

THE BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIAL NEWS

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Defending the original, foundation principles upon which the Truth was uncovered from darkness and upon which the Christadelphian movement was developed. Opposed to the dogmas of papal and protestant christendom. Upholding the Truth as The Berean Christadelphians since 1923.

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worthy of particular attention in connection with the promise to the Philadelphians. "When I take the congregation I, by righteous ones, maisharim, will judge. The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved; I have fixed its pillars." In this we are pointed to the time when "the Great Congregation" of Israel, consisting of its Twelve Pillars, shall be taken possession of by the Deity, who says, he will judge "by Righteous ones;" that is, by Messiah and his Brethren, the Saints, who then constitute the Deity in corporeal manifestation — "pillars in the Temple of my Deity." The idea of the Deity ruling the habitable in or by others was announced by Paul to the Athenian Areopagus. He called upon the members of this body to abandon the idols and embrace the true Deity, "because He had appointed a Day (of a thousand years) in which he will rule the habitable in justice in a man whom he hath ordained, having offered assurance to all, having raised him from among the dead." Deity in Man the future ruler of the nations; and that man the Spirit—Man of Multitude, symbolized in Apoc. 1:13. This is a grand idea — a multitudinous Spirit—Man, every individual member of which will have been either raised from among the dead like Jesus; or transformed, like Enoch and Elijah. This is the "One Body the Ecclesia," which is the pillar—house of Elohim; the Christ. This is the Seed of Abraham, or the Christ, that rules the world for a thousand years — a Christ, or Anointed Body, consisting of Jesus and the Saints, every one of whom is "a pillar;" and collectively, "the temple of Deity" from which "he shall not at all go away out more."

The Aionian House

But before this post—resurrectional state can be attained, "the earth and all its inhabitants" must be "dissolved." Its constitution, as symbolized by the beasts of Daniel and John, must be abolished. This is the work of Jachin and Boaz in the Porch, which, as we have seen, typify omnipotence in the saints in the execution of judgment. When they shall have become "victors," they will pass from the brazen into the golden state. They will then be fixed, or established, as the golden pillars of the earth under its millennial constitution. Once a pillar in the house of wisdom in the golden state, he will "not at all go away out more" To perceive the force of these words we must remember that "the Temple of Deity" exists in two states — the present, and the future. Paul, addressing the saints in Corinth, who were as we are, of the present, or flesh and blood, state, says to them, "Ye are a building of Deity — a temple of Deity, and the spirit of the Deity dwells in you." But they have all "gone away out" of "the tabernacle in which they groaned being burdened" (2 Cor.5: 4); "the earthly house of the tabernacle," formerly the temple of Deity in Corinth, is all "dissolved;" and its constituents are all sleeping in the dust of the earth unconscious of everything. There they lie awaiting the action of the power which shall raise them from the dead; and constitute them "a building, a house not made with hands, an AION—HOUSE in the heavens;" when they shall become pillars in this house where they will continue fixed. Death will affect them no more, and consequently, being then immortal they will "not at all go away out more."

Arranged from the writings of Bro. Thomas by Bro. Bob Widding

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God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

DETROIT, Michigan – S.S., 10:00am; Memorial, 11am; Wed. Night Class, 7pm; Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, MI 48035, 586—790—2156

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Due to the death of our dear Bro. Bud Banta, we travelled to Texas. We were very sad to lose Bro. Bud, but we know that he is at rest waiting for the Master's return. He was looking forward to the soon coming Kingdom.

We stayed and visited with Bro. Paul and Sis. Jo Neely for a week and were able to enjoy visits with Sis. Ruby Wolfe, Sis. Linnie Hennig and Bro. Lee and Sis. Trudy Freeburg. We attended the lovely chili dinner that Bro. Mike and Sis. Karen Neely invited all the Ecclesias to attend. It was good to be able to visit with so many brothers and sisters there. We had the Memorial Meeting in Lampasas then we went to Austin and visited Bro. Jim and Sis. Kay Phillips and Sis. Jaymie. From there we went to Goldthwaite and visited Bro. Vernon and Sis. Marie Hurst and Sis. Carolyn McLaren (she was there visiting). From there we went to Rogers, Texas and had a nice visit with Bro. Bob and Sis. Sharon Wolfe. We got to go to their little meeting house and do the readings with their family, Bro. Dan and Sis. Misty Wolfe and their children and Bro. Sonny and Sis. Anne Prado and their children. It was encouraging to be there and listen to how well all their little children can read the Bible. On our way home we had a lovely visit and Memorial Meeting with Bro. Mike and Sis. Joyce Murphy. We were welcomed everywhere with wonderful hospitality from all our ecclesial family. Being in isolation with only ourselves and Sis. Kay, these visits were real encouragement for us, to see so many others that, too, are looking and longing for the soon coming Kingdom. We pray for Jesus to return soon.

We want to thank everyone and let you know that we love you all very much.

Love in the bonds of the Truth,
Bro. Freddie Higham

NAIROBI, Kenya

Loving greetings to you all in Christ,

I received an email from Sister Mary Agnes Kariuki of the recent death of her mother who she had been caring for. She wanted to express her thankfulness to those who have been supportive of her during the time when she was caring for her mother. If any would like to send a note of condolence to Sister Mary Agnes her email address is:

agneskariuki08@yahoo.co.uk or you could mail her something at: Box 1582, Kikuyu, Central Kenya, 00902

Love in our One Hope in Christ,
Sis. Jeanne Fuhr

dwelling of the Deity," is to be a constituent of these four cherubic—veil pillars, and an element of Jachin and Boaz, the diversity of metals having reference not to different classes of saints, but to the same individuals in different states. As brass, they are glowing in the furnace of divine wrath, "executing vengeance upon the nations and punishments upon the peoples; binding their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron;" in short, "executing upon them the judgment written," in the time appointed for them to possess themselves of the kingdom under the whole heaven (Psal. 49:7; Dan. 7); as brass, they are "standing upon the sea of glass mingled with fire," and treading down the wicked as ashes under the soles of their feet (Apoc. 15:2; Mal. 4:3); but as gold, they stand upon the sea, sounding their harps to the song of the victory they have achieved over the kingdoms and empires of the world.

The saints in the execution of judgment in the approaching "hour of judgment," are also typified by the sixty pillars of brass, pertaining to the court of the tabernacle (Exod. 27: 9—17). This dwelling in Song 3:7, is styled "His litter which is for Solomon." It is seen "ascending out of the wilderness as pillars of smoke." The Bride asks "Who is this?" Her attendants reply that it is "His litter which is for Solomon himself. Sixty valiant men surround it, the stoutest heroes of Israel; every one of them grasping a sword, being expert in war; the Commander his sword upon his thigh without fear in nights." This scene is introduced in Apoc. 19:14. Here the Commander and his sixty heroes, or brazen pillars, are in battle array, and prepared to smite the nations, and to tread the winepress, without fear or apprehension of defeat.

Twelve Pillars

In Exod. 24:4, the Twelve Tribes of Israel are typified by twelve pillars surrounding the altar. Jeremiah was made "a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land." This represented an antagonism between him and the state; but as he was likened to iron and brass, he was thereby shown to be unconquerable. It is therefore added, "and they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee, saith Yahweh, to deliver thee" (1:18,19). James, Peter and John were also pillars in the hedraiwma, being with the rest, as the twelve pillars of Moses around the altar, and the future rulers of the pillar—tribes (Gal.2: 9; Matt. 9:28).

From these premises, then, we perceive quite an array of pillars pertaining to the house, or kingdom of Elohim. They are Wisdom's pillars. They are being "hewn out." The work of hewing is not yet complete; but when the work is finished, and the pillars are all set up, or established, in their proper places, they will then constitute "her Seven Pillars." It will then be said that "Wisdom hath builded her house, and she hath hewn out her seven pillars" (Prov. 9:1.). The wisdom that was with Yahweh "before the earth was;" and called by John "the Word that was Deity." Wisdom's house is the house of the Deity, who is "the builder of all things," commonly styled "the kingdom of God." Those who are to possess this are the "pillars of the earth," which in Psa. 75:3, the Spirit in Asaph says, "I have established." This testimony is

derived from hedra, which signifies "a seat, habitation, especially of gods, a temple, altar, etc." Hence, the expressiveness of the word, and its peculiar and exclusive application to a habitation of the truth constituted of gods, or children of Deity, who are, as represented in the Apocalypse, "the Altar," "the temple," "the Holy City," or, as Paul expresses it, "an habitation of Deity by spirit" (Eph. 2: 22).

