# Proverbs - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Present Testimony: Volume 10, 1859, Anointed One, The

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RO 8:22-8:31{The Divine Counsels were all laid in Christ, before the foundation of the world. The Son of the bosom was brought out in counsel then; and all the purposes of God had their foundation in Him, in the person He was preordained to be, and the place He was pre-appointed to fill.1

We read this in Proverbs 8.

" The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth, while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens I was there, when He set a compass upon the face of the depth, when he established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment, when He appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by Him (as) One brought up (with Him), and I was daily (His) delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, and My delights were with the sons of men.

What a message does this Scripture bring to us from the eternal ages! It tells us of those infinite ages which were before creation, in ways most wondrous and excellent. How exact and special is Wisdom's account of herself in that passage! The chief part of the dust of the world was not then made, when all was planned and settled in Christ. No work of His hand had God to survey then. No evening or morning had then given Him succeeding periods for delight and refreshment, as the good and holy work advanced to its perfection. But He had Christ in counsel before him, His first thought, and the foundation of all His thoughts. The things of creation and redemption, the things of Providence and grace, heavenly purposes and earthly purposes, things nearer at hand or further off, all had respect to Him. " The Lord possessed me," says Wisdom, " in the beginning of His way."

But in this beautiful mysterious passage, there are two things which specially engage my mind at this time-that Christ was, "by Him, as One brought up with Him," and again, that He was also "His delight." That is, He was ever at hand, so to speak, and ever a joy. He was God's resource and God's object.

These two things are strongly marked here; and as we pass down the current of Scripture, we find this to be so. Let what may arise, Christ is ever by God, ready to be used by Him at once, and then used by Him with delight. In Eden or at creation, among the Patriarchs, under the law, in the days of the kings, and by the voices of the prophets, as well as after His manifestation in flesh, and then in the light of the Holy Ghost through the Apostles, that is, from the opening to the close of the volume, this is seen. Let man be in innocency or sold under sin, whether the elect be in simple family order, or in the organized system of a nation, or in the unity of a mystic body, whether they be ruled or instructed, under government or under revelation, Christ is God's great ordinance. It may be, that we, through unbelief and blindness of heart, get but a dim sight of Him at times, God sees Him clearly and at all times, under all changes and conditions. And this is what 1 would now contemplate for a little while, in some of the leading instances of it.

We know that, at the Creation, without Him was not anything made that was made.

As soon as sin enters, He comes forth at once. He is the burden of the first promise which was made immediately upon the entrance and conviction of sin. He is, as we know, the bruised, victorious seed of the woman. The Lord God brings him forth at once, as One already provided in counsel, or, as our Scripture speaks, "As One brought up with him.," as One that was "by Him." Sin, the great occasion for the manifestation of God and His grace, and His secrets, had come in, and Christ at once comes forth. Faith in Adam receives Him-with what measure of light we may not be able to say,-but as soon as believing Adam comes out from his guilty covert at the bidding of the seed of the woman now revealed to him, the Lord God uses Christ for him with delight. The action of clothing him with the coat of skins tell us this. There was freedom and fervency in that action. -It was done without reserve, and by the Lord's own hand. The coat of skins was first made by Him, and then by Him put on the naked Adam-all this bespeaking His delight in Christ, using Him, and using Him with readiness of heart, for " the sons of men"—as our Scripture speaks. The Lord God wrought in a ruined world now, as He had lately wrought for six days in an unstained creation. And, if the eternal purpose respecting Christ, the counsel of grace laid in Him ere worlds began, had been the delight of God, so also was the manifestation of this purpose now-this earliest use and application of it. This delight fed itself in action and service, when the need arose, as surely as it had fed itself in thought and counsel in eternity.

So again, shortly after this first case of Adam, Abel's altar and lamb speak the same truth. The sacrifice was to God a witness of Christ, and God had immediate respect to it. He answered that sacrifice at once, and evidently with delight. He had respect to Abel and to his offering. He pleads with Cain on the warrant and value of it, and would fain have had him, another sinner like Abel, serve at the same altar-all this still telling of the same purpose and joy, that His anointed was " by Him, as One brought up with Him," and "daily His delight," His equal and full delight one day as well as another, in the behalf of one sinner as well as of another, for Abel as well as for Adam.

Noah's ark was just the same. Another ruin had broken forth. The end of all flesh was again before God. It was the wreck of a world a second time. But Christ was " by Him" still. " Make thee an ark of gopher-wood," said the Lord to Noah, and that ark was Christ. And when Noah pleaded Christ, in other words prepared an ark to the saving of his house, " The Lord God shut him in," and then " the ark went upon the face of the waters." His own hand, which before had made the coat for Adam, now sheltered " the sons of men" in that sanctuary which grace had provided-and this action, this shutting of all the ransomed in that sure place by the hand of God Himself, again tells of the "delight" with which He used His Anointed for us, which He tasted when His Christ was thus trusted and pleaded by sinners.

And Noah's altar afterward was just what his ark had, thus, already been. That altar and the victim upon it was Christ. Noah took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. I say not how far he discovered the Christ of God in all this. In his measure I surely believe he did. The woman's seed promised to Adam, bruised yet victorious, was, I judge, before him, and so was Abel's lamb. But be this so, whether dimly or brightly as to Noah, as to the Lord God Himself, the One whom "He had possessed in the beginning of His way, before His works of old," was assuredly before Him; and in the virtue of His name, and of the preciousness of His blood, He said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." The Lord God "said in His heart." What words! What a witness of the profound and perfect satisfaction God was taking in Christ, the counseled, covenanted foundation of all His purposes about " the sons of men," the treasury of all His riches and secrets of eternal saving mercies!

And the Bow in the Cloud speaks the same language. In the fine glowing style of that beautiful token, God seems, as with His whole heart and His whole soul, to pledge security to the creation. But this was all in His anointed, for it was the blood of Noah's altar which prevailed thus to keep the token of the covenant, the pledge of the earth's security, ever under the eye of the Lord. That precious blood had drawn forth the deep delighted utterance of His heart, as we saw, and now this token shall draw His eye in its own direction continually. The cloud big with judgment may come, but the bow shall ride upon it, and control it, and give it an appointed measure-" here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The eye of Him who sits above all water-floods shall look upon the bow—and another witness is given, that time makes no change, successive seed times and harvests shall go on while the earth remains, for Christ is still. " by Him," and always " His delight," His predestined salvation and gift of grace, in behalf of " the sons of men."

But as we still pursue our way through Scripture, or along the path of God, we still find the same mystery; we still find Christ "by Him" and also "His delight."

In the day of the call of Abram, the world was in the darkness and abomination of idols. The family of Terah served them (Josh. 24:2). Another mighty moral, ruin was spreading itself every where. As disobedience had defiled the garden of Eden, and self-will and violence had corrupted all in the world before the Flood, so now, these idol abominations marked the apostasy of even the family of Shem -for Terah was of that line. But Abram is separated. Like Noah, he found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a chosen one, a vessel of mercy. Great promises are made to him; but of them all, Christ is the ground and title. "In thee," says the God of glory to him, when He called him out, "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"—and his blessing, as we know from the divine teaching of Gal. 3, is through faith in Christ Jesus. In that word to Abram, the Gospel was preached to Abram, the Gospel of Christ, in whom is all our blessing.

How simple this is! Christ and Christ only is still before God, at His hand or "by Him" for use in the behalf of "the sons of men," produced without delay or effort, and given to their rising and recurring necessities. And the Lord God calling out Abram to look on the stars and see if he could number them, when Christ was about to be revealed to him, was an action which bespoke the delight which God took in using His Anointed for him. There was fervency in the action—a style about it that tells of secret joy, well marking or accompanying that moment when God was revealing Christ to the faith of His elect.

And thus, in this other and later day, this same mystery re-appears. In the day of the fall of Adam, in the apostasy and doom of the antediluvian world, and now in the hour of the call of Abram from amid the overspreading of abominations, Christ known in eternal counsels, is brought forth, and that with delight for the sons of men.

But as we go on with the Book of God, we find the Christ still. See this in the day of the Exodus. It was a time of judgment, as the time of Noah had been. But another Ark is prepared, and that Ark, like the former, in the day of the Flood, is Christ. "They shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts and on the upper door-posts of the houses wherein they shall eat it, for I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Lord; and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses wherein ye are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." The blood was upon the Jewish lintel; and that blood was Christ sheltering the house in the day of judgment and death.

His Anointed, after this manner, was again "by Him," for the use of "the sons of men" in the day of their necessity. And, as a people thus redeemed by Christ, and standing before God in the value of Christ, God takes them up as with His whole heart and His whole soul. In the cloud of His Presence He joins them on the road, as soon as they are freed from the place of judgment; He takes counsel with Himself about them; then He acts for them; He raises a wall of partition between them and their pursuers; feeds them with bread from heaven and with water from the Rock; and conducts them in strength and triumph, till He sets them in the place of glory at his own holy hill—and all this (with the song which He put into their lips on' the banks of the Red Sea) tells us of the full " delight" with which He had brought forth His anointed for them (Ex. 12-18).

This is surely a great and magnificent scene, and all is unchanged. The Christ of God "set up" from everlasting, is still with God for us, though our need arise again and again. He is at hand as One prepared and provided for "the sons of men," and brought forth in their behalf with "the delight" of God, according to this beautiful word in Prov. 8.

And I may here pause to say, prophets and oracles have also told this, and His own lips have uttered it. " Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth," says Jehovah of His Anointed by Isaiah: " This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," was heard over Him again and again in the days of His flesh here. " Therefore doth my Father love me," says Jesus Himself, " because I lay down ray life that I might take it again;" such words and like words telling, like the whole current of divine history, the joy which is known in our God over the manifestation and work of His Anointed in the behalf of us sinners.

But now, in still following that current of divine or scriptural history, we reach Ex. 19, and there we see God in a character in which we had not seen Him since the day of Gen. 2. He is now a lawgiver a second time. He who had been in a burning bush, has now taken His seat on a burning mount. The God of the Fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of Grace, now appears as the God of destructive righteousness and judgment. Through the self-confidence of Israel, their God is now rather a Lawgiver than a Redeemer; a character, again we say, in which He had not appeared since the time of Adam, and the Garden of Eden. (See Rom. 5:13,14).

This was a change indeed. The people had procured it for themselves; and however ruinous it may prove, they have to accept it all at their own hands.

But then, we read—" the covenant confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul." And so, the eternal purpose, which had been taken ere the world was, and not merely four hundred and thirty years before, Could not be disturbed by all this. No, indeed! The Anointed One, " brought forth" and " set up," possessed of God " in the beginning of His ways, before His 'works of old," no after-works could displace. This we have already seen, at different successive seasons from the beginning; and now again we are to see the same in this day of man's self-confidence, leading the God of—grace to the hill of judgment. Quickly again is Christ " by Him, as one brought up with Him," ready at hand to be used, and used with " delight," for " the sons of Men"-all this changing, shifting scenery, which sin, and judgment, and law, and human assumption induce; only sealing and verifying, and settling forever, the unchanging purpose of God, and his grace in the person, and work, and value of His Anointed.

This new condition into which Israel had now brought themselves, would work ruin as surely as sin had wrought it in Eden. Fallen man can no more answer law, than innocent man had resented temptation. But God's Anointed is still "by Him." We see this now in Ex. 25 as we saw it then in Gen. 3. The shadows of good things to come, now shown to Moses tell us this now, as the promise to Adam had told it then. Moses is called up to a region above and beyond that of darkness and thunder and tempest; and there, in figure, Christ is shown to him—Christ in the sanctuary of peace. The people had not yet broken the law; when this is done at least they had not been convicted. The national or conditional covenant is sealed in chap. 24, and this exhibition of the Anointed One is made to Hoses in chaps. 25-30, that is, immediately afterward. No delay takes place, for Christ was " by Him." The thing is done suddenly. No counsel or preparation was needed—for counsel had been taken "in the beginning, before His works of old." Just as in the day when sin entered, God's resource was in Him that had been " set up from everlasting," and thus was at hand for immediate use; so that He now left the fiery mount, the place of judgment for the higher regions, the place of grace and of His Anointed One, not to say with all convenient, but with all immediate speed.

And " delight" again waits on this, action, as it had done in earlier days, as we have already seen. For when the congregation, in the obedience of faith, prepare the Tabernacle, and all is finished, the glory enters and takes its place there, and takes it with most evident and full joy. It will have the whole of it to itself, so that even Moses could not follow (Ex. 40)—all this again bespeaking the delight of the Lord God in seating Himself where Christ was seen. It was not after this manner He had taken His place on Mount Sinai. He had gone there with evident reserve. See this in chap.. xix. But now, it is not with reserve He fills the sanctuary, but with readiness and fervency, and manifest enjoyment, occupying the whole of it, courts and holy places and all. As we sing betimes-

And all this was but the expression of that "delight" which our Scripture (Prov. 8) tells us was known in counsel before the world was. For this delight is a "daily" delight—as fresh after ages as at the beginning -in action repeated again and again, as it was, in counsel, ere the world was.

There might be other witnesses to prove, that Christ, the Anointed One, is God's resource in the. day of the need of " the sons of men," and is still called forth for them. But I would pass on only to one other illustration of this.

The nation of Israel are set in the land, and there they are proved again, as they had been under the law in the wilderness. But they violate the very first article of their commission, as they bad broken already the very first, commandment of their law. They strike confederacy with the peoples of the land, the nations of Canaan, whose destruction had been enjoined upon them, and the angel of the covenant weeps at Bochim over the insulted covenant (Judg. 1).

All, therefore, is wreck and ruin again. Adam in the Garden, man under law, Israel with their covenant in the land, alike witness this wreck and ruin. And as it thus began, so it goes on, with the nation set in their inheritance. This unfaithfulness, beginning in Judg. 1 with the tribes, is found again in their own King Saul, the son of Cis, in 1 Samuel. Like people, like prince, as Judg. 1 and 1 Sam. 15 tell us. But God is the same in grace, if man be the same in unfaithfulness and apostasy. For upon all this we quickly read, " How long wilt thou mourn for Saul?" (says the Lord to Samuel, who was weeping over the fall of the king, as the angel had wept over the fall of the nation at Bochim) " how long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel; fill thine horn with oil and go, I will send thee to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, for I have provided me a king among his sons." (1 Sam. 16). This son of Jesse was unknown to men, but in secret God had provided him for Himself. David, the beloved, was known to God in counsel now, and David, the beloved, was the witness or the type of the Anointed One. Bethlehem carried the witness now, as it did, in due time, the Christ Himself. In the ear of faith, " good tidings of great joy" were now, in their measure, heard rim the fields of that town of Judah. " Out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel," began to be said to her now. David was an arrow in the Lord's quiver, and he was the arrow of the Lord for deliverance to Israel, in this terrible day of Israel's calamity. He was the Bethlehemite, the anointed, the beloved, the pledge of Him who has since appeared for redemption and salvation the type of Him who in purpose was the Anointed One ere worlds began.

