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The Lord's Prayer—Conclusion

“For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen” (Matt. 6:13). This model for Divine worshippers concludes with a doxology or ascription of praise to the One addressed, evidencing the *completeness* of the prayer. Christ here taught His disciples not only to ask for the things needful to them, but to ascribe unto God what is proper to Him. Thanksgiving and praise are an essential part of prayer, and particularly should this be borne in mind in all public worship, for the adoration of God is His express due. Surely if we ask God to bless us, the least we can do is to bless Him: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us” (Eph. 1:3)—it is the echo and reflex of His grace toward us. Devout praise, as the expression of elevated spiritual affections, is the proper language of the soul in communion with God.

The perfections of this prayer as a whole and the wondrous fullness of each clause and word in it are not perceived by a rapid and careless glance, but only become apparent by a reverent pondering. This doxology may be considered in at least a threefold way. First, as the expression of holy and joyful praise. Second, as a plea and argument to enforce the petitions. Third, as a confirmation and declaration of confidence that the prayer will be heard. A further word upon the first. Throughout the sacred Psalter, prayer and praise are conjoined. In the New Testament we are directed, “in everything by prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving* let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6). All the prayers of eminent saints recorded in the Bible are intermingled with the adoration of Him who inhabits the praises of Israel.

In this pattern prayer, God is made both the Alpha and the Omega. It opens by addressing Him as our Father in Heaven; it ends with lauding Him as the glorious King of the universe. The more His perfections are before our hearts, the more spiritual will be our worship and the more reverent and fervent our supplication. The more the soul be engaged with God Himself, the more spontaneous and sincere will be its praise. “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2). Ah, is it not our failure at this point which so often withholds blessing from us? “Let the people praise Thee, O God: let all the people praise Thee. *Then* shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us” (Psa. 67:5, 6). If we do not praise God *for* His mercies, can we expect Him to bless us *with* His mercies?!

“For Thine is the kingdom” by which is meant God’s right and authority over all things, by which He disposes of them according to His mere pleasure. God is supreme sovereign in creation, providence, and grace. He reigns over Heaven and earth, all creatures and things being under His full control. “And the power,” by which is meant His infinite sufficiency to execute His sovereign right and perform His will in Heaven and earth. Because He is the Almighty, He has the ability to do whatsoever He pleases. He never slumbers nor wearies; nothing is too hard for Him; none can withstand Him. All forces opposed to Him and the Church’s salvation, He can, and will, overthrow. “And the glory,” by which is meant His ineffable excellency: since He has absolute sovereignty over all and commensurate power to dispose of all, therefore is He all-glorious. God’s “glory” is the grand end of all His works and ways, and of it He is ever jealous. To Him belongs the exclusive glory of being the Answerer of prayer.

Let us next notice that the doxology is prefaced with “for,” which here has the force of *because*. “For Thine is the kingdom,” etc., is not only an acknowledgement of God’s perfections, but a most powerful *plea* as to why our petitions should be heard. It is the “for” of argumentation. Thou art able to grant these requests, *for* Thine is the kingdom, etc. While undoubtedly the doxology belongs to the prayer as a whole and is brought in to enforce all its seven petitions, yet it seems to us to have a special and more immediate reference to the last one: “deliver us from evil, *for* Thine is the kingdom,” etc. The number and power of our enemies is indeed great, rendered the more formidable because of the treachery of our wicked hearts; yet we are encouraged to implore Thy assistance against them, because all the attempts made by sin and Satan against us carry in them an invasion of Thy sovereignty and dominion over us and Thy glory by us.

“For Thine is the kingdom,” etc.: what *encouragement* is here! Two things especially inspire confidence towards God in prayer: the realization that He is *willing* and that He is *able*, both of which are here intimated. God is “our Father” which tells of His love and assures of His care for us. God is also the King of kings, possessing infinite power, which tells of His sufficiency and guarantees His ability. As the “Father,” He provides for His children; as the King, He will defend His subjects. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him” (Psa. 103:13); “Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob” (Psa. 44:4). It is for God’s honour and glory to manifest His power, to show Himself strong on behalf of His own. “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us: unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3:20, 21).

What *instruction* is here! First, we are taught to enforce our petition with arguments drawn from the Divine perfections: God’s kingdom and power and glory are to be turned into so many pleas for obtaining the things required—this is doing as Job said, “I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments” (23:4). Second, it directs us to unite together petition and praise. Third, it intimates we must pray with the utmost reverence: since God is so great and powerful a King, He is to be feared; hence it follows, we are to prostrate ourselves before Him in complete submission to His sovereign will. Fourth, it inculcates full surrender and subjection to Him, for otherwise we do but mock God when we acknowledge His dominion over us. Fifth, it signifies that we make His glory our chief concern, by endeavouring so to walk that our lives show forth His praise.

“Forever”: this is in marked contrast from the fleeting dominion and evanescent glory of earthly monarchs. The glorious Being whom we address in prayer is, “from everlasting to everlasting God.” Christ Jesus, in whom He is revealed and through whom prayer is offered, is the same yesterday and today and forever. When we pray aright we look beyond time into eternity, and measure present things by their connection with the future. How solemn and expressive is this word, “forever”! Earthly kingdoms decay and disappear. Creature power is puny and but for a moment. The glory of human beings and of all mundane things vanishes like a dream. But the kingdom and power and glory of Jehovah are susceptible to neither change nor diminution, and know no end. Our blessed hope is that when the first Heaven and earth have passed away, the Kingdom and power and glory of God will be known and adored in their wondrous reality to all eternity.

“Amen”: which intimates the two things required in prayer, namely, a fervent *desire* and the exercise of *faith*, for “Amen” signifies both “so be it” and “it shall be so.” This twofold meaning of supplication and expectation is plainly hinted at in its *double* mention in, “Blessed be His glorious name forever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen” (Psa. 72:19): God has determined it shall be so, and the whole Church expresses its desire, “so be it.” This “Amen” belongs and applies to each part and clause of the prayer: “Hallowed be Thy name—Amen,” and so throughout; expressing both our desire and affirming our confidence. It is itself a condensed and emphatic petition: believing in the verity of God’s promises and resting on the stability of His government, we both cherish and acknowledge our confident hope in a gracious answer.—
A.W.P.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

5. *The Beatitudes: Matt. 5:1-11.*

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God” (Matt. 5:9). “The Jews, in general, regarded the Gentile nations with bitter contempt and hatred, and they expected that, under the Messiah, there should be an uninterrupted series of war-like attacks made on those nations, till they were completely destroyed or subjugated to the chosen people of God [an idea based, no doubt, on what they read in the book of Joshua, concerning the experiences of their forefathers—A.W.P.]. In their estimation, those emphatically deserved the appellation of ‘happy’ who should be employed under Messiah the Prince to avenge on the heathen nations all the wrongs these had done to Israel. How different is the spirit of the new economy! How beautifully does it accord with the angelic anthem which celebrated the nativity of its Founder: ‘glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men!’” (J. Brown).

This seventh Beatitude has to do more with conduct than with character, though, of necessity, there must first be a peaceable spirit before there will be active efforts put forth to make peace. Let it be remembered that in this first section of the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus is *defining the character* of those who should be subjects and citizens in His kingdom. First, He described them according to the initial experiences of those in whom a Divine work is wrought. The first four may be grouped together as setting forth the negative graces of their hearts. They are not self-sufficient, but consciously poor in spirit; they are not self-satisfied, but mourning because of their spiritual state; they are not self-willed, but meek; they are not self-righteous, but hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of Another. In the next three, the Lord names their *positive* graces: having tasted of the mercy of God, they are merciful in their dealings with others; having received a spiritual nature, they now hate impurity and love holiness; having entered into the peace which Christ made by the blood of His Cross, they now wish to live in amity with all.