The ecclesia in the aggregate is the Pillar of the Stone to be placed in Zion, and a hedraiwma, or House of Elohim, as Jacob termed the type he set up at Bethel. But while the saints collectively are an Elohal Pillar and House of the truth, this house also contains two classes of pillars, and many individual pillars in each class. This is seen in type and antitype. Typically, the two classes are represented in the Two Brazen Pillars in the Porch of Solomon's temple, the one on the right hand being named Jachin, and that on the left, Boaz. These names were significative of the things represented by the pillars, which were of brass, eighteen cubits, or about thirty—two feet, in the shaft, which was twenty—one feet girth, and surmounted with a chapter nine feet high. Here were loftiness and strength. The chapters were ornamented with nets of checker—work, wreaths or stephans, of chain—work, pomegranates, and lily work, all of which were representative of things pertaining to the pillars. As a whole, they were styled Yahkin, and Boaz, or in plain English, He shall establish by strong ones.

Song of Songs

In Canticles, Solomon, who had much to do with lily work and pomegranates, and fragrant and choice woods in the building of the temple, makes the Bridegroom term the Bride "the Lily;" and speaking of herself, she says, "I am his, feeding among lilies" and, "a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valley." And in another part of this Song of Songs, the bridegroom says of the saints forming collectively the Bride, "A garden enclosed is my sister spouse; a spring locked up, a fountain sealed. Thy shoots are plants of Paradise, pomegranates with delicious fruits." Moses styles Palestine "a land of pomegranates," so that they came to be used as a similitude for those who shall inherit the land. They therefore constituted the hem of the typical robe of Aaron, being of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and alternating with golden bells. These plants of Paradise typifying the two classes of saints from Israel and the Gentiles, are concretely the "strong ones, by whom HE, Yahweh, will establish" the kingdom of David. They are, therefore, Yahkin and Boaz, the brazen pillars of the porch.

But while these pillars of fine brass represented "the Feet" of the Eternal Spirit, which in their progress are as "pillars of fire" glowing in a furnace (Apoc. 1:15:10. 1; Ezek. 43:7), there are other representative pillars, which typified the same agents in a different position. Within the tabernacle were "four pillars" upon which was suspended the Veil inwrought with Cherubim (Exod. 25:32). These pillars were of wood overlaid with gold. Brass pertained to the Porch and Court of the Priests; Gold to the Holy and Most Holy compartments of the tabernacle. These four cherubic—veil pillars answer to the Four Living Ones of Apoc. 4 and 5 These, who are the redeemed, have entered the temple, "the smoke from the glory and power of the Deity" having altogether passed away (Apoc.15:8). To be "a pillar in the

HENGOED, Wales, Breaking of Bread – 10.45am; Sunday School – 12.45pm; Lecture – 2.30pm; Bible Class and Elpis Israel Class – held alternately in the homes of the brethren and sisters. Youth Evening – held every 2 weeks on Friday at the Aberdare Country Park Village Hall at 6.30pm.

Beloved Brethren and Sisters in the bonds of the Abrahamic Covenant

Since the last Ecclesial news was submitted we have been encouraged by two Weekends spent with brethren and sisters around the Scriptures of Truth. The first was in March (2008) and was based on the Song of Solomon. This lifted our minds from the present to the glorious Marriage that will take place consequent upon the Return of the Bridegroom, the altogether Lovely One. It was a wonderful theme and we were grateful to visiting brethren for their labours in unfolding the spiritual gems that the Word holds in the types and shadows set forth in the Oracles of God.

We were greatly encouraged in having a number of brethren and sisters visiting us at that time. These were Bro Dale and Sis Kathy Lee from North Carolina, Bro Lyn Osborne from Colorado, Bro Michael Phillips from Ohio, Bro Len Naglieri from Massachusetts, Bro David Humphreys from Richard (Canada), Sis Kaye Yuen from British Columbia (Canada) and Sis Rachel Johnatty-Theaker from London (UK). We very much appreciate the time and expenses incurred in making the visit and we thank them all very much.

The second Study Weekend was in September (2008) and was based on "The Dwelling Places of the Deity." Although we had no visitors on that occasion, we were enabled to enjoy the benefits of contemplating the desire of Yahweh to dwell with his servants in anticipation of the Day when the glory of Yahweh shall return as the sound of many waters, and fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

On a sad note we have to let the brotherhood know that Bro Gordon, Sis Vivienne and Sis Zara Tippins have withdrawn fellowship. This was a great sadness to us all and we hope and pray that they will be able to return to the Fellowship. We have greatly missed the company of them and their family on the walk towards Zion, and hope that this can be resumed.

During the month of November we engaged in public Lectures (in addition to our regular Sunday Lectures) in a different location (Pontypridd for those who have visited this area). These have taken place on Tuesday evenings to try and witness to the great events transpiring in the earth. The first was designed to bring the nation of Israel to a focus using the title of "Israel – Past, Present and Future". The second was entitled "Russia Triumphant and Europe Chained." The first address saw four individuals attend, and three out of the four attended the second week. At the time of writing a third and fourth address is planned ("The Kingdom of God," and "The Promises to Abraham" respectively). We hope and pray that the initial interest will continue as it has been very encouraging to see this interest in Divine things, but we can only sow and water and patiently wait for any increase that Yahweh sees fit.

It would be remiss if we did not send our love and concern to many in the brotherhood who are currently experiencing great trials through sickness and various problems. We pray that Yahweh, who knows the needs of each and every one, will bless and providentially guide in His infinite love and wisdom as we all wait the consummation of His purpose. May the Day of His Son's appearing soon become a reality.

While writing we would like to announce that our Spring Study Weekend will be held God Willing on the weekend commencing 27th March if our Master has not returned by then. Please contact Bro Steve Male for further details.

With love in Elpis Israel and on behalf of the brethren and sisters of the Hengoe Ecclesia.

Bro Phillip Hughes

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING.....July 3 – July 6, 2009
Sis. Christine Jones Email: sc.jones@sasktel.net

Draw Near To God

The Psalms are the deepest part of Scripture. They are deeper than what we call doctrine. They deal with all the problems and experiences of the people of God—all the problems related to the constitution of sin, the present dispensation of evil, the vanity to which creation was subjected in hope. The Psalms contain all aspects of the Truth. They are the most intimate, personal, and expressive part of Scripture.

Jesus was tried in all points like his brethren, and we see all the meditations of his heart in the Psalms, not that he himself ever failed or contemplated sin or foolishness. But in all things he entered into the weaknesses and sorrows of his brethren, and in this way even the confessions of sin are his. There was the recognition of evil motions of the flesh which he constantly fought against, and which constantly assailed him. He experienced the complete pattern of the flesh. Just as Daniel, Nehemiah, Isaiah, and other righteous men spoke in their prayers as if they were part of those who had sinned against God saying, "*We have sinned.*"

Psalm 73:1, "*Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.*" This is the theme and the conclusion of the Psalms in this first verse. And then the Psalmist goes into detail concerning his previous passing doubts. "*Truly God is good to Israel.*" This we must cling to, regardless of any other consideration. The book of Job is meant to teach us the fatal folly of ever for a moment questioning God, or murmuring at any of His all-wise arrangements. All complaining and dissatisfaction are evil. We are so apt to judge things on the basis of our own thoughts, desires, or

thou goest, and I will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done what I have spoken to thee of."

The gospel of the kingdom having been thus announced to Jacob, as it had been before to Abraham (Gal. iii. 8), he awoke, and under the vivid impression of what he had seen and heard, took the Stone upon which his head rested, and set it up for a pillar — a monumental pillar — and poured oil upon the top of it. This was the nearest approach he could make to the matter of the vision. The stone resting upon the earth and pointing upwards might represent the ladder; and the oil poured on the top of it, the Spirit, or Deity, who stood above it. Thus the Stone was converted into a pillar or monument, which, to the mind of Jacob, would suggest the promise he had heard in his dream. His recollection of this promise would be the monumental inscription of this pillar of Stone.

But when he awoke in a typical resurrection, he exclaimed, "Verily, Yahweh is in this place, and I knew not;" and he was afraid, and said, "How awful is this place! This is nothing else but a house of Elohim, and this a gate of the heavens!" Hence, that this idea might be perpetuated, he said, "Yahweh shall be to me for Elohim, and this Stone which I have set for a pillar shall be a House of Elohim."

Jacob's stone pillar, then, was typical of a House of Elohim to be set up after he awakes from his sleep of centuries. When he awakes, he will find himself in an awful time and place, the gate of heaven opened, and the house of Elohim in manifestation, but he, nevertheless, without dismay. What he saw in vision he will then see in fact — "Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John 1:51).

