

THE WORD OF THE CROSS

No. 19.

EDITORIAL.

To all who love the Lord and seek His Interests, Grace, Mercy and Peace, from God our Father, and from Our Lord Jesus Christ.

I cannot but give God thanks for the valued letters from many parts of the world that have been an encouragement to us, expressing, as they do, the writers' grateful thanks to God for the messages of the Word of the Cross. I do not quote them, as they would require considerable space, but their warm loving words of appreciation are had in remembrance; nor will their Lord and ours forget them. He assuredly values all that is written of 'the things concerning Himself' and this includes the teaching—the reproof—the correction—the instruction in righteousness—with this purpose in view: "That the man of God may be perfect (complete) thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3:16:17. Epaphras laboured agonisingly in prayer for the Colossian believers that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Col. 4:12. Already, in this same Epistle, Paul declares the Divine objective of all his ministry: "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," Col. 1:28.

There is a dissatisfaction that is commendable; a dissatisfaction with what we have already attained—the rate of progress of our 'growing up unto Him'—the lack of response to the wonderfulness of His Love for us—and a sorrow that the world holds attractions for too many of His beloved ones—with the consequent dimming of the vision of Him shewn by the weakness, or the absence, of desire for His return. With this is the coldness of heart toward the lost around us, the feebleness of efforts to save them for whom Christ died—the substitute of entertainment for the Ambassadors Ultimatum—all so different from Paul the Apostle's—"WOE IS ME IF I PREACH NOT THE GOSPEL." All these and more have been the burden of my ministry for many years, and have led to the writing of those messages already published, and many more still unpublished—and still more clamouring to be written. This issue contains five messages with verses, that will well repay careful reading. The first one to which alone I have space to refer is a penpicture of the Lord Jesus: 'JESUS THE BELOVED.' It should attract all hearts to Him, and help to increase love to Him. I wonder if you have had times in your spiritual experience of what I have termed—'Falling afresh in love with Him'? The Father giving such visions of His Son in His Personal Blessedness, and the Son shewing Himself to you in a way known only to you—Something between Him and you—like the Pergamos overcomer who eats of the HIDDEN MANNA, and gets A WHITE STONE, AND UPON THE STONE A NEW NAME WRITTEN, which no one knoweth saving he that receiveth it (Rev. 2:17). And did not your heart burn within you, thrilled almost to bursting, and your love to Him overflowed, and you could only express it as 'falling afresh in love with Him'? These are red letter days, and yet there is more and better to come, for as the heart is engaged with Him, there will be an increase as 'from Glory to Glory!' each one more blessed than the former, until that which is perfect is come, and that which is in part shall be done away, and then we shall fully know even as we are fully known, Face to Face in the Fulness of Eternal Love.

With all this in view, I am hoping to include in forthcoming issues, if He will, messages already written, as—Jesus and His friends—Jesus Walking—Jesus in the House—Jesus the Man of Joy—Jesus Perfected—Jesus the Second Man—Jesus Supreme, and others. He may make it possible to publish these issues more frequently; I have asked Him about this. If He comes, and His lovers weary for that Blessed Moment, then we shall need no more messages about Him. We shall have HIMSELF.

JESUS—THE BELOVED.

Then He had great and noble and blessed qualities in a pre-eminent degree that brought the appellation of such a most enviable title. How true this is; for He was indeed the Unique One. His birth was a miracle, He was born of a virgin. God declared in His Word concerning Him, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." Heb. 1:5. Yet He was born a helpless Babe, dependent on His mother, Mary, for care and sustenance. His life was in danger, and He had to be carried out of the country to save Him from the power of His enemies. He had a great experience all through those early years

and now He is about thirty years old when He comes to John the Baptist for baptism. Not that He had anything to repent of—for John's baptism was the baptism of repentance—and this explains John's reluctance and his confession that he was more in need of Jesus to baptize him than that he should baptize Jesus. Jesus, however, identifies Himself with the Remnant of the nation that received John's message and includes Himself in wondrous Grace with them in the words—"Suffer it to be so, now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Then he suffered Him. Matt. 3: 13-15.

"And Jesus, having been immersed, went up straightway from the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him, and lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased," Matt. 3: 16-17. Mark and Luke give the words as addressed personally to Him, "Thou art My Beloved Son;" while Luke adds the information that He was praying; and as Jesus always looked up to heaven when praying, He would thus see the heavens opened and the Spirit descending—"and it abode upon Him." John 1: 32. Here we have the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in perfect unison—the Trinity of Divine Persons: the Father expressing His full and blessed complacency of delight as He beholds His Son immersed in the waters of baptism and rising straightway from the water in lowly grace—"Thou art My Son—The Beloved—in Whom is all My delight." He uses the strongest expression of appreciation and of boundless satisfaction. It is the exuberance of pleasure—He cannot contain Himself—He cleaves—He rends the heavens that He may tell out the fulness of His heart—the joy of His heart—the overflowing pleasurable ecstasy of rapturous delight in His Beloved Son. What a thrill of satisfaction this must have given Jesus! To have His Father's approval was His first and last desire. This dominated Him. This actuated Him. Was it not already written of Him—"Lo, I come, (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God?" Heb. 10:7. But what a wonderful Personality He must have been to be so Beloved! What qualities—what graces—what perfections—what love—what delightsomeness He must have displayed in the sight of His Father to have called forth such a blessed and loving appreciation. The Father, from Whom no thought could be hidden, could discern nothing but what was right and true in the mind of His Son. The darkness and the light were both alike to him, and the holiness and perfection of His Son in the light were His holiness and perfection in the dark. What He said—He was—for He was the Truth. His words only expressed Himself. His deeds declared Him. His righteousness was not the ceremonial or external righteousness of man, but righteousness of heart and nature—expressed in a righteousness God had never before seen on earth. Every thought of the mind—every desire of His heart—every purpose and counsel—all were fully carried out by His Son. "A wise son maketh a glad father," saith the Scripture and God was surely a glad Father that day with such a wise and wonderful Son. In Him the Father found all His delight. He filled the Father's heart with Divine satisfaction; He needed nothing more. He had found all in His Son. He was the Father's terminus. He need go no farther. In His Son He found His rest where all was suitable to Him. Blessed Lord Jesus—Blessed Son of the Father—the Word Who became flesh—full of Grace and Truth—meek and lowly in Heart—the Life with the Living water—the Bread of God that came down from heaven—the Faithful and True Witness—the Christ—the Lamb of God—surely we may find our delight in Thee as Thy Father found His—filling His heart, Thou mayest well fill ours.

MY SERVANT—MY BELOVED.

Long before this epoch making incident, Isaiah had foretold of the coming of the Beloved of God and Matthew quotes the prophecy in Matt. 12: 8—"Behold My Servant whom I have chosen, **My Beloved** in Whom My Soul delighted." One can feel the thrill of pleasure as the Father says "My Beloved." All the love of His heart comes out in it.

On many occasions in Scripture God addresses His people as beloved. The spirit of God in the Apostles gives them this blessed designation for they are truly beloved. But that love has not been theirs because of any excellence in them, for they were, without exception, sinners and rebels against God. That love originated in the heart of God while they were yet sinners; and that love gave His only begotten Son—spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all that through His atoning Blood, sin might be put away—pardon bestowed and Eternal Life given to all who would believe. No longer does God view His own in their old sinful nature, but in His Son—for they are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ, Who is the true God and the Eternal Life. 1 John 5: 20.

Alone does Jesus stand as **The Beloved**—Beloved for His peerless worth—His intrinsic value—His wondrous qualities and blessedness—God's One absolutely faithful Servant—that could not but endure Him to the heart of God His Father. We too, are beloved—but in Him and for His sake alone.

THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD.

Again does the Father speak from Heaven. The incident is well known but worthy of our repeated consideration. We cannot dwell too long on the blessedness and worthiness of our Lord Jesus. He is of Infinite interest and charm and entitled to our adoring worship as well as our appreciation, for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. "Who can by searching find out God?" How can the finite grasp the Infinite. How could the creature rise to the full greatness and grandeur of the Creator? Yet God has given His Son, Who is the image of the Invisible God—His exact representation—the exact expression of His Subsistence—Who in Manhood has perfectly expressed God—has declared Him—made Him known. In Him then we see God, and know God. In Him we find all the characteristics and qualities of God. The abounding Grace and Love of God—the Wisdom of God—the Patience and Longsuffering of God—the Tenderness and Compassion—the Faithfulness—the Dependableness of God, all come out in Him. Yes, and infinitely more radiances of Glory and Beauty that no pen can write or mind imagine or Eternal ages unfold, are all to be found in Him—**Jesus, the Beloved.**

It was on what Peter calls the Holy Mount where Jesus was transfigured before the wondering eyes of Peter, James and John, while Moses and Elias spoke with Him concerning His coming exodus by the Cross. A bright cloud overshadowed them, and they feared as they entered into the cloud and a voice out of the cloud which said, "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him." Matt. 17: 5. Peter had broken in with a suggestion and while he yet spake, the voice from the cloud commanded all to '**Hear the Son**'—calling attention to the Father's confession of His Son and His delighted appreciation of Him.

No wonder the disciples fell on their face and were sore afraid. They were eye-witnesses of His Majesty, for He received from God His Father, honour and glory. They had never seen such Glory—His very garments flashing like lightning. It was more than they could bear. He knew that and while they were still lying on the ground on their faces, He came and touched them and told them to rise and be not afraid. His touch gave strength, His words gave assurance. What Grace—what Glory—what consideration—what tenderness of feeling for His poor trembling disciples! How He loved them! He is indeed Jesus the Beloved.

ONE SON, HIS WELL BELOVED.

In Mark 12: 1 we find that He began to speak unto them in parables, "A certain man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a place for the wine-vat and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country." You know the story how he sent servant after servant to the husbandmen to receive from them the fruit of the vineyard. They refused to give anything, but beat the servants, some they killed. Then we read, "**Having yet therefore one son, His well-beloved,** He sent Him also last unto them saying, "They will reverence my son! But those husbandmen said among themselves, this is the heir; come let us kill him and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took Him and killed Him, and cast him out of the vineyard."