Thus, in these various but consistent forms, was this mystery again and again told out, that Christ was provided for "the sons of men" in their time of need. On the entrance of sin—in the day of the doom of the world, before the flood—in the call of Abraham forth from the overspreading of abominations—in the hour of the judgment of Egypt- in the ruin of Israel under the law—and again, in the day of their ruin under their own national covenant, Christ is at hand, " set up" and " brought forth" for sinners—the One whom God has " by Him" for immediate use, and that, too, at all times, and with " delight" for " the sons of men."

I might, of course, have gone further down, even to the end of the volume, with this story of God's grace in His Anointed One—nay, with a more vivid witness of it, as we got to the New Testament. But I stop here. The promise, the first promise, that of the seed of the woman, began to tell this story; and, after many other witnesses to it, as we have now seen, David, the shepherd-boy of Bethlehem, of the stem of Jesse, repeats it in our hearing, after so long a time-

" Jesus Christ I the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

Ere God had built the mountains,

Or raised the fruitful hills;

Before He fill'd the fountains,

That feed the running rills;

In Thee, from everlasting,

The wonderful I AM

Found pleasures never wasting,

And Wisdom is Thy name.

When, like a tent to dwell in,

He spread the skies abroad,

And swathed about the swelling

Of ocean's mighty flood:

He wrought by weight and measure;

And Thou west with Him then:

Thyself the Father's pleasure,

And Thine, the sons of men.

Thus Wisdom's words discover

Thy glory and Thy grace,

Thou everlasting Lover

Of our unworthy race!

Thy gracious eye survey'd us

Ere stars were seen above;

In wisdom Thou halt made us,

And died for us in love.

And could'st Thou be delighted

With creatures such as we,

Who, when we saw Thee, slighted

And nail'd Thee to a tree!

Unfathomable wonder!

And mystery divine

The voice that speaks in thunder

Says, "Sinner, I am thine!"

Timothy: May 2014, In View of Eternity

O child of God, so weary with earth’s toil And ceaseless strife,Thy Master chooseth thee for high behest And fruitful life; Oh, gladly waitBeside the portal of the Master’s gate,To do His bidding, for the day grows late.

Take thou His message, and then hasten back To His dear feet;And He will greet thee with His tender love And comfort sweet; Then gladly waitBeside the portal of the Master’s gateFor the next message, as the day grows late.

And mourn not sorely, if thine errand seem All fruitless now;The message was thy Master’s, and His mark Is on thy brow; And thou didst waitBeside the portal of the Master’s gate,As the shades gathered and the day was late.

Not now the time of reckoning; it will come To thee at last,And thou wilt smile to think of weary hours That shall be past, When thou didst wait,Beside the portal of the Master’s gate,To do His bidding, ere it was too late.

From “To Every Man His Work”

Echoes of Grace: 1953, "Those That Seek Me Early"

Prov. 8:17

It is told of the great Hannibal that when he could have taken Rome he would not, and when he would have taken it, he could not.

Is not this the case with many souls? When their hearts are tender and the Lord Jesus is easily found, they harden their hearts against Him. Then when they near the end and should be resting in His love, He "has no beauty that they should desire Him." When they may have mercy, they do not prize it; and when they cry for mercy, like the rich man "tormented in this flame" in Luke 16:24, they cannot obtain it. He that in his youth reckons it too early to be converted may at last find that he has scorned the only way to be saved. "After death, the judgment"

"Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." Job 36:18. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. 2:3.

The Gospel Messenger: Volume 19, Wisdom's House.

(Read Proverbs 7:24-27; 8:1-26, 9:1-18.)

YOU have the ways of the “strange woman” in Proverbs 7, the voice of “Wisdom” in chapters 8, and the voice of the “foolish woman” in chapters 9 The strange woman and the foolish woman simply mean the world.

Both the connections and the contrasts of Scripture are very interesting, and I do not think any person could read these chapters without at once seeing their striking connection, the continuity of the subject, and, withal, the intense contrast between the voice of Wisdom and the voice of the foolish woman.

All these three chapters, it is very striking to notice, end with death, and death is an awful thing. Of the house of the strange woman we read, “Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death” (7:27). Thank God, you have not yet landed in hell, my unsaved reader. You are on the way to it though, that is the point. If you are not converged, you have never heard Wisdom’s voice, hence you have never been blessed, and never been brought to God. Whose house are you in? The house of the strange woman, the world. Do not forget, “Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.” Ah, thank God, you have not yet gone down, my friend, but remember that God is going to deal with those sins of yours. Your life is not for much longer, and death is a head of you. Thank God, it has not yet gripped you.

There is one thing, sinner, after death, and what is that for you? Hell! You may say: “I do not like that word. I do not believe in hell.” Very likely, you are not the first infidel that has said that. I should like to give you a bit of comfort. There is not a single infidel in hell. “Oh,” you say, “I thought, according to your doctrine, that all infidels went there.” You are mistaken. There is not a solitary infidel in hell. Do you know why? Because all the infidelity is knocked out of their souls as they enter the doorway. Ah, my friend, hell is a reality. I believe in it. God believes in it. The devil believes in it. The Spirit of God believes in it. It is only your enemy the devil—always a liar—that will tell you there is no hell.

I believe in the Word of God, every line of it. I find it says, “Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.” “That is not the gospel,” you will say. I know it is not. But it is a terrible reality from which the gospel will deliver you. Surely it is enough to be warned, is it not? Sinner, God bids you stop in your downward course. Hence He warns you of what is its end. Heed His warning.

My unsaved friend, God wants you. His heart is toward you; hence we read in chapter 8, “Doth not wisdom cry? “Who is Wisdom? Jesus. He is Wisdom. He is the Wisdom of God. It is the voice of the blessed Son of God that speaks. “Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths” (vers. 1:2). It is beautiful to see the activity of Wisdom. I never read this scripture that I do not feel rebuked. How little am I like Wisdom. Oh, look at this divine activity. Are we in this spirit? Where does she stand.? “In the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors” (vs. 3). Anywhere, everywhere, there is no place, so to speak, that you cannot find Wisdom or one of her maidens, according to these chapters. And what does she cry? “Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men” (vs. 4).

It is the voice of God to the unsaved children of men. It is the voice of the living God to the unsaved, unblest sinner. Dear friend, do you think it wise still to refuse? Do you think it wise to make light of God’s call? “O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart” (vs. 5). God calls us fools. Aye. A man pressing on to ruin when he might be going to glory is indeed a fool. A man that is going to eternal penalty instead of turning to God, and going to everlasting joy, what do you think of that man? I think you also would call him a fool.

Have you not heard of the man in the New Testament who thought of nothing but the things of this world, and who was going to build new barns to hold the golden grain that was to turn into golden sovereigns? He had only lived for the world, and he was just dropping asleep when, all of a sudden, he heard a voice saying, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee” (Luke 12:20). That man was a fool. He has many imitators. Friend, you listen to God. Hear His Word: “O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.” All that God wants you to do is to peed His voice. If He gets your ear, He will be cure to get your heart. Do you know why? Because it says, “Hear, and your soul shall live.” It says also, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Oh, I believe in the mighty power of God’s Word, used by His spirit, to wake men up. I believe in the almightiness of that Word.

Wisdom says, “Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things” (vs. 6). Then Wisdom is described. Mead Proverbs 8 carefully, and you will find it describes the person of the Lord Jesus, and unfolds the eternal glory of the Son of God. His blessed voice says: “Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it” (vers. 10:11). If you had your house filled with rubies, you would have to leave them behind. But if you have Wisdom you will not leave that behind, and when the Lord comes back for His people He will not leave you behind.

This chapter describes where Wisdom was when God made the heavens and the earth. “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought

forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water" (vers. 22-24). He is an Eternal Being. And He came into this world in blessed grace, the Word was made flesh that He might glorify God, and the shedding of His blood meets all the claims of God in respect of man's sin. It is an Eternal Being, the Son of everlasting God, who, in grace, became a Man that He might win your heart and mine. He says, "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" (vs. 30). Here is the Son of God, here is the blessed One who was ever the joy of the Father's heart, and we find that He says, "Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men" (vs. 31). He had His eye upon us then in the purpose and counsel of His heart.

Let us listen attentively to His words. "Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways" (vs. 32). How He seeks to win us. "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me" (vers. 33, 34). The same voice said," The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). These were His own blessed words when here upon earth. This hour of gracious blessing began when He was on the earth, it goes on still. Although He has gone, as a Man, to the right hand of God, His blessed voice still speaks, and His heart is unchanged, His thoughts toward us are quite the same. "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord" (vers. 34, 35). The listeners to His voice are in His grace. "But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (vs. 36).

Now which of these verses, my reader, are you in, verse 35 or verse 36? You do not care for Jesus? No. Then you love death. You do not love the Lord? No. You love death. You are doing an irreparable injury to your own soul. I do not know anything more touching than this expostulation of the blessed Lord. Can anything be more touching or tender? Note well His words, as He says, "For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord." Everything turns on personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

Dear fellow-Christian, you have life. Possibly you may say, "I was brought to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ only last Sunday night." Be it so. You found life then. Life is a sweet thing to get, and it often is gotten in a gospel meeting, or by reading a paper like this.

You may say, undecided one, "I do not believe in sudden conversions." You will when you are converted. You may get saved where you are, and as you read this page, by simply trusting the Lord Jesus. Mark this, if you are not saved by the belief of the gospel, you will be eternally damned in your sins because you have not believed it. You say, "I cannot believe it." Cannot believe God? Cannot believe the Word of God? That is a very serious acknowledgment. I think I know why you cannot. Another voice has hitherto commanded you.

You have heard about the "strange woman." Her voice is heard in the ninth chapter. The world has a loud voice, and, alas, you can understand the voice of the foolish woman. Just look for a moment at her first. Only, I must say, she is an imitator. "A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing" (ch. 9:13). I am always struck with the variety with which Satan floods and caters for the world. There is usually a noise, and there must always be something new, something fresh. The world could not go on if you did not give it fresh novels, fresh plays, and fresh songs. This is all in keeping with the character of the foolish woman. "For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city" (vs. 14). She has got the highest place, if I might say so. Do you know where Wisdom's maidens are? She sends forth her maidens, and she stands in the high places of the city, but she has lo seat. She moves on. But this woman has a seat, she is at home. It is the world, it expects to abide, and promises you what is abiding.

Hence, "She sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways." And what does she say? "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither." She will promise you pleasure and amusement. They are but "the pleasures of sin for a season." God alone can fill the heart with abiding peace and joy. "Pleasures for evermore" He furnishes. It is nearly forty-four years since I first tasted them, and they get better and better as time goes on. The foolish woman can never give you rest and peace. It is impossible. But she calls vigorously to passengers, "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant" (vers. 16, 17). A stolen thing is what belongs to somebody else. "Stolen waters are sweet." What is the idea of stolen waters? Let nobody know. "And bread eaten in secret is pleasant." There is the secrecy of sin.

Reader, forget not that all will come out. All will come out by-and-by, that is not blotted out now by the blood of Jesus. Remember, every secret of the heart will come out by-and-by. That is a serious thing. "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant," is the language of the careless world. "But he knoweth not that the dead are there." It is a house of the dead. Oh, unsaved friend, dear unsaved soul, take heed to the voice of the Lord. He here details simply but most solemnly what is the end of the world. "Her guests are in the depths of hell." Supposing you scorn His word, what will be the end of it? He says, "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself." I think that is beautiful. That is, the truth is always individual. If I am wise I get it myself. It is not that I cannot tell others. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it" (vs. 12). I want you to see how intensely individual everything is in relation to the things of God. Are you still going to be the guest of this foolish woman? Better far be the guest of Wisdom.

And now let us see in chapter 9 what Wisdom has done. Wisdom has a house, and oh, it is a wonderful house. "Wisdom hath builded her house" (vs. 1). Ah, it is a wonderful house is Wisdom's house. It is the house of God. It is where God is known. It is where His character is known. And look— "She hath hewn out her seven pillars" (vs. 1). It gives the idea of that which was a sort of canopy. And how many pillars? Seven, I know a good many of the pillars. The canopy over my head is glory. What supports this structure is the pillars. I would fain describe this house to you. You can get in through any of the pillars. I think that the first pillar is the Purpose of God. God had a purpose in His mind. It is a house where God is known, Christ is enjoyed, and every heart is profoundly and eternally happy. What is the second pillar? I see how the truth has all come out, in Christ, and I label my next pillar, Love. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."

And what is the next pillar? You know God cannot put up with sin, and cannot make light of sin. His holiness forbids that. There is no sin there, it is all outside. There are plenty of guests, all perfectly happy, but there is no sin in there. The third pillar is Holiness. But there is more. There is time pillar of Righteousness. God's claims have all been met by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, by His atoning blood. I have the purpose of God, the love of God, the holiness of God, and the righteousness of God. But there is more than that. We have in Christ the revelation and unfolding of the Truth of God. There is another wonderful pillar, Mercy. Oh, the mercy of God! Of this house, I say, one of its pillars is mercy. There is yet another pillar, Grace. And are those the seven pillars of the house? Well, they are seven very solid pillars, and they are very sound pillars, and, thank God, the house they sustain can never be moved. Everybody in that house is divinely happy. Have you got in yet? If not, you come just now into God's house.

After wisdom builds her house, she furnishes it right royally, and invites her guests. We read, “She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table” (vs. 2). What is the idea? “Come, for all things are now ready.”

Yes, the feast is spread. And what is the feast? The revelation of all that God has made known in the gospel. And what have you to do? Come in and eat. You have nothing to bring. Come in, poor sinner. Do I hear you reply, “I am such a sinner, I am a dreadful sinner”? Never mind. You may come in, if you so please, by time Grace pillar, or the Love pillar, or the Truth pillar, but you can come in.

And to Whom do you come? To God, revealed in His blessed Son. How do I know this? When everything was furnished, what was Wisdom’s next action? “She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither.” Where? Into scenes of joy and satisfaction. Oh, turn into this scene where joy is deep and abiding. It is like the feast of Luke 14, and the feast in the Father’s house of Luke 15. What a welcome you will get. Oh, come. “As for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I Have mingled” (vs. 5). That is beautiful.

Now, beloved reader, will you not hear Wisdom’s voice, because although it is her maidens that come out and address you, still it is Wisdom’s voice. It is all her work. It is all Christ. It is the activity of the love of Christ going through the various channels.

How blessed would you be if you respond to the call— “Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.” You would be saved and satisfied. Observe, it is not stolen bread. It is not that which the voice of the clamorous woman urges you to eat of. Wisdom’s bread is eaten in public. There are no secrets in God’s gospel. It is all abroad in the world now, God has loved the world, and His Son has died for it. “This thing was not done in a corner,” Paul says. No, Jesus died in view of the whole world. What for? To save a sinner like you, or me, from the depths of hell.

Wisdom’s call closes with great emphasis. “Forsake the foolish, and live.” There will have to be decision on your part, and then instruction for the pathway follows: “And go in the way of understanding” (vs. 6). Friend, come in and feed. If you never took the gospel before, take it just now. If hitherto you never got hold of the fact that Christ has died for you, believe it now. Christ wants to save you. What do you say? Fain would I hear you reply, “I will take Him at His word.” That would mean present pardon of your sins, and eternal joy to your heart.