But there is a sense in which Jacob's pillar of the stone exists as a house of Elohim even now, and in intimate connection with the house he will see when he awakes from his present know—nothing state. Paul presents to us this sense in the saying, that "a House of Deity is an ecclesia of living Deity, a PILLAR and material habitation, (hedraiwma from hedra, a habitation of gods,) of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). This pillar and habitation is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Anointed being chief—corner" (Eph. 2: 20). As a monumental pillar, the inscription upon it is "the exceeding great and precious promises" believed by each saint, or "living stone," of which the pillar is composed — "promises" concerning the kingdom and name made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as narrated by Moses. This pillar was anointed on the top of it on the Day of Pentecost, when the spirit was poured upon the apostles. That anointing was perpetuated in "the testimony for Jesus" which has reached even to us, and with which every true believer is anointed. An ecclesia, however, is not only a pillar inscribed with the truth, but is a hedraiwma of the truth. It is a material thing made up of "gods," as David styles them, or of "children of Deity," according to 1 John 3:2; Psa. 82:6. These are anointed with the truth, and therefore they are a God—habitation, or hedraiwma of the truth.

In regard to this word hedraiwma, it may be remarked here, that it occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor in any classical author. The word is

We are all faulty, and have great need of mercy and forbearance, for “*If Thou Lord shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared*” (Psa. 130:3, 4).

Therefore, “*Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, will all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender—hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you*” (Eph. 4:31, 32). Christadelphian—1889

Analecta Apocalypticæ (3) A Pillar In The Temple

After exhorting the faithful to hold fast the gospel of the kingdom and name, the Spirit—Man proceeds to assure them of reward. In addressing the victor who shall have overcome in the public games which he patronizes and conducts, the Spirit saith, “I will make, the victor a PILLAR in the Temple of my Deity.” In thus saying, “pillar” evidently is representative of a saved person. Therefore to make such a pillar in a temple of Deity is to make him an integral part thereof; and for a saint to be part of the temple, indicates that the temple itself is composed of persons. Now a temple is a dwelling; not a common dwelling, but a habitation of Deity. A temple composed of the saints is a habitation of Deity, which the Lord pitches and not man.

Upon this principle the pillars and the house, temple, dwelling, or habitation, become identical and inseparable. But obvious as this may be to the enlightened, we propose to make it equally so to others; and to unfold the significancy and beauty of the phrase in the remarks which follow.

The idea of a pillar being a house of Deity is traceable to the conception of Jacob, who, doubtless, initiated it under the inspiration of Deity. The history of its origination is told in Genesis, as follows. Isaac called Jacob into his presence, and told him to go to Padanaram, and select for himself a wife there, from Laban’s daughters. On his departure he blessed him saying, “AIL—Shaddai bless thee, and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy Seed WITH THEE; that thou mayest inherit the land, wherein thou art a stranger, which ELOHIM gave to Abraham.”

Jacob’s Ladder

On his way thither, Jacob came to a certain place where he passed the night, making his pillow of the stones. While asleep, the vision of the Ladder appeared to him. This ladder seemed to connect the earth and heaven; and by it ascended and descended upon him angels, or messengers of ELOHIM. Above the ladder stood YAHWEH, known to Jacob by the name AIL—Shaddai, who said to him, “I am YAHWEH Elohim of Abraham thy father, and ELOHIM of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy Seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east, and to the north and the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in thee, and in thy Seed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places where

conveniences. Human prosperity, as though it is desirable, is usually a degenerating evil. For tribulation and trouble and suffering are divine and upbuilding purifiers and teachers. The school child wants to play and enjoy himself, rather than to submit to rigorous study and training. In this, we are all children. We want the candy and not the discipline. But there must be a process of refining and purification to develop sense of character and beauty of holiness—to open our eyes to spiritual and eternal values, if we are to be of any permanent use to God. And God will preserve only that which is useful to Him. He is seeking the material for His eternal temple.

“*Even to such as are of a clean heart.*” God truly is good to all. But His goodness is exercised in superlative degree toward the pure in heart. All His great purpose revolves about them. All things are theirs and for their sake. All that God does is with a few who share ultimate blessing and union with Him. “*Such as are of a clean heart.*” We use the term ‘heart’ as the very root and center of anything—the deepest springs of character and conduct. “*Let a man examine himself*” (I Cor. 11:28) is the apostle’s solemn exhortation. The pit of the inmost heart must be right and clean in the sight of God. The evil motion of the flesh within us must be discerned and abhorred—repudiated. Failures and weaknesses must be recognized and confessed and put aside.

Verse 2: “*As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.*” The Psalmist expresses a problem that all in some way face, and he works his way through from doubt to full, unshakable assurance. “*My feet were almost gone.*” Let us take warning. The danger is ever present. Let us never presume upon our own strength and steadfastness, for only the power and guidance of God can preserve us from falling. And that power and guidance is only given to those few who keep in close contact with Him.

Verse 3: “*For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*” He permitted himself to look upon the ease and prosperity of the godless, and to become dissatisfied. He entertained (and it is very easy) the feeling that he was missing something, that he was a martyr, that he was being denied something pleasant and exciting that those who had no care about God were enjoying. How grieving this short—sighted, careless view must be for the loving spirit of God. And His children belittle the great treasure of His fellowship, which should outweigh and obliterate every other consideration. For the leeks of Egypt are more impressive than the cloudy pillar of the divine presence and care. We remember in the parable the father’s gentle answer to the elder brother, “*Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine*” (Luke 15:31).

“*My feet were almost gone.*” He was on the brink of dropping into the bottomless chasm of unbelief. This, we realize, is horror and trembling when he has come to himself, for “*God is not mocked.*” (Gal. 6:7). He is infinitely patient and long suffering, when patience and long suffering are justified. But it is His own declaration that He has no pleasure in fools. And

those, who having once stood in the light of God's love, allow themselves to look with desire upon the lot of the wicked, are putting themselves into that class, in whom God has no pleasure.

Verses four to nine describe the apparently trouble-free and thoughtless course of the men of the world, leading them to overbearing self-assertiveness and pride.

Verse 8: *"They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily."* They scoff at those endeavoring to serve God. They look upon the lowly and the godly, struggling for livelihood and suffering for principle, with amused content.

Verse 9: *"They set their mouth against the heavens..."* They blaspheme and ridicule all thoughts of God.

Verse 10: *"Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them."* This is the sad part, that which grieves the Psalmist and the disaster in which he himself had nearly stumbled. *"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world."* (II Tim. 4:10). But the greatest and most subtle danger is not open forsaking of the Truth, that is open and clear and can be coped with, but a deceptive losing of its power and intensity, while nominally remaining in it. Few openly forsake the Truth, and it is no particular virtue just to hold it nominally. But most men must have some sort of form of worship. But with many it becomes just another religion, satisfying their religious instincts—a return to the world in heart, in practice, in character.

Continuing in verse 10: *"And waters of a full cup are wrung out to them."* That is, those of God's people who return to this. This appears to refer to the present advantages that they gain, or appear to gain, by their unfaithfulness. The figure being used is in the same sense as 'my cup runneth over.' But it could be a parenthesis referring to the final judgment cup of sorrow and rejection, although verses 11 and 12 carry right on with the thought of their present success. So it seems to be a part of that—the apparent, deceptive success of returning to the world.

Verses 13 and 14: *"Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hand in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning."* These are the lowest points in the bitterness and turmoil to which the Psalmist now sinks. We may say from verse 13 (though he does not openly say this) that he does not actually accept the conclusion. It is the one that seems to inevitably press upon him in his anguish. *"I have cleansed my heart in vain,"*—as Job was led to say, *"What does it profit a man to serve God?"* It is put here in vivid and uncompromising terms that we may grasp the sadness of the lesson, so that in ourselves it comes much more subtly and stealthily. There is the danger that we may thrust aside many Scriptural lessons, because they are worded with such stark plainness that we may self-righteously feel they express attitude far below what we could ever descend to. But here is where we need the piercing light of the

sins" (James 5:20). Many weak and falling ones may be upheld by such Christ-like treatment. There is a further possibility of its being an extreme case, where the brother has designedly trespassed. *"Judge not,"* even in this. Be merciful. Take the God-like attitude of *"come now, let us reason together."*

If, after your *utmost effort*, there is no alteration of position, take further and necessary measures; and, if finally the ecclesia have to take action, and sorrowfully withdraw from him, remember even this should be done in love, for the good of the offender. *"For the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"* (1 Cor. 5:5). *"Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother"* (2 Thess. 3:15). In the carrying out of the commandments there is no room for spite, or tale-bearing, evil speaking, or personal animus of any kind. Let no brother imagine he can *"work the work of God"* in that spirit.

