
To Him Who can discern them,
And God has given pardon, peace,
Tho' we could ne'er deserve them,
Then, dying is no dangerous thing;
Safe in the Saviour's keeping,
The ransomed soul is gently led
Beyond the reach of weeping.

... James Mudge

When is He Coming?

Three times in the last chapter of the Bible, the

Lord announces His return:

"Behold, I come quickly"... Rev. 22:7 and 12

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly"... Rev. 22:20 In neither of these statements does He say when He is coming. In fact, elsewhere He emphatically rules out the when, for He says to His disciples: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts 1:7).

Just before He went to the Cross, He assured His disciples of His return: "Let not your heart be troubled...I go to prepare a place for you...I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Several times in John's gospel, the Lord refers to the time of separation as "a little while;" but the Scripture declares that a thousand years are as a day. By that accounting, it is barely two days before He returned to heaven.

Because He was obedient even unto His death on the Cross, the One who came to do the Father's will has been exalted far above. He speaks seven times over in John 17 of believers as being God's gifts to Him—a fulfillment of the prophet Isaiah: "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." He expresses His own heart's desire to the Father: "Father, I will that

they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory."

Not only to behold His glory, but to share in it, for "the God of all grace has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus" (I Pet. 5:10ff).

Nowhere in the New Testament do we read that Jesus is coming soon. We do not know when He is coming, but we read three times in Rev. 22 of how He is coming—quickly. In Heb. 10:37 we read, "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come and will not tarry." This "little while" has almost reached two millenia (2,000 years), and it seems that our Lord delays His coming. This is not so, for this text shows that, when the appointed time arrives, there will be no dilly-dallying about His coming.

"It may be at morn, when the day is awaking,
When sunlight thro' darkness and shadow is breaking,
That Jesus will come in the fullness of glory,
To receive from the world 'His own.'
O, Lord Jesus, how long, how long?
Ere we shout the glad song:
Christ returneth! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen."

Just before the Saviour went to the Cross to pay redemption's price ("Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" -- I Pet. 1:18), He instituted a feast of remembrance, which He clearly intended to be carried on by His redeemed people until He returned.

He gave thanks for the bread, saying, "This is My body, which is given for you;" and also for the cup, stating, "This is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." He gave of each to His disciples, saying, "This do in remembrance of Me;" so we rightly sing to Him in praise and worship:

"Lord Jesus, we remember the travail of Thy soul;

When, through Thy love's deep pity, the waves did o'er
Thee roll;

Baptized in death's dark waters, for us Thy blood was
shed;

For us Thou, Lord of glory, wast numbered with the
dead."

In 1 Cor. 11:26 we read His words addressed to His believing people: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." This Scripture clearly shows the Lord's intention that we observe this Remembrance Feast until, in accord with His promise, He comes again. "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star" (Rev. 22:16).

He bids us to look backward, upward and onward. He is the Root of David. Read Matt. 22:41-46. The blessed truth is that He is both David's Lord and David's son. From everlasting to everlasting, He is God; but, as touching the flesh, He was born of the seed of David. He could rightly say of David—as He did say of Abraham—"Before David was, I AM!"

"Thou art the everlasting Word; the Father's only Son;

God manifestly seen and heard, and heaven's beloved One.

Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,

That every knee to Thee should bow!"

The New Testament opens with the statement: The Book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1). As David's greater son, He lived here, died for sinners, arose from the grave, and now sits at the Father's right hand, a Prince and a Saviour, able to save to the very end all who come unto God by Him. But He is also the Bright and Morning Star.

"Some glorious morning, sorrows will cease;

Some glorious morning, all will be peace;

Heartaches all ended, school days all done;

Heaven will open; Jesus will come!

Oh, what a meeting there in the skies;

No tears nor crying shall dim our eyes;

Loved ones united eternally;

Oh, what a daybreak that morn will be!"

The great day of reunion of all the redeemed of all the ages with the Redeemer will take place. The great wedding day of Christ and His Church will take place. The Lord speaks, "Surely (YES) I come quickly!" His beloved people (His Church) respond, "Even so (YES—the same Greek word in both instances), come, Lord Jesus!"

It will be the only union, since man's story on earth began, where it will be true eternally that "what God has

joined together," no one—man or devil—can ever separate.

In hope we lift our wishful, longing eyes,
Waiting to see the Morning Star arise;
How bright, how gladsome will His advent be,
Before the Sun shines forth in majesty!
Midst the darkness, storm and sorrow,
One bright gleam I see;
Well I know the blessed morrow,
Christ will come for me
He is coming! Yes, He's coming!
Christ our Prophet, Priest and King!
While we watch for His appearing,
Let us pray and serve and sing!
THOU ART COMING!
Thou art coming! Thou art coming!
We shall meet Thee on Thy way,
We shall see Thee, we shall know Thee,
We shall bless Thee, we shall show Thee
All our hearts could never say!
What an anthem that will be,
Singing out our love to Thee,
Pouring out our rapture sweet
At Thine own all-glorious feet!
Not a cloud and not a shadow,

Not a mist and not a tear,
Not a sin and not a sorrow,
Not a dim and veiled tomorrow,
For that sunrise grand and clear!
Jesus, Saviour, once with Thee,
Nothing else seems worth a thought!
Oh, how marvellous will be
All the bliss Thy pain hath bought!
Thou art coming! At Thy table
We are witnesses for this,
While remembering hearts Thou meetest,
In communion clearest, sweetest,
Earnest of our coming bliss.
Showing not Thy death alone,
And Thy love exceeding great,
But Thy coming and Thy throne,
All for which we long and wait.
Thou art coming! We are waiting
With a hope that cannot fail;
Asking not the day or hour,
Resting on Thy word of power
Anchored safe within the veil.
Time appointed may be long,
But the vision must be sure:

Certainty shall make us strong,
Joyful patience can endure!