“Blessed are the peacemakers.” This takes note of the horrible contention and enmity which sin has brought into the world, for where there is no strife there is no need for peacemakers. The world is “living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another” (Titus 3:3): though attempts are often made to conceal this by the cloak of hypocrisy yet it soon peeps forth again in its hideous nakedness, as the history of the nations attests. And let not writer and reader forget the solemn fact that such was once our own sad case, as the opening words of Titus 3:3 declare—“for we *ourselves* also were.” But on the other hand, our text also brings into view the triumph of God over Satan: grace has brought in that which even now in measure, and in the future completely, displaces the vile works of the flesh.

To be a lover of and worker after peace is one of the distinguishing marks of those who are followers of the Prince of Peace. That miracle of grace which has made them at peace with God causes them to regard their fellows with sincere benevolence, desiring to promote their best interests, both here and hereafter. It is their care, so much as in them lies, to live peaceably with all men, and therefore do they abstain from deliberate injury of others. In each relationship they occupy—domestic, social, ecclesiastical—it is their desire and endeavour to prevent and allay strife. They are lovers of concord, promoters of unity, healers of breaches. They delight to pour oil on troubled waters, to reconcile those who are estranged, to right wrongs, to strengthen the kindly ties of friendship. As the

sons of peace they bring into the fetid atmosphere of this world a breath from the pure and placid air of Heaven. How much the world is indebted to their presence, only the Day to come will show.

Let it be pointed out that this lovely Christ-like disposition is a vastly different thing from that easy-going indolence which is so often nothing but cowardice or selfishness. It is not a peace at any price which the Christian loves and aims to promote. No indeed, that is a false peace, unworthy to be called peace at all. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17): note well the words, "first pure"—peace is not to be sought at the expense of righteousness. Hence it is important that we lose not the thread of connection between our present Beatitude and the one which precedes it: as the "pure in heart" modifies the "mercy" of verse 7, so also it qualifies the "peace" of verse 9—it is *such* mercy and peace as God Himself approves of. The same qualification is seen again in, "follow peace with all men *and* holiness" (Heb. 12:14). We are to avoid all needless occasions of contention, yet not to the point of sacrificing the Truth, compromising principle, or forsaking duty—Christ Himself did not so: Matthew 10:34.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). The very terms of this exhortation denote that so far from compliance therewith being a simple task, it is one which calls for constant vigilance, self-discipline, and earnest prayer. Such is the state of human nature, that offenses will come, nevertheless, it is part of Christian duty to see to it that we so conduct ourselves as to give no just cause of complaint against us. It is for our own peace we do so, for it is impossible to be happy in broils and enmities. Some believers are of a naturally contentious disposition, and doubly so *they* need to beg God to hold His restraining hand and calming hand upon them. When disturbance and turmoil is aroused, we should diligently examine ourselves before the Lord as to whether the cause for it lie *in us*, and if so, confess the sin to Him, and seek to reconcile those offended. If we be innocent, we must meekly submit to it as an affliction.

If it be true that "Blessed are the peacemakers," it necessarily follows that, Cursed are the peacebreakers. Then let us be diligently on our guard against bigotry, intemperate zeal, and a quarrelsome spirit: the things of God are too sacred for wrangling. Highly important is it that we give earnest heed to the exhortation of, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). Let it be carefully noted that the preceding verse specifies the chief *aids* to this. In order to the development of a peaceful disposition, we must first cultivate the grace of "lowliness," which is the opposite of pride, for, "only by pride cometh contention" (Prov. 13:10). Second, there must be the cultivation of "meekness," which is the opposite of self-assertiveness, the determination to press my will at all costs: remember "a soft answer turneth away wrath." Third, the grace of "longsufferance," which is the opposite of impatience. Finally, "forbearing one another in love," for the queen of the graces "endureth all things."

See here the blessedness of that work to which the ministers of God are called: not merely to effect peace between man and man, but to reconcile men to God. What a contrast is this from the task allotted to Joshua and his officers under the Mosaic economy, of taking up the sword to slay the enemies of the Lord! In this dispensation the servants of Christ are commissioned to seek the reconciliation of those who are at enmity with God. The heralds of the Cross are the ambassadors of peace, bidding sinners throw down

the weapons of their warfare and enter into an amnesty with God. They know there is no peace for the wicked, and therefore do they exhort them to acquaint themselves with God and be at peace (Job 22:21). Of them it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:15).

There is still another way in which it is the holy privilege of believers to be peacemakers, and that is by their *prayers* averting the wrath of God from a guilty nation. In the day when the Lord's anger is kindled against a sin-laden people and the dark clouds of Providence threaten an impending storm of judgment, it is both the duty and the privilege of God's redeemed to stand in the breach and by their earnest supplication stay His hand, so making peace. Moses did so (Exo. 32:11-14); so, too, Aaron—(Num. 16:47, 48), and David, (2 Sam. 24:10). When some fearful plague visits our country, or another nation threatens it with war, we are to behold God raising His rod, and entreat Him to be merciful: see Jeremiah 12:11; Ezekiel 22:30, 31. This is indeed a blessed work of peace: to stay the Lord from the work of destruction, as Abraham's intercession had done for Sodom if there were but ten righteous persons in it. Once more we say, only the Day to come will show how much the wicked gained by the presence of the righteous remnant in their midst.

A word now upon the reward: "for they shall be called the children God," which is a decisive proof that these Beatitudes contemplate not the mortal virtues of the natural man, but rather the spiritual graces of the regenerate. To be *made* a child of God is to be renewed in His image and likeness; to be *called* so is to be esteemed and regarded as such. The Lord Himself is "the God of peace" (Heb. 13:20), and where this holy disposition is manifested by His people, He *owns* them as His children—compare Hebrews 2:11 and 11:16 for the force of the word "called." Furthermore holy peacemakers are recognized as children of God by their spiritual brethren. Have you received this grace of the Spirit, so that you sincerely desire and endeavour to live at peace with all men? Then that is an evidence you are a child of God, a pledge of your adoption. Labour to maintain it. Ultimately, God will make it manifest to all the universe that we are His children (Rom.8:19).

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven" (v. 10). The Christian life is one that is full of strange paradoxes which are quite insoluble to human reason, but which are easily understood by the spiritual mind. God's saints rejoice with joy unspeakable, yet do they mourn with a lamentation to which the worldling is an utter stranger. The believer in Christ has been brought into contact with a source of vital satisfaction which is capable of meeting every longing, yet does he pant with a yearning like unto that of the thirsty hart. He sings and makes melody in his heart to the Lord, yet does he groan deeply and daily. His experience is often painful and perplexing, yet would he not part with it for all the gold in the world. These puzzling paradoxes are among the evidences which he possesses that he is indeed blest of God. But who by mere reasoning would ever conclude that the persecuted and reviled are "blessed"! Genuine felicity, then, is not only compatible with, but is actually accompanied by manifold miseries in this life.