W. T. P. W.

Girdle of Truth: Volume 7, With All Thy Getting, Get Understanding

The great desire of God is that we should understand every act and leading of His grace toward us. Human parents do much for their children without ever making known to them their intent and pleasure, and therefore much of the lives of the children are spent in misunderstanding the parental treatment, and endeavoring to escape from it, instead of in co-operation with it. Very different is the way of our God and Father, and our Lord. Jesus Christ. Blessings, I believe, whether it be place, gift, or anything else, are often postponed and delayed, until we are intelligent enough to see their value. The Lord unfolds to His servant the gift according as he attains ability to comprehend it, and God acknowledges the exercise of it, and gives scope for it according as the servant has intelligence or subjection to follow simply with his mind therein. In order to " think so as to be wise as God has dealt to each the measure of faith," (Rom. 12:3,) a man must know the measure; and therefore, if he is " skilful in the word of righteousness," he is grown up and able to discern between good and evil. If I am able to discern, I understand God's dealing with me, and get the blessing of it; and if not, I am only a babe, and unskillful in the word of righteousness. I have need of milk: solid food is unfit for me. I am alive, but I have no sense or intelligence of God's ways with me.

Now a want of this sense must debar me from the communication of God's mind and purposes. You would not talk to a babe about its inheritance; you would only speak and open your mind to it according as it gained sense to understand. This I believe God does in a special manner; and that, not only with regard to blessings, but in the same way, though in a lesser degree, in chastening. I do not say that He does not chasten unless we understand the good of it, or that we always do understand it; on the contrary, I believe that He often chastens to vindicate His own care when His child does not notice it at all; but what I say is, that unless we are exercised thereby, no good comes of it, and no soul who knows His love will be satisfied to let His chastening pass by without understanding it. If an earthly friend indicates any coolness or distance towards me, do I not, in proportion as I love such an one, seek explanation of it? And just so with regard to the love of Christ; in proportion as we value it shall we seek for an explanation of any marked visitation from Him to us. This is the way of God with us in either chastening or blessing, but we see it more plainly and markedly in blessings. It is " to him that hath" that " more shall be given." The man who had made most got in preference to any who had made less. God, I repeat, unfolds according as we are prepared for it; and hence circumstances are constantly used to prepare us for a due appreciation of His blessings. Thus Paul, in the prison. at Rome, and John at Patmos, were through circumstances prepared, the one to reveal the heavenly glory as from heaven, and the other to reveal the Lord's glory on earth. When Jonah lost his gourd, he was able to understand God's feelings; and when thus prepared to hear them, they are imparted to him. God wants us to know the way whereby we go, and to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. I do not believe that any soul, no matter how great its acquisition of knowledge from the Scriptures, has really got on beyond its intelligence of God's ways with itself; so that it is in proportion as I understand God's ways with myself that I have been taught of Him. If I understand His ways with me only in the wilderness, then I am in the wilderness; that is to say, the wilderness is the measure of my attainment and advance. If in heaven, then I am in the same sense in heaven, and so on.

I dare say some of us have observed very often how some spiritual desire like a flash of light has engaged the soul; but though the enjoyment of it be remembered, we find that we practically have not reached it; and the reason of this is, that we are not prepared for it. I have no doubt that the grapes of Eshcol are often tasted by us, when we have a great deal of exercise to go through, and intelligence to acquire before we reach Eshcol. Caleb, after tasting the grapes, needed forty years of preparation ere he was in actual possession of Eshcol: and surely his heart must then have acknowledged God's gracious way with him. And when

he was in full possession-when he comprehended the nature, order, and value of the blessing he had so long before tasted of, he could then sing " with understanding." It is when we reach Eshcol that we see how necessary it has been for us to go through so much exercise and toil of spirit; for there it is that we comprehend the excellence of the blessing, and are in it too. To be in the place of blessing, you must not only

prize the blessing, but you must also feel that you are suited to the place, and, as a necessary consequence, separated from what is unsuited to it. It is not all in a moment that we see how our idolatry stands in the way as a barrier to our reaching the place or the possession of the grapes, the taste and excellence of which we feel we appreciate. And chastening may often fall on us in order to remove the obstacle and prepare us.

There can be no basket of first-fruits, (see Deut. 26,) unless we understand our blessings and possess them. Hence the prayer, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, that we, " being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height," &c. The Lord give us to understand the nature, order, and value of His blessings, that we may be prepared to enjoy them suitably!

Christian Truth: Volume 35, What Is Wisdom?

We read that "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." Prov. 4:7. There is no wisdom apart from Christ; He is the wisdom of God. When He is the controlling Object, every effect is wise. "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Matt. 6:22. As the star guided the wise men, so we are guided by the One who absolutely controls us; we do not move without Him, and we are sure to find the wise way. The way of wisdom is pleasantness and peace. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after...to behold the beauty of the Lord." Psalm 27:4.

Thus Mary Magdalene was led into wisdom. She was in great distress, and there appeared to be no way out of it, but she persisted in the one thing. She wanted her Lord, and could not do without Him. "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." John 20:13. She loved intensely, and she proved, "I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me." Prov. 8:17. She allows neither angels nor apostles to divert her from her one Object. She proved that wisdom will "bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her." Prov. 4:8.

Thus Mary of Bethany sat at His feet and heard His word; He was her Object. Martha loved Him, but she was occupied with her service toward Him, and thus lost the good part which shall not be taken away. When we find the Lord, we find our Solomon. We see His wisdom-heavenly things. His things are revealed to us as we are in communion. We are in the circle of all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; we are colored and formed in this association to see clearly what suits Him. It is true wisdom when I can see the course for Him in a scene of darkness, pretension, and the form of godliness. I cannot know what suits Him in this scene if I have not been in company with Him, where everything is suited to Him, where wisdom is unhindered in its influence. Then I come into this scene, not occupied with or distracted by the things here, but, like Moses coming down from the mount, or Mary of Bethany from His feet, or Mary of Magdala from His side, to declare and present that which is suited to Him, introducing an entirely new order of things into the midst of the confusion and disorder here.

No one has wisdom now but the one who knows what suits "the Christ." No one can truly be wise now according to God unless he has definitely before him the mystery of God in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

When the Lord is the one Object of the soul, not only is one led to act in every step for Him, but there is a very marked effect in oneself. With Israel, where the cloud was, there was the manna. They watched for the cloud, and then they surely found the manna. So it is with us. The more the Lord is before my heart, the more I am rewarded by His present favor. If I can say, "My soul followeth hard after Thee," I can surely add, "Thy right hand upholdeth me." And that is not all. I become a body of light; I become characteristic and demonstrative of the peace that governs me in my conduct and ways. I have "the wisdom that is from above...first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Surely, blessed Lord, we can say of Thy wisdom, "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her." Prov. 3:18.

Faithful Words for Old and Young: Volume 15, Look Right on.

“LET thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.” (Prov. 4:25.) Glory is ahead, fellow Christian— look right on; “turn not to the right hand nor to the left.” Be determined — more than ever determined — by the grace of God to live for Christ, and for glory. Whatever others do, look right on, and keep right on.

Faithful Words for Old and Young: Volume 15, Avoid It.

“AVOID it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away;” remember these words on the chart. For how many a soul has been wrecked through not giving evil and temptation a wide berth. Sin is like a rock — a whirlpool; therefore keep as far from it as you can. There is plenty of sea-room, so avoid the danger. Give sin as wide a berth as possible.

Young Christian: Volume 26, 1936, Right Path, The

I have sometimes seen upon a mountain that there is one path which is simple and right, and a comfort indeed it is to know it though there are ever so many crooked ones going over the heath. That is just where we are now. If a person has the right path, he does not need to inquire about the fifty wrong ones.

“Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.” (Prov. 4:25).

If I look on I see Christ, and then all is easy, and with my eyes on Him, I go straight.

A broad path means a broad conscience, not a broad heart.

We have a narrow path, but it is a known path and a straight one.

Echoes of Grace: 1972, Proverbs 4:12

“As thou goest, step by step, the way shall open up before thee." (Syriac translation)

"Child of My love, fear not the unknown morrow,Dread not the new demand life makes of thee;Thy ignorance doth hold no cause for sorrowSince what thou knowest not is known to Me.Thou canst not see today the hidden meaningOf My command, but thou the light shalt gain;Walk on in faith, upon My promise leaning,And as thou goest all shall be made plain.One step thou seest—then go forward boldly,One step is far enough for faith to see;Take that, and thy next duty shall be told thee,For step by step thy Lord is leading thee.Stand not in fear, thy adversaries counting;Dare every peril, save to disobey;Thou shalt march on, all obstacles surmounting,For I, the Strong, will open up the way.

Christian Treasury: Volume 11, Keep Thy Heart With All Diligence

Proverbs 4:23PRO 4:23

A proud heart

A backsliding heart

A foolish heart

An impenitent heart

An evil heart

A double hear'

A hardened hurl

An obstinate ham

A wicked hears

A deceived heart

OR a contrite heart

OR a rejoicing head

OR a wise heart

OR a faithful heart

OR a dean heart

OR one bean

OR a lender heart

OR a willing heart

OR a pure heart

OR a True heart

(Psa. 101:5; Psa. 51:17).

(Nov. 14:14; Psa. 13:5).

(Rom, 1:21; Job 9:4).

(Rom. 2:5; Neh. 9:8).

(Heb. 3:12; Psa. 51:101).

(Psa. 12:2; 1 Chron. 12:38).

(Ex. 9:34; 2 Kings 22:191).

(Deut. 2:30; Ex. 35:5).

(Pout 15:9; Psa. 24:41).

(James 1:26; Heb. 10).

N. Berry

Young Christian: Volume 26, 1936, Fragment: Faith and Anxiety

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” (Prov. 3:5).

When faith begins, anxiety ends; where anxiety begins, faith ends. Ponder these words of the Lord Jesus, “Only believe.”

As long as we are able to trust in God, holding fast in heart, that He is able and willing to help those who rest on the Lord Jesus for salvation, in all matters which are for His glory and their good, the heart remains calm and peaceful.

It is only when we practically let go faith in His power or His love, that we lose our peace and become troubled.

Young Christian: Volume 27, 1937, In All Thy Ways

“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” (Prov. 3:6).

“All our ways.” He is willing to be our guide in the smallest things of life. Before writing an article, answering a letter, having an interview, or dealing with any problem, we need to look up to Him who is the Fountain of all wisdom. Look at the promise annexed:

“He shall direct thy paths.”

By day and by night He went before His people in the wilderness. He will do not less for those who today acknowledge Him in all their ways.

Girdle of Truth: Volume 2, Four Wise Things on the Earth

Proverbs 30:24-29

" There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces."

In these verses we get many of the principles of faith. We see it first in the ant, who, though she is not strong, prepares her food in the summer. Faith always looks to the future, and gives up present enjoyment for future blessing. The ant may be considered a mean, laborious creature, while it is preparing its food, and others are enjoying themselves in the summer-time; but it reaps the reward of its toil in the winter, when its storehouse is full, and others are wanting food. Thus the saint is despised and rejected now, but he will soon enjoy happiness when those who are happy now will be miserable. In "the conies" we see a picture of the Christian, feeble and unable to defend himself, but strong in the Lord, his rock. Away from Christ, he is nothing, but in Him he is strong and invincible amidst all the attacks of the enemy. Christ is our rock, our fortress, our God, our strength, our buckler, and the horn of our salvation. (Psa. 18:2.) " The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands." This gives us a beautiful picture of the love and harmony that ought to exist between Christians, though they have no visible head, yet should they show the influence of their head in the order and unity manifested in their assemblies. Though the locusts have no king, yet there is not the slightest disorder in their bands; all is closely compacted together, all is harmony and order. In systems of men's devising, there is always some head set up, and the worldling will mock those who have no head, because he would say, " there can be no order or regularity where there is no head." But though the worldling know it not, Christians have a head, and the vicegerent of that head (the Holy Ghost) presides in their assemblies.

" The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in king's palaces." Here again we see another picture of the Christian, disagreeable and contemptible in himself', yet he has access into the holiest. Mark the ambition of the spider; it is not in the lowest corner only that the spider is to be seen, but even on the golden cornice and the marble stone.

Thus let it be with the saint, endeavoring individually to be like the ant, providing for the future; (Matt. 6:19, 20, 21) like the coney, trusting not in himself, but in the Lord, his rock; collectively, like the locusts in love and harmony; and like the spider, having boldness to enter into the holiest.

Christian Truth: Volume 28, Proverbs 30:24-28

"There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces."

Now even though you be "little," you can be, through grace, "exceeding wise"; and for this, the first thing is to be like the ants, preparing in the summer; that is, storing up in the favored time for the coming winter—applying your heart to wisdom, so that when the demand for it

corneas it assuredly will come, you may be able to answer the enemy in the gate. You know the mind of the Lord, having learned it from His Word before you were required to act on it.

The next exceeding wise thing is having your house in the rocks—having a position, a home, where no thief approaches—where you are secure and unassailable.

Third, with "no king"; without any apparent or recognized rules—visible power—you keep in company with your own people, the Lord's host—led and governed by the Holy Spirit.

Last, you take hold of heaven with your hands; your feet are not there yet, but you can speak of your hope and present enjoyment being in kings' palaces; "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."

May the Lord lead us in our littleness to be "exceeding wise."

Christian Truth: Volume 26, Poverty and Riches: Twin Dangers

"Give me neither poverty nor riches" (Pro. 30:8) was a wise request, and "Be content with such things as ye have," is often a needed injunction; for we are not always mindful that He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." None perhaps know the trials connected with poverty or riches, but those who are actually brought into such circumstances. But many of the Lord's people have been tried by one or the other. Poverty is easily understood to be a trial. When it really comes, its pinch is keenly felt. To be rich is more congenial to human selfishness, and often gives the owner a place of honor and distinction among men, so that it is only realized to be a trial by those whose consciences are exercised before the Lord.

In poverty, if God be not the refuge and strength, if He be not trusted for sustainment and deliverance, the heart soon becomes despondent, or busy to invent contrivances, sometimes not very honorable, to force a way of escape. Efforts of this kind, under such circumstances, are by no means uncommon, and the painful nature of the trial is often pleaded in justification of unbelieving ways. But worldly wisdom is not the wisdom that comes down from above, nor is carnal stratagem after the pattern of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. The contrivances of unbelief only cripple faith and, sooner or later, bring dishonor on the name of the Lord; such actings also spoil the Christian's testimony for the Lord, and often embitter his path for the remainder of his wilderness journey. A sense of the grace of God in not having spared His own Son, but in delivering Him up for us all, often wakes up faith, and puts unbelief to shame. But how many have dishonored the Lord in time of poverty!

In earthly prosperity, if God be not hearkened to and obeyed, some may have painfully to learn that "riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away" (Pro. 23:5), or their path may be beset with humblings, disappointment, spiritual leanness, and regrets, with faith weakened, and hope sadly dimmed.

