

Volume 17—Studies in the Scriptures—No. 4**April, 1938****The Lord's Prayer—Part 2**

“Our Father which art in Heaven” (Matt. 6:9). This opening clause presents to us the *Object* to whom we pray, teaches us the covenant-*office* which He sustains, and denotes the *obligation* imposed upon us, namely, that of a filial spirit, with all that entails. All real prayer ought to begin with a devout contemplation and express acknowledgement of the name of God and His blessed perfections. We should draw near unto the Throne of Grace with suitable apprehensions of God's sovereign majesty and power, yet with a holy confidence in His fatherly goodness. In these opening words we are plainly instructed to preface our petitions by expressing the sense we have of the essential and relative glories of the One we address. The Psalms abound in examples of this: see 8:1 as a case in point.

“Our Father which art in Heaven.” Let us first endeavour to ascertain the general principle which is embodied in this introductory clause. It informs us in the simplest possible manner that the great God is most graciously ready to grant us an audience. By directing us to address Him as “our Father,” we are definitely assured of His love and power. This precious title is designed to raise our affections, excite to reverent attention, and confirm our confidence in the efficacy of prayer. Three things are essential unto acceptable and effectual prayer: fervency, reverence, and confidence—and these this opening clause is designed to inspire in us. Fervency is the effect of our affections being called into exercise; reverence will be promoted by the apprehension that we are addressing the Heavenly Throne; confidence will be deepened by viewing the Object of prayer as our Father.

Coming to God in acts of worship, we must “believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). And what is more calculated to deepen our confidence and draw forth the strongest love and earnest hopes of our heart toward God, than by Christ's here presenting Him to us in His most tender aspect and endearing relation?! How we are here encouraged to use holy boldness and to pour out our souls before Him! We could not suitably invoke an impersonal “First Cause,” still less could we adore or supplicate a great abstraction. No, it is unto a person, a Divine Person, One who has our best interests at heart we are invited to draw near—to our *Father*. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that *we* should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1).

First, God is the “Father” of all men *naturally*, being their Creator. “Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?” (Mal. 2:10); “But now, O LORD, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand” (Isa. 64:8). The fact that such verses have been grossly perverted by some holding erroneous views on “the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man,” must not cause us to utterly repudiate them. It is our privilege to assure the most ungodly and abandoned that, if they will but throw down their weapons of their warfare and do as the Prodigal did, there is a loving Father ready to welcome them. If He hears the cries of ravens, will He turn a deaf ear to the requests of a rational creature? Simon Magus, while still “in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity” was directed by an Apostle to repent of his wickedness and *pray* to God (Acts 8:22).

But the depth and full import of this invocation can only be entered into by the believing Christian, for there is a higher relation between him and God than that which is merely of nature. God is his “Father” *spiritually*. Second, God is the Father of His elect

because He is the Father of their Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3), and therefore did He expressly announce, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God" (John 20:17). Third, God is the Father of His elect by eternal decree. "Having predestinated us unto the *adoption* of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5). Fourth, He is the Father of His elect by *regeneration*, wherein they are born again and become "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4); as it is written, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6).

These words, "Our Father," not only signify the office which God sustains to us by virtue of the Everlasting Covenant, but they clearly imply our obligations: they teach us both how we ought to dispose of ourselves toward God when we pray unto Him, and the conduct which becomes us by virtue of this relationship. As His children we must "honour" Him, be in subjection to Him, delight in Him, strive in all things to please Him. Again, it not only teaches us our personal interest in God Himself—by grace, our Father—but it also instructs us of our interest in our fellow-Christians—in Christ, they are our brethren. It is not merely "*my* Father," but "*our* Father." We must express our love to them by praying for them—we are to be as much concerned about *their* needs as we are over our own. How much is included in these two words!

"Which art in Heaven." What a blessed *balance* this gives to the previous clause. If that tells us of God's goodness and grace, this speaks of His greatness and majesty; if that teaches us of the nearness and dearness of His relationship to us, this announces His infinite elevation above us. If "our Father" inspires confidence and love, "which art in Heaven" should fill us with humility and awe. These are the two things which should ever occupy our minds and engage our hearts: the first without the second tends to unholy familiarity. The second without the first produces coldness and dread. Combine them together and we are preserved from either evil, and a suitable poise is wrought in the soul as we duly contemplate both the mercy and might of God, His unfathomable love and His immeasurable loftiness. Note how the same blessed balance was preserved by the Apostle in "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" (Eph. 1:17).

"Which art in Heaven": not because He is confined there, for "will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the Heaven and Heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee" (1 Kings 8:27)—He is infinite and omnipresent. There is a particular sense, though, in which the Father is "in Heaven": because His majesty and glory are most eminently manifested there. "Thus saith the LORD, The Heaven is *My throne*, and the earth is *My footstool*" (Isa. 66:1), and the realization of this should fill us with the deepest reverence and awe. "Which art in Heaven" calls attention to His *providence*, as directing all things from on High. It announces His ability to undertake for us. Our Father is *the Almighty*—"Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased" (Psa. 115:3). Yet though the Almighty, He is "*our Father*," and "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him" (Psa. 103:13), and "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 11:13). Finally, it reminds us that *we* are journeying *there*: for Heaven is our "Home."—A.W.P.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

124. *The Apostle's Prayer: 13:20, 21.*

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant; make you perfect in every good work to do His will: working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.” Though this be in the form of a prayer yet it presents a succinct summary of the entire doctrine of the Epistle. The “blood of the Everlasting Covenant” stands over against “the blood of bulls and of goats,” that “great Shepherd of the sheep,” risen from the dead, is in contrast from Moses, Joshua, David, etc., who had long ago died; while “the God of peace” presents a striking antithesis to Jehovah’s descent upon Sinai “in fire.” Let us briefly consider these three things again, but this time in their inverse order.

“Through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant.” We consider that this clause has a threefold force, that it is connected—both grammatically and doctrinally—with *each of* the preceding clauses. First, it is through the blood which He shed for sinners that Christ became the great Shepherd of the sheep—He was so previously by ordination, but He became so actually by importation—the sheep were now His purchased property. Second, it was through or because of the atoning blood that God delivered Christ from the grave, for having fully satisfied Divine justice He was fully entitled to deliverance from prison. Third, it was through or by virtue of the pacifying blood of Christ that God henceforth became “the God of peace” unto His people, the whole controversy which their sins raised having been satisfactorily settled. And Christ shed His precious blood in fulfillment of the stipulations of the Everlasting Covenant, or that agreement which He entered into with the Father before the foundation of the world.

“That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep.” “The Father is frequently said to raise Christ from the dead because of His sovereign authority in the disposal of the whole work of redemption, which is everywhere ascribed unto Him. Christ is said to raise Himself or take up His life again when He was dead, because of the immediate efficiency of His Divine Person therein. But more is intended here than an act of Divine power, whereby the human nature of Christ was quickened. The word used is peculiar, signifying a recovery out of a certain state: a moral act of authority is intended. Christ as the great Shepherd of the sheep was brought into the state of death by the sentence of the Law, and was therefrom restored by the God of peace, to evidence that peace was now perfectly made. The bare resurrection of Christ would not have saved us, for so any other man may be raised by the power of God; but *the bringing* of Christ from the dead through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant is that which gives assurance of the complete redemption of the Church” (condensed from Owen).

“The God of peace.” He is such first, because He takes this title from the Covenant itself (Isa. 54:10). He is so secondly, because as the supreme God He is pacified, and that because His law has received perfect satisfaction from our Surety. He is so third, because He is, in consequence, reconciled to us. Having accepted the Person, obedience, and soul-travail of Christ, God is at peace with all His people in Him. Because He is at peace with them, He freely pardons all their iniquities and bestows every needed blessing upon them. When God removes from us all penalties and evils, and gives unto us all the privileges and good of the justified (such as the Holy Spirit to break the power and reign of sin

in us) it is as the “God of peace” He does so; yea, as the supreme Judge, acting according to the principles of His government constituted in the Everlasting Covenant, by virtue of the merits of Christ and of our interest in Him.

God is also called “the God of peace” because He is the Author of that tranquility which is felt at times in the hearts and consciences of His people, as He is also the Lover of that concord which obtains in measure among them upon earth. Owen suggests a further reason why the Apostle uses this Divine title here. “He might have also herein an especial respect to the present state of the Hebrews, for it is evident that they had been tossed, perplexed, and disquieted with various doctrines and pleas about the Law, and the observance of its institutions. Wherefore, having performed his part and duty in the communication of the truth to them for the information of their judgments, he now in the close of the whole applies himself by prayer to the God of peace: that He, who alone is the Author of it, who creates it where He pleaseth, would, through his instruction, give rest and peace to their minds.” (John Owen).

So completely is God appeased that there is a new covenant procured and constituted, namely, the Christian Covenant, called here “the Everlasting Covenant.” First, because it shall never be repealed and continueth unalterable, the called obtaining by it the title and possession of an eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15). Second, because Christ’s atoning blood is the foundation of this Covenant, and as the virtue of it never ceases, therefore is it made effectual to secure its end, namely, the eternal salvation of sinful men who are converted and reconciled to God. This new Covenant is also designated “the Covenant of Peace”: “I will make a covenant of peace with them” (Ezek. 37:26). First, because in the same this peace and reconciliation is published, and offered to us: “The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:36 and cf. Eph. 2:17), because in this Covenant the terms of this peace between us and God are stated: God binding Himself to give to sinful men forgiveness of sins and eternal life upon the conditions of repentance, faith, and new obedience.

A most important practical question is, How do we come to be interested in this Divine peace and reconciliation? A threefold answer may be returned: by ordination, impetration, and application. First, by the Father’s eternal decree or foreordination, for as to whom should enter into the same has not been left to chance; hence, God’s elect are termed “the sons of peace” (Luke 10:6). Second, by the Son’s impetration or paying the purchased price: “having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself” (Col. 1:20). Third, by the Spirit’s application, who subdues our enmity, bends our stubborn wills, softens our hard hearts, overcomes our selfrighteousness, and brings us into the dust before God as self-condemned criminals suing for mercy. It is at our conversion this Divine peace is actually conveyed to us, for it is only then that God’s wrath is removed from us (John 3:36) and that we are restored to His favour. Further grace is given us day by day as those already reconciled to God.

A final reason may now be advanced why God is here addressed as “the God of peace,” and that is, to afford us valuable instruction in connection with prayer. It is very striking to note that in more than half of the passages where this particular Divine title occurs, it is where He is being *supplicated*—the reader may verify this for himself by consulting Romans 15:33 and 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 3:16, and here (Heb. 13:20). Thus, it is employed for the purpose of *encouraging* us in our addresses at the Throne of Grace. Nothing will impart

more confidence and enlarge our hearts than the realization that God has laid aside His wrath, and has only thoughts of grace toward us. Nothing will inspire more liberty of spirit than to look upon God as *reconciled to us* by Jesus Christ: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Rom. 5:1, 2).

"Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ" (Heb. 13:21). Before taking up the coherency of this sentence let us point out the great practical lesson it contains. No matter how diligent the minister has been in his pulpit preparations, nor how faithfully he has delivered his message, his duty is by no means then fully discharged: he needs to retire to the closet and beg God to apply the sermon to those who heard it, to write it on their hearts, to make it effectual unto their lasting good. This is what the great Apostle did. In the body of this Epistle he had exhorted the Hebrews unto many good works, and now he prays that God would *enable them thereto*. The same thing holds good for those in the pew. It is not enough to listen reverently and carefully, we must also entreat God to bless unto us what we have heard. It is failure at this point which makes so much hearing unprofitable.

Though the Apostle's prayer be brief, it is a most comprehensive one. It makes known the *method* by which Divine grace is administered to us. The grand *fountain* of it is God Himself, as He is the God of peace: that is, as in the eternal counsel of His will, He designed grace and peace unto poor sinners, agreeably to His goodness, wisdom, justice and holiness. The *channel* through which Divine grace is communicated, and that in a way suitable to the maintenance of God's glory, namely, by the mediation of Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. God would have us know that while He is Himself the Giver, yet it is our Surety who merited for us every spiritual blessing we enjoy. The *nature* of this Divine grace relates particularly to our sanctification or perfecting, and this is expressed under the two heads of this prayer, namely, the grand end to be ever kept in view, and the means whereby that end is attained.

Having dwelt at some length upon the solemn manner in which the Apostle addressed the Throne of Grace, we now turn to contemplate the *import* of His prayer, observing the two things here asked for the Hebrews. The first was that God would "make them perfect in every good work to do His will." This will require us to inquire into the meaning of this petition, to ponder its extensiveness, and then to mark its implications. Different writers have given various definitions to the "make you perfect," though they all amount to much the same thing. Thomas Scott gives "rectifying every disorder of their souls and completely fitting them for every part of His holy service." Matthew Henry enters into more detail: "A perfection of integrity, a clear mind, a clean heart, lively affections, regular and renewed wills, and suitable strength for every good work to which they are called."

Owen rendered it "make you meet, fit and able." And adds "It is not an absolute perfection that is intended, nor do the words signify any such thing, but it is to bring the faculties of the mind into that order so as to dispose, prepare, and enable them, so that they may work accordingly." The Greek word for "make you perfect" is rendered "fitted" in Romans 9:22, "framed" in Hebrews 11:2, and "prepared" in 10:5, where the product of *Divine workmanship* is seen in each instance. In the case before us it is the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit in connection with the progressive sanctification of the be-

liever. Personally, we regard the definition of Scott (given above) as the best: the most accurate and elucidating.

The work of Divine grace in the elect begins when they are born again by the quickening operations of the Holy Spirit, and this work of grace is continued throughout the whole of their remaining days upon earth. Perfection of grace is not attained in this life (Phil. 3:12, 13), yet *additions* to our present attainments in grace are to be diligently sought (2 Peter 1:5-7). No matter what spiritual progress has, by grace, been made, we are never to rest satisfied with it: we still need to be further strengthened for duties and fortified for trials. A child grows until it becomes fit for all manly actions, yet further progress is attainable after the state of manhood is reached. So it is spiritually. God requires from us the mortification of every lust, and an universal and impartial obedience from us—and therefore we may perceive how perfectly suited is this prayer to our needs.

Next, we turn to consider the *extensiveness* of this petition: “Make you perfect in *every* good work.” This comprehensive expression includes, as Gouge pointed out, all the fruits of holiness Godwards and of righteousness manwards. There is to be no reservation. God requires us to love Him with “all our hearts,” that we be sanctified in our “whole spirit, and soul, and body,” and that we “grow up into Christ in all things.” Many will do some good, but are defective in other things—usually in those which are most necessary. They single out those duties which make the least demand upon them, which require the least denying of self. But we shall never enjoy sound peace of heart till we are conformed unto all the revealed will of God: “Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto *all* Thy commandments” (Psa. 119:6). Then pray daily to be Divinely fitted unto every good work, especially those which you find the hardest and most exacting.

“To do His will.” Here we have a Scriptural definition of what is a “good work”: it is the performing of God’s preceptive will. There are many things done by professing Christians which, though admired by themselves and applauded by their fellows, are not regarded as “good works” by the One with whom we have to do; yea, “that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15). Of old the Jews added their own traditions to the Divine commandments, instituting fasts and feasts, so that the Lord asked “who hath required this at your hand?” (Isa. 1:12). We see the same principle at work today among the deluded Romanists, with their bodily austerities, idolatrous devotions, arduous pilgrimages, and impoverishing payments. Nor are many Protestants free from self-appointed deprivations and superstitious exercises. It is not the heeding of religious impulses, nor conforming to ecclesiastical customs, but doing the will of God which is required of us.

The *rule* of our duty is the revealed will of God. The “works” of man are his operations as a rational creature, and if his actions are conformed to God’s Law, they are good; if they are not, they are evil. Therefore a man cannot be a good Christian without doing God’s will. If it be God’s will that he should refrain from an act or practice, he dare not proceed to do it: see Jeremiah 35:6; Acts 4:19. On the other hand, if it be the revealed mind of God that he should do something, he dare not omit it, no matter how it cross his inclination or fleshly interests: “To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). It is not enough that we thoroughly understand the will of God: we must *do* it; and the more we do it, the better shall we understand: John 7:17.

“Make you perfect in every good work to do His will.” Various things are clearly implied by these words. First, that we are imperfect or not qualified unto every good work.

Yes, even after we have been regenerated, we are still unprepared to obey the Divine will. Notwithstanding the life, light and liberty we have received from God, yet we have not ability to do that which is well-pleasing in His sight. This is indeed an humbling truth, yet truth it is: Christians themselves are unable to perform their duty. Though the love of God has been shed abroad in their hearts, a principle of holiness or new “nature” communicated to them, this of itself is not sufficient. Not only are they still very ignorant of God’s will, but there is that in them which is ever opposed to it, inclining them in a contrary direction. Nor do the Scriptures hesitate to press this solemn fact upon us: rather is it frequently iterated for the humbling of ourselves before God.

Second, yet our spiritual impotency is not to be excused, nor are we to pity ourselves because of it; rather is it to be confessed to God with self-condemnation. Third, none but God can fit us for the performing of His will, and it is both our duty and privilege to ask Him so to do. We need to diligently beg Him to strengthen us with might by His Spirit in the inner man, to incline our hearts unto His testimonies and not to covetousness, to so bedew our souls that we will grow in grace; for the new nature in the believer is entirely dependent upon God. “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God” (2 Cor. 3:5). If we need Divine grace to think a good thought or conceive a good purpose, much more do we need His strength to resolve and perform that which is good. Therefore did the Apostle pray for supplies of sanctifying grace to be given unto the Hebrews, to enable them to respond to the will of God in the duties of obedience required of them.

“Working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight” (Heb. 13:21). This is both an elucidation and amplification of that which has just preceded, intimating *how* God makes us perfect or fits us unto every good work. The previous petition expressed the grand *end* for which the Apostle prayed, namely, the progressive sanctification of his readers; here, he expresses the *means* by which this was to be accomplished in them. This is effected not by moral persuasion and instruction only, but by an actual and effectual inworking of Divine power. So perverse are we by nature, and so weak even as Christians, that it is not sufficient for our minds to be informed by means of an external revelation of God’s will; in addition, He has to stimulate our affections and propel our wills if we are to perform those works which are acceptable to Him. “Without Me ye can do *nothing*.”

“Working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight.” This respects the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the regenerate. It presents a striking and blessed contrast between the unsaved and the saved. Of the former we read, “The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2); whereas of the latter it is said, “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). First, God puts within us the will or desire, unto that which is good, and then He bestows His strength to actually perform. These are quite distinct, and the latter is never commensurate with the former in this life. The distinction was clearly drawn by the Apostle when he said, “For to *will* is present with me, but how to *perform* that which is good I find not” (Rom. 7:18): yet even that “will” or desire had been wrought in him by Divine grace.

Only as these two truths are clearly recognized and honestly acknowledged by us—the Christian’s spiritual powerlessness, and the efficiency of inwrought grace—will we rightly ascribe unto God the glory which is His due. To Him alone is due the honour for

anything good which proceeds from us or is done by us: “By the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Cor. 15:10). Not only do we owe to God the new nature which He has placed within us, but we are entirely dependent upon Him for the renewing of that new nature “day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16). It is God who works in His people spiritual aspirations, holy desires, pious endeavours: “from Me is thy fruit found” (Hosea 14:8). The more this be realized, the more will our proud hearts be truly humbled.

“Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight” (Heb. 13:21). By linking the two sentences here we are taught the important lesson that there cannot be conformity to the will of God in the *life*, till there be conformity to Him in the *heart*. Herein we see the radical difference between human efforts at reformation and the Divine method. Man concentrates on that which is visible to the eyes of his fellows, namely, the external: “Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess” (Matt. 23:25 and cf. 27). Not so with Him who looks on the heart: *He* works from within outward, fitting us for an obedient walk by effectually exciting the affections and empowering the will. It is thus that He continues and carries on to completion His work of grace in the elect.

Ere passing on to the next clause, let it be duly pointed out that while it is due alone to the gracious operations of the Spirit that we understand, love, believe, and do the things which God requires from us, it by no means follows that we are warranted to lie upon a bed of ease. No, far from it: we are responsible to *use every means* which God has appointed for our growth in grace and practical sanctification. Those who are fondest of quoting “for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His pleasure,” are usually the slowest to emphasize the preceding exhortation: “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). We are commanded to give all diligence to add to our faith the other graces of the Spirit: 2 Peter 1:5-7. Then let us shake off our carnal security and lethargy: use the means and God will bless our endeavours—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

“That which is well-pleasing in His sight” (Heb. 13:21). First, let us endeavour to live day by day in the consciousness that all we do is done in the sight of God. Nothing can escape His view. He observes those who break His law, and those who keep it: “The eyes of the LORD are in *every* place, beholding the evil and the good” (Prov. 15:3). How it should curb and awe us to realize that God is an observer of every action: “in holiness and righteousness *before Him*” (Luke 1:75). Second, let this be our great aim and end: to please God. That is sound piety, and nothing else is. Pleasing man is the religion of the hypocrites, but pleasing God is genuine spirituality. More than once does the Apostle inculcate this as the right end: “Not as pleasing men, but God” (1 Thess. 2:4); “that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing” (Col. 1:10).