"It is a strong proof of human depravity that men's curses and Christ's blessings should meet on the same persons. Who would have thought that a man could be persecuted and reviled, and have all manner of evil said of him, for righteousness' sake? And do wicked men really hate justice and love those who defraud and wrong their neigh-

neighbours? No; they do not dislike righteousness as it respects *themselves*: it is only that species of it which respects God and religion that excites their hatred. If Christians were content with doing justly and loving mercy, and would cease walking humbly with God, they might go through the world, not only in peace, but with applause; but he that will *live godly* in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). Such a life reproves the ungodliness of men and provokes their resentment" (Andrew Fuller). It is the enmity of the Serpent—active ever since the days of Abel (1 John 3:12)—against the holy seed.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." The connection between this and all that has been before us must not be overlooked. It is not every sufferer, nor even every sufferer for religion, who is entitled to appropriate such consolation. This antagonism is not in return for wrongdoing or in response to what has given just cause for offense. They who are morose, haughty, selfish, or evil-speaking, have no right to seek comfort from this Beatitude when people retaliate against them. No, it is where Christ-likeness of character and conduct is assailed, where practical godliness condemns the worldly ways of empty professors and fires their enmity—where humble yet vital piety cannot be tolerated by those who are devoid of the same. The wicked hate God's holy image and those who bear it, His holy Truth and those who walk in it. This pronouncement of Christ's signifies, Blessed are the spiritual which the carnal detest; blessed are the gentle sheep, whom the dogs snap at.

How many a Christian employee who has refused to violate his conscience has suffered at the hands of an ungodly master or mistress! Yet such persecution, painful though it be, is really a blessing in disguise. First, by means of the opposition which they encounter, the Lord's people became the better acquainted with their own infirmities and needs, for thereby they are made conscious that they cannot stand for a single hour unless Divine grace upholds them. Second, by persecution they are often kept from certain sins into which they would most likely fall were the wicked at peace with them: the rough usage they receive at the hands of worldlings makes impossible that friendship with them which the flesh craves. Third, such persecution affords opportunity to glorify God by his constancy, courage, and fidelity to the Truth.

This searching phrase, "for righteousness' sake," calls upon us to honestly examine ourselves before God when we are being opposed: "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters" (1 Peter 4:15). The same qualification is made in the verse which immediately follows the last quoted: "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." This is a most necessary caution, that the believer see to it he is buffeted for *right doing* and not on account of his own misconduct or foolish behaviour. It is to be observed that persecution is often so speciously disguised that those guilty thereof are not conscious of the same, yea, so deceitful is the human heart, they imagine they are doing God a service (John 16:2). But, "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs *is* (not "shall be") the kingdom of Heaven": its privileges and blessings (Rom. 14:17) are theirs even now—though hated by men, they are "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 1:6).

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake" (Matt. 5:11). In verse 10 the Lord enunciates the general principle; here He makes special application of it to His servants. Note carefully the change from "them," throughout verses 5-10, to "ye," and "your," in verses 11,

12: opposition is the general lot of God's people, but it is the special portion of His ministers. If faithful to their calling, they must expect to be fiercely assailed. Such has even been the experience of the Lord's servants. Moses was reviled again and again (Exo. 5:11; 14:11; 16:2; 17:2, etc.). Samuel was rejected (1 Sam. 8:5). Elijah was despised (1 Kings 18:17) and persecuted (1 Kings 19:2). Micah was hated (1 Kings 18:17). Nehemiah was oppressed and defamed (Neh. 4). The Saviour Himself, the faithful witness of God, was put to death by the people to whom He ministered. Stephen was stoned, Peter and John cast into prison, James beheaded, while the entire course of Paul was one long series of bitter and relentless persecutions.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:11, 12). In these words the Lord Jesus faithfully warns His servants what they may fully expect to encounter, and then defines how they are to respond thereto, how they are to conduct themselves under the fire of their enemies. That blessedness which worldly leaders value and crave is to be flattered and feted, humoured and honoured; but the felicity and glory of the officers of Christ is to be made conformable to the Captain of their salvation, who was "despised and rejected of men." Yet instead of being downcast over and murmuring at the hostility they meet with, ministers of the Gospel are to be thankful to God for the high honour He confers upon them in making them partakers of the sufferings of His Son. Because that is so difficult for flesh and blood to do, the Lord here advances two reasons as encouragements.

It is true that persecution of both ministers and saints is today in a much milder form than it assumed in other ages; nevertheless, it is just as real. Through the goodness of God we have long been protected from legal persecution, but the enmity of the Serpent finds other ways and means for expressing itself. The words of Christ in John 15 have never been repealed: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also" (vv. 19, 20). Let it be carefully noted it was the professing and not the profane "world" that Christ was alluding to: it was from religious leaders, from those making the greatest spiritual pretensions, the Redeemer Himself received the worst treatment. And so it is now: members and officers of the "churches" stoop to methods and use means of opposition which those outside would scorn to employ.

Let us carefully note the qualification made by Christ in the verses we are now considering. This benediction of His is pronounced only on them who have all manner of evil spoken against them *falsely*: they have themselves given no just occasion for the same. No, far from it, it is not for any lawful ground of accusation in themselves, but "for My sake"—for their loyalty, and fidelity to Christ—for their obedience to His commission, for their refusal to compromise His holy Truth. To be "reviled" is to suffer personal abuse: said Paul, "we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things" (1 Cor. 4:13). "Persecution" may involve acts of ill-treatment, or ostracism. To have "all manner of evil said against" us, is to suffer defamation of character: 1 Thessalonians 2:2 clearly implies that even the moral reputation of the Apostle was attacked. All of these are efforts of the Devil to destroy the usefulness of God's ministers.

The Lord Jesus here pronounced blessed or happy those who, through devotion to Him, would be called upon to suffer. They are “blessed” because such are given the unspeakable privilege of having fellowship with the sufferings of the Saviour. They are “blessed” because such tribulation works patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope, and such a hope that will not make ashamed. They are “blessed” because they shall be fully recompensed in the Day to come. Here is rich comfort indeed. Let not the soldier of the Cross be dismayed because the fiery darts of the Wicked One are hurled against him. Remember, “The sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18).

“Rejoice and be exceeding glad”: this, too, is spoken especially to ministers. Those afflictions which faithfulness to Christ bring upon them are not only to be endured with patience and resignation, but thanksgiving and gladness. And that, for a threefold reason. First, they come upon them for Christ’s sake: if He suffered so much for them, should they not rejoice to suffer a little for Him?! Second, they shall be richly recompensed hereafter: “great is your reward in Heaven”—not as of merit, but purely of grace, for there is no proportion between them. Third, they bring them into fellowship with a noble company of martyrs: “for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you”—they, too, were ill-treated by members of the outward Church: what an honor to share, in our measure, the lot of those holy men! Verily there is cause to rejoice, no matter how fierce the conflict may be! O to emulate the Apostles in Acts 5:41 and 16:25. May Divine grace enable all the oppressed and saints of God to draw from these precious words of Christ the comfort and strength they need.—A.W.P.

THE LIFE OF DAVID.

84. *His Sacred Song.*

If we are now to complete our exposition of this Song, we must dispense with our usual introductory remarks: we therefore proceed at once to our next verse. “Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, so that my feet did not slip” (2 Sam. 22:37). Here David praises the Lord because He had not only preserved, but prospered him, too, blessing him with liberty and expansion—compare verse 20. From the narrow mountain pass and the confinement of caves, he had been brought to the spacious plains, and there, too, he had been sustained, for the latter has its dangers as well as the former. “It is no small mercy to be brought into full Christian liberty and enlargement, but it is a greater favour still to be enabled to walk worthily in such liberty, not being permitted to slide with our feet” (C. H. Spurgeon). To stand firm in the day of adversity is the result of grace upholding, and that aid is no less needed by us in seasons of prosperity.