That soul alone is happy who knows he is the Lord's, and can truly say, He loved me, and gave Himself for me. Assured by the Word of God that he is accepted in the Beloved, and loved by the Father as He loves the Son, he enters into the truth that he is kept here only to do His will. To such, every question resolves itself in this, What is the Lord's will? And a dependent, obedient heart lives not to itself, but to Him who died and rose again.

Perhaps there is no greater trial to which a child of God can be exposed than the rapid pouring in of wealth. Few have been able to bear it. Many have fallen grievously by it. Some have become so intoxicated by it as to plunge themselves into foolish and pernicious occupations. Others have been drawn back again into the world, who seemed for a while to have run well in ways of separation from it; while some who began this new responsibility as God's stewards have grown up to be patrons, and even to seek a place of honor among men by it. In fact, whatever be our circumstances, all God's people have painfully to learn that in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing, and that we cannot bring forth fruit except we are abiding in our Lord Jesus. Nothing else can possibly preserve us in the path that glorifies God. Whether we have poverty or riches, each believer has alike to cry, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." To be happy in the Lord day by day, in the lowly path of dependence and obedience, is of the highest importance, for nothing can be ministered by us for His glory without this. We do well to remember His precious words, "Abide in Me,... for without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:4, 5.

How many poor saints have been sweetly sustained and comforted by remembering that Jesus was poor! When He went about from place to place ministering the glad tidings of the kingdom, are we not told that certain women "ministered to Him of their substance"? (Luke 8:2, 3). And, when He died for us on the cross, what earthly possessions did He leave? All we read is that they parted His garments among them, and for His vesture they did cast lots.

Some years ago a Christian was lovingly visiting a cobbler who was very poor, and residing in the west of England. An earnest servant of the Lord accompanied him, who sometimes gave words of hearty counsel in the form of lines of poetry. They both sought to comfort the tired cobbler in his poverty, but before taking leave of him one said, "I will give you, dear brother, a couple of lines:

"When cruse and barrel both are dry, We then will trust in God most high."

After pausing a moment the other said, "Finish it; you have not completed your words of counsel." But he replied, "I have nothing more to say," and intimated that he wished to convey to the poor cobbler that, like Elijah, he should put his trust in God. Then said the other, "I would like to add,

'When cruse and barrel both are full,

To God we'll consecrate the whole.'"

These surely are words in season for rich as well as for poor. To trust in time of need, and to yield ourselves and all He entrusts us with to Himself in time of abundance, are alike the path of faith. Happy those who under all circumstances are so before the Lord, and constrained by His love, as to be wholehearted for Him at all times and under all circumstances!

Things New and Old: Volume 24, More Brutish Than Any Man

This was Agur's judgment of himself. He might have had a very different opinion of his state in former years, but now he says, "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy." He does not say, I am become more brutish, but I am so. It was what he was in himself—his state. It is clear from what follows that he is one who is having to do with God, who is thinking of himself as in the searching light of His presence; and there he learns, not that he is good, and better than others, but that he is bad, and worse than others. And what else can be the estimate we form of ourselves when consciously before Him who is of purer eyes than to behold evil? An honored prophet, who was used to communicate much from God to man of the sufferings and glory of Messiah, was known to say when he saw His glory, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips." (Isa. 6:5.) Another, of whom God had said, "there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil"—when he was brought face to face, as it were, with God, was brought, not merely to know he was "vile," but to abhor himself. He said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself] and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:5, 6.) Again, we have an inspired psalmist saying, when in the sanctuary of God, "So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee." (Psalm 73:22.) And when another prophet was seriously recounting the ways of Jehovah, we hear him saying, u Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters. When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble," &c. (Hab. 3:15, 16.) But in Agur we find a man loathing himself indeed, estimating no one so unclean, unwise, and ignorant as himself. It is not so much what he has done that so bows him down, but what he is, what his true character is as a man; having powers and affections, but so ruined in the current of mere nature, that he sees no one so morally resembling the brute creation as himself. If he eats, and drinks, and sleeps, to satisfy the necessities of nature, so do brutes; only he might, perhaps, make personal application of the prophet's words: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isa. 1:3.) So low and groveling, so unclean and earthly-minded did he feel himself to be, so little did he find his thoughts and ways according to God, that he was loathsome in his own eyes, and could only say, "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have I the understanding of the holy."

The words which immediately follow these utterances of self-judgment are, "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the winds in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him." (Vers. 4, 5.) Thus the speaker is evidently having to do with God. For "who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?'' Is it not He whom God sent into the world to save sinners, who was delivered for our offenses, and whom God raised again for our justification? Is it not He who was "the Word made flesh, and dwelt among us," who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, according to the will of God? Is it not He whom God hath highly exalted, and crowned with glory and honor, because He finished the work of atonement, and had been obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? Is it not He of whom God says that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"? Of whom but God could it be said, He "hath gathered the wind in his fists, and bound the waters in a garment"? And did not Jesus command the raging winds and tumultuous sea to cease, and immediately there was a great calm? Well, then, may he challenge his hearers, and say, "What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?" All this is the secret which the gospel makes known, for "this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

A further proof that this self-judged, self-abased man is in the presence of God, is, that he received His word into his heart as divine truth, the word which effectually worketh in them that believe. God has spoken, and Agur has heard, and received the word from His mouth; so that he now not only boasts of the purity of the word, and the faithfulness and goodness of God to them that trust Him, but he becomes the guardian of the divine revelation, and is zealous for its preservation without human corruption. This was faith indeed, and faithfulness too, which is always the fruit of faith. He says, "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." (Vers. 5, 6.) Precious testimony to a divinely-wrought faith!

And does not self-abasement always accompany great faith? Let us hearken to our Lord's own words concerning it. A Gentile centurion applies to Him for His healing power to be put forth in a valued servant, who was at home, sick of the palsy, and grievously tormented. Jesus said, "I will come and heal him;" but the centurion's reply elicited from the Savior one of the most remarkable commendations of the greatness of faith recorded in scripture. Nor can we fail to notice that his unfeigned humility, his self-abasement, was one of its marked features. "The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed. Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Thus we see great humility of mind and self-unworthiness connected with "great faith." (Matt. 8:5-10.)

Look at another instance. A Syrophoenician woman applies to Jesus about her daughter, who was grievously vexed with a devil. At first she was wrong, because she applied to the Lord to do this for her as "Son of David," but afterward she learned that, being a Gentile, she was outside the covenanted blessings of Israel, and had no connection with " the sure mercies of David." She at length took her place before Him as a dog, an unclean creature, having no claim whatever to His goodness, and, as a cur dog, she waited for a crumb of bread to fall from the Master's table; thus she, as unworthy as a Gentile dog, would wait for a crumb, that might be cast unto a hungry, needy one, in the lowest place of self-abasement and need. She said, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." (Matt. 15:21-28.) Thus we have another example of great faith being associated with self-abasement. And is it not always the case?

Observe, then, that this God-fearing Agur, this man of faith, learned in the presence of God,, where we believe it can only be really taught—first, to loathe himself, and to own himself to be worse than any man; secondly, to know something of God, not only as Almighty, but of His Son, the One who both descended and ascended; thirdly, he found a divinely-laid foundation for his soul's confidence in the "word of God," and unquestionable assurance of safety too, for "He is a shield to them that put their trust in him;" fourthly, he contends for the revelation which God has given in His own word, and for that alone, as the true ground of faith. "Add thou not to his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." What rest this gives the soul!

He now is exercised as to his walk and conduct, both spiritually and temporally. The consciousness of entire dependence on God makes him a man of prayer. He earnestly entreats God to remove far from him vanity and lies, and to give him neither poverty nor riches. As to the first, nothing so hinders spiritual perception and growth as the empty pride and vanity of the natural heart being allowed, and false doctrine—lying statements about the truth, which look something like it, but when tested by holy scripture are found to be not the truth. We are told "no lie is of the truth." We can well understand this, and see how repugnant to the taste of a meek and lowly Christian must be the puffed up vanity of the fleshly mind, which Satan and flatterers are often seeking to do. Nothing so cripples faith, so hinders our testimony, so retards growth and spiritual edification, as proud, vain, self-confident, self-righteous thoughts! Lord, remove them far from us! And if man's traditions, the philosophy of rationalists, the infidelity of ritualists, the popery of protestantism, the unreasonable and unscriptural dogmas of others, occupy our minds, instead of the pure simple word of the living God, how can we be happy Christians, or really fruitful branches of the true vine? Well, then, may we cry earnestly to God in these last days and perilous times, "Remove far—yes far—from me vanity and lies."

But we are not yet in heaven. We have mortal bodies, needing food and raiment, and this our God is far from being unmindful of; and, concerning this, we may profitably ponder the prayer of this God-fearing man—"Give me neither poverty nor riches." And why? Why pray against being rich? Why not pray rather to be rich? Because he knew something of himself. He has been before God, and in His holy presence has learned to say, "I am more brutish than any man." Why, then, did he dread riches, and pray against being wealthy? Is it not a good thing for this life? Does not wealth give a man power, influence, usefulness? Ah, but this man is before God. He thinks how it might affect God's honor. He is afraid that if he were rich he might forget that he was a weak, unworthy man, more brutish than any man. He gives us the reason, and, oh, how clear and pointed it is! "Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?" He feared, if he had riches, that he might dishonor God, and be lifted up with pride, instead of pursuing that path of unfeigned dependence and lowliness which brings glory to God.

Then, is it well to be poor? Certainly not; he prays, therefore, that poverty might not be his portion; for few things, perhaps, are more distressing to a God-fearing man than to be pinched with poverty. He knows something of his own proclivities; he is taught to have no confidence in the flesh, and he fears, that if he were poor, he might fall into temptation, and defraud, over-reach, or steal, and bring dishonor on the name of his God. We can easily understand this. We may, then, profitably ponder his prayer, "Feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

Before closing these remarks, another interesting point remains to be noticed. It is this. Having seen what he is himself in God's presence, having also tasted the sweetness of the word of His grace; and diligently gone forward in the path of doing all to the glory of God, he is now able to see clearly the true condition of the people among whom he dwells. It was so with the prophet Isaiah; for when he found out that he was undone, and a man of unclean lips, he then saw that he dwelt among a people of unclean lips. We see in the case of Job also, that it was after he had so thoroughly judged and abhorred himself, that he saw the true state of his friends, and prayed for them; and we may be sure that no one has a correct estimate of those around who is not right before God as to himself and his ways.

The God-fearing Agur describes four classes of people.

1. "There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother." (Ver. 11.) These are the bad people of the world, those who are disorderly, self-willed, and unnatural in their ways. It is a generation that may be seen in almost every place. They are rude and insolent, and walk on the muddy side of the broad road which leadeth to destruction. Having grown up insubject to their parents, and to despise rule, they have made such progress in this sad course as to defy authority and despise dominion. How different from the obedient Son of God, whose delight it was to do the Father's will!

2. "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." (Ver. 12.) These are the good men of the world—the reformed, the moral, the virtuous, and benevolent. They boast of their good intentions, good heart, the extent of their benevolent undertakings, and the prosperity of all their doings; but with all this self-gratulation they know not forgiveness of sins. These walk on the clean side of the broad way which leadeth to destruction. It is a well-known generation. It is the way of Cain, who so ignored the fall of man that he dared to approach God without blood. Such self-made purity is the total denial of Christianity, which recognizes no purity of conscience, no cleansing of sin but by the precious blood of Christ.

3. "There is a generation, how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up." (Ver. 13.) Such clearly are Pharisees, so lofty are their eyes that they esteem themselves righteous, and despise others; so lifted up are their eyelids that they presume to thank God that they are not as other men are, or even as these wicked publicans, who can only cry, God be merciful to me, a sinner. It is a frightful delusion, and yet, alas! a common snare of Satan's. " how lofty are their eyes, and their eyelids are lifted up." This is a generation not easily to be mistaken.

4. "There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw-teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men." (Ver. 14.) These are the mockers, scoffers, skeptics, and infidels, who hate God's people, because they know not God, and despise His truth. They are an increasing generation, and especially to be noted in these last days. "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation?" (2 Pet. 3:3, 4.) Rationalists and philosophers they may be, but they see no beauty in Christ, they deny the need of redemption, proudly use their tongues to undermine the authority of scripture as a divine revelation; they gnash with their teeth on those who stand up for the Godhead glory of the Son, and His accomplished work of redemption, and hate and persecute the children of God.

It is perfectly clear that when the Holy Spirit works in souls. He shows them that they are sinners—guilty and lost sinners—in the sight of God, and, instead of mending and reforming such, or helping men to do it, He brings them to know that by the blood of Christ alone they can have a purged conscience, and be made fit for God's presence.

“He never leads a man to say, Thank God I’m made so good; But turns his eye another way, To Jesus and His blood.”

Christian Treasury: Volume 2, Four Little Things but Exceeding Wise: Proverbs 30:24-28

1. "The ANTS are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.”

The summer is the time when we have the opportunity to prepare our food for the winter that is fast coming upon us. The ants are exceeding wise because they take advantage of this opportunity and prepare their meat in the summer. Soon many will have to cry, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." "Exceeding wise" is the one who prepares his meat now, when he may do so.

In Matt. 9:37 we read: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few.”

In John 4:35, the Lord tells us: "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." The white harvest fields tell us that the time for the harvest is rapidly passing away.

In Rev. 14:15, the Word tells us:

“The harvest of the earth is dried.” (Margin.) The dried up harvest fields tell us it is too late for the harvest. In Jer. 8:20, we hear the sad cry: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." And that means they are LOST, LOST forever.

2. "The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.”

Like the feeble, little ants, they are "exceeding wise." They find their refuge in the cleft rock. They know the truth of the words of Psa. 18:2: "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.”

The ants teach us to prepare our food while we may: Christ, the bread of life.

The conies teach us to find our refuge in the rock, and that rock is Christ.

3. The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them gathered together. (Prov. 30:27, Margin.)

Having found food and refuge in Christ, the one who is wise, though perhaps weak and small, will now find Christ to be the One who gathers unto Himself. It may be that those "gathered together" unto Him are only "two or three," but we will find that Christ Himself is there in our midst. And the one who is thus gathered I together unto the Name of the Lord Jesus is, in God's sight, "exceeding wise.”

True, the world may not think so. The world would seek "a king," and the locusts "have no king," no visible, earthly leader or ruler, but they have the word of their Lord: "Where two or three are gathered together in [unto] My Name, there am I in the midst of them." And what more can we want?

4. "The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.”

When Moses made the tabernacle, God commanded that every board in it should rest upon two silver sockets, and each socket should weigh a talent: "a talent for a socket." Ex. 38:27. The weight was about 100 pounds. The silver for these sockets was provided by the "redemption money," and tells us of our redemption. Every board had two tenons, or, as the margin puts it, "two hands." And these "hands" took hold of the silver sockets "Two sockets under one board for his two tenons [or, hands,] and two sockets under another board for his two tenons [or, hands.]" Ex. 26:19.