Third, let us see to it that all our works are *so ordered as* to be pleasing *to* God. In order to this our actions must square with the rule of His Word: only that which is agreeable to His will is acceptable in His sight. But more: it is not sufficient that the substance of what we do be right, but it must issue from a right principle, namely, love to God and faith in Christ: “For without *faith* it is impossible to please Him” (Heb. 14:6), yet it must be a faith that “worketh *by love*” (Gal. 5:6)—not as forced, but as the expression of grati-

tude. Finally, as to the *manner* of this: our good works must be done with soberness and all seriousness: “serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:28)—as becometh a menial in the presence of His Majesty. Remember that God actually takes delight in such works and those who do them: Hebrews 11:4—what an incentive unto such!—A.W.P.

THE LIFE OF DAVID.

76. *His Restoration.*

There had been not a little to offset David's grief over the revolt and death of Absalom. As we have seen, his journey back to Jerusalem was marked by several incidents which must have brought satisfaction and joy to the king's heart. The radical change in the attitude of Shimei towards him, the discovery that after all the heart of Mephibosheth beat true to him, the affectionate homage of the aged Barzillai, and the welcome from the elders and men of Judah, were all calculated to cheer and encourage the returning exile. Things seemed to have taken a decided turn for the better, and the sun shone out of a clear sky. Yes, but the clouds have a habit of returning even after a heavy rain. And so it was here. A dark cloud suddenly appeared on David's horizon which must have caused him considerable uneasiness, presaging as it did the gathering of another storm.

The leaders of the Ten Tribes had met David at Gilgal, and a dispute at once ensued between them and the man of Judah. This was the fly in the ointment. A foolish quarrel broke out between the two factions over the matter of bringing back the king. "It was a point of honour which was being disputed between them—which of them had most interest in David. 'We are more numerous' say the elders of Israel. 'We are nearer akin to him' say the elders of Judah. Now one would think David very safe and happy when his subjects are striving which should love him more, and be most forward to show him respect; yet even that strife proved the occasion for a rebellion" (Matthew Henry). No sooner was one of David's trials over than another arises, as it were, out of the ashes of the former.

Ah, my reader, we must not expect to journey far in this world without encountering trouble in some form or other; no, not even when the Providence of God appears to be smiling upon us. It will not be long before we have some rude reminder that "this is not your rest." It was thus in the present experiences of our hero: in the very midst of his triumphs he was forced to witness a disturbance among his leading subjects, which soon threatened the overthrow of his kingdom. There is nothing stable down here, and we only court certain disappointment if we build our hopes on anything earthly or think to find satisfaction in the creature. Under the sun is but "vanity and vexation of spirit." But how slow we are to really believe that melancholy truth; yet in the end we find it *is* true.

We closed last month's article with a quotation which called attention to the typical significance of the incidents recorded in 2 Samuel 19; the opening verses of chapter 20 may be contemplated as bearing out the same line of thought. Christ's visible kingdom on earth is entered by profession, hence there are tares in it as well as wheat, bad fish as well as good, foolish virgins as well as wise (Matt. 13 and 25). This will be made unmistakably manifest in the Day to come, but even in this world God sometimes so orders things that profession is tested and that which is false is exposed. Such is the dispensational significance of the episode we are now to consider. The Israelites had appeared to be very loyal and devoted to David, yea, so much so that they were hurt when the men of Judah had, without consulting them, taken the lead in bringing back the king.

But how quickly the real state of their hearts was made apparent. What a little thing it took to cause their affection for David not only to cool off but to completely evaporate. No sooner did an enemy cry "to your tents, O Israel," than they promptly responded, renouncing their professed allegiance. There was no reality to their protestations of fealty, and when the choice was set before them they preferred a "man of Belial" rather than the

man after God's own heart. How solemnly this reminds us of the multitudes of Israel at a later date: first crying out, "Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 21:9), and a short time after, when the issue was drawn, preferring Barabbas to Christ. And how often since then, especially in times of trial and persecution, have thousands of those who made a loud profession of Christianity preferred the world or their own carnal safety?

"And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel" (2 Sam. 20:1). Alas! how often it appears that in a happy concourse of those who come together to greet and do homage to David there is "a son of Belial" ready to sound the trumpet of contention. Satan knows full well that few things are better calculated to further his own base designs than by causing divisions among the people of God. Sad it is that we are not more upon our guard, for we are not ignorant of his devices. And to be on our guard means to be constantly mortifying pride and jealousy. *Those* were the evil roots from which this trouble issued, as is clear from the "that our advice should not *first* be had in bringing back our king" (2 Sam. 19:43).

"And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel" (19:43). This was only adding fuel to the fire. "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1). If the spirit of jealousy prevailed among the leaders of Israel, pride was certainly at work in the hearts of the elders of Judah, and when those two evils *clashed*, anger and strife quickly followed. It is solemn to observe that God Himself took notice of and recorded in His Word *the fierceness* of the words of the men of Judah—a plain intimation that He now registers against *us* that language which is not pleasing unto Him. How we need to pray that God would set a watch before our mouths, that the door of our lips may be kept from allowing evil to pass out.

"And there happened to be a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite; and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse" (2 Sam. 20:1) Sheba belonged to the tribe of Saul, which had bitterly begrudged the honour done to Judah, when the son of Jesse was elected king. The Benjamites never really submitted to the Divine ordination. The deeper significance of this is not hard to perceive: there is a perpetual enmity in the Serpent's seed against the antitypical David. How remarkably was this mysterious yet prominent feature of Christ's kingdom adumbrated in the continued opposition of the house of Saul against David: first in Saul himself, then in Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 2:8, 9; 3:1 etc.), and now Sheba. But just as surely as David prevailed over all his enemies, so shall Christ vanquish all His foes.

"And he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel" (2 Sam. 20:1). See how ready is an evil mind to place a false construction upon things, and how easily this can be accomplished when determined so to do. The men of Judah had said "the king is near of kin to us" (19:42), but this son of Belial now perverted their words and made them to signify "We have *no* part in David" whereas they intended no such thing. Then let us not be surprised when those who secretly hate us give an entirely false meaning to what we have said or written. History abounds in incidents where the most innocent statements have been grossly wrested to become the means of strife and bloodshed. It was so with the Lord Jesus Himself: see John 2:19-21 and compare Matthew 27; 26:61, 62—sufficient

then for the disciple to be as his Master. But let the Christian diligently see to it that he does not let *himself* (or herself) be used as a tool of Satan in this vile work.

“Every man to his tents, O Israel” (2 Sam. 20:1). This call put them to the proof—testing their loyalty and love to David. The sequel at once evidenced how fickle and false they were. “So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri” (v. 2). Hardly had they returned to their allegiance, than they forsook it, How utterly unreliable human nature is, and how foolish are they who put their trust in man. What creatures of extremes we be: now welcoming Moses as a deliverer, and next reviling him because the deliverance came not as easily and quickly as was expected; now glad to escape from the drudgery of Egypt, and a little later anxious to return thither. What grace is needed to *anchor* such unstable and unreliable creatures.

“So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri” (v. 2). Nothing is told us as to whether or not David himself had taken any part in the debate between the elders of Israel and of Judah, or whether he had made any attempt to pour oil on the troubled waters. If he did, it appears that he quite failed to convince the former, for they now not only refused to attend him any further on his return to Jerusalem, but refused to own him as their king at all. Nay more, they were determined to set up a rival king of their own. Thus the very foundations of his kingdom were again threatened. Scarcely had God delivered David from the revolt of Absalom, than he was now faced with this insurrection from Sheba. And is it not thus in the experience of David’s spiritual seed: no sooner do they succeed in subduing one lust or sin, than another raises its ugly head against them.

“But the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem” (v. 2). It is blessed to find there were some who remained loyal to David, refusing to forsake him even when the majority of his subjects turned away from him. Thus, though the test exposed the false, it also revealed the true. So it ever is. And *who* were the ones that remained steadfast to the king? Why, the men of his own tribe, those who were related to him *by blood*. The typical significance of this is obvious. Though in the day of testing there are multitudes who forsake the royal banner of the antitypical David, there is always a remnant which Satan himself cannot induce to apostatize, namely, those who are Christ’s brethren spiritually. How beautifully was that here illustrated.

“And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood” (v. 3). Here we see one *of the gains* resulting from the severe chastening that David had undergone. As we have seen in earlier chapters, David had multiplied wives and concubines unto himself contrary to the Law of God, and they had proved a grief and a shame to him (2 Sam. 15:16; 16:21, 22). God often has to take severe measures with us ere we are willing to forsake our idols. It is good to note that from this point onwards we read nothing more of concubines in connection with David. But how solemn to discover, later, that this evil example which he had set before his family, was followed by his son Solomon—to the drawing away of his heart from the Lord. O that parents gave more heed to the Divine threat that their sins shall surely be visited upon their descendants.

“Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present” (2 Sam. 20:4). Though the men of Judah had not followed the evil example of the Ten Tribes in their revolt against the king, yet it appears from this verse

that many of them were no longer in attendance upon David, having no doubt returned unto their own homes. Considering the circumstances, it seems that they put their own comfort and safety first, at a time when their master's regime was seriously threatened. "Though forward enough to attend the king's triumphs, they were backward enough to fight his battles. Most love a loyalty, as well as a religion, that is cheap and easy. Many boast of their being akin to Christ that yet are very loath to venture for Him" (Matthew Henry). On the other hand, let it not be forgotten that it is not without reason the Lord's people are called "sheep"—one of the most *timid* of all animals.

"Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present" (v. 4). This shows the uneasiness of David at Sheba's rebellion and his determination to take strong and prompt measures to quell it. Amasa, it may be pointed out, had been the "captain of the host for Absalom against David" (2 Sam. 17:25), yet he was near akin unto the king. He was the one whom David had intended should replace Joab as the commander of his armies (19:13), and the rebellion of Sheba now supplied the opportunity for the carrying out of this purpose. Having received a previous notification of the king's design may have been the main reason why Amasa, though an Israelite, did not join forces with the insurrectionists. He saw an opportunity to better his position and acquire greater military honour. But, as we shall see, in accepting this new commission, he only signed his own death-warrant—so insecure are the honours of this world.

It is very much to be doubted whether David's choice was either a wise or a popular one. Since Amasa had filled a prominent position under Absalom, it could scarcely be expected that the men whom Joab had successfully commanded would now relish being placed in subjection to the man who so recently had been the enemy of their king. It is this which, most probably, accounts for the delay, or rather Amasa's lack of success in carrying out the king's orders, for we are told, "So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him" (2 Sam. 20:5). As Scott says, "The men of Judah seemed to have been more eager in disputing about their king, than to engage in battle under Amasa." This supplied a solemn warning for Amasa, but in the pride of his heart he heeded it not.