“I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them: and turned not again until I had consumed them” (v. 38). David was here alluding to occasions like that recorded in 1 Samuel 30: the Amalekites thought themselves clear away with their booty (v. 2), but when David’s God guided him in pursuit, they were soon overtaken and cut in pieces (vv. 16-18). It is not sufficient that the believer stand his ground and resist the onslaught of his foes. There are times when he must assume the offensive and “pursue” his enemies: yea, as a general principle it holds good that attack is the best means of defense. Lusts are not only to be starved, by making no provision for them, they are to be “mortified,” or put to death. God has provided the Christian warrior with a sword as well as with a shield, and each is to be used in its season. Observe that verse 38 follows verse 37: there must be an enlargement and revival before we can be the aggressors and victors.

“And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet” (v. 39). This calls attention to the *completeness* of the victories which the Lord enabled David to achieve. But does not this present a serious difficulty to the exercised saint? How far, far short does *his* actual experience come of this! So far from his enemies being consumed and under his feet, he daily finds them gaining over him. True—nevertheless, there is a real sense in which it is his holy privilege to make these words his own: they are the language of *faith*, and not of sense. The terms of this verse maybe legitimately applied to the judicial slaughter of our foes: we may exult over sin, death, and Hell having been destroyed by our conquering Lord! Forget not His precious promise, “because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19)—His victory in the past is the sure guarantee of our complete victory in the future.

“For Thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast Thou subdued under me” (2 Sam. 22:40). David had been both vigorous and valiant, yet he takes no credit to himself for the same. He freely acknowledges that it was God who had qualified him for his warfare, who had given him ability therein, and who had crowned his efforts with such success. Any measure of liberty from sin and Satan which we enjoy, any enlargement of heart in God’s service, our preservation in the slippery paths of this enticing world, are cause for thankfulness, and not ground for glorying in self. It is true that we have to wrestle with our spiritual antagonists, but the truth is that the victory is far more the Lord’s than ours. It has long been the conviction of this writer, both from his own experience and the close observation of many others, that the principal reason why the Lord does not grant us a much larger measure of present triumph over our

spiritual foes, is because we are so prone to be self-righteous over the same. Alas, how deceitful and wicked are our hearts.

“Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me” (v. 41). There is no doubt that such will be our paeon of praise in Heaven in a far fuller sense than ever it is in this world. Do we not get more than a hint of this in Revelation 15:1-3, where we are told that, “those that had gotten the victory over the Beast,” etc., sing “the song of Moses, the servant of God (see Exo. 15) and the song of the Lamb.” Meanwhile, it is our blessed privilege to rest upon the Divine promise: “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Rom. 16:20). Rightly did Adams the Puritan, when commenting on this verse in our Song, exhort his hearers, “Though passion possess our bodies, let patience possess our souls.” In a protracted warfare *patience* is just as essential as is valour or skill to use our weapons. The promise of ultimate salvation is made only unto those who “endure to the end.” In due season we shall reap if we faint not. The fight may be a long and arduous one, but the victor’s crown will be a grand recompense. Then look *above* the smoke and din of battle to the Prince of Peace who waits to welcome you on High.

“They looked, but there was none to save; even unto the LORD, but He answered them not” (2 Sam. 22:42). The Companion Bible has pointed out that there is here a play on words in the Hebrew, which may be rendered thus in English: They cried with fear, but none gave ear. They called both to earth and Heaven for help, but in vain. God heeded them not for they were His enemies, and sought Him not through the Mediator; being given up by Him, they fell an easy prey to David’s righteous sword. “Prayer is so notable a weapon that even the wicked will take to it in their fits of despair. But men have appealed to God against His own servants, but all in vain: the kingdom of Heaven is not divided, and God never succours His foes at the expense of His friends. There are prayers to God which are no better than blasphemy, which bring no comforting reply, but rather provoke the Lord unto greater wrath” (C. H. Spurgeon).

“Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth: I did stamp them as the mire of the street, and did spread them abroad” (v. 43). Let not the *connection* between this and the preceding verse be missed—emphasized by its opening, “Then.” It shows us how utterly helpless are those who are abandoned by God, and how fearful is their fate—compare the case of king Saul: 1 Samuel 28:6. The defeat of those nations which fought against David was so entire that they were like powders pounded in the mortar. Thomas Scott saw in this verse, and we think rightly so, a reference to, “the inevitable destruction which came upon the Jews for crucifying the Lord of Glory and rejecting the Gospel. They cried, and they still cry, to the Lord to save them, but refusing to obey His beloved Son, He vouchsafes them no answer.” How accurately did the figures of this verse depict the tragedy of *the Jews*: “dust” which is scattered by the wind to all parts of the “mire” that is contemptuously trampled underfoot!

“Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, Thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen: a people which I knew not shall serve me” (2 Sam. 22:44). In the first clause David refers to the intensive strife which had gravely threatened and menaced his kingdom. There had been times when internal dissension had been far more serious and dangerous than anything which the surrounding nations threatened; nevertheless God had graciously preserved His servant from their malice and opposition. Thus it is with the Christian warrior: though he be opposed from without by both the world and the Devil,

yet his greatest danger comes from *within*—his own corruptions and lusts are continually seeking to overthrow him. None but God can grant him deliverance from his inward foes, but the sure promise is, “He which hath begun a good work in you will finish it” (Phil. 1:6). The same principle holds true of *the minister*: his acutest problems and trials issue not from without the pale of his church, but from its own members and adherents; and it is a great mercy when God gives peace within.

“Thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen: a people which I knew not shall serve me.” God’s signal preservation of David intimated that he was designed and reserved for an important and imposing position: to rule over the twelve tribes of Israel, notwithstanding all the opposition the Benjamites had made against him, and to be exalted over heathen nations also. The decisive defeats of the Amalekites and Philistines were regarded as the pledge of still more notorious triumphs. The practical lesson inculcated therein is one of great importance: hereby we are taught that the unchanging faithfulness of God should encourage us to view all the blessings which we have received at His hands in the past as the earnest of yet greater favours in the future. God has not preserved you thus far, my faint-hearted brethren, to let you founder at the end. He who did sustain you through six trials, “in seven there shall no evil touch thee” (Job. 5:19). Say, then, with the Apostle, “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that He will *yet deliver us*” (2 Cor. 1:10).

“Strangers shall submit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me” (2 Sam. 22:45). It will be observed that in this verse, as well as in the second half of the preceding one, that our translators have made a change of tense from the present to the future. Opinions vary considerably as to where the last section of the Song really commences, in which memory passes into hope, in which the successes of the past are regarded as the guarantee of still greater triumphs in the future. God had been David’s “buckler” (v. 31), his “strength and power” (v. 33), He had given him the necks of his enemies (v. 41): from all of which David draws the conclusion that God had still grander blessings in store for him. There can be little room for doubt that in the verses we are now pondering David was carried forward by the Spirit of prophecy unto this New Testament era, his own kingdom being the symbol and portent of the spiritual reign of his Son and Lord.

The only matter on which there is any uncertainty is the precise point in this Song where the historical merges into the prophetic, for the Hebrew verb does not, as in English, afford us any help here. As we have seen, Thomas Scott considers that verse 43, at least, should be included in this category. Alexander Maclaren suggested, “It is perhaps best to follow many of the older versions, and the valuable exposition of Hupfield, in regarding the whole section from verse 38 of our translation as the expression of the trust which past experience had wrought.” Personally, we consider that too radical: we are on much safer ground if we take the course followed by the A.V. and regard verse 44 as the turning point, where it is evident David was conscious that his kingdom was destined to be extended further than the confines of Palestine: strange tribes were to submit unto him and crouch before him in subjection.