I think those "hands" which took hold of the silver sockets, tell us of each believer taking hold, by faith, of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Thus we learn from Exodus of the faith of the spider in Proverbs that took hold with her hands and is in kings' palaces. Mr. Darby's translation gives us "lizard" instead of spider, and those who have lived in the tropics and watched the little lizards running about on the ceiling, by "taking hold with her hands," and there devouring the mosquitoes and other insects that so often inhabit a tropical house will better understand the force of "taking hold with her hands." Those little hands of the lizard are provided with what they need to take hold, in some unseen manner, of the ceiling of the kings' palaces, and there she makes her home.

It is true, as the locusts taught us, that we have no visible king, but the spider (or, lizard) tells us that by faith we look for the Father's house, a home, where "God is known in her palaces for a refuge." Psa. 48:3. And of the One of whom it is said, "God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows," it is also said, "All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad." Psa. 45:7, 8.

Just one word more. Note that the ants and the conies and the locusts are all in the plural, but when we come to the one that takes hold with her hands, we find the singular only. Faith must be an individual thing, something for each one of us. I must take hold of those silver sockets of redemption for my very own self. May God help us to have the exceeding wisdom of these FOUR LITTLE THINGS.

G. C. Willis

Messages of God's Love: 1925, Close to a Refuge, but Outside

THE following short paper has been sent by a collier: he says, “The subject of our narrative was a miner. And notwithstanding the many deliverances he had witnessed when in danger, yet he was a rejecter of that blessed One, who came to “seek and to save the lost.” The writer

had many times spoken to him about his soul’s salvation: to which he was always indifferent, at the same time thinking the eleventh hour to be time enough.

“In November 1881, he left his home for his usual work; while going along a narrow road in the pit leading to his work place, he was overtaken by a water car that had broken loose some distance above. He was knocked down and killed in a moment, as it were, close to a refuge hole, but outside of it. What a fulfillment of God’s word, ‘He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy?’ Had he accepted Christ as his Refuge, then the sudden change would have been sudden glory. This paper may be read by some who are saying ‘Time enough yet, I am not exposed to those dangers referred to: and I am in health and strength’ just think for one moment. Should the Lord call His own to meet Him, while you are reading these lines, and find you a rejecter, what would your health and strength avail you?”

Yes, the poor miner was near to a safety hole, cut in the side of the narrow path. Away from that safety, there was no escape from destruction of the body. Just outside the ark, when God shut Noah in, was sure destruction, and no escape. Have you not heard the gospel? Are you near the place of refuge, but not in Christ, still outside? How dreadful to be exposed to everlasting destruction. There is no other place of refuge. And how soon the roll and thunder of judgment will be heard on this doomed earth.

Are you in the place of safety—in Christ? There all is eternal peace. There are two words, one of which you must hear from Christ, “Come unto Me,” or “Depart from Me.”

If not “come,” then it will be “depart.” Do you say, When may I come to Christ? When may I enter the place of safety? Now, now, He says, come unto Me, and I will give you rest. There is not a moment to be lost. It was too late for the miner to step into the refuge, though close at hand. Forever too late. May the Holy Spirit, as you read these simple lines, bring you to take eternal refuge in Christ.

ML 01/18/1925

Christian Treasury: Volume 4, Visions

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." Prov. 29:18.

When we first read this verse, there seems to be no connection between the first part and the last part, but I believe that there is. "Where there is no vision the people perish." But there is power in the Word of God to enlighten the soul and to save it. To keep the law is to walk according to that Word.

As we look around us we can see men and women perishing for lack of vision. There are visions which are from God and there are others which are false visions. Often men are spoken of as being "men of vision." but they have vision only for things of this world and are blind to the things of God and to eternity.

“He that keepeth the law" is wise because it gives the revealed and perfect will of God. In Psa. 119:34 we read. "Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy law: yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart." And in verse 130 it says: "The entrance of Thy words giveth light: it giveth understanding unto the simple." Only as the Word of God enters into the soul can it have light and understanding and receive true vision.

No Vision

The Word of God gives us examples of those who had vision and others who did not. Let us read 1 Sam. 25:2-12. Nabal was a man who had received much in the way of consideration and favor from David. Nabal means fool and like a fool he had no vision to see that David was God's appointed king.

There are so many today who have mercies showered upon them, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, but are unwilling to acknowledge His goodness. He desires to bring you into blessing. If you go on denying the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ upon you, how sad it will be, for you also will perish for lack of vision. Nabal paid the penalty for his lack of vision; he perished because he failed to recognize David's claims.

On the other hand, Abigail went to David. She had vision to see that in the one who was driven from place to place was the Lord's anointed king and that in due time he would reign. Abigail was afterward brought into a place of blessing and later to share David's glory because she saw in him the king of God's choice.

Today, vision is needed to discern in the despised and rejected Lord Jesus Christ, God's appointed Savior and King, to whom every knee must bow.

In the New Testament we read of another who was rich in this world's goods but lacked vision in Luke 18:18-24:

A certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery. Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Now when Jesus heard these things, He said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, He said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

This tells us of a rich man who had no vision. "The rich man's wealth is his strong tower," and that is what this young man thought. He came to the Lord Jesus Christ, but he had no vision to see in Him who was going about their streets, the One who would fulfill all God's counsels. If he had had vision he would have known Him as the One who was the Object of all God's purposes: he would have seen in Him God's beloved Son.

Vision of Faith

Hebrews 11 is a chapter that brings before us a great cloud of witnesses to the blessedness of having a vision, the vision of faith. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." All in Heb. 11 had vision, for it is faith that enables us to see and to know that which is hidden from our natural eyes.

It was faith that gave Abraham the seed. Abraham had a vision of the Lord of glory, and also had a vision of the inheritance that was to be his. God gave him to know that he had a heavenly place. The Lord Jesus said of Abraham, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and He saw it, and was glad." John 8:56.

There is another example in Heb. 11:24-27 of Moses:

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

What a wonderful thing faith is! Moses saw the emptiness of all the glory of Egypt. He saw the great reward of serving the invisible God and he was ready to forsake all for what God had for him.

What a Savior God has provided for us. He has told us that He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, and He is coming soon to receive us to Himself.

Vision of Glory

On the Damascus road, Saul of Tarsus, the proud, aggressive and powerful Pharisee received his vision of the glory of Christ. He knew that Jesus of Nazareth, whose name he hated and whose followers he wished to destroy, was truly the Lord, God's appointed Savior. That vision of glory shining into his heart turned the persecutor, Saul, into the humble bond slave of Jesus Christ.

We read in the Old Testament, in Hos. 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." It was the lack of knowledge that destroyed Nabal. He did not know God's purposes for David's glory as God's appointed king of Israel, but looked upon him merely as some sort of a bandit leader, though his servants could have told him how much he owed to the care of David and his band.

Vision That Saves

The Word of God had been preached to the Thessalonians and had brought them to God.

For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.
1 Thess. 1:9, 10.

We see what kind of a church they were: a church with a vision that saved them. They knew Christ as their Deliverer from the wrath to come. We also by faith know Him as our Deliverer and our Savior.

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. 1 Thess. 2:13.

It is the Word of God which had come into their lives. God is light and also God is love. In Acts 18 we see how Paul had gone to the Thessalonians and preached Christ to them. That word which they had heard they received as it was in truth, the Word of God.

May you have your eyes opened to see a vision of Christ on the cross as your Savior and now on high in the glory, awaiting the day that God has appointed when He shall come back again, first to receive His redeemed people out of this world and then to be manifested in His glory as the Lord of lords.

H.F. Collier

A Message From God: 1921, Fear at Christmas

Fear at Christmas allayed by a text of Scripture when I was a child. I have had many Christmases, but never one more remarkable than the following, which occurred when I was a child. My sweet sister Sophia (three years older than I) and I used to sleep together in a large room, but one day our aunt begged for her to pay her a visit at Plymouth; so I was left alone and had to go upstairs in the dark and get to bed as best I could. Well, I know I had had Christmas things to cheer me, and even a box of lovely sweets and cakes to eat, if I liked; but alone, and in semi-darkness, so frightened me, that I quivered with fear and trembling; but, thank God, I asked Him to help me. He did, and, remarkable to say, this text came to my mind, which I suppose I must have heard at family prayer or had read it at my morning Bible lesson; it is found in Proverbs 28:1, and as it was in my reading last evening it made me recollect the terror of that Christmas night I speak of, until I boldly repeated the text, “The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion.” Through God’s goodness I became at once “bold as a lion,” and felt I need not fear anything, for His Word was my stay and comfort. I undressed and went into bed and slept in perfect peace.Emily P. Leakey.

Echoes of Mercy: Volume 14 (1904), "Boast Not Thyself of Tomorrow."

IT was on a cold evening just before Christmas last, that two young men stood together in a leading thoroughfare in London. The day had been spent in company, and now they were separating. “Good-bye, old chap,” said the elder of the two; “when we next meet, it will be in

some out-of-the-way place in India. I'm off on the 29th." Yes, so had he arranged — passage taken, and everything prepared; but, alas! it is to be feared, without reference to God's will or asking counsel of Him. He went home to his lodgings, and later on to a bed from which he was never to rise again.

In the morning he was called as usual, and as he did not come to breakfast, a gentleman in the house went to his room, touched him, and found his body "icy cold." A doctor who was summoned immediately, said he had been dead several hours. Only thirty-three! In the prime of life and energy, in good social position, with everything bright and pleasant as far as this world is concerned, suddenly called away; and what then? It is written: "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccl. 11:3).

Of his state of soul all that can be said is that God knoweth. Conscientious, kind, a good son and brother, was the verdict of friends; but however good these things may be, they are of no avail for salvation in the sight of a holy, heart-searching God, without belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and acceptance of Him as our own personal Saviour.

Reader, if called away thus suddenly, what would be your lot? It is written, "Once to die, but after this the judgment," to one without Christ; but to the believer in His finished work on the cross, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8); "To depart and be with Christ is far better" (Phil. 1:23).

Reader, again, which would it be with you? Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.

S. H.

The Remembrancer: 1910, "A Word Fitly Spoken"

... As to Eph. 4 (gifts, &c.), we must remember that it does not treat of ornaments before the world, but of the tender and precious care of Christ for that which He loves as His own flesh. In result, man cannot frustrate this care; he may know very little how to profit by it; the appreciable result down here may be but small, but the thought of God in blessing will be always accomplished, because our folly, though culpable (Matt. 18:7), gives room for His wisdom. If Israel had not courage to go up the mountain of the Amorites, and as to the then present circumstance lost, and lost what they did not find again, they learned—at least, Joshua and Caleb and others, and we ourselves likewise—much as to themselves, which set them in a relationship much more real, more true with God, according to what Israel was, and what God was, and gave God an opportunity for the display of His grace and power, taking care of even the nap of their coats, and not allowing their feet to swell; for a manifestation much more remarkable of His power and of His ways in the crossing of Jordan dryshod, and in all the details of their entrance into Canaan, from the testimony of Balaam after the long passage of the desert—all these things being necessary to the full revelation of the ways and counsels of God.

Was it then that the sin of Israel was the work of God? By no means. This unbelief was already in their heart; the arrival at the mountain was but the opportunity for its manifestation. God may permit and arrange events for the manifestation of sin—never in order to produce it—and the manifestation (being under grace) brings all into the light, and is a means of progress.

Then, to say that because the church has failed, it gets necessarily into a worse condition, is true and false at the same time. As a public vessel of testimony to the truth on the earth, to its shame, that is true; but it is impossible that God or Christ should be unfaithful, and the fact of the manifest and general failure gives room for a concentration of energy and of light, which gives so much the more clearness, as the space it illumines is small. Israel, when the precious Savior was there, was always going on worse, was tending to its ruin, but He shines with a light ever brighter, as it is concentrated in what He was Himself, instead of lending itself to His relations, true but temporary and obligatory, with the Jews. This is the reason why, though all is so beautiful, the Lord appears in John with a light and perfection infinitely more touching and striking—why we see Him better than in the other gospels. We are more entirely with Him, with Him alone, with what He was in Himself. There the Jews are set aside. Who in the history of Israel shines in the midst of darkness like Elijah? The only one in testimony, the only one, save the hidden remnant, whom the eye of God recognized and whom the faith of the prophet ought to have known, if he had been near enough to God to have His thoughts.. I find in the Psalms, that faith is much more simple and calm when the remnant is driven away.

It is the same, I believe, with the church, at least, one may look for it; not that the vessel should be repaired and set right, but that the true church, those at least who in heart are waiting for the Lord, will be always more true in their position, will understand the Lord's heart better, will be more united amongst themselves, a " little flock," but who will know much better the voice and the heart and the thoughts of the Good Shepherd. The ground which the enemy gains can only be over the flesh and over the general testimony: it is sad, but understood by the faithful one, and, after Sardis, the manifest general condition. If I find Laodicea to be spued out, I find Philadelphia, which has the ear and heart of the Savior, little strength, but which has not denied His name, but which has kept His word. We are working for the most part with those, the half of whom do not know the immense principles in. question; but if there is faithfulness, a single eye, God keeps them. But to be always waiting for the Lord, that is our strength. " There are many called, but few chosen." Alas! decline is the continual tendency, but the Savior never declines. Keeping close to Him, one will have, not perhaps a public testimony common to the masses—they are always rather the fruit of a testimony—but still, the testimony oh His part in the fullness of His power, according to the need of the church; for His power and His love never change. This is a subject that goes to the heart, and I know that I can trust Him, though I have often been cast down at the sight of the determination of the church to put aside grace and blessing, and the power which the enemy puts forth in deceiving her.

I have lost much time at—, through failing to follow sufficiently closely the leadings of the Holy Ghost, and I am suffering for it now, having to do through greater difficulty that which, having been done much more easily before, would have left me free to do what I cannot now accomplish as I should desire, but now I put myself again in His loving hands; I must learn my lesson of the mountain and the Jordan. We are in sorrowful times; let us not be surprised at it, only let us be near Him, in order to make shine clearly, without obscuring it, what He gives.

You are entering I think upon that period of activity which makes a life of reflection a far more hidden life than before. This is a very real progress in Christian life. I liked divine philosophy, it is still to my taste. As long as the external life is composed of this, we have the appearance of being far more spiritual and deep. Thus, the steam which escapes from the engine, appears to have much more force than that which draws the heavy train, which only appears to offer resistance to the movement that it is sought to give it; but it is when hidden for the

most part, that the force really acts. In this way its reality also is put to the proof. And why do I say that it is real progress? It is because, it makes less appearance before men, because it is more entirely before God, with whose approval we must be satisfied. We must be content to possess the thing with Him, nay —to find it in Him; but that is to possess it in reality. It is the principle of moral perfection, to enjoy things instead of accrediting oneself with them in the eyes of others. Active Christian life is a common life of service, in contact with human passions, faults and weaknesses, in a word, in contact with the flesh. But to act in it, to introduce God in it (and this is what Christ was) there must be power, we must be really in communion with Him—participating thus in that nature that nothing encroaches on, and which shines in its own perfection in the midst of all—to be above all that we meet with.