That is not obeying Christ's law, although it may possibly have that appearance. It is the operation and prompting of the carnal mind, and to be *"carnally minded"* is death; for the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God (Rom. 8:6, 7). Christ knoweth the heart and motive, and he will judge accordingly.

Those who act from fleshly motives are among brethren what Samson's foxes were to the Philistines' cornfields. If there be any such, let them read carefully through Proverbs, and particularly note every one of Solomon's wholesome remarks concerning such characters.

Fleshly feelings, uncontrolled by divine wisdom, are a terrible snare, and lead to Sheol, and those who sow to them "will reap corruption."

"If ye have bitter envyings and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work." *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits. Without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace"* (James 3:14–18).

They only who take Christ's attitude in this matter will of the spirit *"reap life everlasting."*

It is essentially *"sowing to the spirit,"* and will be so regarded, and rewarded at the righteous tribunal of Christ, where doubtless many, who have been condemned even by their brethren, will, much to the chagrin of their detractors, be welcomed by Christ with approval, while the self-considered more righteous will be sent empty away.

offender will not be evilly thought of, or spoken of; for “*love covereth all things,*” and the transgressors’ status and feelings will be as fully considered and respected as one’s own. Yea! much more so. Neither will he be visited from motives and feelings personal to the visitor, but solely and purely for the good of the brother who has transgressed. The love of Christ will constrain such an one to seek to uphold the truth, and to obtain a recognition of its claims, and obedience to its precepts. With the object of *gaining, not of sacrificing*, his brother, he will, in the spirit of meekness, strive to restore the faulty; and will consider his own imperfections and weakness and consequent liability to fall into temptation and transgression (Gal. 6:1). Trivial matters of intended disparagement of a brother will not enter or occupy his mind. He will be ready with the cloak of love for human frailties, while serious detraction of a brother, he will *refuse to listen* to, as unworthy of a son of God; and an offence against Christ’s law. He will silence the would be scandal retailer by the admonition. “*Speak not evil one of another, brethren*” (James 4:11).

But where he has good reason to think sin exists, he will, in the spirit of love and obedience, immediately communicate with the brother. A visit made in such a spirit will generally be satisfactory, and bear good fruit. The mere mention of the matter, at this right quarter, may immediately shew the trespass to be mythical both in motive and action. (What a terrible injustice and trespass if it had been previously talked of to others). Or it may reveal the fact that the trespass was committed ignorantly or undesignedly. Exhibition of the truth’s bearings will in such a case be sufficient to shew an earnest brother his exact position; and, profiting by the brother’s righteous example, he will be thereby “*provoked to love and good works.*” The offending brother is thus benefited: and the truth is upheld, and Christ is glorified. On the other hand, enquiry may shew the matter of offence to have a grain of truth in it, and a bushel of misrepresentation. Side—shaking of the head, and unintelligible hints, which may mean almost anything and help to convey grave innuendoes, may have made a mountain out of the original mole—hill. You do the truth and the brother good service by thus affording him an opportunity of explaining his part and position. Again, perhaps the trespass was committed in a moment of weakness, reveals the operation of a besetting sin, which has caused the brother painful and continued remorse and anguish of mind, and against which he has struggled more or less successfully for some time. He is distressed sufficiently. Upbraid him not, lest he be overwhelmed with “*overmuch sorrow,*” and in despair fall away. Forgive him in sincerity and truth, even to seventy times seven, as you would have your trespasses forgiven. Point him to a merciful Deity for further forgiveness, and do all you can to encourage him. Your object is to *gain him* for Christ’s sake. Do not be sparing in your efforts. Pray constantly for him, and let him see that you are really anxiously concerned for his eternal well—being. Remember that “*he that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of*

Spirit, to examine the devious recesses of our inner heart. We are much more likely to say these things unconsciously in our actions than consciously in our words. When we are discouraged, or when for a time we forget the things of God and are engrossed in present things and worldly activities, we are in reality thoughtlessly reproaching God in the spirit of these verses.

Verse 15: “*If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.*” The Psalmist realizes the essential contradiction of this position. He dares not express it. He knows it is the denial of the basis of all prayer and hope. It is a betrayal of all who sought to serve God, and a commending of the wisdom of the wicked. This was what Elihu rebukes Job for, saying, “*Job walketh with wicked men. For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.*” (Job 34:8—9). By saying this, Job justified the ungodly. If we ever complain about anything, we are doing the same. Often all appearances are in this direction. The great lesson is that the divine wisdom and divine goodness underlie everything. How clearly we can now see this in Job’s case, and he himself could see it afterwards. How hard and perplexing it was at the time for Job in his misery and distress.

Verse 16: “*When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.*” The mental conflict overwhelmed him. He could neither face nor escape the despairing conclusion of verse 13: “*I have cleansed my heart in vain.*”

Verse 17: “*Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.*” There is a deep reference here, expressed by Jesus, as in John 7: “*If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.*” The Psalmist had, despite his perplexity, gone into the sanctuary. He had sought unto God. This is the solution to all problems—go into the sanctuary. The very word ‘*sanctuary*’ illustrates the answer. Literally, it just means ‘*holy place, that which is sanctified.*’ But it has rightly come to carry the meaning of ‘*refuge, a haven of safety, a place or position of holiness.*’ That is the only true place of safety. Whatever the difficulty—go into the sanctuary. Go into the holy place. Seek God, and seek holiness. Put aside the problems and seek the practical pursuit of personal holiness. Holiness and separation is the refuge from all evil and the doorway to understanding. It is a blessing in disguise, when we are driven in extremity and trouble to flee into the sanctuary of God.

“*Then understood I their end.*” The end solves the whole difficulty. The perplexity and despair were the results of a narrow and short—sighted view. Now the whole picture has suddenly changed before the Psalmist. None of the actual facts and circumstances have changed. The wicked still prosper. The righteous still suffer. There is still just as much sorrow and trouble. But now everything is seen in an entirely different light. What seemed to be an insoluble contradiction now is plain and clear and harmonious. Actually, nothing changed but the Psalmist’s own viewpoint and understanding. When

we shut our eyes, the light is still there, but we just don't see it. Those with their eyes open, do. There is a great general lesson here, as well as a particular one. And that is, in all things we must endeavor to make our view of things the right one. Our ignorance does not obliterate fact, except for us ourselves, to our own loss. The first step in this direction is to learn that the natural mind and heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things. Only the wisdom of the Spirit can guide us into truth. This must be clearly and humbly realized before we can understand anything in truth.

The world is so full of so many views and opinions. Who are we that we have any assurance of having the right one? Of ourselves, we are no better than the great majority, and we are far less intelligent than many of the world. One thing we can have, and that makes all the difference. The only way we can be right among so many conflicting views is by the guidance of God. And the only way to obtain that guidance is clearly and simply set forth. *"If any man will do His will, (and in many things His will is very clearly laid out) he shall know of the doctrine."* (John 7:17). His understanding will be opened; his doubts will be removed, if he will set himself to do what he knows already. Obey the simple, yet profound, rules of holiness that mean a complete revolution of all life's motives and desires. And then—and then alone—we will truly know the Truth.

Verse 18: *"Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castest them down into destruction."* How truly is worldly prosperity a slippery place. Slippery, because at best, it is so brief, so tenuous—the constant struggle to be on the top of the heap, and many are trodden under. And slippery because it is so deceitful and difficult to maintain a humble, lowly, God—dependent, self—denying faith in circumstances of outward well—being.

Verse 19: *"How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment: they are utterly consumed with terrors."* The psalmist's whole perspective has changed. He now clearly sees that the present, which seems to loom so large, is but a brief moment at best. Then comes the inevitable end, the inevitable reckoning.

Verses 21 and 22: *"Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee."* Here again we have a striking parallel with Job's sudden realization that he had spoken presumptuously before the awful greatness and goodness and majesty of God. *"I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."* (Job 42:6). If we have not, and more than once, experienced this same, sudden, and overwhelming realization of pompous, self—satisfied foolishness, then we have not yet learned much wisdom at all. How blind and foolish is the natural mind in relation to spiritual wisdom! *"He that is spiritual discerneth all things."*

Verse 23: *"Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand."* What a relief to suddenly awake from this nightmare of

It is a command of Christ of PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE that we "LOVE ONE ANOTHER."

"Let love be without dissimulation." "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love" (Rom. 12:9–10). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of brethren; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet. 1:22) . "ABOVE ALL THINGS, HAVE FERVENT LOVE AMONG YOURSELVES, FOR LOVE SHALL COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS" (1 Pet. 4:8).