What pathos is found in those words, "**Having yet therefore one Son, His well-beloved?**" He had sent servants with His authority, but this they derided and the servants they rejected and wounded and killed. Perhaps if He sends His only and well beloved Son, they will respect Him and hear His words and render to their Master His rightful dues. It would cost the Father much to send this well-beloved One. He had no other Son. Who could carry on the name and the family and the inheritance if he was slain by these wicked husbandmen? He had patiently borne their rejection and maltreatment of His servants. He had not punished them but had given them every opportunity to repent and do the right thing. So He sent His Son—His well-beloved. But these wicked husbandmen thought this was their opportunity. This Son was the only heir and if they killed Him they would claim the inheritance. And they took Him and killed Him and cast Him out of the vineyard.

In this He prophetically set forth the failure and wickedness of His opposers—the chief priests—scribes—elders—and His own rejection and murder. Stephen said later, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of Whom

ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the Law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it." Acts 7: 51-53.

So His One—His only Son—His well-beloved was slain—and He was the Heir. But He has not lost His inheritance—for God Who had spoken in times past unto the fathers in the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us in His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things." Heb. 1: 1-2. For God hath raised Him from dead and has made good in resurrection all He declared concerning Him. "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for thine inheritance; and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." Ps. 2: 8. But more than this. God has given Him co-heirs in the multitude of those who have believed in Him; for they who receive Him are declared to be children of God—"and if children, then heirs; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. 8: 16-17.

"Who shall declare His generation for He was cut off out of the land of the living?" is the question asked by Isaiah and answered: "He shall see His seed—He shall prolong His days—He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." Isa. 53: 10-11. And the Psalmist joins with his triumphant declaration—"A seed shall serve Him. It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." Ps. 22: 30.

His enemies spoke evil of Him. They said, "When shall He die and His name perish?" Ps. 41: 5. But instead of His name perishing—God has given Him a name above every name. Phil. 2: 9. "I will make Thy name to be remembered. Ps. 45: 17. "His name shall endure for ever." Ps. 72: 17.

Thus His only Son has brought Him many Sons—His well-beloved has encompassed a multitude of well-beloved ones—out of His Death has sprang up Life and "The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner." Mark 12: 10. Oh! if **He was well-beloved then, how much more well-beloved now!**

THE FATHER LOVETH THE SON.

Is it not an expression of wonderful Grace that we are brought within the sphere of Divine Family Secrets? What great condescension is this that the Father makes public to His own the paternal feelings of His heart.

This we read in those precious and heart moving words of John 3: 35, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." What an unveiling of the heart of the Father in this simple, direct revelation of His love to the Son. It is a present continuous love—The Father loves the Son. Who can gauge the extent—the unlimited extent—of that love? What words can describe it? That love declares His confidence in His Son and as the expression of that confidence, the Father hath given all things into His hand. In Him the Father has invested all authority—all power—all things—whatsoever they be. There is nothing in creation excepted. "No one knows the Son but the Father" and in this the Father declares the blessedness—the worthiness—the competence of the Son to undertake and to fulfil to its utmost completion, all the purposes of God thus entrusted to Him. He knows His Son—He knows what He can do, and is letting Him do it. Here we are in the Family circle—in the secrets of the Father's heart—already in spirit in the Father's House—at home—beholding the Father's love to the Son—an atmosphere of love, and that Divine and Changeless.

THE FATHER FONDLY LOVETH THE SON.

The only limit to the expression, to us, of the Father's love to the Son, lies in the limits of our language and our finite comprehension. What He has been pleased to make known to us is enough to thrill our hearts for ever. Jesus said to the Jews, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." John 5: 17. He had just healed the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath and the Jews persecuted Him and sought to slay Him because He had, in their eyes, broken the Sabbath. In the words quoted He reminds them that God had certainly rested the Sabbath, but sin had broken in and God had to begin again to work. Man's continued sin kept God working and now the Son was here—the Image of the Invisible God—God manifest in Flesh—to continue the working. He definitely associated Himself with God as His Father and thus the Jews were not slow to notice. Their opposition increased for they now had two charges against Him—He had broken their Sabbath and said that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God. v. 18. To this Jesus answered, "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son in like manner. For the Father fondly loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that He Himself doeth and He will show Him greater

works than these, that ye may marvel." v. 19-20.

The Jews were His own people or this revelation would not have been given them. He uses the most loving and friendly word to indicate the love the Father had to Him—the Son—the fond love of the Father. So fond was that Love that He shewed to the Son all that He did. There were no secrets—no reservations. The Son was admitted into the centre of all things done by the Father and what He saw the Father do, He did the same. He never once acted on His own initiative or drew upon His own resources. He was the Son in true relationship and in filial love and obedience. He was so one with the Father that He could say "It is the Father in Me that doeth the works," John 14: 20.

He came to do the will of God. The will of God was in His soul. The Word of God He had hid in His heart. He came to reveal the Father and only the Son could do that. Every desire that rose in the heart of the Father was at once met in response by the Son. The purpose of the Father was His purpose. He disclaimed all independence of action: "The Son can do nothing of Himself." Can you wonder that the Father fondly loveth Him? This was an intensely personal love and the Son, deeply conscious of that love, could not but give expression to the fact of it. And there were greater things yet to be shewn to the Son, "that ye may marvel." They would be amazed—astonished—but He knew they would not believe. He makes still greater claims, that, "as the Father raiseth up the dead and maketh them alive; even so the Son maketh alive whom He will." This was a straight claim to Deity followed by the astounding statement that the Father had committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He follows this with a most challenging claim that "he that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." Thus are the Father and the Son identified, the One with the Other—yet distinct personalities—a real Father and a real Son.

But there is still more, He claims that "He that heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life." So believing in Him is vital to a man's salvation. Then again the hour has arrived when those dead who hear the voice of the Son of God will live; for the Father hath given to the Son to have life in Himself. He claims John the Baptist as a trustworthy witness—but the works the Father gave Him to finish are a greater testimony—but greater than all is the testimony of the Father to Him. He heard His voice—"Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I have found all My delight." He tells the Jews—"Ye have neither heard His voice nor seen His shape, and ye have not His word abiding in you; for Whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not, and He would not receive honour from men. Shall we ask again **"Can you wonder that the Father fondly loved Him?"**

A FURTHER REASON WHY HIS FATHER LOVES HIM.

"Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again." John 10: 17.

This is the third occasion in which John's Gospel speaks of the Father's love to the Son. The word used here and in John 3: 35 expresses appreciation of the character and dependability of the object. There is that in the Son that cannot fail to draw out the love of the Father. The word used in John 5: 20 declares the Father's Personal love to the Son—the love of complacency—the love of relationship—a love that needs no other qualifications than this—the tender affection of a Father to His Son.

Here the statement of His Father's love to Him gives a reason for it—a reason why His Father loved Him—something that called out the love of the Father—something so outstanding in its performance and in its utter surrender to the will of the Father, that this love flowed out to His Son in its fullest measure of appreciation. And the reason?—"Because I lay down My life that I might take it again." Man compels Him to nothing. True that they arrested Him—tried Him—scourged Him—and "by wicked hands have crucified and slain Him," yet He was delivered up to them by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. When they sought to arrest Him, He did but utter His Divine Name, "I AM" and they fell backward to the ground. He then withdrew the power of His name and suffered them to rise, and delivered Himself into their hands. He could say to Pilate, "Thou could'st have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above."

He laid down His life of Himself. "No man taketh my life from Me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. This authority I received from My Father." John 10: 18. He ever acted on the authority of

His Father. To Him His Father was everything. The Father's honour—His glory—His purposes were His one consideration and He was prepared to lay down His life to secure all for Him. This oneness of aim comes out beautifully in John 12: 27-28. The Greeks who had come to worship at the feast had said to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus." This request brought from the heart of Jesus the expression of His soon coming sacrifice. His soul was troubled, for the ordeal before Him was the most fearful in the history of eternity. Yet He faced all its issues and in the throes of His soul trouble, His one thought was for the Glory of His Father, and he addresses Him—"Father, glorify Thy name," then came there a voice out of heaven saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

This was the Father's response to the abounding desire of His Son. He will do more than he asks. He doubly glorifies His name. He sets an infinite value on the Sacrifice of His Son and that Sacrifice will bring an infinite and added Glory to the Father's name. He has many Titles but what Divine Glory rests on that title—"The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. 1: 3. This is a new Glory as it is a new Title. "Therefore doth My Father love Me." And well might He love Thee, blessed Lord Jesus! Who ever loved Him like Thee? Thou, as no one ever did, did'st love the Lord Thy God with all Thy heart, with all Thy soul, with all Thy strength and with all Thy mind. Thou did'st obey His voice. Thou did'st cleave unto Him. Thou did'st not go aside from any of His words—to the right or to the left. Thou hast kept His charge, and His statutes and His judgments and His commandments. He suffered Thee to hunger and to be sorely tried and tempted, yet Thou murmured not, but held fast to the Word of God—the worship of God and the honour of God. He allowed the cities of the plain to reject Thee and all Thou did'st say was, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." He permitted men to rail on Thee—to assail Thee vehemently—to slander Thee and Thou did'st suffer it all—and finally Thou did'st lay down Thy life voluntarily. Thou did'st bow Thy head and breathe out Thy Spirit. Therefore doth Thy Father love Thee. How could He help loving Thee, Who so perfectly and blessedly met every desire of His heart? God is Love and He met Love in Thee and is satisfied. May we say very humbly alongside such a love: "And therefore, we too, love Thee, for Thou hast first loved us."

ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED ONE.

"To the praise of the Glory of His Grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1: 6.

This gracious and heart thrilling phrase—"accepted in the Beloved" cannot but arouse the query—what does it really imply? It is an outstanding statement of the highest and most heavenly nature. The word "accepted" barely expresses all it means. It is not merely that we pass scrutiny and the door is opened to us. It is not merely admission. It is not only that our persons are accepted. It means that we have been taken into favour—that we have been made suitable for the presence of God—that all that was against us has been put away for ever and nothing left that God could not smile upon. But it means more—that all that characterised His Son has been put upon us, and, graced with His blessedness, the heart of the Father is open to us and in the Glory of His Grace He has given us favour and acceptance in the Beloved.