Divine philosophy, supposing it to be real, and to meet with no opposition when displayed before others, is an easy enjoyment; and, as I have said, one may clothe oneself with it, and display it to admiring eyes. To walk in Christian life, we must be what we admire: that is another thing. We must be divine, in the sense of being made partakers of His nature. And this is why JESUS was the most isolated of men, and at the same time, the most accessible, the most gracious; the most isolated, because He lived in absolute communion with His Father, and found no echo, no sympathy answering to the perfect love which was in Him; the most accessible, the most gracious. because He was that love towards others. Speaking of the ineffable work which was to open up a way for that love through all the sin, He says: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it is accomplished." That baptism of bitterness and death, which made an end of sin, even in its last stronghold and its last title of destruction, through the righteousness of God against us, gave free course to that love in its infinite designs of grace; for love is infinite in its inventions for the happiness of that which is loved, and the love of God purposes that which is beyond all our thoughts. It is the spring of the thoughts of the Infinite God. And again, when towards the end of His course the opportunity presents itself, at the moment when the unbelief of His own makes Him say: " How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?" (for—and this is what he expects from us in this poor world—there was not, even in His own, faith or capacity to make use of the resources of grace and power which were in Him) He adds, without even a moment's interval, Bring thy son hither " (Luke 9:41). The consciousness of being isolated in His love, so that others did not even understand how to profit by it, does not, for a moment, arrest His energy and activity. The same sentence which contains the " how long," says also " bring thy son hither."

What was then the life of this JESUS, the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief? A life of activity in obscurity, causing the love of God to penetrate the most hidden corners of society, wherever needs were greatest; among those whom human pride repelled, in order to maintain its own reputation, but whom the love of God sought, because He needed not to establish for Himself a reputation, or to preserve one. He was always the same: and the more He apparently compromised Himself, the more He manifested Himself in a perfection which never belied itself. The love of God needed not, like human society, to protect itself from that which laid it too bare. It was always itself. The arduous life of JESUS was passed in seeking souls in all circumstances. It went through everything that could put it to the proof, but we see in it a divine reality which never failed; then—in presence of self-righteousness and pride, and the tyrannical boldness of the contra diction of sinners, or in favor of some poor crushed soul, or, lastly, to justify the ways of God in their favor—we discover in it from time to time a divine mine of touching, exquisite thoughts, a depth of truth which disclosed its perfection by its simplicity, showing a soul always fed with the most intimate communion with infinite love and perfect holiness. He was the One who could say, " We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; " the One who weighed evil by the perfection of good which was in Himself, and who found in the fearful discoveries (if we may speak of discoveries where all was laid bare) which the holiness of His soul made, opportunities for the manifestation of infinite love. Rather, it was the love, of a holy Being which made these discoveries, a love which clothed itself with a grace which, by its very humiliation, placed itself within the reach of all the needs of the heart, and which, at the same time, in presence of the pride of man, showed itself at the height of the dignity and the majesty of God.

How beautiful to see this Person (these divine qualities piercing through the humiliation) place Himself within the reach of these whom the world despised, and find" being wearied with His journey " and becoming a debtor for a cup of cold water to a woman who hardly dare show herself with others—meat to eat which the world, and even His disciples, knew nothing of; and that in the deliverance of a poor heart, crushed by the weight of a bad conscience and the contempt of her fellow creatures to whom He had given back (or rather, given) the spring of life and joy. What a perspective of blessing for poor sinners this opened to His soul! For He did not despise such consolation in the midst of a world which drove Him from its bosom. Thus love comforts itself: the heart which loves the sinner needs such consolation in such a world. But where is it to be found? In retirement, in the labors of a life which had to do with the common need of souls, but still abiding in the truth; for this life did not shelter itself from the misery of the world, to walk in the midst of that which has an appearance only (" a vain show ") but it brought into it—precious grace!—the love of God. He was that of which others could write.

How many needs, hidden even in the most degraded souls, would be confessed, would come to light, if a love, a goodness which could give them confidence, were presented to them: but for this, one must be content, often to find oneself in the midst of such degradation, being preserved from it only by what is within: and this was the life of the Lord. How many souls are whirling in pleasure, in order to silence the moral griefs which devour them? Divine love not only answers needs, it makes them speak. It is delightful to see the opening out of a soul, and, at the same time, the entrance of spiritual intelligence. One may not exactly seek the degradation I speak of, but one finds the world knowing that is the truth as to what is found there, and its outward forms do not stop it. But it is a life of labor, of patience and of blessedness, which has no equal. Christ could say through all, " That they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves." Without doubt " there are diversities of gifts," but even when God opens this path before us in His grace, how slow we are to follow the track of the One who would draw us there. But let us take courage, grace is there in the path He opens to us; we find it day by day as we go onward; and what glory, when all the principles have been formed in the heart by faith, blossom in heaven, and are reproduced in the fullness of their results according to the heart of God. Meanwhile "we walk by faith and not by sight." " And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." " Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

"How will recompense His smile

The sufferings of this `little while.'

The Remembrancer: 1909, "A Word Fitly Spoken"

1

RO 25:11{

In these " last days," those who, in the fear of the Lord, have acted on the word in 2 Timothy in purging themselves from the vessels to dishonor in the " great house " and also in following righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart," have found how truly they are " perilous (‘ difficult ') times " —in which the pretensions and the energies of man are highly manifested. It is not an easy thing to be content with being simply what we are in reality before God. Times of " revival" reveal the thoughts of many hearts; but to learn in a day of grace to abide in peace, and know that God is God, is completely above the education of the flesh.

The spirit of the age affects many Christians who labor to restore the "old things" for the service of God, instead of being broken before Him by the feeling of their own fall. I do not at all doubt their sincerity, but I fear that they have not judged themselves, that they know not the actual state of the ruin that surrounds them; so that they cannot have an adequate confidence only in the living God, as in the God of all resources in the midst of this scene where man has failed in everything.

We ought never to be afraid of the whole truth. To confess openly what we are in the presence of what God is, such is always the path of peace and of blessing. If it be thus when even only two or three are found before God, there will not be disappointments, nor fallen hopes. If the wells dug in the days of Abraham have been filled and stopped up with earth, we have nevertheless to do with a God who can make water issue out of the rock, even when struck, and cause it to flow in the parched desert to refresh His people, thirsty and fatigued.

I do not envy the labor of those who dig canals in the sand for the streams, which after all may take another course.

The active ways of God, in all times of blessing, consist in reproducing the glories of the work of the Lord Jesus. The darker the long night of apostasy becomes, the more distinctly the light of life shines. The word to the remnant is, " Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts" (1 Pet, in 15). He is the only gathering point. Men make among themselves confederations (Isa. 8:11-14). having many things in view; but the communion of saints cannot be known unless every line converge on this living Center.

The Holy Spirit does not gather the saints around simple views, true as they may be, on what the church is, on what it has been, or on what it may be on the earth. He gathers them always around this blessed Person who is the same yesterday and today, and forever! " Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them " (Matt. 18:20). We are certain that Satan and the flesh will seek to resist this work and this way of the Lord, or to overthrow them.

We have need to be guarded from boasting, as is the case in these days; we need to be kept peaceful in the presence of God: there is so much independence and self-will almost everywhere. " We shall do great things " is the most unbecoming cry that can be heard at this time, when the light has made evident how little has been done.

God has made us know His truth as that which delivers us: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free " (John 8:32). This liberty is not that of the flesh, because it penetrates our hearts with all the reality of a separation well known to God, who is holy. Thus one gets straight into His position with one's heart humbled and broken. If anyone talks of separation from evil without being humbled about it, let him beware lest his position be simply that which at all times has formed sects, and has also produced heterodoxy in doctrine.

As to our service, we have seen our precious Lord and Master in profound abasement wash the feet of His disciples, giving Himself as an example-to whom? To us assuredly. Now I know no service at the present time which is worthy of Him and agreeable to Him, if not done in humiliation (cf. Acts 20:19). This is not the time to speak of a place for ourselves. If the church of God so dear to Christ, is in this world dishonored, dispersed, ignorant and afflicted, he who has the mind of Christ will always take the lowest place. The true service of love will seek to give according to the wants of, and will never think of putting shame on, the objects of the Master's love, because of their necessity.

The men taught of God for His service come forth from a place of strength, where they have learned their own weakness and their own nothingness. They find that Jesus is everything in the presence of God; and Jesus is everything for them, in all and through all. Such persons in the hand of the Holy Spirit are real helps for the children of God; they will not contend for a place of distinction, or authority among the scattered flock. Communion of man with God with respect to the Church is shown by a frank disposition to be nothing in it, and thus one will be happy in one's heart in spending and being spent.

In our personal remembrances we have lessons to learn with fear and trembling.

May the thoughts of power never occupy our hearts too much: " Power belongeth unto God " (Psa. 62:11). For some years there has been a time of excitement, men seeking power everywhere, and crossing seas to find it. Many thought of the church; but it was rather the church in power.

They have felt and said that the power was lost; how regain it? From that time they became occupied with earthly things, as if they could work deliverance here below.

Some may recollect how Satan put man forward, and the result has been the same everywhere. Whatever the form that such efforts adopted in days of confusion and excitement, they were invariably agreed to let all go on perceiving their deception (for all failed in their objects, and the result was only sects). There were even mortal marks of hostility against the Lord Jesus; or if His name was left untarnished, they prepared, nevertheless, the way for the terrible result of annulling the presence of the Holy Spirit, who alone can glorify Jesus.

The Great Shepherd will not forget the labor done in his name with a happy heart for His dear sheep, poor and necessitous. An unfading crown of glory and abundant praise in the day of His appearing, will be the portion of those who meanwhile act thus. God will own all that He can own and none will lose His recompense. I am not surprised at the disappointments which have followed all the efforts men have made in the church to introduce some formal system of ministry, authority or government. God cannot allow men to come and arrange the ground on which in these days He is pleased to find and bless His saints. We know very well what is the path of the flesh, which is completely indifferent about the fall of the church: it is to occupy a place among men where God has not granted it.

There is great instruction in the conduct of Zerubbabel, related in Ezra (3.). The son and heir of David takes his place with a remnant returning from captivity. He is content to labor in Jerusalem, without a throne, without a crown. In building the altar of the Lord and the house of God, he simply served God in his own generation. Heir of the place that Solomon had formerly occupied in the days of prosperity and glory, he speaks neither of his birth nor of his own rights; yet is he faithful in all the path of separation, grief and struggles he is obliged to pass through. May the Lord render us more and more peaceful and confiding in Himself in these days of trial. "When I am weak, then I am strong," is a lesson Paul had to learn by a very humbling process. If we speak of our testimony on the earth, it will soon be evident that it is all nothing but weakness, and, like the seed that is lost by the wayside, the testimony will end all the same for our shame. But if the living God has by us, on the earth, a testimony to His own glory, then the feeling of weakness will only draw us more directly to the place of power. An apostle with a thorn in his flesh learns the sufficiency of the grace of Christ. A little remnant is gathered and assembled, having nothing in which it can boast in the flesh; but it is thus that it is suited to remain faithful to the name of the Lord Jesus, when that which seemed to be something before men has failed.

Neither anger nor prudence nor pretensions of man can do anything in the state of confusion in which the church is now. I have no hope in the efforts that some are making to insure themselves an ecclesiastical position. In an earthquake, when the ground is undermined from its foundations, it matters little for a man to see how he can make his dwelling agreeable. We shall find it better to remain where we are set by the first discovery of the ruin of things in the hands of men, and with our faces in the dust. Such is the place that belongs to us if right, and after all it is the place of blessing. In the Apocalypse, John learns the actual state of the churches, falling at the feet of Christ. He was afterward taken to heaven in order that thence he might later on see the judgments on the earth; but evil in the church can never be well known, save when one is humbled at the feet of Jesus.

I have read of a time when several gathered together in such a grief of spirit that for a long time they could not utter a single word; but the floor of their meeting room was moistened with their tears. Were the Lord to grant us still such meetings it would be well to frequent these houses of tears: " They that sow in tears shall reap in joy " (Psa. 126:5). It is not only for an earthly remnant that that is true, but it is also written for us. I should willingly make a long journey to join persons thus afflicted, but I should not take a single step with a view to receiving, at the hands of the most excellent of men, power to overthrow all to-day, and to reconstitute tomorrow.

All that we can do is to walk with vigilance, but peacefully, thinking of the interests of the Lord Jesus; as to ourselves having nothing to gain and nothing to lose. The path of peace, the place of testimony, is to seek to please God. We need to be very watchful over ourselves, lest, after having been preserved from the corruptions of the age by very precious truths, made known to us in our weakness, we should be caught in the net of presumption, or launch out into insubordination-a thing that God never can own or tolerate. " Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace." The word of God is the same to-day as ever. All that has happened has not changed His purpose, which is to glorify the Lord Jesus. If we are humbled before Him, all that belongs to the glory of Christ will be to us of great moment. And what do we wish more?

Evil as the days are, and ragged and dirty as the path is through which we are called to pass (a path where false profession has made sloughs and mires, and wherein the high way is broken down) yet there is a bright bit at the end upon the earth, even that terminus wherein shall be heard, ere the Spirit leaves the earth, ere the Bride has gone on high, those blessed precious words, " The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." Professors may not know where the Spirit is now; and many may be saying "and where is the church, that assembly which was set up at Pentecost? " But faith can look on high, faith can see, read and know the living thoughts of the risen and ascended Lord, and faith knows how His heart and mind have the assembly, the Bride in them and carry her there; and faith, too, feels and owns the claims which are upon oneself to live and walk here as part of this same Bride which shall be adorned and meet for her Lord: a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, in yet a little while, I want the reality of that, His present love to be more tasted, more enjoyed, more practically lived upon by myself and by those He loves who are here below.

And surely now is the time for this. Rebecca on her camel's back (Gen. 24), as Rebecca leaving her kindred, and Rebecca journeying through the strange journey, needed to stay herself upon her good fortune and to feed herself with her high calling: when she came to Sarah's tent hope was in measure changed to sight.

And it is not an unreasonable thing, either, to urge this. He who is on high is as much set now on giving forth to us, daily and hourly, as He was set once, in time past (Luke 9:51;12:50; 13:33), on getting to the cross where He made an end of our guilt, having borne there the judgment due to us; or, as He will be in the time to come, when He will bid us rise up hence and come away with Him. His face, now unveiled, He shows to us on high; His faithful love He proves now to us down here; and He lets us know too, that to His heart and mind that coming is no secondary thing of little importance. If once He cried, " I have a baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened till it be accomplished," so now He says, " Surely I come quickly." One great grief to Him when He was down here, was that none of His own shared with Him His thoughts—were prepared for His self-renunciation. Just so now, I judge that His joy is in those who do think of what is now dear to His own mind, what He is about to bring out to light when He comes to be admired in all those that believe (2 Thess. 1:10).