This is the most vital principle in the whole counsel of God. Love is the only present existing principle among us that will continue eternally (1 Cor. 13:8). Its claims are inculcated and reiterated more emphatically, and frequently, than the use of any other principle. This certainly is not without significance. *"Love is the fulfilling of the law; he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13:8–10).*

"Let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (John 4:7, 8). "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this is the commandment that we have from Him, THAT HE WHO LOVETH GOD LOVE HIS BROTHER ALSO" (John 4:20, 21).

Owing, perhaps, to our aggressive attitude in *"contending earnestly for the faith,"* we are liable to over—look, or under—estimate, the superlative importance of this principle. We are frail, and whilst building up one side of our spiritual fabric, we may unconsciously allow another to suffer from the stress brought to bear upon it.

This golden thread of love runs through all God's revelation: from Adam to Christ: from Christ to John. Without it we are positively nothing (1 Cor. 13:2). It was inculcated under the Mosaic dispensation. *"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. 19:17, 18).*

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death" (1 John 5:16).

"Love suffereth long, and is kind; is not easily provoked: thinketh no evil: beareth all things (or covereth the faults of others), and endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13:5–7).

When the force of these passages is fully realised, and acted upon, the commandments of Christ are sure to have their full place and weight: *"For this is love that we walk after His commandments."* In such cases the

man his fault “between thee and him alone.” If there be no fault, there will be explanation and understanding. If there be, there will be concession and forgiveness. And we are not to weary in the recurrence of the process. Peter asked how often this forgiveness was to be granted. Christ’s answer practically was, “No limit.” Peter suggested “Seven times” as going a long way. Christ said “I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven.” He then backed his remark with the parable of the unmerciful fellow—servant, which we have already considered, and which concluded with the command that we must every one forgive trespassers, on pain of not being ourselves forgiven. The mind cannot exhaust the beauty of this commandment. How noble is the placable mind! How cordially it commends itself to all classes of men. How hideous and detestable the harsh and unforgiving. By so much we may estimate the superiority of the doctrine of Christ over all teachers who went before Him. Moderns may complacently think themselves at least equal to Christ—and in some points, perhaps, superior. They forget that they work upon a situation prepared by the teaching of Christ, and are themselves the offspring of the forces which his teaching set in motion. No system of teaching places man so low and God so high, the duty of mercy in such an imperative position. The reason self—evidently is, that, with all their plausible talk, other systems are of man: Christ’s alone is of God.

—Bro. Robert

Roberts

Matthew 18 – The Divine Way

“If thy brother shall trespass, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone” (Matt. 18:15).

(I have omitted the words “against thee.” Some four or five critical editions, and some four early manuscripts do not contain them. And the text with the omission appears to me to read more in harmony with other parts of the Scriptures.)

This is an affirmative answer to the question, “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*” and fixes grave responsibility upon every brother of Christ.

The injunction to warn the wicked “is as binding upon us as it was upon Ezekiel,” and the omission on our part to give warning to a righteous man who may turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity “*will bring us under the same condemnation as would the prophet’s neglect*” (Ezekiel 3:17–21).

Yes! we shall certainly be answerable to Christ for our attitude toward our brethren, and as to how we have performed that part of Christ’s service due to them. If we can get this idea firmly implanted in our minds, our duty will be easily recognised, and our service in this direction rendered much easier.

doubt and foolishness to find that it was not too late, that God still held his hand. “*My foot had well nigh slipped.*” How close he had come, we now realize.

Verse 24: “*Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.*” How comforting now comes this unquestioning reliance upon God—guiding first, and then the glory. Everything in its own order. How pitiful are all who rely on themselves and on their own reasoning and set themselves against God. What a priceless blessing to have reached the stage of complete dependence and acceptance of the way of God, allowing God to solve all the problems, and waiting with unassailable patience the time of acceptance to glory.

Verse 25: “*Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*” None includes more than just people: it includes things—no one or no thing. The heart that can truthfully say this without any reservation has found the secret of life and peace. There is nothing I desire before, or beside, other than thee. Not only is God the most desirable of all things, but there is nothing else at all worth desiring. God is all. God is everything. All is of God and from God. This is obviously the only true wisdom. But how can we convince our own blind, sinful, mortal flesh?

Verse 26: “*My flesh and my heart faileth.*” Here is his weak point. They are weak and perishing; they are overwhelmed with the struggle and the great problem of life—the bondage of corruption, the vanity under which creation groans. “*Who shall deliver me from this body of death?*” (Rom. 7:24) “*But,*” we continue, “*God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.*” “*My strength is made perfect in weakness,*” (II Cor. 12:9) Jesus told Paul. And Paul was thereafter content, and carried with faithful endurance his lonely, single—handed load right to the end. “*God is the strength of my heart.*” And there is no limit to His power. This perishing, mortal flesh is not of itself equal to the burden, but Paul proved for all his brethren that they might be, strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man, that they might be filled with all the things of God.

Verse 27: “*For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish.*” How close are we to God? We are assured that if we draw nigh unto God, He will draw nigh unto us. What are we doing about drawing nigh unto God? It does not just mean approaching Him from time to time in worship, or even just speaking to Him periodically in prayer. The world is full of people who do that. So there must be much more to it than that, for the few that He chooses. It is measurable by the proportion of time that God is in our thoughts—the time we spend studying and meditating on His word. The extent to which we, in all we do from moment to moment, consciously endeavor to please Him rather than ourselves. If we examine ourselves as we are admonished to, especially upon this occasion, we shall, if we are honest with ourselves, realize that much of what we do—large and small—is simply pleasing

ourselves and nothing else—just plain juvenile games. The ones who in the end will be found to have made God their portion forever, will be that rare and privileged and peculiar few who have forced themselves to continually examine their own activities and motives, and have taught themselves to deliberately, consciously make the pleasing of God the whole purpose of their life in all its details—the total exclusion of self. *“Not my will, but thine.”* (Luke 22:42) This and this alone is drawing nigh unto God—making Him our portion forever.

Verse 28: *“But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.”*

Bro. G.V. Growcott

God Helpeth Thee: Thoughts on Hymn 180

In memory of our departed Brother Buddy Banta

This past week, the ecclesial world has suffered the loss of our beloved Brother Buddy Banta of Lampasas, Texas. Many of us here in Texas were gathered together at his funeral, and our Brother Freddie Higham of Michigan graciously came to perform the service. We will miss Buddy for several reasons: his steadfast and extensive knowledge of the Scriptures, sharpened by the insight of our pioneer brethren; his continued resolve in the face of many trials; and also his good humor. But with regard to those trials in particular, we may now stand comforted in the fact that he is now at rest, where they will trouble him no more. Now he sleeps in the hope we all profess, looking forward to the promises God has made of old, which His Son will return to fulfill.

When I was thinking of our Brother Buddy, I recalled that Hymn 180 was one of his favorite hymns. And I remembered that some time ago, I had written an exhortation on that very hymn, as the situation at the time seemed to call for it. So I knew that I wanted to take up this talk once more, dust it off, and deliver it once more as a tribute to him.

The week prior to September 15, 2002, was one of mixed emotions. First of all, it had been a year since the horrifying terrorist incident now known as "9/11". Such a tragic event that — for the brethren and sisters in North America — was so close to home indeed was a sobering trigger that once again made us wonder how this would fit into God's plan for this earth, and how much less time would be afforded us until Jesus returned.

In the meantime, the Lampasas Ecclesia had suffered a loss, as Sister Leora Hurst lost her battle with chronic health problems she had been struggling with. If I recall correctly, she passed away on the very night of September 11, which could only make the moment more bitter.