"In the Beloved" speaks of the Father's affection and love of His Son. This is the highest term of endearment the Father could express of His Son and it is in the Beloved we are thus so signally favoured. Note the setting of this most blessed statement beginning Eph. 1: 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath

1. Blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.
2. According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.
3. Having predestinated us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.
4. To the praise of the Glory of His Grace, wherein He hath made us accepted IN THE BELOVED.
5. In Whom we have redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence."
6. Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He had purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of

times that he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on earth, even in Him.

7. In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; that we should be to the praise of His Glory who first trusted in Christ.

8. In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in Whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His Glory."

This new and blessed title, "**The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,**" tells of the Father's appreciation of His Son and of His delight and satisfaction in being known as His God and His Father. His life on earth—His obedience—His entire surrender to the will of God, could not but gladden the Father's heart. The Lord Jesus had included His own in this blessed relationship in the intimation in resurrection, "Go to my brethren and say unto them, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" John 20: 17.

"He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Heb. 9: 26. His death settled every righteous claim of God, "And you hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight." Col. 1: 21-22. Thus shall we be before God the Father. If His Son is holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight, so are we, for we are "in Him."

This is a blessed oneness. "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Heb. 2: 11. Thus shall we be in the Father's house in all the activity and warmth of the Father's love. We shall be there, not as angels—nor servants—nor merely human creatures on whom God has had mercy, but as sons. Closer to Him than angels, who are but His servants, great and blessed though they be. They are His by creation. We are His by new birth—born of God—predestinated unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself. This, God has destined we shall be and who can resist His will? He has said it and it shall be so. And in that day, He, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will be able to say as He beholds us in His Son's Beauty and Glory—"These are My beloved sons in whom I am well pleased." And we shall be able to say—"And Thou art our God and Father for that we are sons, and Thou hast sent the Spirit of Thy Son into our hearts whereby we call Thee, Father."

What great and wonderful words then, are these?—**Blessed—Chosen—Predestinated, and Accepted in the Beloved!**

God here portrays the blessedness of His own — every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ—not one awaiting. Chosen in Him before time was and granting holiness and blamelessness before Him in love—holy and without blemish and received in all the wealth and warmth of the Father's love.

Sonship is also ours. His good pleasure showing His sovereign Grace in the good pleasure of His will. And this will redound to the praise of the Glory and of His Grace in which He made us accepted in the Beloved. God has already assured us of our place in Christ—our eternal blessedness—and views us as in His presence in love, in perfect suitability—as sons in the Father's house, but this is deeper, nearer still to His heart, the crowning expression of love—in the **Beloved!** In all the sweetness and graciousness and loveliness and acceptability of the Beloved—in all that He is to the heart of the Father—so are we.

Not till God expresses this perfect—gracious acceptance of us in the Beloved in this Ephesian Epistle, does he ever mention our sins and then only to declare our redemption in Him and the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of His Grace. But He will not occupy our attention with that till He made known first our great blessedness. "Accepted in the Beloved" lies in the centre and is the centre of these eight great statements. It is the point around which they all revolve. But we are still in the body and in it we groan. It is the body that has yet to be redeemed—that detains us here in a groaning creation. This means that there is still sin in us, for if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves. But if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous. And if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The occurrence of sin should bring deep and real self judgment. It is not our true self. It is not the New Man. It is the product of the flesh in us, and the Holy Spirit is in us to sustain and develop the new man for Christ and to maintain incessant war with the flesh, that we might

not do the things that we would.

The Holy Spirit would engage our hearts with the Son of God—the vision that alone will change us into His image and deliver us from the thralldom of the flesh, while our souls rejoice unceasingly in the fact of our gracious acceptance in the Beloved, and we move onward to that great moment—to the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His Glory.

THE SON OF HIS LOVE.

Now we come to the climax—"The Kingdom of the Son of His Love."

"Giving thanks unto the Father Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light; Who hath delivered us out of the authority of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love." Col. 1: 12-13.

It is thus the Father Who has made us fit to be sharers of the portion of the saints in light, so that we may be brought into a goodly company—the saints in light. God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all. His saints must therefore be characterised by light, else they could not be saints. They are His set apart ones—His holy ones and it is He Who has made them so, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. They were once under the authority of darkness out of which they could not deliver themselves. Indeed they were at one time darkness as well as in darkness and the children of darkness. They are now 'light in the Lord' and the children of light. The Father not only delivered them out of the power of darkness, but translated them into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love. This is a complete accomplishment—translated—transferred—from one authority to another, and that other the wonderful, ineffable Kingdom of the Son of His Love.

It is the Father Who has done all this. It is in the Son of His Love we have redemption through His blood. It was the Father Who sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; and oh! how the Father loved Him because He laid down His life that He might take it again. God dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto—Whom no man hath seen or can see—yet it is into that light His saints are brought and in that light shall rejoice eternally. This is the portion of the saints and we who are His, are sharers in it. The Father has fitted them for His Presence; in His Son they are holy and without blemish and He views them in Him with Divine pleasure. They are at home before Him. The intensity of that light in which God dwells will only serve to reveal in ever greater display the perfections and excellences of the Son of His Love. We shall never come to the end of what the light will there unveil—an unending panorama of the Grace and Glories of Him Who ever gave the Father such inexpressible delight. Behold the greatness of the Blessed One! "Who is the image of the invisible God, the First-born of all creation: for in Him were all things created that are in the heavens and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities or authorities: all things were created through Him and for Him: and He is before all things and in Him all things consist." Col. 1: 15-17.

He is "the Image of the invisible God;" not a mere likeness—but the exact representation of God. He made God visible for He was God manifest in flesh. He could say "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He declared the Father. He expressed the Father. What came out in Him as He traversed this scene was the Father. Everything about Him told of the Father. He ever was God—Eternal God—whether as the Word in eternity expressing God or as becoming flesh—or, as in the form of a servant—or as being found in fashion as a man—His Divine Personality undergoes no change. He is ever Eternal God and He was never anything else; 'the Image of the invisible God.' He is "the Firstborn of all creation." This does not refer to time but to dignity. Adam was the first man, but he was not the Firstborn. He sinned and his sons sinned after him. Christ came later but He was the Firstborn—for He was the Creator and alone had right and title to be hailed as the Firstborn, for it is a matter of dignity. "That was not first which is spiritual but that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual." "The first man is out of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from Heaven." 1 Cor. 15: 41-47. But the second man, Christ, is the Son and Heir, and thus He alone can be the Firstborn, although He did not arrive on this scene until the fulness of the time was come, and God sent Him forth, made of a woman, made under the law. Gal. 4: 4.

Jacob's description of his firstborn, Reuben, makes clear the dignity attached to such—"Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, excellency of dignity and excellency of power."

Reuben was Israel's firstborn but on account of his iniquity he was not reckoned as firstborn, his birthright being given to Joseph, and the genealogy is not reckoned after the birthright: for Judah prevailed above his brethren and of him came the Prince or Chief Ruler. 1 Chron. 5.1.2.

Reuben had the title as to time but it was given to Joseph with a blameless record and deserved dignity. Yet it was Judah who prevailed above his brethren and of him came the Prince. Both speak of Jesus; Joseph of His holy character, Judah of His Royal Person.

Thus the name firstborn is associated with might—strength—excellency of dignity and excellency of power, and it is in this connection it is used concerning the **Son of His Love**.

As God declares in Psalm 89: 27-19 "Also, I will make Him My Firstborn, Higher than the kings of the earth." This declares God's intention to give Him a position of Honour, as yet not conferred upon Him, but which He assuredly would yet have. This is in keeping with Heb. 1: 5. "I will be to Him for a Father and He shall be to me for a Son." "For in Him were all things created." There is nothing in creation that was not first in Him and derived from Him—whether Light, Life, Love, Wisdom, Understanding, Beauty, Preciousness, the marvels that constitute the elements—all were in Him first. They were the expression of Himself in a myriad of forms—visible and invisible—in the heavens and upon the earth—from the Hyssop that springeth out of the wall to the great trees of Lebanon—from the minutest protoplasm on earth to the mightiest Thrones—Dominions—Principalities and Authorities of Heaven. All created through Him and for Him. Thus all creation is centred in Him—through Him and unto Him. He is the beginning and the end, for he is before all things and in Him all things consist.

THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF HIS LOVE.

"And He is the Head of the body, the Assembly: Who is the beginning the firstborn from among the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For in Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell." Col. 1: 18-19. "God has given Him to be Head over all things to the Assembly which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Eph. 1: 22-23.

He must be pre-eminent—He is pre-eminent. He is the beginning the firstborn from among the dead. But others were raised from the dead before Him. In point of time they were, but not in dignity and greatness. Those who were raised from the dead but lived to die again. He, raised from the dead by the Glory of the Father, having laid down His life that He might take it again, liveth again after the power of an endless, indissoluble life. Heb. 7: 16. And is alive for evermore," Rev. 1.

Again, we repeat, it is not a question of priority in time, but priority in dignity—for in all things He must have the pre-eminence.

All the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell in Him. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Col. 2: 9. In Him it was indeed Triunity in Unity and Unity in Triunity. There was and is in Him but One mind—one thought—one purpose, shared by all the Persons of the Godhead. All the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him—the Son—for He must be pre-eminent.

These are a few of the greatnesses and blessednesses of Him into Whose Kingdom—the Kingdom of the Son of His Love—the Father in Grace and Love, has translated us. Only once does this most touching, lovely expression occur in Scripture, the **Son of His Love**.

All the Father's heart is in it. The Son—the expression of His Love and the evidence of it. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." Therefore said the angel "That Holy Thing that shall be born of thee shall be called, Son of God." He had to be here before He could be given—before He could be sent to be the Saviour of the world. It was the Father's love in the Person of His Son—the Son of His Love. All is of Grace, so that, accepted in the Beloved, we are brought into a scene where all is Love, where all is of God, and God is Love and the Son is Love and the Holy Spirit is Love and Heaven is Love, and where to the ages of the ages we shall know the Infinite Blessedness and unspeakably glorious rule of the Kingdom of the Son of His Love.