"And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us" (v. 6). It had already been clearly demonstrated that Sheba was a man who possessed considerable influence over the men of Israel, and therefore David had good reason to fear that if he were allowed to mature his plans, the most serious trouble would be sure to follow. His order to Amasa shows that he was determined to frustrate the insurrectionists by nipping their plans while they were still in the bud, by sending a powerful force against them. Chafing at the delay occasioned by Amasa's lack of success in promptly collecting an army, David now gave orders to Abishai to take command of the regular troops, for he was determined to degrade Joab.

"And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri" (v. 7) This, we take it, defines "thy lord's servants" of the previous verse, namely, the seasoned warriors which Joab had formerly commanded. Though he had no intention of employing Joab himself on this occasion, David gladly availed himself of his trained men. Abishai was a proved and powerful officer, being in fact brother to Joab. All

seemed to be now set for the carrying out of David's design, but once more it was to be shown that though man proposes, it is God who disposes. Even great men, yea, kings themselves, are often thwarted in their plans, and discover they are subordinate to the will of Him who is the King of kings. How thankful we should be that this is so, that the Lord in His infinite wisdom ruleth over all.

"When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them" (v. 8). It seems this was the appointed meeting place for the concentrated forces of David. Amasa now arrived on the scene at the head of the men which Abishai had mustered, and promptly placed himself in command of the army. But brief indeed was the moment of his military glory, for no sooner did he reach the pinnacle of his ambition than he was brutally dashed therefrom, to lay weltering in his own blood. "Vain are earthly distinctions and preferments, which excite so much envy and enmity, without affording any additional security to man's uncertain life: may we then be ambitious that honour which cometh from God only" (Thomas Scott).—A.W.P.

THE DIVINE COVENANTS.

6. *The Davidic.*

“And I will make an Everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David” (Isa. 55:3). “As we had much of Christ in the 53rd chapter and much of the Church of Christ in the 54th, so in this chapter we have much of the covenant of grace made with us in Christ” (Matthew Henry). The chapter opens with a gracious invitation, for those who felt their need of them, to partake of spiritual blessings. The Prophet seems to personate the Apostles as they went forth in the name of the Lord calling His elect unto the marriage supper. Then he expostulates with those who were labouring for that which satisfied not, bidding them hearken unto God, and assuring them that He would then place Himself under covenant bonds and bestow upon them rich blessings.

The “sure mercies of David” were the things promised to the antitypical David in Psalm 89:28, 29, etc. That it is not the typical David or son of Jesse who is here intended is clear from various considerations. First, the natural David had died centuries before. Second, *this* David whose mercies are sure was yet to come when the Prophet wrote, as is plain from verses 4 and 5. Third, none but the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, answers to what is here predicated. Finally, all room for uncertainty is completely removed by the Apostle’s quotation of these very words in, “And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David” (Acts 13:34). Thus “the sure mercies” of the true David signified God would raise Him from the dead unto everlasting life.

These “sure mercies” are extended by Isaiah unto all the faithful as the blessings of the covenant, and therefore may be understood to denote all saving benefits bestowed on believers in this life or that to come. This need occasion no difficulty whatever. Those “mercies” were Christ’s by the Father’s promise and by His own purchase, and at His resurrection they became His in actual possession, being all laid up in Him (2 Cor. 1:20), and from Him we receive them (John 1:16; 16:14-16). The promises descend through Christ to those who believe, and thus are “sure” to all the seed (Rom. 4:16). It was the covenant which provided a firm foundation of mercy unto the Redeemer’s family, and none of its blessings can be recalled (Rom. 11:32).

Those “sure mercies” God swore to bestow upon the *spiritual* seed or family of David (2 Sam. 7:15, 16; Psa. 89:2, 29, 30), and they were made good in the appearing of Christ and the establishing of His kingdom on His resurrection, as Acts 13:34 so clearly shows, for His coming forth from the grave was the necessary step unto His assumption of sovereign power. God not only said “Behold, I have given Him for a Witness to the people,” but also a “Leader and Commander to the people” (Isa. 55:4). As the “Witness” Christ is seen in Revelation 1:5 and 3:14, and again in John 18 where He declared to Pilate “My kingdom is *not* of this world, else would My servants fight” (v. 36)—it is not based on the use of arms as was David’s, but on the force of Truth: see verse 37.

Christ became “Commander” at His resurrection (Matt. 28:20): as the Apostles expressly announced, “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a *Prince* and a *Saviour*” (Acts 5:31). It is the wielding of His royal sceptre which guarantees unto His people the good of all the promises God made unto Him—“the sure mercies of David.” “Behold, Thou (it is God speaking to the antitypical David, designated in verse 4 “Witness” and “Commander”) shalt (showing this was yet future in Isaiah’s time) call *a nation* whom Thou knowest not,” which is referred to in, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from

you, and given to *a nation* bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43)—the “holy nation” of 1 Peter 2:9. “And nations that knew not Thee shall run unto Thee” (Isa. 55:5) which manifestly has reference to the present calling of the Gentiles.

“I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even My Servant David: He shall feed them, and He shall be their Shepherd” (Ezek. 34:23). This is Jewish language with a Christian meaning. The reference here, as also in Psalm 89:3; Jeremiah 30:9; Hosea 3:5, is unto the antitypical David. “David is in the Prophets often put for Christ in whom all the promises made unto David are fulfilled” (Lowth). A threefold reason may be suggested why Christ is thus called David. First, because He is the Man after God’s own heart—His “Beloved” which is what “David” signifies. Second, because David, particularly in his kingship, so manifestly foreshadowed Him. Third, because Christ is the Root and Offspring of David, the One in whom David’s horn and throne is perpetuated forever.

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt. 1:1). These words are to be understood not only as an introduction to the Gospel of Matthew, but rather as the Divine summary of the whole of the New Testament. The Redeemer is here presented in His official and sacrificial characters: the true Solomon, the true Isaac. Inasmuch as the beloved Son of God willingly submitted to the altar, and being now risen from the dead, He is seated upon the throne. It was to Him as the Son of David that the poor Canaanitish woman appealed. Dispensationalists tell us she was not answered at first because she, being a Gentile, had no claim upon Him in *that* character—as though our compassionate Lord would be (as another has expressed it) “a stickler for ceremonial, for court etiquette”! The fact is that she evidenced a faith in the grace associated with that title which was sadly lacking in the Jews, for one of the things specially connected with Solomon was *his grace to the Gentiles*.

“Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shalt be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:31-33). First, let it be duly noted that this is recorded by Luke, the essentially *Gentile* Gospel. Second, herein it was expressly announced that Christ should reign “forever,” and not merely for a thousand years; and that of His kingdom “there should be no end,” instead of terminating at the close of “the millennium.” Third, the prophecy of verse 32 has already been fulfilled, and that of verse 33 is now in course of fulfillment. Christ is already upon the throne of David and is now reigning over the spiritual house of Jacob. Clear proof of this is furnished in Acts 2, unto which we now turn.

The argument used by Peter in his Pentecostal sermon is easily followed, and its conclusions are decisive. The central purpose of that sermon was to furnish proof that Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews had wickedly crucified, was the promised Messiah and Saviour. We cannot now analyze the whole of Peter’s inspired address, but confine ourselves to that portion which is pertinent to our present subject. In Acts 2:24 declaration is made that God had loosed Jesus from the pains of death. Then follows a quotation from Psalm 16. Upon that quotation the Apostle made some comments. First, David was not there referring to himself (v. 29). Second, it was a Messianic prediction, for God having made known that His Seed should sit upon his throne, David wrote his Psalms accordingly (i.e. with an eye to the Messiah), and therefore Psalm 16 must be understood as referring to

Christ Himself (Acts 2:30-31); the Apostles themselves being eye-witnesses of the fact that God *had* raised up Christ (v. 32).

In Acts 2:33-36 the Apostle made application of his discourse. First, he showed that what he had just set forth explained the wondrous effusion of Holy Spirit in the extraordinary gifts He had bestowed upon the Twelve. In verse 12 the people had asked “What meaneth this?”—the Apostles—speaking in tongues. Peter answers, This Jesus having been exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and having received the promised Spirit from the Father, had now “shed forth” that which they both saw and heard (v. 33). Second, this was self-evident, for David had not ascended into Heaven, but his Son and Lord had, as he himself foretold in Psalm 110:1 (vv. 34, 35). Third, therefore this proved what we are all bound to believe, namely, that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah and Saviour of sinners, for God has made Him “both Lord and Christ” (v. 36).

It is with the 30th verse of Acts 2 we are here more especially concerned: that God swore to David, Christ should sit on *his* throne. Let us consider the negative side first: there is *not* a hint or a word in Peter’s comments that Christ would ascend David’s throne in the *future*, and when in verse 34 he quoted Psalm 110:1 in fulfillment of Christ’s ascension—“The LORD said unto my Lord, sit Thou at My right hand”—he did *not* add “until Thou assume the throne of David,” but “until I make Thy foes Thy footstool”! Coming now to the positive side, we have seen that the scope of the Apostle’s argument was to show that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah, and that He was risen from the dead, had ascended to Heaven, and we now add, was seated upon David’s throne.

That which clinches the last-made statement is the “therefore” of verse 36. The Apostle there draws a conclusion, and unless his logic was faulty (which it would be blasphemy to affirm) then it *must cohere* with his premise, namely, Christ’s *present* possession of the throne of David in fulfillment of the oath God had sworn to the Patriarch. For the purpose of clarity we paraphrase: the premise was that Christ should sit on David’s throne (v. 30): the conclusion is that God has made Jesus “both Lord and Christ” (v. 36). None but those whose eyes are closed by prejudice can fail to see that in *such a connection* being “made Lord and Christ” can mean nothing else than that He is now seated on David’s throne. Peter’s hearers could come to no other possible conclusion than that God’s promise to the Patriarch re the occupancy of his throne had now received its fulfillment.

Nor does the above passage stand alone. If the reader will carefully consult Acts 4:26, 27 it will be found that the Apostles were addressing God, and that they quoted the opening verses of Psalm 2, which spoke of those who were in governmental authority combining together against Jehovah and His Christ, which the Apostles (by inspiration) applied to what had recently been done to the Redeemer (Acts 4:27). They referred to the Saviour thus, “For of a truth against Thy holy Child (or “Servant”) Jesus, whom Thou hast *anointed*” (v. 27). Now in *such a connection* the mention of Jesus as the One whom God had “anointed” could only mean what is more fully expressed in Psalm 2, My anointed *King*—“yet have I anointed (see margin) My King upon My holy hill of Zion” (Psa. 2:6)—otherwise the application of Psalm 2 unto the crucifixion had been fitted only to mislead.