And yet, that very weekend, Becky van Pelt was examined for baptism, passed, and was baptized that Sunday morning of the 15th. Now—Sister

forgiveness we request for ourselves. The remark with which Jesus concludes the parable is decisive. “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you (as the lord of the parable did to the servant) *if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses .”*

In view of the certainty that the world in general would assume this attitude of opposition to him and his, he enjoins it as a matter of care on all who desire to be his disciples to be clear on this matter. “Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut it off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.” This is connected with the exhortation to “Despise not one of these little ones,” and must therefore refer to matters of attitude or relation to them. What can it mean but that we must be ready to part with anything rather than remain in a position that involves hostility to the undoubted friends of Christ? Jesus even gives it an application to brethren in the wrong. We are not to give them up without effort at reclamation in the particular way prescribed. “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast *gained thy brother* . But if he shall not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the ecclesia; but if he neglect to hear the ecclesia, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Nothing tends more to the keeping or the restoring of peace than the observance of this law; and no law is more constantly broken. The universal impulse, when anything is supposed to be wrong, is to tell the matter to third persons. From them, it spreads with the result of causing much bad feeling which, perhaps, the original cause does not warrant, and would not have produced if the aggrieved person had taken the course prescribed by Christ, and told the fault “between thee and him alone.” If good men, or those who consider themselves such would adopt the rule of refusing to listen to an evil report privately conveyed, until it had been dealt with to the last stage according to the rule prescribed by Christ, much evil would be prevented. Disobedience is almost the universal rule in this matter. The results are serious now, in the generation of hatred instead of love. Much more serious will the result be to the offenders against this rule in the day when all matters will be measured and settled by the divine rule—Jesus indicates that any decision arrived at by an ecclesia in the proper application of this rule will be respected and confirmed by God Himself: “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” This is much encouragement to the brethren to be faithful in the matter. The application of the rule will often make it unnecessary to advance beyond the first stage. A brother approached privately, with every opportunity of explanation, will often make concessions that must remain impossible if he is made the subject of public opprobrium, however deserved. The healing of a matter will often be the result if you go and tell a

better than the passive state that leaves a man exposed to the devil's shafts)—and the Lord will help them to obtain the victory. The battle is only short at the longest, and will soon be over.— EDITOR

Oh, it hurts me so to read of division and strife in our little communities here and there. There are so few of us, scattered abroad throughout the wide world. A handful of sheep surrounded by ravening wolves, and must we turn and rend each other? Why can't the strong bear up the weak? Why can't the tender and sympathetic recall the straying? Why can't we forgive seventy times seven if need be? Ah! me! It all seems very hopeless sometimes, and there are so few of us, so very few, and bitterness—strife. I sometimes wonder if, without a Moses to plead for us, we will not all be lost by the way side, and a new people raised up in our stead. Can we expect the Christ—the loving, pitying Christ—to care for us if we care not for each other? “Peter lovest thou me?” “Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.” “*Feed my sheep.*” *Christadelphian—1883*

The Unmerciful Servant

A servant owes a large sum to his lord, which he is unable to pay. He entreats his lord to give him time, promising to pay all. His lord forgives the debt altogether. The servant afterwards demands of a fellow—servant the payment of a small debt. The fellow—servant is unable to pay, and asks time. The servant refuses to wait or to forgive, and has the fellow—servant imprisoned. The lord of the servants hearing of it, sends for the first servant, reinstates the forgiven debt, and orders him into prison and affliction till the debt is paid.

The application of this is both clear and important. Its meaning is established by the occasion of the parable, and by the comment which Jesus makes on the action of the lord of the servants in reviving the debt and imprisoning the man who had shown no mercy. The occasion was a question of Peter's: “Lord how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times?” Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven.” A parable intended to illustrate a saying like this must be a parable enforcing mutual forgiveness as a paramount duty among the servants of Christ; but it goes further than this, and shows that a failure to render this duty will be a very fatal affair to the offender. His own forgiven sins will be revived against him if he assume an exacting and unforgiving attitude towards others. The importance of the matter is shown by the way Christ binds it up with the petition he puts into the mouths of his disciples for the forgiveness of trespasses. “Forgive us our trespasses *as we forgive them that trespass against us.*” By this association of words he confronts us with our duty to others every time we ask forgiveness for ourselves. It is a good test of our standing in the matter whether we are able to make our forgiveness of others the measure of the

Becky would receive the right hand of fellowship right after my first delivery of this exhortation was complete.

Knowing these things, I found myself wondering, “Is it a coincidence that such a joyous event has happened so close to a sad one, or is it the hand of Providence? Is it by God's mercy that we have gained a Sister at the same moment that time has claimed one from us?”

In Scripture, we find that God indeed has a hand in these moments of comfort. Observe, first of all, what is said in Psalm 30, from verse 4:

Sing unto Yahweh, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

And also, in John 16, from verse 20, as Jesus was preparing his disciples for his impending death:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.”

So, with many scriptures like this in my head, I began to consider Hymn 180.

As it turns out, there's also a story about the first time I delivered this exhortation, in which I accidentally got Brother Buddy into trouble! He was presiding on the Sunday I was to speak. Sister Dottye Banta, whom we sadly lost earlier this year to cancer, knew her husband far better than I did, and naturally she knew of his fondness for this hymn. Buddy would relate to me later that she had essentially warned him beforehand, “Whatever you do, do NOT do Hymn 180. PLEASE don't make me play it this time!” Unfortunately for him, when he asked what hymns I wanted, THAT was the very hymn at the top of the list! I'm certain, however, that we were both forgiven.

You see, Hymn 180 is a hymn about sorrow and joy. But try telling me that when I was younger! I DREADED Hymn 180. I could not STAND it. To me, it was too dark, too depressing, and just made me feel very, very low whenever I heard it. And so knowing that Brother Buddy was fond of it, I was always VERY ANXIOUS when he presided, expecting that it would be the last hymn of the memorial he would choose. And more often than not it was. And I would be in tears as it played. And even to this day, depending on what mood I am in, it can still get to me.

But then again, there was something I wasn't taking into account when I was younger. Yes, you look at most of the verses, and the first two lines are

describing these heart—wrenchingly sad moments. BUT...what about the last two lines? They're LIFTING. ENCOURAGING. "God Helpeth Thee", or as noted in the last verse, "God Dwells With Thee". So even in times of darkness, God WILL provide comfort and encouragement.

I had once seen our Brother Jerry Connolly take a hymn and go through it verse by verse, connecting the words of the hymn with Scriptural references to show examples of how the hymn's message is supported. And that is the format I adopted for this exhortation as well. The one exception would be the opening verse, which I feel forms a fitting synopsis for the entire hymn:

When waves of sorrow roll
Across thy troubled soul,
Let this thy comfort be:
God helpeth thee.

Sorrow is spoken of generally here. As we get into the verses that follow, we will get more into specific examples of these sorrows. And as we consider these verses' depictions of sorrow in detail, I will likewise provide Scriptures that detail God's hand and presence in each instance...a hand that is with us as well in our lives.

So, then, on to the second verse:

When skies are dull and grey,
And dreary is the day,
Herein thy sunshine see:
God helpeth thee.

The Friday before I delivered this exhortation the first time, I was riding the bus to work. (This was, of course, before I finally stopped putting off learning how to drive for myself and getting my own car.) That particular Friday, the sky was a flat, even grey. And the tinting on the bus windows made it look even darker and greyer. But eventually the sun came through the haze, shining into it to form a brilliant red curtain.

I will confess that I have many personal quirks. And one of them is an actual APPRECIATION of grey days. However, I'd like to think that my appreciation of grey days are not because of the grey itself, but of what is done to COUNTERACT it. Streetlights turn on. The drivers on the road turn on their headlights. Buildings and signs light up. And all of these additional lights make the grey day tolerable, and perhaps even pleasant.

Grayness, however, is not limited to the sky. At times, our emotions may be as depressing, drab, and heavy as those clouds. It is at a time like those that we need to remember the words of two old sayings: "Every cloud has a silver lining", and "Count your blessings".

By way of illustration, let's look at Elijah.

Elijah the Tishbite was a prophet unto the northern kingdom of Israel, which had split from the tribe of Judah. In the split, unfortunately, the

Striving Against Sin

“AN ANXIOUS ONE .”—Jesus says, “All manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men except the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.” Consequently, when the conditions of forgiveness are complied with—(contrition, confession, and abandonment)—a man innocent of the unpardonable sin (and a man in modern times can hardly be guilty of that) should never give in to despair. Let him take God at His word, and have faith in forgiveness, and begin the struggle again. Better to die fighting against sin than to sign an unconditional surrender. In the one course, there is hope; in the other nothing but certain ruin, blackness, and death. Jesus commands us to forgive an offending brother “*seventy times seven*,” who turns again saying, “I repent.” And he teaches us to pray the Father to “*forgive us our sins as we forgive them that trespass against us* .” What greater encouragement can the repentant sinner have to resume the work and walk of reformation?