I used to think that I had lively faith, communion and hope; but as I get older I find myself more like a babe faithfully watched over by a mother's eye, and seem to get more satisfied to see what His thoughts of today are about me and what His plans for the morrow. Less account made of my feelings, more of His. Less notice of my faith, more of the fact that He died in my stead. More consciousness of the worth of His presence in heaven as a fact, than of the feelings which the knowledge of it produces in me—more counting on the certainty of His coming back, in order to put the finishing stroke to what He has wrought than of the flutter of expectancy. Not that the work wrought in us by the Holy Ghost has sunk in value in my thoughts, but that I look more at the outgoings of that work in me. To me to live is Christ. The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Individual attachment of the soul to the person of the Lord seems of growing importance. He bare the wrath in our stead; He has confessed in heaven above His love to us; He means to come and fetch us home. How can I say such things and not want to see HIMSELF, His own very self? True, when He comes, the scene will be surpassingly grand and blessed—Himself, the Resurrection and the Life, corning out from God to turn the low estate of those who have trusted in Him, to an occasion in which to show forth the glories of His own divine Person as the Resurrection and the Life. He will come and will call up out of the grave all that believed in Him—and then, standing on the cloud, will cause the life wherewith He will have quickened those that are alive and remain to His coming, to burst forth; and then their bodies shall be as instinct with His life as the souls of His people already are; and He will catch them away to be with Himself forever in the Father's house. Most blessed as this, the doctrine of 1 Thess. 4, is—my soul seems to find its deeper more individual portion in chapter i. I appreciate Him; and do so in the very presence of God: He loves me

and I love Him, and I wait for Him to come from heaven. The individuality is so blessedly seen on the one hand, and the contrast between this divinely wrought love to Himself and the poor world all around. It is, too, one's portion for to-day, just where we are now.

Christian Truth: Volume 14, Apples of Gold

"Apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Pro. 25:11) means, divine fruit shown out in redemption. Fruit, the result of the Holy Spirit within us, is displayed on the beautiful picture of redemption, which we are in Christ Jesus.

Eastern Manners and Customs Illustrating Various Bible Passages, Eastern Manners and Customs: "Like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver"

" A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."-Prov. 25

A word " spoken fitly" or as in the margin "on its wheels"-not flung in nor pushed in, but glided in at the fitting opportunity and suited to him to whom it is addressed-is both beautiful and precious, like golden fruit seen, through the pure frosted network of a silver basket. Such a word was once spoken to the great emperor Theodosius, who at one time was disposed to waver in his belief in the divinity of our Lord. On day he was seated on his imperial throne in the great hall of his palace at Constantinople, and by his side sharing his throne and splendor was his little son Arcadius, on whom he had just bestowed the title and honors of Augustine. An aged bishop approached to salute his sovereign. He bowed with all reverence to Theodosius, but turned away without seeming to notice Arcadius. The Emperor, thinking it an oversight, called him back, and in a friendly manner pointed to the prince, upon which the bishop coolly went up to the child, stroked him on the head, and said with the familiar air he might have used to a peasant " God save thee, my son." The Emperor's indignation rose in a moment. Raising his voice he angrily commanded his guards to drive the insolent old man from his presence. But as he was being led to the door the bishop found time to " Thus, O Emperor, will the Lord of heaven do to those who fail to obey His commands, and to honor the Son even as they honor the Father." The lesson was rude and simple, but it was striking and well-fitted to impress the mind of him to whom it was addressed. Theodosius never forgot it. -Anon.

Christian Treasury: Volume 6, A Word Fitly Spoken

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Prov. 25:11.

A word fitly spoken is both beautiful and precious, like golden fruit seen through the pure frosted network of a silver basket. The marginal reading for fitly spoken is, "on its wheels"-not flung in nor pushed in, but glided in at the fitting opportunity and suited to the person to whom it is addressed.

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The Emperor's indignation rose in a moment. Raising his voice he angrily commanded his guards to drive the insolent old man from his presence. But as he was being led to the door, the bishop found time to say: "Thus, O Emperor, will the Lord of heaven do to those who fail to obey His commands, and to honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

The lesson was rude and simple, but it was striking and well fitted to impress the mind of him to whom it was addressed. Theodosius never forgot it.

"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him." John 5:22, 23. Young Christian

Edification: Volume 1, What Occupies Our Thoughts?

“MY head,” said one of the most famous men in English literature, “is like a tavern in which a company of low punch-drinkers have taken up the room that might have been filled with lords drinking burgundy.” It was an arresting saying and many of us may have to confess that our heads are not unlike that. Having the flesh within us and the world around us it is easy for us to become carnal and worldly in our thoughts, and our characters and ways cannot be better than our thoughts, for the Scripture says of man, “As he thinketh in his heart so is he” (Prov. 23:7). If it is so with us, what a dishonor it is to God who has made us His children, and what a loss of present joy and blessing it is to us.

The importance of our thinking cannot be exaggerated, everything indeed, whether of joy to ourselves, testimony to others, or, glory to God, depends upon it. The Epistle to the Philippians was one of the last written by the Apostle Paul, probably the very last written to a church. It is a beautiful epistle, full of Christ, and of the wonderful effect that the knowledge of Him has in the lives of men upon earth. Paul wrote this farewell letter to that church that he loved so well that they might understand all this better, and we know that he was moved and inspired by

the Holy Ghost to do this. He closes the Epistle with a series of exhortations, and the last of these is certainly not the least important. It comes down to us with all its force, and only as we heed it can we be kept from slipping away from our steadfastness and joy in the Lord.

“Finally, brethren,” he says, “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” We feel as we read this list of exalted things that our heads will not be like a tavern of low punch-drinkers if they fill our thoughts, but where are they to be found? We must have guidance if we are to get on the track of them. And Paul does not leave us to our own imaginations as to what they are, but continues, “Those things, which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.” In a former chapter he had written, “For me to live is Christ.” So that these things that controlled Paul’s mind and came out in his speech and deeds when he was at Philippi, whether by the river-side, in the house of Lydia, in the inner dungeon, the jailor’s house or in the assembly, are all enfolded and disclosed in Christ.

But the heart lies at the back of the mind and that which we love most occupies our thoughts most. The low punch-drinkers love their punch, the sensual man thinks sensually because he loves sensuality, and the man who loves the Lord Jesus thinks of Him, and consequently, speaks of Him and he becomes like Him in his ways. It was so with Paul, and we are to be like him. I need not say that we love and rejoice in the Lord as we realize His love to us. But this exhortation as to thinking is necessary or it would not be given. We shall have to set our minds with purpose to it, and fill them up with Christ, or the “low punch-drinkers” will fill them, for none of our minds can be a vacuum.

There is a present result of this right thinking. So Paul writes further, “THE GOD OF PEACE SHALL BE WITH YOU.” Not only shall we be able to hold converse with the very aristocracy of God’s kingdom of peace, but the God of peace Himself will be with us. This is truly wonderful. We know of course that God ever found His delight in His beloved Son. He said so twice in the hearing of men when the Lord Jesus was on earth, but this word declares that He finds His delight in those who delight in Him also; if our minds are filled with the beauties and glories of Christ God will give us His company. It will be His joy to do so. We know that when we may choose our company, we go to those whom we love and in whom we can find our pleasure and with whom we have things in common. It is so with God Himself. He delights in the company of those who delight in Christ; and what a dignity this puts upon them, they are truly peers in His kingdom of peace and can drink with Him and one another the wine of His joy in Christ, for Christ is the “wine which cheereth God and man” (Judg. 9:13).

There will be no peace in that tavern that is filled with low punch-drinkers, and there will be no peace in the hearts and; minds of those who are earthly, worldly, sensual; but if we have Christ as our portion and are rejoicing in Him, the Lord, alway, then will there be peace indeed within us and holy communion with the God or peace. And this will be to us a foretaste of heaven, and we shall be “blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,” among whom we shall “shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life” (chapter 2:15, 16).

J. T. MAWSON.

The Christian Shepherd: 2000, "My Son, Give Me Thine Heart"

“My son, give Me thine heart.”

So simple! And Christianity ought to be simple. These six simple words sum it up well—six words that would strip away all do’s and don’ts if I take them to heart. The Bible would not be to me a Book of rules—but one of loving requests. Love does incredible things for its object.

“My son, give Me thine heart.”

My Lord is the perfect example of the full measure and length of what love will do. Because He loved me, He died for me. And more, He is on call day and night answering more of my prayers than I could ever count. Oh! May I return to Him such love by really giving Him my heart.

“My son, give Me thine heart.”

If I did this there would be no need to ask Him so many questions. If my heart were His, I would automatically know the will of the Lord, I would know the Lord was at His table, and I would know that all things work together for good. I would know the answer to questions on the right way to date, whether war is right or wrong, whether I should vote, and what’s modest and what’s not.

“My son, give Me thine heart.”

There’s not too much more to say—if I give my heart to the Lord, I will want to do what He wants me to do—it’s that simple. But, if it’s so simple, why do I find it so hard?

“My son, give Me thine heart” (Prov. 23:26).

By a young believer (1999)

“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Christian Truth: Volume 35, Training Children

To instruct even an unconverted child in the Scriptures is of great value. It is like carefully "laying a fire" so that a spark alone is needed to kindle it into a flame. It is a good and wholesome thing for Christians to be most particular in the training of their children in a thorough knowledge of the Word of God.

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6.

Christian Treasury: Volume 9, Training

Prov. 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go."

Satan does not wait till children grow up—why should you?

Gospel Papers, Sowing and Reaping: Proverbs 1:24-26

RO 1:24-26{WHAT makes this passage so very solemn is, that it is the close, the finish, as we say. This is very serious indeed. The Book of Proverbs refers to the government of God upon the earth; and therefore the judgment here, though of God, and final, does not go beyond judgment in this world. It is man in this world, dealt with in his responsibility.

1St. The call, or voice of God, now comes from the place where Christ is witness to the perfection and completion of His work. Let me say the present call of God is based on the perfection of Christ's finished work. The One who put away sin is now on the heavenly side of the grave. He died unto sin once, now He liveth unto God. Besides, the presence of the Holy Ghost here on earth is a testimony to the completeness and sufficiency of the cross. But, besides all this, the call of God is sent forth in many channels. Did He not speak to you by your recent sorrow? Has that late suffering of yours nothing of God's voice in it? Is there not in your very conscience, at this moment, a voice that tells you that if you were now to die you would be lost forever? Be assured, reader, God has not left Himself without abundant witness to the patient, long-suffering character of His grace.

2nd. We have here also man's refusal: "I have called, AND YE REFUSED." How solemn this is! Refused is the word the blessed God uses to describe the way in which man treats His call. This refusal does not always take the same shape or form, but refusal it is: sometimes, in so many words, it is an open avowal of dislike to the subject at all costs; very often it is a kind of indifferentism; and most frequently it is A procrastination, which promises to itself a more convenient season-a season, let me add, which in most cases never comes; but let the character be what it may, it all ranks in God's eyes as refusal. "I have called, and ye refused." Reader, if if you are still out of Christ, there is a little hell within you at this moment, even as the ebbs and pulsations of the sea within the harbor walls are but an indication, a reminder of the dread roll of the ocean a thousand miles outside. Reader, think of these words; you in your turn calling, but the call is too late. The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and you are not saved. No more insensibility now no more procrastination now! No gospel no peace, no hope! One voice rolls its long sadness over ages of ages forever: " Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

This, as I have stated, is the doom of those who hearken not to wisdom. There was no love, or submission to the truth: their ease and prosperity and carelessness will be their destruction. As regards those who walk in a different road, in wisdom's ways, how striking the contrast!-" Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are way of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

(Proverbs 3:13-17.) W. T. T.

Things New and Old: Volume 6, Wounded Conscience and Its Remedy, A

Conscience. (Pro. 18:14.)

Go gather the down which floats on the wind,

And the leaves from ev’ry tree;

Can ye find a couch for the troubled mind?

Can ye find a rest for me?

Go gather the honey-dew from the leaf,

And the labor sweet of the bee;

Can ye ‘suage the bitter tongue of grief?

Give a drop of sweet to me?

Let the cold wind blow through the midnight rain,

And the breeze flutter over the sea;

Can it breathe one chill on a burning brain?

Can it cool my brain for me?

Let the gale which springs in the morning cloud,

Give life to all that be;

Can it quicken again my murdered mind?

Give back my mind to me?

Let the spring-time shine, with its sunny hours,

And the merry birds all in glee;

Can ye gather amidst ten thousand flowers,

One bud that blooms for me?

Atonement

(Heb. 9:26.)

Ah! there is a bed that was hewn in stone,

Where lie lay that was nail’d to the tree!

‘Twas there my Lord lay all alone,

And there’s the rest for me.

And there was a dew all silvery bright,

It fell on plain and Ice;

They gathered it fresh at the morning light,

And sweet’s its taste to me.

And there was a rushing mighty wind,

It blew o’er a bloody sea,

It breathes a calm for my troubled mind,

A Comforter for me.

And there was a gale when the Day-star rose;

Its shining clear I see;

My mind, in his beams, revives and glows,

And all is life with me.

And there was a flower, which sprung from the tomb.

When the days had number’d three;

Upon my heart that flower shall bloom,

Eternal joy for me.

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Things New and Old: Volume 22, Before Honor Is Humility

The way to exaltation is the dust,—

‘Tis known to all, who in the Savior trust.

The rocky heart, Immanuel’s love must melt.

And beggars’ dunghill-misery be felt,

Before to princely dignity we’re raised,

To sing, “The Lamb is worthy to be praised.”

And though, the blessed of the Lord we are,

Oft trials of our faith were called to bear,

(While trav'ling onward to our heavenly rest)

That we may still be more than ever blest.

Our choicest comforts, sometimes He requires,

To empty us of earth, and fond desires;

And when we find in God a ceaseless store.

If good, He'll give us more than we'd before.

Through fierce temptations, stirring up within

The foul corruptions of indwelling sin,

We loathe ourselves; and praise and magnify

The Son of God, who did for sinners die.

Or should the mighty Tempter's power prevail,

And all our weapons of resistance fail,

Thus wounded by the "fiery dart," we cry—

"Lord help and heal thy child"—so Christ draws nigh!

Thus exercised, our graces are renew'd,

With heav'nly wisdom we become endu'd:

Pride, folly, and self-confidence depart,

And we advance in lowliness of heart.

The fetter'd spirit now to earth sits loose,

A vessel fitted "for the Master's use;"

Bereft of former gloom, and anxious care,

We serve "with reverence and godly fear."

Where all was drought refreshing streams are found,

And inward notes of melody abound;

And being more establish'd in His love,

We live by faith on Him who pleads above.

My soul! "be still" and know that He is God,

Be subject to thy loving Father's rod;

And though at present tears and dust are thine,

He surely will exalt thee "in due time."

Fragments Gathered Up, Jehovah

Jehovah is always His name in Israel, and that of government, save in a few cases where Adonai (Lord is the proper appellative use of it) is employed. But it is to be noticed that Jehovah is used in Proverbs, because it is authoritatively instructive in known relationship; never in Ecclesiastes, where it is God in contrast with man having his own experience as such on earth. "God" abstractedly is only once used in Proverbs (xxxv. 2). We have "her God" in chapter 2:17.

Young Christian: Volume 25, 1935, "A Soft Answer Turneth Away Wrath"

"A wrathful man stirreth up strife; but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife" (Prov. 15:18).