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen” (Amos 9:11). This is another old covenant promise possessing a new covenant significance, as will appear by

the inspired interpretation of it in Acts 15. Let us first notice its time-mark: "in that day." The immediate context explains this: it was to be the day when "the sinful kingdom" of Israel would be destroyed by God "from off the face of the earth" (v. 8. saying that He would not utterly destroy the house of Jacob—the godly remnant), when He would "sift the house of Israel among all nations" (v. 9), when "all the sinners of His people should die by the sword" (v. 10). What follows in verses 11 and 12 predicted the establishment of *Messiah's* kingdom. Second, let us now observe its citation in Acts 15.

In verses 7-11 Peter spoke of the grace of God having been extended to the Gentiles, and in verse 12 Paul and Barnabas bore witness to the same fact. Then in verses 13-21 James *confirmed* what they said by a reference to the Old Testament "And to this (i.e., the saving of a people from the Gentiles and adding them to the saved of Israel: see vv. 8, 9, 11) agree the word of the prophets" (Acts 15:15). Yes, for the promised kingdom of the Messiah, in the Old Testament, was *not* placed in opposition to the Theocracy, but as a continuation and enlargement of it: see 2 Samuel 7:12, and Isaiah 9:6 where it was said that the Prince of Peace should sit on David's throne and prolong his kingdom forever; while in Genesis 49:10 it was announced that the Redeemer should spring from Judah and be the Enlarger of his dominion.

Then James quoted Amos: "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the LORD, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called" (Acts 15:16-17). The "tabernacle of David" was but another name for God's earthly kingdom (note how in 1 Kings 2:12 we read, "Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father," while in 1 Chron. 29:23 it is said, "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD"), for during the last thousand years of Old Testament history *His* kingdom on earth was inseparably identified with *David's* throne. But now the shadow has been displaced by the substance, and it is the "tabernacle" of the antitypical David. The Church militant is aptly designated a "tabernacle" in allusion to the Tabernacle in the wilderness, for it is (as that was) God's habitation, the place where the Divine testimony is preserved, and where He is worshipped.

The setting up of the kingdom of Christ was designated a raising of the fallen tabernacle of David, first, because Christ Himself was the Seed of David, the One through whom the promises of 2 Samuel 7 were to be made good. Second, because He is the antitypical and true David: as the natural David restored the theocracy by delivering it from its enemies (the Philistines, etc.), and established it on a firm and successful basis, so Christ delivers the kingdom of God from its enemies and establishes it on a sure and abiding foundation. Third, because Christ's kingdom and Church is the continuance and consummation of the Old Testament Theocracy—New Testament saints are *added* to the Old: Ephesians 2:11-15; 3:6; Hebrews 11:40. Thus the prophecy of Amos received its fulfillment, first, in the raising up of Christ (at His incarnation) out of the ruins of Judah's royal house. Second, when (at His ascension) God gave unto Christ the antitypical throne of David—the Mediatorial throne. Third, when (under the preaching of the Gospel) the kingdom of Christ was, and is, greatly enlarged by the calling of the Gentiles. Thus Acts 15:14-17 furnishes a sure key to the interpretation of Old Testament prophecy, showing us it is to be understood in its spiritual and mystical sense.

"And again Isaiah saith, There shall be the Root of Jesse, and He that ariseth (Greek in the present tense) to rule (reign) over the Gentiles: on Him shall the Gentiles hope"

(Rom. 15:12 R. V.). This was quoted here by the Apostle for the express purpose of demonstrating that the true David was the Saviour of and King over the Gentiles—if the Davidic reign or kingdom of Christ were yet future, this quotation would be quite irrelevant and no proof at all. In Romans 15:7 the Apostle had exhorted unto *unity* between the Hebrew Gentile saints at Rome. In verses 8 and 9 he declared that Christ became incarnate in order to unite both believing Jews and Gentiles into one Body. Then in verses 9-12 he quotes four Old Testament passages in proof—multiplying texts because this was a point on which the Jews were so prejudiced.

“These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that *hath* the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth” (Rev. 3:7). This need not detain us long, for the meaning of these words is obvious. In Scripture the “key” is the well-known symbol of authority, and the key of *David* signifies that Christ is vested with *royal* dignity and power. To one of those who foreshadowed Christ, God said, “I will commit thy *government* into his hand, and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the *key* of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open” (Isa. 22:21, 22). Note well, dear reader, that Revelation 3:7 was spoken by Christ to a Christian church, and not to the Jews! The use of the present tense utterly repudiates the ideas of those who insist that Christ’s entering upon His Davidic or royal rights is yet future.

“Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book” (Rev. 5:5). We cannot now enter into a detailed examination of the blessed scene presented in Revelation 5, but must content ourselves with the briefest possible summary. First, we take it that the sealed book is the title-deeds to the earth, lost by the first Adam—cf. Jeremiah 36:6-15. Second, Christ as the Lion of Judah “prevailed” to open it: He secured the right to do so by His conquering of sin, Satan, and death. Third, it is as the “Lamb” He takes the book (vv. 6, 7), for as such He redeemed the purchased possession. Fourth, He is here seen “in the midst of the throne,” showing He is now endowed with royal authority. There is no hint in the chapter that its contents respect the future, and therefore we regard the vision as a portrayal of God’s placing His King upon the hill (mountain) of His holiness, and giving to Him the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Christ’s throne is a heavenly and spiritual one: “Even so might *grace reign* through righteousness unto eternal life *by* Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:21).—A.W.P.

CONDITIONS IN THE PAST.

When the superiority and supremacy of the bishop of Rome was acknowledged by the other bishops (at the beginning of the 7th century), the papacy rapidly developed and dominated the whole of Christendom. Romanism was a strange combination of Judaism and Paganism, thinly veiled by a Christian nomenclature. Idolatrous in doctrine, corrupt in practice, withholding from the people the pure Word of God, and making its appeal to the lusts of the flesh, millions of adherents were secured, but at the cost of quenching the Spirit. Most significant is it that men from within her own pale testified to Rome's duplicity and wickedness. We quote from one such witness in the 11th century.

“Woe to this generation which hath the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy. If indeed that should be called hypocrisy, which now through its prevalence cannot be hid, and through its impudence seeks not to be hid. At present, rottenness and corruption affects the whole body of the Church, and the wider it spreads, the more desperate; and the more inwardly it spreads the more dangerous; for if an *heretic*, an open enemy, should rise up, he would be cast out; if a violent enemy, she (i.e., the Church), would perhaps conceal herself from him. But now, whom shall the Church cast out? or whom shall she hide herself from? All are friends, and all are enemies; all are in mutual connection as relations, yet in mutual contests as adversaries; all are fellow-members of one family, yet none are promoters of peace; all are neighbours, yet all are seekers of their own things; by profession servants of Christ, in reality they serve Antichrist; they make an honourable figure by the good things they have received from the Lord, while, at the same time, they give no honour to the Lord” (Bernard, sermon 33 on Canticles).

After the rise and domination of Romanism there followed what has been aptly termed “the Dark Ages,” for that Word of God which is to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, was publicly put out. Nevertheless, from the 7th to the 14th centuries God by no means left Himself without witnesses on earth. Claude in Italy and Gootschalk (old German for “the servant of God”) in Saxony preached the doctrine of grace in the 9th century. In the 11th century the Waldenses were active in evangelism all through the Alps. In England such men as Bede, King Alfred the Good, Anselm and Bradwardine (archbishops of Canterbury) in the 11th and 14th centuries and Wycliffe are well-known names. Peter Lombard and John Husse in Bohemia were mighty instruments in the hands of God long before the days of Luther and Calvin.

It is unnecessary for us to write about the grand Reformation of the 16th century, but it will be pertinent to give one brief quotation to show the almost incredible vileness of human nature as evidenced in the awful persecution to which the people of God were then subjected. Foxe's book of Martyrs chronicles the murderous deeds of Rome in this country, but it is not so well-known what wholesale butchery took place in France. In his “History of Redemption,” Jonathan Edwards (a most cautious writer) says, “It is reckoned that about this time (1572) within thirty years there were martyred in France for the Protestant religion, 39 Princes, 148 Counts, 2,346 Barons, 147,518 Gentlemen, and 760,000 of the common people.” Were such a colossal tragedy to occur today how “students of prophecy” would make capital out of it! We spare our readers' feelings by refraining from a detailed account of the barbarous methods employed in torture—far worse than any we have read that the Bolsheviks use.

What we are now more concerned with is to observe *the ebb* of the Reformation tide and the rapid decay of piety which soon followed. “Go through all places, it shall be

found that scarce one of a thousand in his dealings makes conscience of a lie: a great part of men get their wealth by fraud and oppression, and all kinds of unjust and unmerciful dealings . . . This doth appear to be true, by the practice and behaviour of men on the Lord's day: if the number of those which come to hear God's Word were compared with those which run about their worldly wealth and pleasure, I fear me the better sort would be found to be a little handful to a large heap, or as a drop to the ocean in respect of the other . . . Like to him (Herod) are many in these days, which gladly desire to hear the Gospel of Christ preached, only because they would hear speech of some strange things, laying aside all care and conscience to obey that which they hear. Yea, many in England delight to read the strange histories of the Bible, and therefore can rehearse the most part of it, yet come to the *practice* of it, the same persons are commonly found as bad in life and conversation, or rather *worse* than others . . . A rare thing it is to find the virtue of fidelity in the world now a-days: who is he that makes conscience of a lie? and is not truth banished out of our coasts?" (W. Perkins, 1595, Vol. 1, pp. 129, 154, 201, 275).

"Our lives shame us: open and manifest iniquities proclaim us unthankful. Fraud in our homes, drunkenness in our streets, oppression in our fields, adulteries in corners, corruption on benches . . . Irreligious and profane: other times have been notable for this, *ours* is notorious; the lusts of the flesh, if ever, are now manifest. Drunkenness reels in the streets, gluttony desires not to be housed. Bribery opens his hand to receive in the very courts. Robbery and murder swagger in the highways. Whoredom begins to neglect curtains, and grows proud of its impudence" (Thomas Adams, 1605, Vol. 1, pp. 131, 145).

"In 1623 Charles the First revived his father's edict for allowing sports and recreations on Sunday to such as attended public worship, and he ordered his proclamation for that purpose to be read by the clergy after Divine service. Those who were puritanically affected refused obedience, and were suspended or deprived. Such encouragement and protection which the king and the bishops gave to wakes, church-ales, bride-ales, and other church festivals of the common people, were objects of scorn to the Puritan" (Hume the historian). There are few indeed today who have any conception of the fearful profligacy of that monarch's court, the open immoralities which obtained in high places, the corruption of the law-courts, and the wickedness which abounded among the common people.