Not only were the severe conflicts through which David passed and the remarkable victories granted to him prefigurations of the experiences of Christ, both in His sufferings and triumphs, but the further enlargements which David expected and his being made head over the heathen, foreshadowed the Redeemer’s exaltation and the expansion of His

kingdom far beyond the bounds of Judaism. First, the antitypical David had been delivered from the strivings of his Jewish people (v. 44), not by being preserved from death, but by being brought triumphantly through it, for in all things He must have the pre-eminence. Second, He had been made Head of the Church, which comprised Gentiles as well as Jews. Third, those who had been "strangers" (v. 45) to the commonwealth of Israel, submitted to the sound of His voice through the Gospel and rendered to Him the obedience of faith. Fourth, Paganism received its death-wound under the labours of Paul, its pride being humbled into the dust: such we take it is the prophetic allusion in verse 46.

"As soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto Me" (v. 45). "In many cases the Gospel is speedily received by hearts apparently unprepared for it. Those who have never heard the Gospel before, have been charmed by its first message, and yielded obedience to it; while others, alas! who are accustomed to its joyful sound, are rather hardened than softened by its teachings. The grace of God sometimes runs like fire among the stubble, and a nation is born in a day. 'Love at first sight' is no uncommon thing when Jesus is the wooer. He can write Caesar's message without boasting, 'Veni, vidi, vici'; His Gospel is in some cases no sooner heard than believed. What inducements to spread abroad the doctrine of the Cross" (C. H. Spurgeon).

"Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid out of their close places" (v. 46). "Out of their mountain fastness the heathen crept in fear to own allegiance to Israel's king; and even so, from the castles of self-confidence and the dens of carnal security, poor sinners come bending before the Saviour, Christ the Lord. Our sins which have entrenched themselves in our flesh and blood as impregnable forts, shall yet be driven forth by the sanctifying energy of the Holy Spirit, and we shall serve the Lord in singleness of heart" (C. H. Spurgeon).

"The LORD liveth: and blessed be my Rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation" (v. 47). After offering praise for past conquests and expressing his confidence in future victories, David returned to the more direct adoration of God Himself. Some of the glorious names of Deity which he had heaped together at the beginning of his Song, are now echoed at its close. The varied experiences through which he had passed had brought to the Psalmist a deeper knowledge of his living Lord: the One who had preserved Noah and ministered to Abraham long before, was his God, too: swift to hear, active to help. One of the lesser known Puritans commented thus on this verse: "Honours die, pleasures die, the world dies; but the Lord *liveth*. My flesh is as sand, my fleshly life, strength, and glory is as a word written on sand; but blessed be my *Rock*. Those are but for a moment; this stands forever; the curse shall devour those, everlasting blessings on the head of these" (P. Sterry).

"It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me, and that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: Thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: Thou hast delivered me from the violent man" (vv. 48, 49). Here David recurs to the dominant sentiment running through this Song: all his help was in God and from God. To take matters into our own hands and seek personal revenge is not only utterly unbecoming in one who has received mercy from the Lord, but it is grossly wicked, for it encroaches upon a prerogative which belongs alone to Him. Moreover, it is quite unnecessary, for in due time the Lord will avenge His wronged people. Though we may join with Stephen in praying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," yet when Divine justice takes satisfaction upon those who have flouted His law, the devout heart will

return thanks. After the battle at Naseby, in a letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons, Oliver Cromwell wrote, "Sir, this is none other than the hand of God, and to Him alone belongs the glory, wherein none are to share with Him."

"Therefore I will give thanks unto Thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto Thy name" (v. 50). What an example does David here set us of a holy soul making its boast in God in the presence of ungodly men. There is a happy medium between an unseemly parading of our piety before unbelievers and a cowardly silence in their presence. We must not suffer the despisers of God to shut our mouths and stifle our praises; especially is it our bounden duty to bow our heads and, "give thanks unto the Lord," before partaking of a meal, even though we are "among the heathen." Be not ashamed to acknowledge our God in the presence of His enemies. This verse is quoted by the Apostle and applied to Christ in Romans 15:9, which affords clear proof that David had his Antitype before him in the second half of this Song.

"He is the tower of salvation for His king: and showeth mercy to His anointed, unto David, and to his seed forevermore" (2 Sam. 22:51). David contemplated God not only as "the rock of his salvation"—the One who under-girded him, the One on whom all his hopes rested—but also as "the tower of salvation"—the One in whom he found security, the One who was infinitely elevated above him. Though saved, he yet had need of being shown "mercy"! The last clause indicates that he was resting on the Divine promise of 2 Samuel 7:15, 16, and supplies additional evidence that he had here an eye to Christ, for He alone is his "Seed forevermore."—A.W.P.

THE DIVINE COVENANTS.

7. *The Messianic.*

The assertion that there is a *human* side to our becoming the recipients of God's spiritual blessings, that there are certain *terms* which He requires us to first comply with, should occasion no difficulty. For as we have pointed out so frequently in this series, a "covenant" is a *mutual* compact, the second party agreeing to do or bestow certain things in return for what has been done or agreed upon by the first party to it. Before the sinner can enter into the actual benefits of Christ's atonement, he must consent to return to the duty of the Law and live in obedience to God, for He never pardons any while they are in their rebellion and live under the full dominion of sin. This is clear from many passages: see, for example, Isaiah 1:16-18; 55:7; Acts 3:19. Therefore, until there be a genuine repentance (which is not only a sorrow for past offenses, but also a sincere purpose to live henceforth according to the will of God), we have no interest in the grace of the new covenant.

First, we are required to *enter into* solemn covenant with God, yielding ourselves unreservedly up to Him (2 Cor. 8:5), henceforth to live for His glory: "Gather My saints together unto Me: those that have *made a covenant with Me* by sacrifice" (Psa. 50:5). Second, we are required to *keep* this solemn covenant, to live in a course of universal holiness: "All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as *keep His covenant and His testimonies*" (Psa. 25:10). Only those who endure unto the end shall be saved, and for that there must be a diligent practicing of God's precepts and a constant taking to heart of His warnings and admonitions. "Perseverance in their course is not promoted by a blind confidence and easy security; but by watchfulness, by self-jealousy, by a salutary fear of coming short of the promised rest, prompting them to earnest effort and habitual self-denial. Perseverance does not suppose the certainty of salvation however careless a Christian may be, but implies a steady continuance in holiness and conformity to the will of Christ in order to that end" (John Kelly, to whom we are indebted for much in this series).

"Though there are no conditions properly so called of the *whole grace* of the covenant, yet there are conditions *in* the covenant, taking that term in a large sense, for that which by the order of Divine constitution precedes some other things, and hath an influence to their existence. For God requireth many things of them whom He actually takes into covenant, and makes partakers of the promises and benefits of it. Of this nature is that whole obedience which is prescribed unto us in the Gospel, in our walking before God in uprightness; and there being an order in the things that belong hereunto, some acts, duties and parts of our gracious obedience, being appointed to be means of the further additional supplies of the grace and mercies of the covenant, they may be called *conditions* required of us in the covenant, as well as duties prescribed unto us" (John Owen).

It will be evident from this last quotation that we are not advocating any strange doctrine when we insist that the terms of the Covenant must be met if its privileges are to be enjoyed. None was clearer and more definite than Owen in his magnifying of the free grace of God, yet none saw more clearly than he did that God treats with men throughout as moral agents—we can repeat the same teaching from others of the Puritans. Let it be pointed out that the *first* blessing of the Covenant—regeneration, or God's putting His laws in our hearts—depends on *no* condition on our part: *that* is purely a sovereign and gratuitous act on the part of God. But to a full or *complete* interest in I the promises of the

Covenant, faith on our part (with which evangelical repentance is inseparable) *is* required. Here, too, we insist that if on the one hand there can be no justification without believing, yet on the other hand, that very faith is *given* to us and wrought in us.