A man should never conclude that “he has gone beyond the limits of divine forbearance” until he hears the awful fact proclaimed at the judgment seat. Heb. 10:26 refers to presumptuous and despiteful sin, as shown by Paul’s comparing it with “*despising the law of Moses*,” and defining it as a “treading under foot the Son of God” (verse 28 , 29). It has no reference to the struggling sinner who falls through weakness, as in the case of Peter’s denial of the Lord, and who repudiates his act in tears. 1 Cor. 3:15 has no bearing. This refers to a man’s work in others—not in himself, as shown by Paul’s comparison of himself to a builder, Christ to the foundation, and brethren as fellow—builders. A man’s work enduring in others will ensure a reward on their account, yet only if he himself be able to stand the fire of judgment. If he is able to stand the fire himself, he will not be lost on account of the failure of his work in others. The judgment is an ordeal doubtless awaiting every saint at last—for justification or condemnation. Too much stress cannot be laid on Dr. Thomas’s teaching in *Anastasis*, — that the accepted will first have to “tell the story of their lives.” This does not mean, however, that that story will have to be without flaw before acceptance can take place. It means that it must reveal a sufficient approximation to the mind of Christ to justify him in granting forgiveness of all offences. If offences were not forgiven, no flesh could be saved. Hence the point of Peter’s question, “If the righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” Hence also David’s declaration, “If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, Lord who should stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared” (Psa. 130:3 , 4.) The rejected will not be forgiven because their case in no way commends itself to Christ’s regard as a merciful judge. The point for all “anxious ones” to see to is that their course be such that they may obtain mercy. Let them with iron resolution keep out of temptation’s way, remembering the declaration of the word that blessedness appertains to the man who standeth not in the way of sinners. Do not parley with sin. It is easier to keep out of the maelstrom at a distance. Let them give themselves in their leisure to prayer, and the Lord’s work in some form or other—(distributing *Finger Posts* is

It is our privilege to have become enlightened in the truth. It is our duty to walk as children of the light.

It is our privilege to be of those who have been forgiven their trespasses. It is our duty to forgive those who trespass against us, even to the extent, if need be, of seventy times seven.

It is our privilege to be heirs of the kingdom and glory of Jehovah. It is our duty to walk worthy of God, who hath called us thereunto by the Gospel.

It is our peculiar privilege to understand the signs of the times. It is our duty, arising out of this, to watch and pray that we may escape the judgments coming on the children of disobedience.

It is our privilege to be accounted “brethren” by Christ the Lord. It is our duty to love as brethren should do, and to let brotherly love continue.

It is our privilege to be heirs of salvation. It is our duty to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

It is our high privilege that Christ laid down his life for us. It is our duty to lay down our lives for the brethren.

It is our unspeakable joy to look for the mercy of God unto eternal life. It is our bounden duty to be merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness.

It is our precious privilege to rejoice in the bountiful provision which God has made for his children. It is our duty in turn to sow bountifully beside all waters.

It is our inestimable privilege to be the prospective recipients of boundless riches. It is our duty to be rich toward God in beneficent endeavour on behalf of his name and truth.

It is our unquestionable privilege to possess the Scriptures. It is our imperative duty to read and study them for ourselves, and teach them to others

It is our privilege to possess many opportunities of well—doing. It is our duty to do good unto all men, and especially unto the household of faith.

It is our privilege to have been purchased from the slavery of sin by Christ Jesus. It is our duty to account him as our master, and ourselves, henceforth, as but stewards of all we possess, who must render account.

It is our blessed privilege to have received a providential invitation to become candidates for glory, honour, and immortality. It is our reasonable duty to make our calling and election sure by patient continuance in well—doing.

Bro. Shuttleworth—1882

kingdom had also split from God and turned to idolatry. In the time of Ahab, who was Israel's king during Elijah's ministry, the worship of an idol called Baal had sprung up. Elijah roundly denounced Ahab and the people for so handily rejecting God, and thus was treated scornfully by the royal family as a bearer of bad news and — as Ahab once called him — an “enemy”.

After one spectacular contest on Mount Carmel, in which God proved through Elijah that He Alone was the One True God, Elijah had the prophets of Baal destroyed. Jezebel, the cruel queen and wife of Ahab, then threatened to destroy HIM. Thus, Elijah had to flee for his life.

This is what discouraged and disappointed him. He had just witnessed a great victory over idolatry, the fire from God being an irrefutable sign to the people. But now, instead of being able to continue the reform, he was on the run! And so, in 1 Kings 19, the chapter we know as the story of the Still Small Voice, we see the lesson he had to learn.

First, here were the grey clouds he saw, as noted from verse 13:

“I have been very jealous for Yahweh Elohim of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.”

God, however, showed him the silver lining, as we see in verse 18:

“...I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.”

Seven thousand...it was indeed a blessing Elijah could count!

But that wasn't all. God also told him to seek out a man called Elisha the son of Shaphat. This man would become prophet in Elijah's stead, after the time came when God would take Elijah away. Elisha would go on to strengthen the many schools of God's prophets which had sprung up, and be a strong and steady figure in the history of Israel himself.

So Elijah was not alone. Considering the seven thousand, Elisha, and schools of prophets, he was not the only voice God would have in Israel after all. And that was a comfort to him.

And there is also a little more we can learn from Elijah as we consider the next verse of the hymn.

Yield never to despair.
Thou are His constant care.
Whate'er thy need may be,
God helpeth thee.

The contest on Mount Carmel I spoke of earlier was actually the event which had ended a punishing drought God had brought upon Israel. Elijah himself had delivered the message concerning this drought, as we read in 1 Kings 17. In fact, it is at this moment that we first read of him.

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As Yahweh Elohim of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Now, being a citizen of Israel himself, Elijah would likewise have suffered from the effects of this drought. Not only that, but this was — as noted — the first of many incidents which made him highly unpopular with the king! God, however, had determined that he would care for Elijah during this time.

And the word of Yahweh came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of Yahweh...

Soon, however, the famine took its toll even in the land Elijah was hiding.

And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

This would indeed be a moment of despair to anyone, when a vital lifeline simply vanishes from us. But God continued to encourage and provide:

And the word of Yahweh came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

And through the power of God, Elijah — AND the family which hosted him during this time — were sustained.

As noted, when Elijah had to flee because of Jezebel in chapter 19, we can see just how deep his despair was in that moment:

“...he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Yahweh, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.”

Nevertheless, God would still ensure that his basic needs were provided for.

And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of Yahweh came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

"Whate'er thy need may be, God helpeth thee." And if there be any doubt that remains, let the words of Jesus in Matthew 6, from verse 25 on, reassure us on this point:

The religious world supplies largely the same class of whom Paul spake, saying, *“whose god is their belly,”* and it also supplies a still larger percentage of people whose god is their soul. Far and near the soul is ravishingly idolized during life, and superstitiously deified in death. Christ's exhortation is, *“take no thought for your soul” (psuche).*—(Matt. 6:25)

The apostles speak of some who were *“lovers of their own selves,”* and of others who were *“lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,”* and Jesus speaks of others again who *“loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”* Now all these exhibit an idolatrous degree of love, by all of which God is deprived of the *“honour due unto His name.”*—(2 Tim. 3:2, 4; John 12:43)

If a man love his father or his mother, or his wife or children, or his brother or his sister more than he loves Christ, he stands convicted of idolatry; for it is a divine statute that *“all men shall honour the Son even as they honour the Father”* And next to the deifying of the soul, there is perhaps no more common or pernicious a practice than idolizing children. It may be said of those who do it, however, that *“they have their reward”* for the recompense does not tarry long after the maudling sentimentality which ignores or falls short of administering the wholesome discipline defined in Prov. 23:13, 14; 13:24; 22:15; 1 Tim. 3:4; Eph. 6:4

If a man would not choke the word, it behoves him to see to it that even the legitimate cares of this life do not encroach too largely on his time or engross too exclusively his mind, or he may find out one day that he stands indicted with the offence of not rendering to God the things that are God's. Paul's injunction to all is *“Be careful for nothing.”* Beware of *“much serving,”* and remember that *“one thing is needful.”*—(Matt. 13:22 .)

There is yet another way of idolatry of which the sects of “Christendom” are an illustration, viz., the idolizing of pet portions of the Scriptures to the detriment of the rest. Their whole system is founded and propagated upon this principle: their case is well illustrated in the Temptation of Christ in the wilderness, taking the place of the Tempter, and like him having laid their premisses, they next proceed in imitation of Christ to say *“for it is written.”* But though it is written, it has to be replied now, as well as then, that *“it is written again.”* It only suits the purpose of the devil to quote and apply one side of a matter; which though innocent and legitimate in its place as part of the truth, is nevertheless fruitful of serious error and confusion when used to do duty in such a way as to compromise other elements of the testimony.

Christadelphian—1875

Privilege and Duty

It is our privilege to be sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. It is a duty, arising out of that fact, to act the part of obedient children.

city was eventually taken when Israel discovered and purged sin from within themselves. Israel thus had taken the land, and was at rest. Joshua himself would afterwards die in peace, having done the great work God had commissioned him for.

So let us take heart in the account of Joshua. We saw how God watched over him and guided him in such a lonely time. And God will watch over us as well. And with His Son by His side, as our High Priest and Mediator, we also are not alone. EVER.

And here the hymn concludes. Let us look back over what we have learned from it.