The servants of God who faithfully reprov'd and rebuked were no more popular then than they are now. Those who have uncompromisingly denounced wickedness, bade their hearers or readers repent of it, and threatened the everlasting wrath of God if they did not, have ever been unwelcome—thorns in the side of all who hate to have their consciences searched. "If a preacher reprov's sin, he is thought to do it out of harshness or to be too bitter and uncharitable, and they say he should preach God's love and mercy. Reprehension of sin is most condemned and least esteemed. But let a preacher preach dark mysteries and curious inventions, or odd conceits, and he will be widely welcomed" (Henry Smith, 1590, Vol. 2, p. 213).

In his comments upon "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness" (James 4:9), Thomas Manton (1660) said, "Frothy spirits love their pleasure and ease: 'The fool's heart is in the House of mirth' (Eccl. 7:4). A loose, garish spirit doth not love to converse with mournful objects, or to be pressed to mourning duties. It showeth how instant and earnest we should be in pressing such duties as these: 'weep,' 'mourn,' 'be afflicted.' It is one of the fancies now in

fashion that men would be altogether honeyed and oiled with grace; the wholesome severities of religion are distasteful. Some that would be taken for Christians of the highest form, are altogether prejudiced against such a doctrine as this is, and think we are *legal* when we press humiliation. How may the poor ministers of the Gospel go to God, and say as Moses did, 'The children of Israel have not hearkened unto me, how then shall Pharaoh hear me?' Lord, the professors will not brook such doctrine as this is, how shall we hope to prevail with the poor, blind, carnal world? Certainly it is very sad that that which was wont to be a badge of profaneness, men should now adopt it into their religion. I mean, *scoffing* at doctrines of *repentance* and humiliation" (Vol. 14, p. 374).

How shocked and saddened we are by what we now behold in the rising generation: their dislike of work, their mad craze for pleasure, their chaffing at all restraint. Yet the profligacy of youth and the present-day immodesty of the female sex, is *no new thing*. No, not even the modern craze of women bobbing their hair. Writing in 1620, Thomas Fuller, the Church Historian, said, "We see so many women so strangely disguised with fantastic fashions, yea, so many of them affecting man-like clothes and *shorn hair*, it is hard to discern the sex of a woman through the attire of a man."

"I have often marveled at your youth, and said in my heart, What should be the reason that they should be so generally at this day debauched as they are? For they are now *profane to amazement*; and sometimes I have thought one thing, and sometimes another. At last I have thought of this: How if God, whose ways are past finding out, should suffer it to be so now, that He might make of some of them the more glorious saints hereafter? I know sin is of the Devil, but it cannot work in the world without permission; and if it happens to be as I have thought, it will not be the first time that the Lord hath caught Satan in his own design. For my part, I believe the time is at hand that we shall see better saints in the world than have been seen for many a day. And this *vileness*, that at present does so much *swallow up our youth*, is one cause of my thinking so" (John Bunyan, about 1655, out of "The Jerusalem Sinner Saved").

In the account of her experiences, Mrs. Brine, wife of John Brine, minister at Cripplegate, wrote, "Thus I went on near fifteen years of age, about which time (A.D. 1700) it pleased God to awaken me, and bring me to consider what state I was in. One night, being in my usual manner at play with my companions, and hearing them swear at a sad rate, taking the Lord's name in vain in *almost every sentence* they spoke; this I thought was not right in them, though I myself had much ado to keep from bad expressions" (from the collected writings of J. Brine, Vol. 1, p. 544). "Were children and youth ever more disposed to despise and abuse pious parental instruction, than at this day?" (about 1760). "Where is pious, parental instruction and faithfulness more despised and abused than in this place? Is there scarcely a pious child or youth to be found, even in religious families?" (Sermons of Nathaniel Emmons, Vol. 2, p. 122, Franklin, Mass., U.S.A.).

"Some of old thought that because they could cry, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,' that therefore they were delivered, or had dispensation to do the abominations which they committed. For who (say they) have a right to the creatures, if not Christians, if not church members? and from this conclusion, let go the reins of their inordinate affections after pride, gluttony, pampering themselves without fear, daubing themselves with the lust-provoking fashions of the times; to walk with stretched out necks, naked breasts, frizzled foretops, wanton gestures, in gorgeous apparel" (John Bunyan from the "Barren Fig Tree"). "The Apostle biddeth the women to cover their heads because of the

angels” (1 Cor. 11:10), their fashion being to come into the congregation with loose disheveled locks; he mindeth them of the presence of the angels. We may use a like argument to women to cover their naked breasts, now their immodesty is grown so impudent as to out-face the ordinances of God” (Manton, Vol. 5, p. 250).

Today the godly are grieved by the lack of reality and genuineness in so many bearing the name of Christ—bemoaning the fact that so very few who claim to believe His Gospel give evidence in their daily lives that they have taken His yoke upon them. But *the abounding of empty professors is no new thing*, as the following quotations will show. “In this respect may these also be called ‘the outward court,’ who with impudence do arrogate to themselves the name of the Church, and under that name do in some places cast out the true worshippers; and who, by reason of their number—the *best* congregations of the first Reformation consisting of many more apparently bad than good—and many of those churches having none but men *unregenerate*” (Thomas Goodwin, about 1680, Vol. 3, p. 126).

“This is that apostasy which the Christian world groans under at this day (about 1660), and which, as is it is to be feared, will bring the judgments of God upon it. The very profession of piety is much lost, yea, much derided amongst many. . . Duties of holiness, strictness of conversation, communication unto edification are not only neglected, but *scorned*. It is in many places a lost labour to seek for Christianity among Christians; and the degeneracy seems to be *increasing* every day” (John Owen, Vol. 17, p. 475). “How few among the many, yea, among the swarms of professors, have heart to make conscience of walking before God in this world, and to study His glory among the children of men! How few, I say, have His name lying nearer their hearts than their own carnal concerns! Nay, do not many make His Word, His name, and His ways, a stalking-horse to their own worldly advantages? God calls for faith, good conscience, moderation, self-denial, humility, heavenly-mindedness, love to saints, and to enemies, and for conformity in heart and life to His will: but *where is it?*” (John Bunyan from “The Strait Gate”).

“In those who enjoy the Gospel, profess the embracement of it, and yet continue *unfruitful*, none of all this appears. The world may make use of such barren souls as arguments that the Gospel is no such excellent doctrine, has no such Divine power or efficacy, produces no such desirable effects. For why? No such thing is visible in the temper of *multitudes who profess* that they believe it. They are but like other men, and exceed not many who were *never* acquainted with the Gospel: no more humble, no more holy, no more self-denying, no more public-spirited, no more heavenly-minded, no more mortified as to many lusts and passions, no more crucified to the world as to the riches, delights, and splendour of it, no more candid and sincere in dealings, no more merciful, no more active to do good in the world, no more fruitful in good works; and where is then the singular excellency and power of the Gospel? The light of nature has been effectual in some to restrain them from those enormities, from which many that enjoy the Gospel abstain not. O what dishonourable reflections doth this cast upon the glorious Gospel of Christ” (David Clarkson, 1680, Vol. 2, p. 397).

“We seem to grow weary of the name of Christ; and in the end of time mockers and atheistical spirits swarm everywhere; and the holy, meek, sober, humble, heavenly spirit seemeth to be *banished* out of the Christian world, but that a few broken-hearted souls keep it up. Partialities and sects are countenanced, while unquestionable duties are little

regarded, except by those few who have the courage to live in a counter-motion to the practices of a *loose age*, by their holiness and serious regard to the hopes of another world” (Thomas Manton, Vol. 15, p. 309). “Our times may very justly be esteemed ‘perilous’—difficult, troublesome, and dangerous; for many, who are of the religious profession, are manifestly under the influence of such vices as the Apostle in that place (2 Tim. 3) enumerates. Some are captivated by one, and others by other vices . . . In my opinion, they who make pretences to religion in words but in their behaviour are any way irregular, are the most dangerous companions a good man can intimately converse with—because he may be tempted to think that there is not much evil in this or that irregular practice through a charitable judgment he forms of the persons addicted to those practices . . .

“We have *lost* the chief glory of the Reformation, and the very life and soul of popery greatly flourishes amongst us, to our great scandal and the satisfaction of the Romanists. This is the dreadful condition of a multitude of those who pass under the denomination of Protestant Dissenters; and what will be the issue of these things, the Lord only knows . . . But *few* are careful to keep up *family worship*. There is reason to fear that it is very rarely practiced by many who would be thought to be Christians. The late hours of our clubs, which call for our attendance almost every evening, will not allow us time to give God thanks for the mercies of the day, to confess our sins to Him, and entreat His protection in the night in the presence of our children and servants. If worship is performed in the family at all, it is on the evening of the Lord’s Day, when alehouses cannot enjoy our company with any decency. This was not always the case; Professors formerly did not behave themselves in this manner; we are *much degenerated* in our conduct” (John Brine, about 1740, Vol. 1, pp. 306, 7, 14, 27).

“The Apostle Paul complained of professors who walked not according to the Gospel. There has been occasion for the same complaint ever since; *but never more than the present*. Many walk at this day who make some profession of Christ and yet never attain to any steadfastness, but are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine; and at last come to nothing. Others, pretending to be better settled, attain to some form of godliness, but are without the life and power of it; they appear to have some notions about the way of righteousness, but not being taught them of God, nor ever brought under the mighty influence of them their walk is very uneven, and generally in the end brings great scandal upon the name and cause of Christ. We have also many at this day who set out in the ways of religion who never felt the plague of their own hearts; these are commonly very confident and presumptuous; they make a shining profession and go on with great parade until they be tried, and then, in the time of temptation, they fall away” (William Romaine, about 1770, “The Walk of Faith,” p. 4).

“With all the preaching and printing ‘tis but few indeed who know Christ and the power of His resurrection. I have been, you are, tried to the heart, to see how few know Him and have their minds enlightened by the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. Yet so it is, but here and there a person is really taken with the Lord” (S.E. Pierce’s Letters, 1796). “There are but few who have their minds enlightened so as to see the worth and beauty of the Lord Jesus. You may very easily discern it in conversation with the generality of professors: to get money is more with very many than to converse with Christ” (Ibid. 1808). “In some places I have found those who are alive to these great things, but the state of the Church of Christ is very low: truth very little known, less beloved and re-

ceived than is commonly apprehended; anything and everything seems to go down except the truth as it is in Jesus. It is a great honour to live in *such* times as the present, *when sin is rampant*, and errors and heresies of all sorts abound—because the grace of God in preserving the feet of His saints, in keeping them alive in Christ, and delivering them from making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, is the more clearly evidenced” (Ibid. 1820).—A.W.P.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

2. *Its Grand Original.*

So little understood is this blessed aspect of our subject, and so important do we deem it, that some further remarks thereon seem called for. That Christ is the Firstborn or Head of the election of grace was prefigured at the beginning of God's works. In fact, the creation of this world and the formation of the first man were on purpose to make *Christ* known. As we are told in Romans 5:14, "who is the figure of Him that was to come." In his creation, formation, and constitution as the federal head of our race, Adam was a remarkable type of Christ as God's Elect. In amplifying this statement it will be necessary to go over some of the same ground that we covered in our articles upon Mystical Union some years ago, but we trust our older readers will bear with us if we here repeat a number of the things to which we then called attention.