In further corroboration of the point we are now labouring is the usage of the term “*earnest*” in the New Testament. In both 2 Corinthians 1:22 and 5:5, we read of “the earnest of the Spirit,” while in Ephesians 1:13, 14 we are told that He is “the earnest of our inheritance.” Now an “earnest” is a token-payment or installment of what has been agreed upon between two or more parties, being a guaranty of the full and final discharge. This figurative expression is used because the right which the believer has to eternal life and glory is by compact or covenant. On the one side, the sinner agrees to the terms stipulated (the forsaking of sin and his serving of the Lord), and yields himself to God by repentance and faith. On the other side, God binds Himself to give the believer forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among the sanctified; and the gift of the Spirit clinches the matter. When we consent to the terms of the Gospel, God engages Himself to bestow the inestimable blessings purchased for us by Christ.

Under the new covenant God requires the same perfect obedience from the Christian as He did from unfallen Adam. “Although God in them (His commands) requireth universal holiness of us, yet He doth not do it in that strict and rigorous way as by the Law (i.e., as given to Adam), so as that if we fail in anything either as to the matter or manner of its performance, and in the substance of it or as to the degrees of its perfection, that thereon both that and all we do besides should be rejected. But He doth it with *grace* and mercy, so as that if there be a universal sincerity in respect unto all His commands, He both pardoneth many sins and accepts of what we do, though it come short of legal perfection; and both on the account of the mediation of Christ. Yet this hindereth not but that the command of the Gospel doth still require *universal holiness* of us, and a perfection therein, which we are to do our utmost endeavour to comply withal, though we have a relief provided in sincerity on the one hand, and mercy on the other. For the commands of the Gospel do still declare what God approves and what He doth condemn, which is no less than all holiness on the one hand, and all sin on the other; as exactly and extensively as under the Law. For this the very nature of God requireth, and the Gospel is not the ministry of sin, so as to give an allowance unto the least, although in it pardon be provided by Jesus Christ for a multitude of sins.

“The obligation on us unto holiness is equal as unto what it was under the Law, though a relief be provided where unavoidably we come short of it. There is, therefore, nothing more certain than that there is no relaxation given us as unto any duty of holiness by the Gospel, nor any indulgence unto the least sin. But yet upon the supposition of the acceptance of sincerity, and a perfection of parts instead of degrees, with the mercy provided for our failings and sins; there is an argument to be taken from the command of it unto an indispensable necessity of holiness, including in it the highest encouragement to endeavour after it. For, together with the command, there is also grace administered enabling us unto that obedience which God will accept. Nothing, therefore, can avoid or evacuate the power of this command and argument from it, but a stubborn contempt of God arising from the love of sin” (John Owen).

A threefold contrast may be pointed out in connection with the obedience required by God under the Adamic and under the Messianic Covenants. First, the *design* of it is entirely different. Under the Covenant of Works man was obliged to render obedience to

the Law in order for his justification; but not so under the Covenant of Grace, for there the believing sinner is justified on the ground of Christ's obedience being imputed to him, and the obedience of the Christian afterwards is necessary only that God might be honoured thereby as an expression of his gratitude. Second, the *enablement* to it, for under the new covenant God works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Under the Covenant of Works man was left to his own natural and created strength. Under the one God gave the bare command, under the other He furnishes His grace and Spirit, so that we are empowered unto that sincere and evangelical obedience which He accepts of us. When God bids us come to Him, He does likewise draw us to Him.

Third, in the *acceptance* of it. Under the Covenant of Works no provision was made for any failure, for it had neither sacrifice nor mediator; consequently, the only obedience which God would accept under it was a perfect and perpetual one. While God requires the same flawless obedience under the New Covenant, yet provision has been made for failure, and if our efforts be genuine, God accepts an imperfect obedience from us because its defects are fully compensated for by the infinite merits of Christ which are reckoned to the believer's account. This sincere obedience (called by many writers "new obedience," and by others, "evangelical obedience"), is required from us as the means whereby we show our subjection to God, our dependence upon Him, our thankfulness unto Him, and as the only way of converse and communion with Him.

We must now consider *the time when* this Covenant came into operation. This cannot be restricted to any one moment absolutely, as though all that is included in God's making of it did consist in any single act. If we revert for a moment to the original promise, it will be found that God said, "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (Jer. 31:32). Now that was not a literal "day" of twenty-four hours, but a *season* into which much was crowded: many things happened between Israel's exodus from the house of bondage and their actual encamping before Sinai, things which were preparatory to the making and solemn establishment of the old Covenant. So was it also in connection with the making and establishing of the New: it was *gradually* made and established by sundry acts both preparatory and confirmatory. In his able discussion of this point, Owen mentioned six degrees: we here condense his remarks, adding a few observations of our own.

The first entrance into the making of the new Covenant was made by the mission of John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way of the Messiah, and therefore is his mission called "the beginning of the Gospel" (Mark 1:1, 2). Until his appearing, the Jews were bound absolutely and universally by the Siniatic Covenant, without alteration or addition in any ordinance of worship. But his ministry was designed to prepare them, and cause them to look unto the accomplishment of God's promise to make a new Covenant. He therefore called the people off from resting in and trusting upon the privileges of the old Covenant, preaching unto them the doctrine of repentance and instituting a new ordinance of worship—baptism—whereby they might be initiated into a *new* condition and relationship with God; pointing them to the predicted Lamb. This was the beginning of the fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:31-33: compare Luke 16:16.

Second, the incarnation and personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself was an eminent advance and degree thereof. True, the dispensation of the old Covenant yet continued, for He Himself, as made of a woman, was made under the Law (Gal. 4:4), yielded obedience to it, observing all its precepts and institutions; nevertheless. His appearing in

flesh laid an axe to the root of that whole dispensation. Hence, upon His birth, the substance of the new Covenant was proclaimed from Heaven as that which was on the eve of taking place (Luke 2:13, 14). But it was made more evident later on by His public ministry, the whole doctrine whereof was preparatory unto the immediate introduction of this Covenant. The proofs He gave of His Messiahship, the fulfillment He provided of the prophecies concerning Him, were so many signs that He was the appointed Mediator of that Covenant.

Third, the way for the introduction of this Covenant being thus prepared, it was solemnly enacted and confirmed in and by His *death*, for therein He offered that sacrifice to God by which it was established, and hereby the promise properly became a "testament" (Heb. 9:14-16). There the Apostle shows how the shedding of Christ's blood answered to those sacrifices whose blood was sprinkled on the people and the book of the Law in confirmation of the first covenant. The Cross, then, was the centre whence all the promises of grace did meet, and from whence they derive all their efficacy. Henceforth the old Covenant, and its administration, having received their full accomplishment, no longer had any binding force (Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:14, 15) and only abode by the patience of God, to be taken away in His own good time and manner.

Fourth, this new Covenant had the complement of its making and establishment in the resurrection of Christ. God did not make the first covenant simply that it should continue for a season, die of itself, and be arbitrarily removed. No, the Levitical economy had a special end to be accomplished, and nothing in it could be removed until God's design was realized. That design was twofold: the perfect fulfilling of that righteousness which the Law enjoined, and the undergoing of its curse. The one was accomplished in the perfect obedience of Christ, the Surety of the Covenant, in the stead of those with whom the Covenant was made; the other was endured by Him in His sufferings; and His resurrection was the public proof that He was discharged from the claims of the Law. The old Covenant then expired, and the worship pertaining to it was continued for a few years longer only by the forbearance of God toward the Jews.