Unto Him, the God and Father of Jesus the Beloved, be glory in the Assembly in Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen. Eph. 3: 21.

THE BLESSED MAN OF PSALM I.

It is good that the first Psalm of the first book of Psalms should begin not with the first man Adam but the second Man—the last Adam—that Blessed Man who is the

subject of all the Holy Scriptures, as He himself declared to His disciples after His resurrection. "And He said unto them, 'These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.'" Luke, 24: 44. He is in all the Scriptures, and the millions of books that have been written about Him are but a mere preface to the array of His Glories to which we shall yet be introduced. Here we know but in part, there we shall know in fulness; but it will be in an unending panorama eternally unfolding to our Redeemed and Changed beings the Unsearchable Riches of the Christ—the Surpassingness of His Love, and the amazingness of the Moral and Divine Glories of that Blessed Man.

But, remember, there will be but One Glorious Man in Heaven; and I do not forget that He is leading many Sons unto Glory—a countless multitude—but only that One Blessed Man there—the rest of us will be only copies—but copies of HIM. He alone is our title there and in Him alone have we Standing and Acceptance. Do you see how this declares that Christ is ALL? No wonder, then, that this Psalm opens with such an extravagance of language—"Blessed, O the Blessednesses—the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." This may be rendered:—"Happy, O the Happiness"—the man that hath not walked (at any time) in the counsel of the ungodly." Both express the truth, for the Blessed Man is indeed the Happy Man, and his never having at any time walked in the counsel of the ungodly, identifies him as that One Man who is exalted Lord and Christ, the Blessed Man and the Son of the Blessed God.

Not one step of His path on earth was taken in the counsel of the ungodly—the lawless—the wicked ones. He was deaf to the entreaties of their leader, the adversary, in the wilderness, and could say at the close of that path:—"The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me." Satan held no territory in Him. Nor could the wily craft nor the ingenuous questionings of satanic men draw Him into their counsels. Counsel He took, but from His Father only—in that counsel He walked continually.

Nor did He stand in the way of sinners. The way of sinners, the path they preferred, was not His way. Their company was not congenial to Him. His opponents did not forget the first Psalm, and challenged Him that He could not be the Blessed Man, for He received sinners and ate with them. He owned that He received sinners and ate with them, for He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He was among them but He was not of them. He mingled with them but undefiled, for He was Holy; and He sought their company only that He might declare the Love of God to them. And he finally died for sinners. Truly the Blessed Man.

NOR SITTETH IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL.

No, He was never found there. That was the assembly of the men of Belial who gathered together to make a mock at sin—to scoff at the law of God—a confederacy of blasphemers. Peter refers to such, that in the last days there shall come scoffers walking after their own lusts; and Jude also speaks of the mockers in the last time. This is a race that has been in existence since sin entered the world but which will be ended, when the present heavens and earth which by God's word are kept in store, and reserved unto fire unto the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men disappear in their final conflagration. This Blessed Man was not one of them. He could say with Jeremiah—"Thy words were found and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto Me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: For I am called by Thy Name, O Lord God of Hosts. I sat not in the assembly of mockers, nor rejoiced." Jer. 15: 16-17.

He sat alone. He had nothing in common with them.

These three negatives were true of Him as they could be of no other. They described a unique man—a Man without a peer—a Man in separation from sinners in His walk—in His standing—in His sitting—three postures of humanity in which He is alone in moral worth—in all of which every other man had failed.

But not only in negatives is He Supreme. There are the positive qualities which He alone exhibits in their highest excellences.

"BUT HIS DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF JEHOVAH, AND IN HIS LAW DOTH HE MEDITATE DAY AND NIGHT."

It is not merely His acquiescence in the Law of Jehovah but His positive delight in it. Peter could rightly testify when it was proposed to place the new converts under the Law:—"Now therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Acts 15-10. This was true. The Law of Jehovah was to them unbearable, and only served to condemn them. But the Blessed Man of this Psalm was different. "He magnified the Law and made it

honourable." His delight—His highest joy was that Law. It was no unhappy yoke to Him. With what wholeheartedness He often exclaimed: "O How I Love Thy Law." He loved Jehovah's commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy Law."

It was His constant meditation. His will was set. "I will meditate in Thy precepts." Even when princes sat in judgment against Him, He said:—"But Thy servant did meditate in Thy Statutes." Indeed, instead of God's Statutes being a burden, He said:—"Thy Statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." Long before the watchman's cry was heard in the early morning, His eyes were open—"That I might meditate in Thy Word." We may say with heavy hearts and perhaps with some reluctance, "Thy will be done"—but He could say and truly:—"I delight to do Thy Will, O God." It was the expression of His whole being. It is exuberant joy. With what pleasure must Jehovah have looked down on that Blessed Man who always did the things that pleased Him!

Now follows a description of what this Blessed Man may be likened to.

**"AND HE SHALL BE LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE RIVERS OF WATERS
THAT BRINGETH FORTH HIS FRUIT IN HIS SEASON
HIS LEAF ALSO SHALL NOT WITHER; AND WHATSOEVER HE DOETH
SHALL PROSPER."**

A tree planted; this may be translated—'a tree transplanted,' and this is indeed descriptive of that Blessed Man—the Second Man—the Lord from Heaven. For He came down from Heaven, and that not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. He was the Word that became flesh and tabernacled among us. Thus was He transplanted by the rivulets of waters where abundance of the water essential for life and growth was certain. Indeed He had more than enough for Himself. He had abundance of supplies for others. To the woman at Jacob's well He could say:—"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink,' thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water." And again—"The water that I shall give shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." And more—"He that drinks of that water, out from him shall flow rivers of living water." The abundance that characterised Him will also mark them; there can be no drought there.

THAT BRINGETH FORTH HIS FRUIT IN HIS SEASON.

It is His fruit—the fruit that is natural to it, that partakes of its nature and life, and 'in His season,' always at the right time, so that it may be depended on. How suitably this represents Him whom we own as Lord!—the Blessed Man—the Son of Man as he delighted to call Himself!

How often our hearts have rejoiced in the words of the Bride:—"I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." Song of Songs, 2: 3.

HIS LEAF ALSO SHALL NOT WITHER.

No sere and yellow leaf does this tree show that would indicate the exhaustion of vitality and the beginning of decay. Life abundant is ever evident in that evergreen and everfresh leaf. And now from the type to Himself.

AND WHATSOEVER HE DOETH SHALL PROSPER.

It could not be otherwise with such a Blessed Man, for 'the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand.' Isa. 53: 10. "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth." Isa. 42: 4. There are no exceptions here to His prosperity. 'whatsoever,' from His smallest everyday acts to His mightiest and of final importance—all shall prosper. Now for the contrast.

THE UNGODLY ARE NOT SO.

They are a dire negative. The only thing positive about them is their ungodliness—their lawlessness—their missing of the mark—their sinning. Nothing that characterises this Blessed Man can be found in them. They are altogether opposite and contrary. No use can be found for them. They are like the chaff which the wind driveth away—nor does anyone want to find it again.

**THEREFORE THE UNGODLY SHALL NOT RISE IN THE JUDGMENT,
NOR SINNERS, IN THE CONGREGATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS.**

There will be two resurrections—that of the just who have been justified by faith in the Son of God, and are thus righteous before God, even as Abraham believed God and

it was counted unto Him for righteousness. Rom. 4: 3. There is therefore now no judgment to them that are in Christ Jesus. Rom. 8: 1. There is the judgment seat of Christ, but that is for the justified ones only, and has nothing to do with their salvation which is already assured by the Sovereign Grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. This judgment seat of Christ is with a view to an examination of their service, so that adequate rewards may be given to those who have been found faithful. In whatever degree there has been unfaithfulness, the rewards will be lost. No unsaved will be at that judgment seat, for they are excluded from that resurrection. Not one sinner will be in the congregation of the righteous.

The other resurrection will be that of the unjust and it will end in Eternal destruction in the blackness of darkness for ever. They have refused repentance—have refused life and now reap a dread harvest. John 5: 26-29. Not one righteous will be in that evil congregation.

FOR JEHOVAH KNOWETH THE WAY OF THE RIGHTEOUS ONES.

Note the change to the plural. It is no longer the individual. The corn of wheat has fallen into the ground and died and has borne much fruit. The Blessed Man is now the Captain of their salvation and has led the many sons unto Glory—a great host of righteous, justified ones, and the way of these, Jehovah knows. His scrutiny of them reveals only what is well-pleasing unto Him, for He has accepted them in the Beloved, having chosen them in Him from before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love. He sees them all in His Son and as changed at His Coming, He sees now His Son in them. So there will be but one Glorious Man in Heaven, but what a multitude of *fac similes*!

BUT THE WAY OF THE UNGODLY SHALL PERISH.

A QUESTION AND ITS ANSWER.

Psalm 15.

The question is asked in two parts and is addressed to Jehovah for an answer. The first part is as to who shall sojourn in Jehovah's Tent. It is the mark of the pilgrim that he is a sojourner—here to-day, and perhaps, somewhere else to-morrow. His lodging is a temporary structure—a tent—easily taken down and easily carried elsewhere (according as Jehovah's pillar of cloud directs), and as easily set up again when the pilgrim arrives at its next site. Here it is: Jehovah's Tent—where He Himself dwells, and the Question:—WHO SHALL SOJOURN IN THAT TENT?

The next part asks:—"WHO SHALL DWELL IN THY HOLY HILL?"

The questioner enquires as to the marks or characteristics of the one who shall abide in the 'Hill of Thy Holiness.' Here it is a permanency. To sojourn is to be on the move—to abide is to be dwelling in a settled place. Here the wanderings of the pilgrim are ended. He has reached his terminus—his greatly to be desired Haven. This abiding place is marked by the Holiness of Jehovah. Who may dare to claim the title to abide there? Jehovah answers:—"HE THAT WALKETH UPRIGHTLY (in true sincerity). To walk uprightly—perfectly—is to walk in a straight path—a path without crookedness—in a straight line. A straight line is defined as the shortest distance between two points, as between the upright walker and his God. He walks in the Light which would assuredly expose any departure from that Path. It means that his whole will and his whole being has uprightness as its one dominant characteristic. There is no unevenness in his steps. All his ways can bear the Divine Scrutiny, nor can men find any just reason to condemn him, even although they should raise false reports about him. Jehovah's verdict is the only judgment to be desired or feared.