There is a certain class of people—despising all doctrine, and particularly disliking the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty—who often exhort us to "preach Christ," but we have long observed that *they* never preach Christ in *His highest* official character, as the Covenant-Head of God's people—that they never say one word about Him as God's "Elect, in whom His soul delighteth"! Preaching Christ is a far more comprehensive task than many suppose, nor can it be done intelligently by any man until he begins at the beginning and shows that the Man Christ Jesus was eternally *predestinated* unto union with the second Person of the Godhead. "I have exalted One chosen out of the people" (Psa. 89:19): that exaltation commenced with the elevation of Christ's humanity to personal union with the eternal Word—unique honour!

The very words "chosen in Christ" necessarily imply that He was chosen *first*, as the soil in which we were set. When God chose Christ it was not as a single or private person, but as a public person, as Head of His Body, we being chosen in Him as the members thereof. Thus, inasmuch as we were then given a representative subsistence before God, God could make a covenant with Christ on our behalf. That He *did* so enter into an eternal compact with Christ in this character as Head of the election of grace is clear from, "I have made a covenant with *My Chosen*, I have sworn unto David My Servant" (Psa. 89:3)—adumbrated in the covenant He made in time with him who was typically "the man after His own heart," for David was as truly shadowing forth Christ when God made a covenant with him as Joseph was when he supplied food to his needy brethren, or as Moses was when he led forth the Hebrews out of the house of bondage.

Let those, then, who desire to preach Christ, see to it that they give Him the pre-eminence in *all* things—election not excepted! Let them learn to give unto Jesus of Nazareth His full honour, that which the Father Himself has given to Him. It is a superlative honour that Christ is the Channel through which all the grace and glory we have, or shall have, flows to us, and that He was set up as such from the beginning. As Romans 8:29 so plainly teaches, it was in connection with *election* that God appointed His own beloved Son to be "the Firstborn among many brethren." Christ being appointed as the Masterpiece of Divine wisdom, the grand Prototype, and we ordained to be so many little copies and models of Him. Christ is the first and last of all God's thoughts, counsels, and ways.

The universe is but the theatre and this world the principal stage on which the Lord God thinks fit to act out some of His deepest designs. His creating of Adam was a shadow to point to a better Adam, who was to have an universal headship over all the

creatures of God, and whose glories were to shine forth visibly in and through every part of the creation. When the world was created and furnished, man was brought forth. But before his formation we read of that renowned consultation of the Eternal Three: "And God said, Let *Us* make man in Our Image" (Gen. 1:26). This respected *Christ*, the God-man, who was from all eternity the Object and Subject of all the counsels of the Trinity. Adam, created and made after God's Image; which consisted of righteousness and true holiness, was the type, for Christ is par excellent, "*the Image* of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15).

The formation of Adam's body, by God's immediate hand, out of the dust of the ground, was a figure or shadow of the assumption of human nature by the Son of God, whose humanity was formed immediately by the Holy Spirit: as Adam's body was produced from the virgin earth, so Christ's human nature was produced from the Virgin's womb. Again—that union of soul and body in Adam was a type to express that most profound and greatest of all mysteries, the hypostatical union of our nature in the Person of Christ: as it is justly expressed in what is commonly called the Athanasian Creed, "As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ." Again—as Adam's person comprised the perfections of all creatures, and was suited to take in all the comforts and pleasures they could afford and impart, so the glory of Christ's humanity excels all creatures, even the angels themselves. The more attentively we consider the person and position of the first Adam, the better may we discern how fully and fittingly he was a figure of the last Adam.

As Adam, placed in Paradise, had all the creatures of the earth brought before him and was made to have dominion over them all (Gen. 1:28), thus being crowned with mundane glory and honour, so in this too he accurately foreshadowed Christ. He has universal empire and dominion over all worlds, beings, and things, as may be seen from the 8th Psalm, which is applied to the Saviour in Hebrews 2:9, where sovereignty over all creatures is ascribed to Him, the earth and the heavens, sun, moon and stars magnifying Him. For though He was for a little while abased beneath the angels in His humiliation, yet now in His exaltation, He is crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. Moreover, though the God-man, the "Fellow of the Lord of Hosts," went through a season of degradation before His exaltation, nevertheless His glorification was foreordained before the world began: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath *appointed* unto Me" (Luke 22:29); "It is He which was *ordained* of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead" (Acts 10:42).

That Christ had both a precedence and presidency in election was also shadowed forth in this primo-primitive type, for we read, "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him" (Gen. 2:20). Yet mark the perfect accuracy of the type: when God created Adam, He created Eve *in* him (and in blessing Adam—Gen. 1:28—He blessed all mankind in him); so when God elected Christ, His people were chosen *in* Him (Eph. 1:4), and therefore they had a virtual being and subsistence in Him from all eternity, and consequently He was styled "the everlasting *Father*" (Isa. 9:6 and cf. Heb. 2:13); and consequently in blessing Christ, God blessed all the elect in Him and together with Him (Eph. 1:3).

Though Adam came forth "very good" from the hands of his Maker and was given dominion over all the creatures of the earth, yet we read, "but for Adam there was not

found a help meet for him.” Consequently, He provided a suitable partner for him, which being taken out of his side was then “buildded” (Gen. 2:22 margin), brought to, and welcomed by him. In like manner, though Christ was the Beginning of God’s way, set up from everlasting, and delighted in by the Father (Prov. 8:22, 23, 30), yet God did not think it good for Him to be alone, and therefore He decreed a Spouse for Him, who should share His communicable graces, honours, riches, and glories; a Spouse which, in due time, was the fruit of His pierced side, and brought to Him by the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit.

When Eve was formed by the Lord God and brought to Adam so as to effect a marriage union, there was shadowed forth that highest mystery of grace, of God the Father presenting His elect and giving them to Christ: “Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me” (John 17:6). Foreviewing them in the glass of the Divine decrees, the Mediator loved and delighted in them (Prov. 8:31), betrothed them unto Himself, taking the Church as thus presented by God unto Him in a deed of marriage settlement and covenant contract as the gift of the Father. As Adam *owned* the relation between Eve and himself saying, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (Gen. 2:23), so Christ became an everlasting Husband unto the Church. And as Adam and Eve were united *before* the Fall, so Christ and the Church were one in the mind of God *prior* to any foreviews of sin.

If, then, we are to “preach Christ” in His *highest* official glory, it must be plainly shown that He was not ordained in God’s eternal purpose for the Church, but the Church was ordained *for Him*. Notice how the Holy Spirit has emphasized this particular point in the type. “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is *the glory of the man*. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man” (1 Cor. 11:7-9). Yet as Adam was not complete without Eve, so neither is Christ without the Church: she is His “fullness” or “complement” (Eph. 1:23), yea, she is His crown of glory and royal diadem (Isa. 62:3)—the Church may be said to be necessary for Christ as an empty vessel for Him to supply with grace and glory. All His delights are in her, and He will be glorified in her and by her through all eternity, putting His glory upon her (John 17:22). “Come hither, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb’s wife . . . descending out of heaven, from God, *having the glory of God*” (Rev. 21:9-11).

In His character as God’s “Elect,” Christ was shadowed forth by others than Adam. Indeed it is striking to see what a number of those who were prominent types of Christ were made the subjects of a *real election* of God, by which they were designated to some special office. Concerning Moses we read “Therefore He said that He would destroy them, had not Moses His *chosen* stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath” (Psa. 106:23). Of Aaron it is said “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but He that is *called* of God, as was Aaron” (Heb. 5:4). Of the priests of Israel it is recorded, “The sons of Levi shall come near, for them the Lord thy God hath *chosen* to minister unto Him and to bless in the name of the Lord” (Deut. 21:5). Regarding David and the tribe from which he came, it is written. “He *refused* the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim; but *chose* the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which He loved . . . He *chose* David also His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds” (Psa. 78:67, 68, 70). Each of these cases adumbrated the grand truth that the man Christ Jesus was chosen by God to the highest degree of glory and blessedness of all His creatures.

“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life” (Rev. 21:27). This expression “The Book of Life” is doubtless a figurative one, for the Holy Spirit delights to represent spiritual, heavenly, and eternal things—as well as the blessing and benefits of them—under a variety of images and metaphors, that our minds may the more readily understand and our hearts feel the reality of them, and thus we be made more capable of receiving them. Yet this we are to know: the similitude thus made use of to represent them to our spiritual view are but shadows, yet what is shadowed forth by them has *real* being and substance.

The sun in the firmament is an instituted emblem in nature of Christ—He being that to the spiritual world which the former is to the natural—yet the former is but the shadow, and Christ is the real substance, hence He is styled “the Sun of righteousness.” So when Christ is compared to the light, He is the “*true* Light” (John 1:9). When compared to a vine, He is the “*true* Vine” (John 15:1); when to bread, He is “the true Bread,” the Bread of life, that Bread of God which came down from Heaven (John 6:31). Let this principle, then, be duly kept in mind by us as we come across the many metaphors which are applied to the Redeemer in the Scriptures. So here in Revelation 21:27 while allowing that “the Book of Life” is a figurative expression, we are far from granting that there is not in Heaven that which is figured by it, nay, the very reality itself.

This expression “the Book of Life” has its roots in Isaiah 4:3, wherein God refers to His chosen remnant as “every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem,” and it is this which explains the meaning of all the later references thereto. God’s eternal act of *election* is spoken of as writing the names of His chosen ones in the Book of Life, and the following things are suggested by this figure. First, the exact knowledge which God has of all the elect, His particular remembrance of them, His love for and delight in them. Second, that His eternal election is one of particular persons whose *names* are definitely recorded by Him. Third, to show they are absolutely safe and secure, for *God* having written their names in the Book of Life, they shall never be blotted out (Rev. 3:5). When the seventy returned from their missionary journey, elated because the very demons were subject to them, Christ said, “But rather rejoice because your names are *written in Heaven*” (Luke 10:20 and cf. Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23), which shows that God’s election to eternal life is of particular persons—by name—and therefore is sure and immutable.