Fifth, the first formal promulgation of the new Covenant, as made and ratified, was on the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after the resurrection of Christ. Remarkably did this answer to the promulgation of the Law on Mount Sinai, for that, too, occurred the same space of time after the deliverance of the people of God out of Egypt. From the day of Pentecost onwards, the ordinances of worship and all the institutions of the new Covenant became obligatory unto all believers. Then was the whole Church absolved from any duty with respect to the old Covenant and its worship, although it was not manifest as yet in their consciences. When Peter said to those of his hearers who were pricked in their heart, "the promise is unto you and to your children," he was announcing the new Covenant unto members of the house of *Judah*, and his, "and to them that are afar off," (compare Dan. 9:7), extended it to the dispersion of *Israel*; and when he added, "save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:39, 40), he intimated the old Covenant had waxed old and was about to vanish away. Sixth, this was confirmed in Acts 15:23-29.

It only remains for us to say a few words on the relation between the original and final covenants. It is important that we should distinguish clearly between the Everlasting Covenant which God made before the foundation of the world, and the Christian Covenant, which He has instituted in the last days of the world's history. First, the one was made in a past eternity; the other is made in time. Second, the one was made with Christ

alone; the other is made with all His people. Third, the one is without any conditions so far as we are concerned; the other prescribes certain terms which we must meet. Fourth, under the one Christ inherits; under the other Christians are heirs: in other words, the inheritance Christ purchased by His fulfilling the terms of the Everlasting Covenant is now administered by Him in the form of a "testament."

Should a reader ask, Does my getting to Heaven depend upon the Everlasting Covenant or the New One? The answer is, upon *both*. First upon what Christ did for me in executing the terms of the former; second, upon my compliance with the conditions of the latter. Many are very confused at this very point. They who repudiate man's responsibility will not allow that there are any "ifs" or "buts," restricting their attention to God's "wills" and "shalls"; but this is not dealing honestly with the Word. Instead of confining ourselves to favourite passages, we must impartially compare Scripture with Scripture, and over against God's, "I will," of Hebrews 8:10-12, must be placed the, "But Christ as a Son over His own house: whose house are we *if* we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end . . . are made partakers of Christ, *if* we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end," of Hebrews 3:6, 14! Does this render such a vital matter uncertain, and place my eternal interests in jeopardy? By no means: if I have turned "from transgression" God has made an everlasting covenant with me and has given to me the same Spirit which abode—without measure—on the Mediator (Isa. 59:20, 21); nevertheless, I can only have Scriptural *assurance of this* so long as I tread the path of obedience.—A.W.P.

THE COVENANT ALLEGORY.

Those of our readers who are particularly interested in the Divine Covenants would be disappointed if we closed our lengthy series thereon and ignored the last eleven verses of Galatians 4, and therefore we felt it necessary to devote an article to their consideration. That this passage is far from being free of difficulties appears from the diverse expositions of the commentators, for scarcely any two of them agree even in substance. Nor will the limited space now at our disposal allow us to enter into as full an elucidation as could be wished, nor permit the pausing now and again to furnish collateral proofs for what is advanced, as is our usual custom. Brevity has its advantages, but it does not always make for clarity. We must, however, content ourselves now with a comparatively terse running comment on this passage, and that, according to the limited light which we have thereon.

Galatians 4:21-31 is, in several respects, very similar to the contents of 2 Corinthians 3. In each case the Apostle is opposing himself to the errors which had been sedulously propagated amongst his converts by Judaizers. In each case he shows that the fundamental issue between them concerned the Covenants, for any teacher who is confused thereon is certain to go astray in all his preaching. In each case the Apostle appeals to well-known incidents in the Old Testament Scriptures, and with the wisdom given him from above proceeds to bring out the deep spiritual meaning thereof. In each case he establishes conclusively the immeasurable superiority of Christianity over Judaism, and thus completely undermined the very foundations of his adversaries' position. Though of peculiar importance to those unto whom the Apostle wrote immediately, this passage contains not a little of great value for us today.

"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the Law, do ye not hear the Law?" (Gal. 4:21). Here the Apostle addresses himself to those who had been lending a ready ear to their spiritual enemies. By his, "ye that desire to be under the Law," was signified those who hankered after subjection to Judaism. His, "do ye not hear the Law?" means, are you willing to listen unto what is recorded in the first book of the Pentateuch and have pointed out to you the dispensational significance of the same? Paul's design was to show those who were so anxious to be circumcised and submit themselves to the whole Mosaic system, that, so far from such a course being honourable and beneficial, it would be fraught with danger and disgrace. To yield unto those who sought to seduce them spiritually, would inevitably result in "bondage" (see 4:9) not "liberty" (5:1). To prevent this, he begs them to listen to what God had said.

"For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was born of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory" (vv. 22-24). Very remarkable indeed is this, for we are here Divinely informed that not merely did the Mosaic rites possess a typical significance, but the lives of the Patriarchs themselves had a figurative meaning. Not only so, but their affairs were so controlled by Providence that they were shaped to shadow forth coming events of vast magnitude. Paul was here moved by the Spirit to inform us that the domestic occurrences in Abraham's household were a parable in action, which parable he had interpreted for us. Thus we are granted an insight to passages in Genesis which no human wisdom could possibly have penetrated.

The transactions in the family of Abraham were Divinely ordered to presage important dispensational epochs. The domestic affairs of the Patriarch's household were invested with a prophetic significance. The historical incidents recorded in Genesis 16 and 21 pos-

sessed a typical meaning, containing beneath their surface, spiritual truths of profound importance. The Apostle here reminds his readers of the circumstances recorded of the two wives of Abraham, and of their respective offspring, and declares that the mothers adumbrated the two covenants, and their sons, the respective tendencies and results of those covenants. In other words, Sarah and Hagar are to be viewed as the representatives of the two covenants, and the sons which they bore as representatives of the kind of worshippers which those covenants were fitted to produce.

“For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman.” The Apostle’s design was to wean those Galatians who inclined to Judaism, from their strange infatuation for an obsolete and servile system, by unfolding to them its true nature. This he does by referring them to an emblematic representation of the two economies. Abraham had a number of other sons besides Ishmael and Isaac, but it is to them alone—the circumstances of their birth, subsequent conduct, history and fate—that Paul’s discussion exclusively relates.

In her unbelief and impatience (unwilling to wait for God to make good His word in His own time and way) Sarah gave her maid to Abraham in order that he might not be wholly without posterity. Though this caused confusion and brought trouble upon all concerned, yet it was ordained by God to presage great dispensational distinctions, nor did it in any wise thwart the accomplishment of His eternal purpose. “Abraham had two sons”: Ishmael, the son of an Egyptian, a bondslave; Isaac the son of Sarah, a free woman, of the same rank as her husband. As we have already said, these two mothers prefigured the two covenants, and their children the worshippers which those covenants produced.

“But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise” (v. 23). Great as was the disparity between the two mothers, greater still was the difference between the way in which their respective sons were born. Ishmael was born in the ordinary course of generation, for, “after the flesh,” signifies to the carnal counsel which Sarah gave to Abraham, and by the mere strength of nature. In connection with the birth of Ishmael there was not any special promise given, nor any extraordinary Divine interposition. Vastly different was it in the case of Isaac, for he *was* the child of promise, and born in direct consequence of the miracle-working power of God, and was under the benefit of that promise as long as he lived. That which is here specially emphasized by the Apostle is that the son of the slave was in *an inferior condition* from the very beginning.