"AND WORKETH RIGHTEOUSNESS." Righteousness is declared in righteous acts. One cannot see righteousness unless in its products in a man. It includes providing things honestly in the sight of God and man. There is no make-believe or hypocrisy. This man pays his debts. He will owe no man anything but love. He will sell his last stick, but he will not be in debt. He cannot be persuaded to join in anything, however profitable it is likely to be, if there should be the slightest dubiety as to its rightness in the sight of God. He worketh Righteousness; that is his job—his lifework.

There cannot but come to mind the uprightness of this same Lord, when in the days of His flesh He walked through this scene. He could challenge Pharisees and Scribes and People:—"Which of you convicteth me of sin?" No one ever took up that challenge although they poured abuse and insult upon Him. He worked Righteousness.

"AND SPEAKETH THE TRUTH IN HIS HEART." The Truth must first be in

the heart before it can come out of it. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It means that the man who is here described speaks what is in his heart, and in his heart is truth and truth only. Many dissemble with their lips while the truth is known to them, but for gain or an evil purpose they do not voice what they know to be true. These do not have the truth in their heart. If they had, it would be sure to come out.

There was but One Man who could say, 'I AM THE TRUTH.'

Nothing but Truth could emanate from Him. On one occasion, recorded in John 8-25, the Jews asked Jesus, 'Who art THOU,' emphasising THOU in sarcasm. "And Jesus said unto them—"Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning." This, literally is, 'I am altogether that which I also say unto you.' What He said unto them, THAT HE WAS, He was the embodiment of TRUTH. He could produce only that which was His Nature. The vine can produce only grapes, and He was the True Vine—the Vine of Truth. He could say: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life"—"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away." Never could man make such stupendous claims as He—but never was such a Man as He—the TRUTH—seen on earth—speaking Truth in and from His heart, regardless of consequences.

This comes out clearly in Luke 4-22 and 28-31. They wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth, but as he continued speaking Truth He said things that they knew to be true, but which placed them in an unfavourable light; then their wonderment changed to hate and rage, so that they seized Him—ran Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built to cast Him over and kill him, but He, passing through the midst of them, went His way.

These three positive characteristics of WALKING—WORKING and SPEAKING, set forth admirably the Grace of our Lord Jesus in His Perfect walk—His Righteous deeds and His Truthful words; a threefold cord that cannot be broken.

The next three marks of the desirable and suitable man are of a negative character—what he does not do. verse 3.

"BACKBITETH NOT WITH HIS TONGUE." Backbiting is speaking evil of those who are not present to defend themselves; taking advantage of their absence to slander them. It is the forbidden evil of tale-bearing. He does not bite with his teeth, but with his tongue; and the tongue can bite more devastatingly—eating into the very soul of a man.

"NOR DOETH EVIL TO HIS NEIGHBOUR," (friend-companion). This embraces much that is of a moral nature. Evil is the opposite of good. Not to do good when you can, is to do evil. "If thou meet an enemy's ox or ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again" Exod. 23-4, 5. How much more, if it is a neighbour's or friend's ox or ass? If this was enjoined under Law, how much more under Grace?

"NOR TAKETH UP A REPROACH AGAINST HIS NEIGHBOUR." This is passing on a slander you have heard about a neighbour. It might be true, or untrue; it does not matter; you took it up and passed it on and thus spread the evil. This marks the man of Jehovah's disapproval.

Not one of these three failings was ever found in our Lord Jesus. He had unpalatable things to say to Pharisees and Scribes and the Jews, and He said them. He wept over them. He desired to save them. Every word He said was true and had they heeded Him it would have been well with their souls. But all the truth He spoke only embittered them and increased their hate and rage. Backbiting with His tongue was not in His Nature nor in His Heart. Those sent to arrest Him came back without Him but with the report—"Never man spake like this man."

Never did He do evil to His neighbour. On the contrary, He loved His neighbours. He went about doing good—never evil. He healed their sick, gave sight to their blind—cleansed their lepers—raised their dead and finally gave Himself to the death of the Cross that they might be saved from wrath to come. But not only for His neighbours did He die, but for His enemies—"being enemies we have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son." Rom. 5-10.

Nor did He ever take up a reproach against a neighbour. When a man came to Him reproaching his brother for not dividing the estate with him, and asking the Lord to take up the matter, He refused saying—"Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" He Himself was the subject of reproach upon reproach. Prophetically it was written of Him—"The reproaches of them who reproached Thee fell on me." And again—"Reproach hath broken My heart." "I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but specially among my neighbours." They called Him a gluttonous Man and

a winebibber—said that He was a Samaritan and had a demon—that He cast out demons by Beelzebub the prince of demons—they termed him “that deceiver,” but “Being reviled, He reviled not again.”

Verse 4 mentions three positive qualities which the desirable man must possess.

“IN WHOSE EYES A VILE PERSON IS CONDEMNED.”

That is, he will not excuse the evil, depraved person. Sin is sin, no matter in whom it is found. He will not call evil, good, as men have done in all ages.

“BUT HE HONOURETH THEM THAT FEAR THE LORD.”

The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom, and this man holds this fear in high esteem and honours those who manifest it. He is a man who judges all things according to Jehovah, His Word and His Will. He is no friend of those who slight a godly man, whom He honours.

“HE THAT SWEARETH TO HIS OWN HURT AND CHANGETH NOT.”

This man discovers that statements he has made on oath are likely to be used to condemn him or to cause him serious hurt or loss. Yet, as he is one who values the Truth and maintains it regardless of consequences, he chooses to suffer, and if needs be, die, rather than escape by denying his own word which he knows to be Truth.

Again we find these three blessed qualities in our Lord Jesus in Whom they shine as in no other. He is ever pre-eminent. When the Pharisees advised Him to leave the district as Herod wanted to kill Him; He replied:—“Go ye and tell that fox—I do cures to-day and to-morrow and the third day I shall be perfected.” He did not hesitate to give Herod this true descriptive title. He called Judas Iscariot the son of perdition; the carnal condition of the Scribes and Pharisees called from Him the most scathing condemnation—“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites”—eight times repeated with His unanswerable indictments of Matt. chapt. 23.

The Lord Jesus always ‘honoured them that feared Jehovah.’ He could say:—“I am a companion of them that fear Thee.” He greets Nathaniel with—“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” Innumerable instances are to be found in Holy Scripture of this phase of His Blessed Character. He honoured them which feared Jehovah.

Did the Lord Jesus ever swear to His own hurt and changed not? He did. In Matt. 26: 59-66, the false witnesses testify against Him, but He answers nothing. The High Priest is indignant. “Answerest thou nothing which these witness against Thee?” But Jesus held His peace. Now the High Priest puts Him on oath: “I adjure Thee by the Living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God?” Jesus now speaks:—“Thou hast said.” That is—what you have said is true, I am. He knew He was giving them the evidence they had sought in vain from the witnesses whose contrary evidence could not be accepted. He knew He was sealing His own condemnation. He had sworn to His own hurt and He was not going to resile from the position He had taken—and He knew what it would lead to.

The High Priest seized the opportunity, although he knew that it was illegal to condemn an accused person on his own testimony alone. He declared that Jesus had spoken blasphemy and that they needed no further witnesses. The Sanhedrin then declared Him liable to the death penalty. No word of protest came from the condemned Man, **HE CHANGED NOT.** He had set His face like a flint that could not be bent or turned. “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.”

So these three qualities are found in Him, He condemned the depraved person—He honoured them that feared Jehovah—and He sweareth to His own hurt and changeth it not.

There remain now two negative requirements.

“HE THAT PUTTETH NOT OUT HIS MONEY TO USURY.” verse 5.

Jehovah forbade His people to lend money or victuals to their poor brethren on usury, or to make gain by increase, thus taking advantage of the poor brother's poverty. Three times this prohibition is repeated—in Exodus—Leviticus—and Deuteronomy. It is clear from this Psalm that this law was disregarded in similar fashion to the way in which the Pharisees made the commandments of none effect by their traditions. Evasion of the Law became a fine art by their ingenious methods and plausible hypocries. Hence this infraction of Jehovah's Word is mentioned as indicating the type of man who would not dwell with Him, and at the same time attesting the high importance Jehovah attached to this prohibition. Offences against the poor were particularly obnoxious to Him. Those who thus sinned had forgotten how really poor they themselves were, and if they had aught more than their poorer brethren it was because of Jehovah's blessing in thus entrusting them with this as a stewardship. To fail to

observe this could only bring the tokens of His severe disapproval and judgment.

Now comes the final mark of the unsuitable man;

"NOR TAKETH REWARD AGAINST THE INNOCENT."

This states a specially vile action for which no possible excuse could be found. Judas Iscariot is the outstanding example of this. "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood," he finally said in his remorse, but found no repentance. Good would it have been for that man if he had not been born.

These two final marks are but two expressions of the same character. With the one hand he gives out money wrongfully for gain, to profit by his poor brother's poverty; with the other he takes money as a bribe to condemn the innocent.

In neither of these do we find any marks of that true Holiness which alone is suitable to the presence of Jehovah—that Holiness without which no one can see the Lord. Its entire absence is all too apparent.

I need not say how entirely we fail to find the least suggestion of any such marks in the life of the Lord Jesus.

He was Himself the poor man. He had no money to give or lend. He had to ask His questioners; 'Shew Me a penny?' He had not one of His own. He had to send Peter to the sea to catch a fish to get the coin to pay the tribute money. But while He had no money, He had something to give to the poor, something that money could not buy. He gave as one of the evidences that He was the Sent One of God, the precious words: "To the poor the Gospel is preached." It was preached without money and without price. The poorest could have it. The richest could not buy it. Its value was inestimable. He had healings of body as well as of soul; and He gave liberally to all. Freely He fed the hungry thousands and from the very touch of His garments exuded healing to those whose faith ventured. He came to call sinners to repentance—the hated Taxgatherers—the sinful men and women—and scorned reputation in His love to bless and save them.