Let us now particularly observe that this Election-register is designated “the *Lamb’s* Book of Life,” and this for at least two reasons. First, because the Lamb’s name heads it, His being the *first* one written therein, for He must have the pre-eminence; after which follows the enrollment of the particular names of all His people—note how *His* name is the first one recorded in the New Testament: Matthew 1:1! Second, because Christ is the Root and His elect are branches, so that they receive their *life from Him* as they are in Him and supported by Him. It is written, “When Christ, *our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory” (Col. 3:4). Christ is our life because He is the very “Prince of Life” (Acts 3:15). Thus, the Divine register of election in which are enrolled all the names of Christ’s members, is aptly termed “the Lamb’s Book of Life,” for they are entirely dependent upon Him for life.

But it is in connection with the first reason that we would offer a further remark. It is called the Lamb’s Book of Life because His is the first name in it. This is no arbitrary assertion of ours, but one that is clearly warranted by the Bible. “Lo I come, in the vol-

ume of the book it is written of Me” (Heb. 10:7). The Speaker here is the Lord Jesus and, as is so often the case (such is the fullness of His words), there is a *double* reference in it: first to the archives of God’s eternal counsels, the scroll of His decrees; second, to the Holy Scriptures, which are a partial transcript of them. In keeping with this twofold reference is the *double* meaning of the word “volume.” In Psalm 40:7 “volume” is unquestionably the signification of the Hebrew word there used; but in Hebrews 10:7 the Greek word most certainly ought to be rendered “head”—“kephale” occurs seventy-six times in the New Testament, and it is *always* rendered “head” except here. Thus, properly translated, Hebrews 10:7 reads “at *the head* of the book it is written of Me.”

Here, then, is the proof of our assertion. The Book of Life—the Divine register of election—is termed “the Lamb’s Book of Life” because *His* name is the first one written therein, and He, who had Himself scanned that roll, said, as He entered this world, “at the *head of* the Book it is written of Me.” A further reference to this Book was made by Christ in, “In Thy Book all My members were written” (Psa. 139:16). The Psalmist was referring to his natural body, first as formed in the womb (v. 15), and then as being the subject of the Divine decrees (v. 16). But the deeper reference is to Christ, speaking, as the antitypical David, of the members of His mystical Body. “The substance of the Church, whereof it was to be formed, was under the eyes of God, as proposed in the decree of election” (John Owen).

Should an exercised reader be asking, How may I now be assured that my name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life? We answer, very briefly. First, by God’s having taught you to see and brought you to feel your inward corruption, your personal vileness, your awful guilt, your dire *need of* the sacrifice of the Lamb. Second, by causing you to make Christ of first importance in your thoughts and estimation, perceiving that He alone can save you. Third, by bringing you to believe in Him, rest your whole soul upon Him, desiring to be found in Him, not having your own righteousness, but His. Fourth, by making Him infinitely precious to you, so that He is all your desire. Fifth, by working in you a determination to please and glorify Him.—A.W.P.

SATAN'S ACCUSATIONS.

“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died” etc. (Rom. 8:33-34). Satan is the blackest enemy, and sin is the worst thing he can allege against me, or my soul is or can be subject unto; for Hell is not so evil as sin. Inasmuch as Hell is of God’s making, but sin only of mine. Hell is made against me, but sin is committed against God. Now I know Christ came to destroy the works, and to answer the arguments and reasonings of the Devil. Thou canst not stand before God, saith Satan, for thou art a grievous sinner, and He is a devouring fire. But faith can answer—Christ is able both to cover and to cure my sin, to make it vanish as a mist, and to put it as far out of sight as the east is from the west—but thou hast nothing to do with Christ: thy sins are so many and so foul—but surely the blood of Christ is more acceptable to my soul, and much more honourable and precious in itself when it covereth a multitude of sins.

Paul was a persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious, the greatest of all sinners, and yet he obtained mercy, that he might be for a pattern of all longsuffering to those that should after believe in Christ. If I had as much sin upon my soul as thou hast, yet faith could unload them all upon Christ, and Christ could swallow them all up in His mercy. *But thou hast still nothing to do with Him, because thou continuest in thy sin.* But doth He not call me, beseech me, command me to come unto Him? If then I have a heart to answer His calls, He hath a hand to draw me to Himself, though all the powers of darkness or sins of the world stood between. *But thou obeyest not His call.* True indeed and pitiful it is, that I am so dull of hearing, and slow of following the voice of Christ. I lack much faith, but yet Lord, Thou dost not use to quench the smoking flax or to break the bruised reed. I believe, and Thou art able to help mine unbelief. I am resolved to venture my soul upon Thy mercy, to throw away all my own loading, and to cleave only to this plank of salvation.

But faith purifieth the heart, whereas thou art unclean still. True indeed, and miserable man I am therefore, that the motions of sin do work in my members. But yet Lord, I hate every false way; I delight in Thy Law with my inner man; I do that which I would not; but I consent to Thy Law that it is good; I desire to know Thy will, to fear Thy name, and to follow Thee whithersoever Thou leadest me. *But these are but the empty wishings and wouldings of an evil heart.* Lord, to me belongeth the shame of my failings, but to Thee belongeth the glory of Thy mercy and forgiveness. Too true it is that I do not all I should: but do I *allow* myself in anything that I should not? do I make use of mine infirmities to justify myself by them, shelter myself under them? Though I do not the things I should, yet I love them and delight in them; my heart and all the desires of my soul are towards them. I hate, abhor, and fight with myself for not doing them; I am ashamed of mine infirmities, as the blemishes of my profession; I am weary of them, and groan under them as the burden of my soul.

I have no lust, but I am willing to know it; and when I know it, crucify it. I hear of no further measure of grace, but I admire and hunger after it, and press on to it. I can take Christ and affliction, Christ and persecution together. I can take Christ without the world, I can take Christ without myself. I have no unjust gain, but I am ready to restore it. I have followed no sinful pleasure, but I am ready to abandon it; no evil company, but I mightily abhor it. I never swore an oath but I remember it with a bleeding conscience. I do not in any man see the image of Christ, but I love Him the more dearly for it and loathe myself

for being so much unlike Him. I know Satan—I shall speed never the worse with God, because I have him for mine enemy. I know I shall speed much the better, because I have myself for mine enemy. Certainly, he that can take Christ offered, that can in all points admit Him—as well to purify as to justify, as well to rule, as save—need not fear all the powers of darkness, nor all the armies of the foulest sins which Satan can charge his conscience with.—E. Reynolds, 1648.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

“I will love them freely” (Hosea 14:4). God’s love is a most free and bountiful love, having no motive or foundation but *within itself*, and His free love and grace is the ground of all His other mercies to His people. He showeth mercy on whom, and because He will show mercy (Rom. 9). From the beginning to the end of our salvation, nothing is primarily alive but free grace: freely loved (Deut. 7:7, 8), freely chosen (Eph. 1:5, 6), Christ the gift of free love (John 3:16), His obedience freely accepted for us and bestowed upon us (Rom. 5:15, 18). Justification free (Rom. 3:24), adoption free (Eph. 1:3), faith and repentance free (Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 2:25), good works free (Eph. 2:10), salvation free (Titus 3:5). Thus the foundation of all mercies is free love.

We do not first give to God, that He may render to us again. We turn, we pray, we covenant, we repent, we are holy, we are healed, only because He loves us; and He loves us not because He sees anything lovely or amiable in us, but because He will show the absoluteness of His own will, and the unsearchableness of His own counsel towards us. We are not originally denominated good by anything which flows from us, or is done by us, but by that which is bestowed upon us. Our goodness is not the motive of God’s love, but His love the fountain of our goodness. None indeed are healed and saved, but those that repent and return; but *repentance* is only a condition, and that freely *given* by God, disposing the subject for salvation; not a cause or procuring God to save us. It is necessary as the means to the end, not as the cause to the effect. That which looks least free of any other gift of God is His *rewarding* of obedience, but that is all and only of *mercy*. When we sow in righteousness, we must reap in mercy (Hosea 10:12), but when He renders according to our works, it is because of His mercy (Psa. 62:12).

This is the solid bottom and foundation of all Christian comforts, that God loves freely. Were His love to us to be measured by *our* fruitfulness or carriages towards Him, each hour and moment might stagger our hope; but He is therefore pleased to have it all of grace, “that the promise might be sure to all the seed” (Rom. 4:16). This comforts us against the guilt of the greatest sin, for love and free grace can pardon what it will. This comforts us against the accusations of Satan drawn from our own unworthiness. ‘Tis true, I am unworthy, and Satan cannot show me unto myself more vile, than without his accusations I will acknowledge myself to be; but that love that gave Christ freely, doth give in Him more worthiness than there is or can be unworthiness in me. This comforts us in the assured hope of glory, because when He loves He loves to the end (John 13), and nothing can separate from His love (Rom. 8:35-39). This comforts us in all afflictions, that the free love of God, who has predestinated us thereunto, will wisely order it unto the good of His servants (Rom. 8:28).

And what is our *duty* in response thereto? First, to labour for assurance of this free love. It will assist us in all duties; it will arm us against all temptations; it will answer all objections that can be made against the soul’s peace; it will sustain us in all conditions which the saddest of times can bring us into—“If God be for us, who can be against us”! Though thousands should be against us to *hate* us, yet none shall be against us to *hurt* us. Second, if God loves us freely we should love Him thankfully (1 John 4:19), and let love be the salt to season all our sacrifices. For as no benefit is saving unto us which does not proceed from love in Him, so no duty is pleasing unto Him which does not proceed from love in us (1 John 5:3). Third, *plead* this free love and grace in prayer. When we beg pardon, nothing is too great for love to forgive; when we beg grace and holiness, nothing is

too good for love to grant. There is not anyone thing which faith can manage unto more spiritual advantages, than the free grace and love of God in Christ.

Fourth, yet we must so magnify the love of God as that we turn not free grace into wantonness. There is a corrupt generation of men, who under pretence of exalting grace, do put disgrace upon the Law of God, by taking away the mandatory power thereof from those that are under grace—a doctrine most extremely contrary to the nature of this love. For God's love to us works love in us to *Him*—and our love to Him is this, that we *keep His commandments*. And to keep a commandment is to confirm and to subject my conscience with willingness and delight unto the rule and preceptive power of that commandment. Take away the obligation of the Law upon conscience as a rule of life, and you take away from our love to God the very matter about which the obedience thereof should be conversant. It is no diminution to love that a man is bound to obedience (nay it cannot be called "obedience" if I be not *bound* unto it) but herein the excellency of our love to God is commended, that whereas other men are so bound by the Law that they fret at it, swell against it, and would be glad to be exempted from it, they who love God and know His love to them delight to be thus bound, and find infinitely more sweetness in the strict rule of God's Holy Law than any that man can do in that presumptuous liberty, wherein he allows himself to shake off and break the cords of it.—Edward Reynolds (1648).