No matter what sorrows overtake us, God is on hand to help us if we seek him. We must not, then, let darkness of mind and sorrow of heart blind us from the blessings that He has given us. If we are constantly seeking Him, He will see to it that we are cared for in all things. It will take courage, faith, and perseverance, to overcome our trials, but it can indeed be done. Even towards the end of our lives, we have a hope of the blessings to come if we endure to that end. And remember...God and Jesus are at your side, constant companions in times where there is no human companionship to rely on.

When I first delivered this exhortation, my hope was that most of all I was able to comfort our hearts that morning, as we prepared to welcome a new Sister into the Lampasas Ecclesia, one who would be sharing our walk towards life everlasting. And now, having delivered it a second time, I hope that it has proven a comfort once again. I truly understand why our Brother Buddy Banta so deeply appreciated Hymn 180, for within it is a constant message that we will all need during our own lifetimes.

Bro. Seth Brown

Idols

Whatever as a matter of choice receives undue attention or is the subject of inordinate desire, or whatever it is which robs God of our strongest affection or our neighbour of that equality of consideration which we bestow upon our own flesh, that same is an idol in our heart.

Covetousness and the undue love of gain is a species of idolatry which is universal: from much that Christ says it was evidently a reigning sin with the Scribes and Pharisees, and from much also that Paul says it is clear that it had even got a footing in the ecclesias. The idolizing of “*filthy lucre*” has been one of the characteristic sins of the Romish apostasy all through, and it is pretty transparent also that the sects of “Christendom” have more or less inherited the same spirit of Mammon from their Papal parent, and so do they take the lead and set the example of it to the rest of the world, who are not slow to follow in the wake of such a precious dear god.—(Mat. 6.25; Luke 12:15 ; Col. 3:5 .)

“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.”

And with the mention of Jesus, we now must turn our attention to the next verse:

Though wearied with this strife,
Burdened with cares of life,
Press on courageously.
God helpeth thee.

Upon the age of 30 years, Jesus began his ministry through the land of Judea. This was a ministry which lasted three and a half years. And Jesus knew all too well what the end of this ministry would bring...the sacrifice he must accomplish, which had been prophesied long before. Isaiah, in the well-known and well-loved 53rd chapter of his prophecy, described what the Messiah was to endure:

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of Yahweh revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Yahweh hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare

his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

The import of such words would weigh heavily on Jesus as he observed one last Passover with his disciples. And as they left the feast, and headed towards Gethsemane, the anguish of the moment came upon him, as we see in Matthew 26:

“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.”

And some time after, he further warned them:

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

As he went aside from them, and as the heavy emotions of the moment exhausted his disciples to the point of sleep, he made a request to His Heavenly Father, as we read in Luke 22:

“And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me...”

But he knew that what had been prophesied must be fulfilled. And so, summoning the courage to endure, he made his humble concession:

...nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

Thus strengthened, Jesus would endure a long tribulation, suffering through a mock trial, an incredulous Roman hearing, a concessionary scourging, rough mocking by the Roman soldiers, and finally — when Pontius Pilate had failed to appease the Jewish leaders — a slow agonizing death by means of crucifixion.

And this he did, for Isaiah had also prophesied what he would gain by being obedient unto death:

Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink...And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And Yahweh spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

So, put yourself by Joshua's side in the days that followed. Watch with him as Moses, Aaron, and Eliezar go up into Mount Hor. He knows that at the top, Aaron will remove his robes and give them to Eliezar, who will become the next priest. He will then die and be buried, and only the two will come down.

Stand with him also after Moses gives one long final exhortation to the people of Israel, and names Joshua as the one who will finish his work, leading in the new generation to conquer Canaan at last. And watch with him also as Moses climbs up Mount Nebo. He will not come down from the mountain this time. God in his mercy will show him a grand view of the land that the children of Israel will conquer, and then at last he will rest from his long labor. And God Himself will see to his burial.

And so it was. Joshua and Caleb were now the last of a generation, guiding another that was younger than them. It must have indeed been a lonely feeling for the two, and especially for Joshua, who now had a great responsibility before him.

But God was there to encourage him, He Himself speaking words of comfort and strength unto Joshua on the eve of the great campaign to take Canaan:

Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel...There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee...Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest...Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for Yahweh thy Elohim is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Joshua was indeed successful. The sadness of losing many beloved mentors gave way to the joy felt when God went mightily before in the battles that followed. City after city fell. And even in the misstep of Ai, the

representative spy for the tribe of Ephraim. Another name of note was from the tribe of Judah; namely, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

All twelve spies indeed saw in their travels that the land was a good one. However, ten of them deemed the residents of the land already as being too powerful to conquer. Joshua and Caleb, however, displayed their faith in God, knowing that He would ably help Israel in their battles to take the land. As we read:

And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel...And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great...And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we...And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron...And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If Yahweh delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against Yahweh, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and Yahweh is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones.

In great anger, God expressed his deep disappointment in the lack of faith present in the children of Israel, and thus made this dread proclamation:

And Yahweh spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me?...Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith Yahweh, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

So of that generation, there were only two worthy of obtaining the land. All their contemporaries would die.

And in another moment that appears truly devastating, the pressures of leading this rebellious people would even cost Moses and Aaron the chance to enter the land. As we see in chapter 20:

And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron...And Yahweh spake

Three days later, Jesus would rise from the dead. The human flesh he had borne in his life would no longer trouble him. Immortality was given to him. He would ascend to His Father's right hand, where to this day he sits, awaiting the time when he will come to fulfil God's promises and plans for this earth.

Brethren and sisters, the trials we will suffer in our lives are nothing compared to what our Master and Elder Brother Jesus Christ has suffered. It is true that we are unlike him in the sense that he bore the Word of His Father, which counteracted the ways of the flesh he lived in, and which we still do. So, with no such counteraction — and a natural tendency to fall victim to the flesh — we naturally will exaggerate our own trials in our own minds into some great, overbearing thing. But take it in perspective. If Jesus was able to press on courageously through a trial that involved him dying, then we should press on courageously through trials that — in comparison — really are "light afflictions"!

As the apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:13:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Paul, having many a trial himself in his ministry, understood the weakness of the flesh, but points out that Jesus's victory over the flesh is much—needed encouragement, as we see in Romans 7, from verse 24:

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

And in the next chapter, from verse 35:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God has blessed his son for overcoming the flesh in a trial of trials. And he will help us through ours as well. Let us then take all our trials in stride, with such assurance.

On to the next verse, then:

When youth and health are fled,
And hopes are dim or dead,
Thou'll not forsaken be.
God helpeth thee.

Brethren and sisters, let me suggest that Abraham is a PERFECT example to tie in with this verse.

The writer to the Hebrews — who most likely may have been Paul himself — has this to say about Abraham in chapter 11, that wonderful Chronicle of the Faithful:

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

When we read the account of Abraham in the book of Genesis, it is not only his faith that is described. We learn also that he was an old man when he undertook this journey, as was his wife Sarah. Also, Sarah had suffered from barrenness throughout her life, and was now past the age of bearing.

So as we look through the account, we see what remarkable thing God has done for them. And all this came about due to Abraham's great faith. Starting in chapter 15:

“After these things the word of Yahweh came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward...And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in Yahweh; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

Further on in chapter 18: *“And Yahweh appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground...And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him...Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And Yahweh said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for Yahweh? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”*

And so, in chapter 21, we see the first of many promises fulfilled:

“And Yahweh visited Sarah as he had said, and Yahweh did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had

commanded him. And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.”

From a natural perspective, it would seem that hopes were indeed dim or dead for these two to have children at such a time in their lives. But one must never discount the power and mercy of God, nor the strong faith of those who believe in Him. As Hebrews continues:

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

Age did not prevent God from fulfilling the promise to Abraham concerning his natural seed. And there are other promises that God has made unto Abraham, concerning the everlasting possession of the land of Canaan here on Earth forever. Note that this has not happened yet. But due to the coming resurrection, the death of Abraham and the other faithful will not prevent those promises from being fulfilled, either. And we can also be assured that, if we come before him ill in health but worthy to partake in these promises, our health will be restored as the curse of the flesh is removed once and for all.

And so Hebrews offers this final assurance:

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

And again: *“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”*

Now, brethren and sisters, we come to the final verse of Hymn 180, and the one that hits home perhaps the most painfully of all:

Friends one by one depart,
Lonely and sad thine heart,
Still, restful, patient be,
God dwells with thee.

Let me finally speak to you this morning of the man Joshua.

When Moses led the children of Israel out of their slavery in Egypt, Joshua the son of Nun was a constant companion and helper unto him. And so, when they came near unto the land of Canaan, Joshua was one of twelve spies — one for each tribe of Israel — chosen to gather intelligence on the land for an invasion. This even is recorded in Numbers 13. If we look there, we see that verse 8 references Joshua (here called Oshea) as the