He had been rich; beyond all human imagination—but He gave all up—He emptied Himself. He Who had been in the form of God, came in the form of a bondman. He became poor that He might make many rich. The usurer that Jehovah condemned begged the poor to make himself rich: Jesus begged Himself to make the poor rich.

The last mark could never apply to the Lord Jesus. He defended that innocent woman whose love and worship had spent much on that precious ointment with which she had anointed Him. "Let her alone," He said, "For she hath wrought a good work on Me." And he defended even the guilty. He did not ignore the sin, but He refused to condemn the sinner, although men asked Him to. His words to that guilty woman will never be forgotten—"Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more."

The answer then to the double question in the first verse of this Psalm is found in one Blessed Name—that of our Lord Jesus Christ. He, the Man Christ Jesus, is the One who has shewn Himself to possess all excellences demanded by Jehovah and innocent of all the evil Jehovah condemned. He it is who was found fit to sojourn in Jehovah's Tent in the days of His flesh and who to-day is in the Hill of His Holiness. Of Him alone could the Father say:—"Thou art my Beloved Son in whom I have found all my delight." He has earned fully the final decision of this Psalm:—"HE THAT DOETH THESE THINGS SHALL NEVER BE MOVED."

And for you, my reader, and for me, the writer, He endured the Cross and despised the shame of it, for the Joy set before Him. And 'He is of God made unto us Wisdom—Righteousness—Sanctification and Redemption.' This is the blessed result of His Death for our sins. We had no virtue to satisfy God's claims and could only provide evil for our condemnation. But God Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by Grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the Heavenlies in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come, He might shew the exceeding riches of His Grace in His Kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Eph. 2: 4-7.

Now since He has put away our sins, and has become our Wisdom—Righteousness—Sanctification and Redemption—fitting us for the Holy Presence of God, Who has accepted us in the Beloved, in all the Riches of His Grace and Love, the Words Jehovah applies to Him, also apply to us:—"HE THAT DOETH THESE THINGS SHALL NEVER BE MOVED." So that we shall sojourn in His Tent and abide in His Holy Hill—for the "DOING THESE THINGS" has been done by Another for us—on our account, and—that to God's Eternal satisfaction making us eternally debtors to His Grace. Blessed be His Glorious Name for ever.

Now we are complete in Him, for we are in Him that is True, even in His Son, Jesus Christ, Who is the true God and Eternal Life. Brought into such blessedness may we have

Grace to serve our God reverently and with godly fear—that His life may be lived over again in us. His indeed is the Glory.

THE ANGELS AND THE ASSEMBLY.

Will you please read 1 Cor. 11: 1-16. This first verse really belongs to the previous chapter where the most solemn warnings are given to the saints that disapproval and judgment will fall on those who give God displeasure by their carnal and self-directed lives. Paul illustrates this by citing the experience of Israel after they were delivered from Egypt and while still in the wilderness; the majority were destroyed and their bodies strewn in the wilderness on account of their unbelief and their insubjection to the Word of Jehovah. He instances his own attitude and action in the matters mentioned, and calls on them to become imitators of him, even as he also is of Christ.

Verse 2 introduces this section. He commends them for remembering him in all things, and that they keep the traditions—the teachings he gave them orally—exactly as he delivered those teachings to them. No oral teaching, termed tradition, can be accepted that is not contained in the Sacred Letters, the Holy Scriptures, or that in any degree contradict or make void what is written therein. This would certainly mean that the traditions were not the truth, or else the written Word were untrue. By what is written we must unyieldingly stand, regardless of what that stand may mean to us, even if it meant the loss of life itself. There were moral traditions maintained among the Jews when the Lord was in this scene which brought from Him the severest condemnation. The Pharisees were the leaders in this and they received the most sweeping denunciations from Him who was the Truth. He openly charged them with making the Word of God of none effect through their traditions. In a later day Paul wrote of similar types arising in the Assembly and causing the saints to be subject to ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men, and thus without any Scriptural authority. Col. 2: 20-22.

Romanism is the outstanding example of the complete domination by their so-called traditions and fables over the Word of God. This results in a religious organisation claiming to be THE church, but you will search the Scriptures in vain to find it.

Verse 3 introduces a new line, but which Paul, by the Spirit, wishes them to take note of. It is thus important and not to be neglected. It is "that the head of every man is Christ: but woman's head is the man, and Christ's Head, God." Christ is the controlling authority for the men. There is no room for the independent and self-willed man who thinks his own thoughts and prefers them. The Head must rule and the man obey. The woman's head is the man, and this means a similar subjection to her head. 'And Christ's Head, God'—we know in what perfect subjection and in what unparalleled obedience did Christ live His life in this scene—even unto death—the Death of the Cross.

Verse 4, "Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head—puts it to shame—for he is hiding, putting out of view, Christ his Head, Whom he is there to set forth.

Verses 5-6. "But every woman who prayeth or prophesieth with the head uncovered—puts to shame her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn; but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered." This statement does not condone a woman praying or prophesying in public in the Assembly, but concerns itself presently with the shame of her appearance while she is so doing in her selfwill. The definite command to silence in the Assembly comes in its right place in the 14th chapter. It would indeed be a shameful thing for a Christian woman to be shorn—that is the hair shortened or bobbed—or shaven—that is, a close cut, such as is too often seen in women professing godliness, for the shorn or shaven hair was in all ages the sign of the prostitute.

The removal of the hair in this way was thus an advertisement to the men that she was not under the authority of any one man. Is this not a shameful thing for a saint to copy?

ON ACCOUNT OF THE ANGELS.

Verse 7. The man was not to cover his head being the image and glory of God, and the head must therefore be in display. The woman, however, is the glory of the man. Thus there are two types of glory—one to be open and visible in the man, the glory of God, and thus no reason for covering it. The other, in the woman, the glory of the man, with every reason for covering it. In the Assembly of God, there is no room

for the first man. The Second Man, the Lord from Heaven, alone is competent to fill the whole scene, and all must be in suitability to Him.

In verses 8-9 the Holy Spirit brings in the facts of origin and purpose in explanation of all this. Man was created first; his origin was not derived from the woman, but the woman was derived from the man. Nor was man created on account of the woman; but the woman was brought into being on account of the man. This was the Divine purpose. "For this cause ought the woman to have authority on the head on account of the angels. The covering on the woman's head was the sign that she was under the authority of the man. However, neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord. For, as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. Here you have essential mutual dependency, but the summing up brings you to the Source of all things—GOD.

Verse 13 is an appeal to their own commonsense, "Judge in yourselves, Is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?" Let me here relate an incident that happened in Glasgow many years ago. A poor woman had confessed Christ as her Saviour after the Gospel meeting one Lord's day. Later, two brethren were deputed to visit her to find out how she was doing, and to help her further. She welcomed them warmly and they opened the Scriptures to unfold something more of the Grace of the Lord Jesus. Then, ere they left her, they suggested that they should kneel in prayer, to which she gladly assented, but begging to be excused for a little, she opened a drawer and took out a small shawl with which she covered her head, then knelt with the brethren while they prayed. This impressed the brethren greatly as nothing had been said about such a matter, but she had evidently been reading her Bible and her happy willingness to obey gave them a blessing they had not expected.

Is God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, not the Great God—The ETERNAL—dwelling in the Light that no man can approach? Should there not be much more reverence and awe in our approach to His Presence than we find usually in meetings? How noisily some tramp in to sit at His Table, even although the meeting has been opened, and leave it in the same fashion; while too often the din of voices and laughter in the entrance or outside immediately after the Lord's Supper makes one wonder if they have forgotten the solemn scene they have just left.

That we have boldness to enter the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus is a precious truth; but the word 'boldness' in English has many meanings just as in other languages. It may mean daring—courage—rude,—etc., but in this Scripture it means none of these, but, because our Lord Jesus came to do the will of God, by which will we are sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all—having offered one sacrifice for sins for ever—perfecting for ever them that are sanctified—we have therefore, brethren, freedom—liberty (not licence) but with right and title to enter into the Holiest. There are conditions to be observed—a true heart—full assurance of faith—hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience—and our bodies washed with pure water. Thus holiness, not only imputed but known in practical experience is essential for the entrance into the Holiest—the immediate Presence of God. "Is it comely?" might be asked of many things. But the matter is not finished. Another question comes in verse 14. "Doth not even nature teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a dishonour to him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." This needs no explanation. Paul now concludes this section with the definite avowal: "But if anyone thinks to be contentious, WE have no such custom, neither the Assemblies of God." This is emphatic. What he corrects and exposes is not their practice nor that of the Assemblies of God. It is essential that these matters must first be corrected before he can proceed to the consideration of their further failure and open up a true exposition of the Lord's Supper, for we have no right to sit at His Table so long as these matters are not judged and our ways brought into line with Divine teachings. Now, having briefly reviewed the first sixteen verses of this chapter will you please turn back to verse 10 for a further consideration.

DISORDER—BUT NOT AMONG THE ANGELS.

"For this cause ought the woman to have authority on the head BECAUSE OF THE ANGELS." 'Authority on the head' was the covering, together with the long hair, that declared her obedience in taking the place of subjection to the man. There was no reaching out for a place God had never given her. Unfortunately, the opposite was too common in Corinth and this was disorder, now as well as then.

There is no disorder among the Angels. Each one is in his own sphere. The thought of taking another's place would never occur to him. Angels are holy, hence happy. Each one fulfils the commission given to him—no more, no less. They are all minister-

ang spirits sent forth to minister to them who are about to inherit salvation. That is why there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repents.