One day the God-fearing Pastor M. found a severely abusive note at his door. He read it quietly, and, saying nothing, prayed about it. On the following Sunday, before leaving the pulpit after preaching, he announced:

“A dear friend brought to my house a letter in which he put my failures before me. I have read it, examined myself, and found much truth therein. In my heart there is the root of all this friend discovers; and it is God’s grace alone that prevented the doing of the things of which I am accused. This dear friend knows my faults so precisely that I conclude he must be here among us. I heartily request him to come to me that I may prove my love to him in return.”

When, in the city of M., a bottomless basket was thrown over the head of Tersteegen to make him an object of ridicule, he said quietly:

“This is far from being a crown of thorns.”

How do we answer, dear Christian reader do we manifest the spirit of Christ?

Gospel Gleanings: Volume 13 (1913), "A True Witness Delivereth Souls"

PROV. 14:25

IT is expected of a witness in English courts of justice to speak “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” in regard to the matters on which he is examined. These matters are often stich as to involve questions of life or death. The liberties of the nation have sometimes been dependent on truthful witness-bearing; but the subjects to be treated of in these pages relate to more important interests still. Eternal life or everlasting death, the salvation or perdition of your never-dying souls, is what depends on your understanding those subjects aright, and on your being rightly affected concerning them. Or, if already saved, our fruitfulness to God and usefulness to man will be in exact proportion to the degree in which we understand the word of God and are subject to it and filled with it. On such subjects it would be a bold undertaking to speak “the whole truth.” “The truth” we do trust through God’s mercy these pages will exhibit; and that, by His blessing, “nothing but the truth” may be permitted to appear; but the subjects to be gone into are so vast and so important that more than any mortal’s tongue or pen could say would be required to express “the whole truth” thereupon.

Happily for us we have something better to rest upon than the witness of men; and happy shall we be if our pages should be used of God to bring His testimony into contact with the souls of our readers. God Himself has become a witness, and to believe his testimony is deliverance indeed. It is life from the dead. It is certain salvation. Who so worthy to be believed as God who cannot lie? “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.” And we do receive the witness of men every day of our lives. We could not pass through life, or attend to the simplest affairs without believing our fellow-men. And shall we not believe God Himself? And if any reader should say, “Yes, but I am no scholar; these things are too deep for me,” will that reader turn from the page before him to the First Epistle of John, the fifth chapter and eleventh verse? We give the words, but would far rather you turned to the place and saw them for yourself in God’s blessed word. “And this is the record (literally, the witness) that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

Can you not understand this? Could it be more simply told? Where is there a poor man in trying circumstances who could not understand if a friend should say to him, “Here is a sum of twenty pounds? It is given you by one who feels greatly for you, and it is contained in this letter. In receiving the letter you will receive the sum that it contains”? Where is the person so situated who would not instantly put forth his hand, and with hearty thanks receive the gift held out to him? It would be but the affair of a moment or two, and take less time than the writing or reading this description of it requires. Dear friend, as God is true, he holds out to you, not a paltry sum of money but, eternal life. It is not contained in any packet or cover, as the money might be; “this life is in his Son.” To believe God’s witness; to take Him at His word; to welcome the gift of His Son and of eternal life in Him; to believe that it is ours, because God thus gives what we in our hearts thus receive; this is to be saved, to pass from death unto life. This mighty change takes place the moment we believe God’s witness that He hath witnessed of His Son. May you, dear reader, if as yet a stranger to these realities, undergo this change before you lay this paper aside.

“But if it be so easy to be saved, why do so many live and die unsaved?” It is indeed enough to astonish heaven and earth that such love should be rejected, such blessedness despised and refused. But returning to the case we supposed; the poor man to whom the money is held out, instead of thankfully receiving it, might reply, “No, I don’t believe that anyone cares so much for me. There is some treachery in it, and I won’t have anything to do with it.” Or, he might say, “No, I have always worked for my living, and I will not be indebted to any one for such a gift. I will go to prison and starve, and see my family starve, rather than accept your gift.” Or, again, he might reply, “Why do you insult me by supposing me so poor? I have my own reasons for the appearances which lead you to think me in need. Pray, keep your gifts to yourself.” Once again, he might say, “No, I dislike the giver, and though I might have accepted relief from another, I will not accept it from you. I disdain both the giver and the gift.” Or, last of all, he might make a difficulty of the way in which the gift is bestowed. “If I might have the enclosed sum without the letter which is said to contain it, I should not object. Show me the money apart from the letter, and I will be glad of it. But I don’t like to touch that letter. I don’t believe it contains any such sum.”

Thus you see, dear reader, in how many ways a man might reject the witness of his fellow man in an affair affecting his present temporal interests. True, there are not many who would act thus; for men are wise about the things of this life, however they may treat their souls and God’s wonderful provision for them. Are you on any ground or in any way similar to those we have supposed rejecting God’s witness to His Son? The world has deceived you, and you have deceived yourself, and your heart has got suspicious of everything and everyone. Oh! do not suspect the sincerity and freeness of God’s love. “Let God be true and every man a liar.” Do not cherish the pride which would rather have eternal life as wages than as a free gift. “The wages of sin is death,” and this is all that we have earned; but “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Can anyone be ashamed to receive life as a gift from Him to whom we already owe everything? Work as hard as possible in gratitude to this bounteous Giver, when once you have received eternal life. But in this He must be the Giver. We can be receivers only. Happy to be such, we might well suppose. Or are you really unconscious of your need? Have you no sins to be forgiven? no soul to be saved? Can you do without eternal life? God grant you to consider your state, and no longer to disdain His bounty and His love. We do not forget that, left to ourselves, we are all “haters of God.” But that which alone overcomes this hatred is the love of God in the gift of His well-beloved Son. Do not, we

beseech you, turn this love, this gift, into a stumbling-block, and spurn the life God gives because He gives it in His Son.

Alas! there are many who do thus reject God’s witness and refuse the life, the eternal life, held out by Him to poor perishing souls. If they could have it through ordinances, or works, or human merit, or in any way apart from Christ, they would not be sorry. But for self and man to have no place; to receive eternal life in Christ, only in and through Christ, having none but Christ in whom to glory or to boast; this is the stumbling-block to human pride. But to think of the patient love which still bears such scornful refusals from the myriads of mankind, and continues to press on men’s attention “the witness of God, which he hath testified (witnessed) of his Son!” May this love break the heart of any reader who has not yet believed this witness, and believing it at once through grace, may he rise from the perusal of this paper to fall on his knees and adore the God of all grace for having given him His Son and given him eternal life in Him.

W.T.

Christian Truth: Volume 17, Diligence Rewarded

This is an age of increased facilities and reduced costs. We run where our fathers walked, and fly where they drove. The aim of modern invention is to make everything easy, and to give the largest returns for the smallest outlay. All this unfits us for the deep spiritual exercises still met with in the path of faith. Modern thought has yet to discover a short cut to piety. Some people may read a chapter of the Bible in five minutes, and think there is little in it, since they get nothing out. Not so, my friend; God does not make Himself cheap like that. "The soul of the sluggard desirest, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." Pro. 13:4.

Edification: Volume 3, "No Evil."

“THERE shall no evil happen to the just” (Prov. 12:21). Wonderful words of comfort to the tried and tested and troubled one who walks in the fear of the Lord.

“NO EVIL.” How comprehensive are the words! How inclusive! How exclusive!

How inclusive! No evil of any kind or character whatsoever, in any time or in any place.

How exclusive! The just is surrounded by God Himself who is ever compassing His people. All evil is shut out. That which appears evil to us at first He can turn to our ultimate good. Out of the eater He brings forth meat and out of the strong He extracts sweetness.

Of old the alchemists sought to turn the base metals into gold. They spent time and travail, life and fortune in the vain endeavor.

But this is the very way of our God. He turns the curse into the blessing. He makes “the wrath of man to praise Him” and the remainder He restrains.

So it was in the case of Job of whose patience we “have heard,” and in whose history we learn “that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.”

“The end of the Lord,” in all that through which the patriarch passed, was his ultimate good. And it is interesting to see that the enemy—Satan—defeated himself in all his assaults against this great man of the east. And it is ever so.

It is evident that Satan had considered God’s servant well. He had studied the position with care. When challenged by God he answers, “Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?”

Examining particularly and scrutinizing closely the circumstances in which Job was found he had been able to discover no point of attack.

A triple fortification was about the patriarch and his belongings. Three God-made hedges.

A hedge about him.

A hedge about his house.

A hedge about all that he hath on every side.

He was well protected. His person, his family, his possessions.

What comfort is here for the believer! The care of God is about every one of His children.

The enemy has full knowledge of all about us and our concerns. But it is only as permitted of God, for His glory and for our good, that he can force a way through the fences set about us, in the wisdom and power and love of our God. Only just as far as it shall prove for our blessing in the end, will God permit any intrusion within the hedges He has made.

“No evil!” The day is nearing when we shall see how all has been wrought together in our lives according to the pattern determined upon by our God and Father. He “is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working” and He controls everything.

In His ceaseless, changeless love He makes all things work together for good to them that love Him. Little we understand now the why and the wherefore, of much that may happen to us. But the day is coming when we shall know even as we are known. Then we shall see how every detail of our life’s pathway has been ruled or overruled by the skillfulness of His hand of infinite power, and according to the integrity of His heart of infinite love.

Often did I watch my aged mother knitting and I wondered what she had in mind. One knitting pin would seem to get all the wool and then another would get it back again. At first the mimic warfare seemed incessant and without profitable result. But little by little the plan was developed and I began to see that there was some “rhyme and reason” in her labor. At last the work took definite shape and I beheld some article of use and comfort being produced. Then I saw, what she had been after all the time. But she knew from the first stitch.

And so it is with the working together of the materials which make up our lives. “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning.” This is true of the great dispensations in the ages. It is true in the little details of the believer’s pathway. God has His thought and plan and patiently carries them into execution.

As in Joseph’s case, God was above all the ill-treatment he received. “As for you,” he said to his brethren, “Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.” God knew from the commencement what the end would be and “there shall no evil happen to the just.”

In my mother’s case, with her knitting, she would at times drop a stitch, or put in a wrong one, and I would see her undo her work in part pulling out the result of her careful movements.

Not so with God. No human weakness or imperfection is with Him.

“As for God, His way is perfect” (Psa. 18:30). He never has to recall a word. He never has to undo any of His work. All from His hands is excellent indeed, and He never drops a stitch. Much should we like, at the time they are made that some stitches were dropped, for we see not why it is thus with us in our circumstances. But every stitch is necessary to the carrying out of His bright and blessed design for our ultimate good and blessing; “for our profit,” On the one hand, as on the other hand “that we may be partakers of His holiness.”

Let us go on without a misgiving, saying with the Psalmist of old, “I will fear no evil for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.” His presence, His guidance, His omnipotence is on our part.

Thus we may take up the words of the hymn and say,

Thus shall we be kept in peace knowing that no evil shall come nigh unto our dwelling or to the dwellers therein.

Inglis Fleming.

Christian Treasury: Volume 4, Two Houses

The house of the wicked shall he overthrown”.

“The house of the righteous shall stand.”

Prov. 14:11 and 12:7.PRO 14:11PRO 12:7

In the houses of men, God is either honored or dishonored. The sequel in either case is given in the scriptures quoted in the heading of this article. These scriptures also show that God looks into the houses of men, both of the just and the unjust. "The eyes of the Lord arc in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Prov. 15:3.

In Job 22:15 to 18, we have an allusion to the houses of men before the flood and their way of life. God had filled their houses with good things, yet they said to Him. "Depart from us: for we desire not [he knowledge of Thy ways." (21:14.) We are here reminded of Deut. 7:10. "He will not be slack to him that hateth Him. He will repay him to his face. Assuredly, God did so! Those wicked men were cut down out of time and their foundation was overthrown with a flood.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in His precious ministry on earth, sheds light on the days of Noah. "Before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away." Matt. 24:38, 39.

History Repeats Itself

"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." Eccl. 1:9. In our day the standard of living is high and God surely has filled our houses also with good things. But while accepting these mercies from His beneficent hand, men are once more saying as they did before the flood. "Depart from us." History repeats itself. The story of God's judgment of wicked men by the waters of the flood is something they willingly are ignorant of (2 Peter 3:5). How solemn to think that if man chooses to leave God out of his life in time, he will also be without Him in eternity. And judgment is at the door. "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Peter 4:17, 18.

Consider Your Ways

A happier picture presents itself in the book of Haggai. Here we find the Lord looking into the celled houses of His people. What did He see? Occupation only with their own affairs and the Lord's interests completely neglected. All were seeking their own, namely, beautifully built and ornamented celled houses while they were living without the Lord's house. Consequently there was no place of worship.

The Lord was grieved, yet not unmindful that not so long since a small remnant only had returned to His land after seventy years of captivity in Babylon on account of Judah's idolatry. He loved them and "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Heb. 12:6. So asking them to consider their ways. He dried up their prosperity. Food and raiment were in short supply, and wages disappeared. Complete frustration ensued. "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it.

Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house." Hag. 1:9.

Undoubtedly, the families suffered with their parents. It is so today when Christian parents with children turn their backs on the Lord. How refreshing to find the people "obeyed the voice of the Lord their God... and the people did fear before the Lord." Hag. 1:12. The very day the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, (Hag. 2:18) their adversity ceased and blessing accrued.

Christian, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33.

Jesus in Martha's House

We turn now to the New Testament for a scene of blessedness, joy, and refreshment. "A certain woman named Martha received Him [Jesus] into her house." Wise woman! We all do well to follow her example. She considered it the highest honor to have such a guest. The blessed Savior, in flesh, was on His way to the cross of shame to lay down His life for our sins according to the Father's commandment. What a blessing came to Martha's house.

First: Martha made a wonderful confession—"I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." John 11:27. That meant eternal life for Martha.

Second: Mary "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word." Luke 10:39. She knew who the heavenly Stranger really was and for what purpose He had come. With the whole world against Him, and His own far behind in sympathetic understanding, she anointed His blessed head and feet against the day of His burying. As the Lord then foretold, we are here recounting Mary's action nearly two thousand years after it took place. Small wonder that the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

Third: Lazarus fell sick, died, was buried, was raised again and restored to his mourning sisters. Truly he was a dead and risen man, and, seated at the Lord's table, he is a picture of every true Christian.

The secret of the blessing in the house at Bethany was that the Lord was accorded His rightful place there, and there was real affection for His blessed Person. How beautifully reciprocal it was, too, as we read, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." How significant, the fact that in returning to the Father, after having glorified Him on the earth and finishing the work He gave Him to do, "He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them." Luke 24:50. Let us then set the Lord always before us. He will be at our right hand so that we cannot be moved. He will pour us out such a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. (Mal. 3:10.)

T. Mather

Christian Truth: Volume 28, Blessed Is the Man: Proverbs 11:25

"Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors." Prov. 8:34.

Begin the day with God;

Kneel down to Him in prayer;

Lift up thy heart to His abode,

And seek His thoughts to share.

Young Christian: Volume 11, 1921, Talebearer, A

“A talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.” Proverbs 11:13.

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