Ps. 104: 4 is quoted in Heb. 1: 7—"AND OF THE ANGELS HE SAITH: 'WHO MAKETH HIS ANGELS SPIRITS AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE.'" They are invisible, but they are personal and have intelligence and understanding, and are quick to discern all that is not suitable to the Glory of God. And they know what is suitable, which many who profess His name seem to be ignorant of. In their service to God, as they carry out His commandments, they act as a flame of fire, nothing can stand before them. They are faster than light—mightier than men—and all consuming in their work of judgment. That this is the Day of Grace is one reason that the fires of judgment do not sweep the earth. They are busy in the Assemblies as in Corinth—where many died and many were weak and sickly. In the day of Wrath our Lord Jesus will be revealed from Heaven with His Mighty Angels in a flame of fire taking vengeance, etc." (II. Thess. 1: 7-8).

These angels of His power will appear as one flame of fire. "A fire goeth before Him" and burneth up His adversaries round about." Ps. 97:3.

The Angels are interested intensely in our Salvation. Peter writes: "Of which Salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently—unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you, WHICH THINGS THE ANGELS DESIRE TO LOOK INTO." (Peter 1: 9-12).

The Salvation of God made possible by Deity—the Word—becoming flesh and as Son of God—God manifest in flesh, doing all the will of God with a filial obedience and a bondservant's utter and unquestioning submission such as God never before experienced, was so amazing, so astounding, that the Angels desired to look into such a transcendent matter. (Eph. 3: 10-11).

The occurrence of the phrase, 'because of the Angels,' would indicate their interest also in the Assembly gathered together unto His Name and would mean their appreciation or otherwise, of the conduct of the saints there. What would be their reaction as they behold the women without hats to cover their heads—or curious inventions perched on one side of the head almost covering one eye and leaving most of the head exposed—uncovered? Or the bobbed hair—the painted lips—the pencilled eyebrows—the curled eyelashes—painted finger nails, and in some places—bare legged—and alas! women dressed in male attire—and that at the Lord's Table?

The Angels are God's Administrators and Executioners, and can deal out judgment on despisers of His Word.

In Psalm 103: 20-21 we read: "Bless Jehovah, ye His Angels, mighty in strength; that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word." They do not have that might for nothing.

It was a solemn word that God spoke through Moses to Israel in Exodus 23: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions: for MY NAME is in him." Israel knew that, for in one day his judgment slew twenty three thousand of those who had sinned—and in this Corinthian chapter it is recorded that many in the Assembly had fallen asleep, and many others sick, because they ate and drank at the Lord's Table in an unworthy manner. This does not refer to religious unbelievers, who, in so-called churches, are allowed to sit at the communion services, but to saints—true believers, who ignore the Lord's claims on them. **IT IS A SERIOUS MATTER TO PROVOKE THE ANGELS.**

We, who are in the Assemblies, should call to mind the statement by the Psalmist in Psalm 39: 7. "God is greatly to be feared in the Assembly of His saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him." If 'Jesus in the midst' was consciously apprehended, what a sobering effect it would have upon all. How we should fear to do or say aught not in keeping with His August and Holy Presence.

This is further set forth in fuller detail in Eccl. 5: 1-7; please read it with care and exercise of heart. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in Heaven and thou upon earth. Therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through a multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.....Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; **NEITHER SAY THOU BEFORE THE ANGEL THAT IT WAS AN ERROR;** wherefore should God be angry at thy voice and destroy the work of thy hands?" These words should be

clear enough to every reader, and they form a solemn reminder of the Holiness and Reverence and Self restraint demanded by the Thrice Holy Presence of God; a reminder, too, that the Angel is there—the servant of God—to observe and to report every defection from all that is suitable and acceptable to God.

THE WATCHERS AND THE HOLY ONES.

Will you note now the well known story of Dan. 4 The King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, had a dream which none of the wise men of Babylon could interpret. He then called in Daniel to whom he told his dream. He beheld a great tree in the midst of the earth. It reached to the Heavens and its influence extended over the earth. Then he saw a WATCHER and an HOLY ONE come down from Heaven. He cried aloud: "Hew down the tree—cut off his branches—shake off his leaves—scatter his fruit. Leave the stump of his roots in the earth with a band of iron and brass—wet with the dew of heaven—his portion with the beasts on the grass—his heart changed from a man's, and a beast's heart be given him, and let seven times pass over him. This is the decree of the WATCHERS and the demand by the word of the HOLY ONES.

Daniel was perturbed, for the interpretation was a serious matter for the king and disastrous indeed. The king noticed Daniel's concern, but said he was to give the interpretation and not allow it to trouble him. Daniel did so, and entreated the king to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, thus may he have mercy from the Most High.

What patience God had with him. He waited twelve months, and as the king walked upon the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, saying: "Is not this great Babylon that I built for the house of the Kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my Majesty?" IMMEDIATELY came the voice from Heaven: "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the Kingdom is departed from thee." His dream was fulfilled that same hour. Insanity seized him, and he was driven from men and spent the seven times with the beasts of the field. At the end of the days his understanding returned and he blessed the MOST HIGH and gave HIM the Glory he had formerly ascribed to himself.

My beloved brethren, God has still His Watchers and His Holy Ones. As they watch YOU, what do they see? And what will be the demand of the Holy Ones when the Watchers' report is made? A Watcher is a sifter who scrutinises every particle as with a sieve, and rejects what is not according to standard; and the standard among the saints is the Holiness of God. There must be no lowering of that Standard; "For the time has come that judgment must begin at the House of God." 1 Pet. 4: 17.

THE ELECT ANGELS.

Paul was writing his first letter to Timothy giving him much truth and many instructions concerning others and himself particularly. In Tim. 5: 2. He breaks in on his teaching as to others, and addresses Timothy personally: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the ELECT ANGELS, that thou observe these things, without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality." So the Elect Angels have something—yea, much to do with the saints, the believers in Jesus Christ—and those whom God has chosen to serve Him in the Assemblies. All eyes are upon them—the Eyes of Divine Persons and those of the Elect Angels. Any prejudice—any underhand work—the things done in a corner to keep this one out and to bring that one in—all that is not of the Truth will come into judgment, attested by that great Word of God that is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4: 12).

"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. 11: 31-32).

In the world God desires not the death of any, but rather that all should turn unto Him and live.

In the Assembly God desires not the use of chastening judgments. He has provided all the power for Holy living, and the Holy Spirit—the Anointing—to provide the Key for the unlocking of all the Scripture. Chastening is His last resort as an act of corrective judgment on evil permitted. There is a different chastening—a pruning by the Father Who is the Husbandman, when the branch bears much fruit, but with the Divine purpose of enabling it to bear more.

THE WORD SPOKEN BY ANGELS.

Let me close this message by directing your attention to Hebrews 2: 1-3, "Therefore, we

ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time **WE SHOULD SLIP AWAY FROM THEM.** For, if the word spoken by ANGELS was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense and reward, **HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE** if we have been negligent of so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?" This Scripture is usually applied to sinners in preaching the Gospel, but it was written to Hebrew Believers who were in danger of going back to Judaism and very specially in view of the soon coming destruction of Jerusalem, its Temple and its Priesthood, with the cessation of all its sacrifices. Christ is presented in this Epistle as more than meeting the need consequent on this, specially in the fact of His One Sacrifice for sins for ever, ending with one stroke the need for an earthly temple or priests or sacrifices, Christ is all.

This has a voice to the saint to-day. If the word spoken by Angels was steadfast, and disobedience to it was judged, do you think that God will not take note of it and deal with it, should you set aside His Word in any way? God has exalted His Word above all His Name and He will not ignore any slight given to it. Any trifling with His Word is trifling with HIM. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven. Wherefore, we, receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have Grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12: 25-29.

HIDDEN IDOLS.

"Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me and sat before me. And the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, 'Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?' Ezek. 14: 1-3.

The sitting of these elders of Israel before the Prophet was a profession of their desire to hear what message from Jehovah had been given for them. God's messages are not always pleasant, though always necessary and true. They are not sent to please the ear. Everything from Him is consistent with Truth and the Honour of His Name. The most dreadful word that fell from the lips of the Lord in the days of His flesh was—'Thou hypocrite.' Singled out for special mention among those who are outside the City are 'whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.' Rev. 22: 15.

Hypocrisy—lying. He hates with a perfect hatred. God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the Light." The first judgment that fell on the assembly was that on Ananias and Sapphira for hypocrisy. Others had sold all that they had and laid the proceeds at the Apostles' feet. Barnabas a Levite, sold his land, which, under the Law should not have been sold, and laid the money also at the Apostles' feet, for in the liberty of the Son of God he was freed from the Law. Ananias and Sapphira, his wife, also sold a possession, but gave only a part of the proceeds which they laid at the Apostles' feet, thus they claimed the devotedness that others had shown. You know the story, how the judgment of death fell swiftly on them both for their lying to the Holy Spirit. It was essential that God should thus act at the inception of the Assembly to make known the Holiness He requires of them. He may not always visit such with instant judgment, but this does not mean that He does not mark such cases, for none of them can escape His Eye. We may not forget that the Word of God is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and that all things are naked and laid bare unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (Heb. 4: 12-13).

These elders of Israel, whom Jehovah classifies as frail mortal men, had set up their idols in their hearts. Not in their homes where wife and children and friends could not fail to see them. Nor in their business where their fellows would be sure to discover them, and appraise these idolators at their true value. And certainly, not in the Temple, for there the true worshippers would be horrified and indignant.

BUT IN THEIR HEARTS WHERE ONLY GOD SAW THEM.

They put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face—they and their idols faced each other, and Jehovah asks indignantly. "Should I be enquired of at all by them?" What daring effrontery for such men to enquire of God at all for anything!

And God did see them, and He sees them to-day—as He did then. Let me ask you, as I ask my own soul—Have YOU any idols set up in YOUR heart, before which you daily bow as representing your ideal—the first or main proposition in your life? It may be money, or a desire to acquire a good reputation, perhaps as a successful business

man, praising himself for its success, as Nebuchadnezzar did—or a thousand other secondary things, and perhaps, not evil in themselves, but it may be just a hobby. An idol is just anything that ousts God from His rightful place of supremacy in your heart and aim, or that divides the affections and attention with Him.

God knew the dread possibilities of the human heart. He knew that his law against idols—images—and altars dedicated to these gods who were not GOD, would drive them underground, as we say of prohibited evils to-day. Hence He records in Deut. 27: 15, 'Cursed be the man that putteth a graven image in a secret place.' What a foolhardy crime—as if the darkness and the light were not alike to Jehovah. Could He not discern the evil before that man's thoughts took shape in his mind? Did He not know when those thoughts were given the assent of the man's will, and when they took concrete form in the very making of the image—the idol—and setting it where no one could see his apostasy? What a fool such a man must be! Hear what David says:—'Thou understandest my thoughts afar off—Thou art acquainted with all my ways. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence? If I ascend up to Heaven, THOU art there; if I make my bed in SHEOL, THOU art there. Ps. 139. If the dread of your idols being seen drives you underground with them, remember, God is underground, too.

"CAN ANY MAN HIDE HIMSELF IN SECRET PLACES THAT I SHALL NOT SEE HIM?" So asks Jehovah in Jer. 23: 33-34. I am sure you will agree with this. And He sees the secret places where men, who say they know Him, meet to plan and plot against the prophet who fails to prophesy smooth things that they may close the door against Him, or spread reports belittling him. The many things 'done in a corner' do not escape His notice nor His judgment. 'If walls had ears' is a common supposition, suggesting what tales they could tell. And what if perhaps they have? Is God not able to 'make the stones cry out?' What if God has, as one of His secrets for a coming day, invested walls and other created things with the power of reproducing every word of evil spoken in secret places, which, at His bidding, will reproduce all as a Gramophone record does! He can, and will, if necessary, reproduce words and scenes and looks and thoughts not repented of and forsaken.

Is it not true that it is these hidden things that are sapping the life and energy of so many of God's people to-day?

The talebearing—the lovelessness—the envies, and other things that arise from the activities of the flesh, indicate a grieved Holy Spirit who, because of the hidden idols, is unable to give the power necessary for victory and the resultant holiness, and consequently for effective service. We must have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things that are done of them in secret."

But, remember, self judgment must come first, for 'if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' It is no use praying, so long as the idols remain. Judge them—cast them out—burn them with fire—overthrow their altars. It may mean the loss of a right eye, a right hand, a right foot, but the price must be paid to ensure that the idols are cast out and the door forever closed against them.

Then, and only then can you hide God's Word in your heart that you may not sin against Him. (Ps. 119: 11). That is the one thing you may hide in your heart that will give God pleasure when He sees it there. Covet this, my brethren, covet this. Now you may earnestly beseech God—"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." **GET ON YOUR FACE BEFORE GOD AND WAIT THERE UNTIL HE DOES IT.**

If you are real, He will. Shrink not from the exposure that may follow. It is Love in action. The deeper the revelation of inward evil, and the readier your acknowledgement of it, the greater will be the unveiling of the riches of His Grace to your soul; and He will be free to make known to you His Wonderful Son in the Excellence and Blessedness of His Person and the deep love of His heart.

But again remember—'idols' and 'God's Word' cannot dwell together in your heart.

Will you call to mind Paul's prayer for the saints in Ephesus which he prefaces with Eph. 2: 22—"In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit." Then follows Eph. 3: 1, broken off for a parenthesis, but repeated in v. 14—"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . **THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS BY FAITH.**" 'God in the Spirit'—'Christ by faith' make the only worthy Dwellers to occupy the hearts of the Redeemed. "Dear Children guard yourselves from idols." 1 John 5: 21. What say you? What is your response?

A REMINISCENCE OF "HIDDEN IDOLS."

The following is an extract from a letter received some months ago from a beloved brother in Christ, now, like myself, well up in years and whose eyesight is so defective that he writes in pencil and "IN LARGE LETTERS" as Paul did in Galatians. But it is evident that his spiritual vision is not impaired, for this does not depend on the outer man which is perishing, but the inward man who is renewed day by day. I well remember that solemn meeting for prayer to which he refers, and the burden of the message which God had laid on my heart, and which I include as a brief summary in this present issue of The Word of the Cross. It had searched my own soul and I was desperately in earnest.

The miners strike at that time is still vivid in my memory. There was the usual distress and certain bakers gave us gifts of loaves of bread to distribute to the women and children at our meetings. We had tea meetings for this purpose and children's meetings where the Gospel was preached and Hymns and Choruses taught them. They came from adjacent towns and included Roman Catholic children who sang the Choruses as heartily as any. Indeed, some years after, one of these mothers who called at my Dispensary in Glasgow, told me her children still sang these Gospel Hymns as she did herself, and she was quite happy about it. It was a busy time—the work never seemed to stop till bedtime compelled it. How often I have told the Father that I would love to do it all over again. The thrill of ringing that lovely Life-Giving Gospel outside and inside with the definite sense of preaching it with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven for the power of the Spirit was definitely known, was an experience too Heavenly for words. I recognised the fact that holiness—a walking with God in the Light as He is in the Light was the essential forerunner of blessing in the Gospel, hence the searching ministry that brought my own soul and theirs in the dust before God. The POWER can come in no other way. The Master's claims on those who would become His disciples were final and arbitrary, and they only who were prepared to pay the price could tread that path and know the POWER.

Now I give you the extract referred to:—

"You have given me a great pleasure by writing such a fine letter to me, and I want you to know at once how much I appreciate your kindness. I have talked about you and the meetings you had here long ago, so often that everything is so real that it seems actually to belong to no distant date. I am going to tell you about your very first visit. You came, an unknown man, on the first week-end of October, 1911. You came straight to the prayer meeting on the Saturday night. I can't forget that meeting. "When they saw your boldness, they took knowledge etc." You got up and read the opening verses of Ezekiel 14:—"These men have set up their idols in their hearts." It seemed as if you had Galston elders in view (a fine thing to say to elders you had never seen before), and you, in your confident straightforward manner, applied it in this fashion. The idols were not outside the house where the world could see them; nor in the public rooms where ordinary callers could discover them; nor even in private rooms where your close friends could see them, BUT SET UP IN THEIR HEARTS WHERE ONLY GOD COULD SEE THEM. It was a solemn prayer meeting—so solemn and searching that only a few could pray. The silence was not stiff but dreadfully serious. I remember it well, the heartsearching of us all. Then there was a miners' strike for six weeks. It began on March 1st, 1912. You were here for weeks then—meetings during the day and at night—Tea meetings—Gospel meetings and searching ministry meetings that Galston hitherto had not known. You did not only want the rubbish cleared out and you did not mince words in saying what was rubbish—You wanted wholehearted surrender to Christ as Lord, and in some instances, thank God, your object was attained, God bless and use you till travelling days are done.

Yours gratefully in the Love of God," Robert Strachan, 17 Polwarth St., Galston.

MY BELOVED.

Stanza I.

As child upon his mother's breast,
Mine ear doth hear each throbbing beat of Love Undying; so I rest.
And His strong arms around me hold me close, eternally secure:
Nor dare one foe approach to take me from His grasp—Who for me stood—
For there His Father's Hand appears, a doubled Everlasting Strength,
Through all the ages to endure—a Love beyond all breadth and length—
To make His Promise good.

Stanza II.

As he whom Jesus loved reclined in Jesus' bosom—a Love-feast indeed;
The son of thunder changed into the dove:
So close to Jesus' lips His slightest whisper hears;
So doth my soul recline in Jesus' Love,
For never downy pillow was so soft, and never whisperings of Love so sweet.
As those outpourings of His Heart that make His Joy and mine complete.

Stanza III.

As Simon Peter fell at Jesus' knees in self abhorrence—in unworthiness,
And sought Him to depart—not knowing yet the Love and Sorrow,
And the Broken Heart, nor yet that Sin-atonement Death
That would remove all distance and all Sin—the soul no more undone;
There would I fall, too, but reconciled—the wanderer brought Home,
No longer distance seeking, but closer draw to Him
By Whom—with Whom—in Whom—I am, FOR EVER ONE.

Stanza IV.

As the Bride speaks of her Bridegroom:—
“Let Him kiss me with His kisses, for His Love excelleth wine;”
All the best that Earth can offer, fragrant flowers and fruit of vine
Fade before His Love surpassing, as He whispers, ‘Thou art Mine.’
So would I (once Gentile sinner, loved by Thee, yet knew it not
Till Thy Love's Glad Tidings reached me, of the price in Blood and Sorrow,
Of the Shame upon the Tree, of the Death and of the Darkness,
Thou didst suffer, Lord, for me).
Say, as Bride unto her Bridegroom, “All My Kisses now for THEE.”

Stanza V.

As tents of Kedar, dark and all repelling,
Was my poor soul, until the Bridegroom's dying
To win His Bride, His Deathless Love thus telling,
For one so black; His Sorrow and His Sighing—
And Broken Heart and Precious Blood poured out
That washed me white—whiter than God's Own Snow,
And radiant and beautiful, without
One single spot my former state to show.
His Bride am I—O Blessedness Untold,
And HE my Bridegroom is—my HEAD of purest GOLD.
And I, all comely now, as Curtains of my King
With His Own Comeliness—HIS Praise alone I sing.

Hunter Beattie

BRIEF REMARKS ON THE VERSES "MY BELOVED"

- Stanza 1.—Quietness and Rest in the Security, Love and Power of the Father and the Son. John X: 27-30.
- Stanza II.—"In Jesus' Bosom," only in this favoured place can the disciple learn His Secrets. John XIII.: 23-26.
- Stanza III.—"The Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance." Rom. II.: 4. The miraculous draught astounded Peter and reproved his hesitation and unbelief. He took the right place but said the wrong thing. But Grace reigns: "And Jesus said unto him, Fear not." Luke V.: 1-11.
- Stanza IV.—Bridal affections engage her heart—"Better" Song I.: 2. The Bridegroom's response—"Much better." Song IV.: 10. All His Love for her—Now all her love for Him. Song V.: 16. Her devotedness finds her 'without'—"outside the camp"—where alone he may be found, together with His reproach. Song VIII.: 1. Heb. XIII.: 13.
- Stanza V.—From Darkness to Light—the Old and the New. Song I.: 5. Christ loved the Assembly and gave Himself for her, giving her that suitability His love desires. Eph. V.: 25-27. The Call of the Bride for the Grand Consummation. Song VIII.: 14.

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