“Which things are an allegory” (v. 24). An “allegory” is a parabolic method of conveying instruction, spiritual truths being set forth under material figures. Allegories are in words what hieroglyphics are in printing, both of which abound among the Orientals—Bunyan’s “Pilgrim’s Progress” is the best sustained allegory in the English language. “For these (feminine) are the two covenants” (v. 24). Here the Apostle proceeds to give us the occult meaning of the historical facts alluded to in the preceding verse. He affirms that the domestic incidents in the family of Abraham constituted a Divinely-ordained illustration of the basic principles in regard to the condition of spiritual slaves and of spiritual freemen, and are to be regarded as adumbrating the *bondage* which subjection to the law of Moses produced and the *liberty* which submission to the Gospel secures.

“These are the two covenants.” This cannot, of course, be understood literally, for it was neither intelligible nor true that Sarah and Hagar were actually two covenants in

their own persons. The words "is" and "are" frequently have the force of *represent*. When Christ affirmed of the sacramental bread, "This is My body," He meant, this bread represents My body. When we read of the rock smitten by Moses in the wilderness (out of which gushed the stream of living water), "that rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4), it obviously signifies, that rock *prefigured* Christ. So, too, when we are told, "the seven stars *are* the angels of the seven churches and the seven candle sticks which thou sawest are the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20), we are to understand that the one symbolized the other.

"These are the two covenants" (Gal. 4:24). There has been much difference of opinion as to exactly *which* covenants are intended. Some insist that the reference is to the Everlasting Covenant of Grace and the Adamic or Covenant of Works; others argue it is the Abrahamic or Covenant of Promise and the Siniatic, while others conclude it is the Siniatic and the Christian or that which is made with the people of God in the Gospel. Really, it is more a matter of terms than anything else, for whatever nomenclature we adopt, it comes to much the same thing. "The one from Mount Sinai which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar" (v. 24): by which is meant, that order of things under which the nation of Israel was placed at Sinai, appointed for the purpose of keeping them a separate people, and which because of its legalistic nature was fitly foreshadowed by the bondsman.

"The one (covenant) from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage," or produces those of a servile spirit, for it made slaves of all who sought justification and salvation by their own doings. It is to be carefully borne in mind that the relation entered into between God and Israel at Sinai was entirely a *natural* one, being made with the Nation as such, and consequently all their descendants, upon their being circumcised, automatically became subjects of it without any spiritual change being wrought in them. "So far as this covenant gave birth to any children, those were not true children of God, free, spiritual, with hearts of filial confidence and devoted love; but miserable bondmen, selfish, carnal, full of mistrust and fear. Of these children of the Siniatic Covenant we are furnished with the most perfect exemplar in the Scribes and Pharisees of our Lord's time" (P. Fairbairn).

"For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia" (v. 25). Here again the word "is" signifies "represents": Hagar prophetically anticipated and prefigured Mount Sinai—not the literal mount, but that covenant which Jehovah there entered into with the nation of Israel. Nor is this mode of expression by any means unusual in the Scriptures: when representing Samaria and Jerusalem by two women, the Prophet said, "Samaria is Aholah and Jerusalem Aholibah" (Ezek. 23:4). "And answereth to Jerusalem which now is" (Gal 4:25). "Answereth to" signifies corresponds with, or as the margin gives it, "is in the same rank with": the origin, status, and condition of Hagar supplied an exact analogy to the state of Jerusalem in the Apostle's time. Jerusalem, which was the metropolis of Palestine and the headquarters of its religion, stands for Judaism.

"And is in bondage with her children" (v. 25). Judaism was subject to an endless round of ceremonial institutions, which the Apostles themselves declared to be a yoke "which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15:10). Those under it enjoyed none of that spiritual liberty which the Gospel bestows upon those who submit to its terms. That large part of the Nation which had no interest in the covenant of promise made with Abraham (whereof *faith* was an indispensable prerequisite for entering into the good of it), was indeed outwardly a part of Abraham's family and members of the visible Church (as Hagar was a member of his family), yet, (like Ishmael), they were

born in servitude, and all their outward obedience was of a slavish character, and their privileges (as his) but carnal and temporal.

“But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Gal 4:26). Here Paul shows what was prefigured by Sarah. Three things are said in describing the covenant and constitution of which she was the appropriate emblem, each of which must be duly noted in the framing of our definition. First, “Jerusalem which is above.” This word “above” (ano) is generally employed of *location*, and would thus signify the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 11:22), in contrast from the earthly. But here it is placed in antithesis from, “which now is” (Gal. 4:25) and would thus mean the *prior* and primitive Jerusalem, of which Melchizedek was king (Heb. 7:1) and to whose order of priesthood Christ’s pertains. Or the “above” may have the force of excellency or *supremacy*, as in “*high calling*” (Phil. 3:14). Combining the three: Sarah shadowed forth the entire election of grace, all true believers from the beginning to the end of time.

Second, which “is free”: such was the status and state of Sarah in contrast from that of Hagar, the bondslave. Suitably did Sarah set forth that spiritual liberty which is to be found in Christ, for He redeems all His people from the bondage of sin and death. Believing Gentiles are freed from the curse of the moral law, and believing Jews are freed from the dominion of the ceremonial law as well. Third, “which is the mother of us all.” The reference is not to the Church either visible or invisible, for she cannot be the parent of herself; rather is it the Everlasting Covenant of Grace which is in view, in which were included all true believers. Thus the differences between the systems represented by Hagar and Sarah are: the one was earthly, carnal, slavish, temporary—the other, heavenly, spiritual, free, eternal.

“For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that barest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband” (Gal. 4:27). This was obviously brought in by Paul to confirm the interpretation he had made of the covenant allegory. It is a quotation from the predictions of Isaiah. Four things call for our consideration. First, the need for this comforting promise which God then gave. Second, the precise place in Isaiah’s prophecy from which this quotation is taken. Third, the particular manner in which it is here introduced. Fourth, its striking pertinency to the Apostle’s purpose.

The *need* for this reassuring word given by the Lord to His believing, yet sorrowing, people in the days of Isaiah is not difficult to perceive, if we bear in mind the exact terms of the promise originally given to the Patriarch and his wife, and then consider the state of Israel under Judaism. The grand promise to Abraham was that he should be, “a father of *many* nations” (Gen. 17:4), and that Sarah should be “a mother of nations” (Gen. 17:16). But at Sinai Sarah’s natural children were placed under a covenant which erected a middle wall of partition, shutting them off from all other nations. How rigorous the restrictions of the covenant were and the exclusiveness it produced, appear plainly in the unwillingness of Peter (till supernaturally authorized by God) to enter the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:28).

The Siniatic Covenant consisted largely in “meats and drinks and carnal ordinances,” yet was it only imposed, “till the time of reformation” (Heb. 9:10). It was well adapted to Israel after the flesh, for it encouraged them to obedience by the promise of temporal prosperity and restrained them by fear of temporal judgments. Amid the great mass of the unregenerate Jews there was always a remnant according to the election of grace, whose

heart God had touched (1 Sam. 10:26), in whose heart was His Law (Isa. 51:7). But the Nation as a whole had become thoroughly corrupt by the time of Isaiah, being deaf to the voice of Jehovah and fast ripening for judgment (Isa. 1:2-6). The godly portion had diminished to “a very small remnant” (1:9), and the outlook was fearfully dark. It was to strengthen the faith of the spiritual and comfort their hearts that Isaiah was raised up.

The quotation here made by Paul was from Isaiah 54:1, and its very *location* intimated clearly that it looked forward to Gospel times, for coming immediately after that graphic description of the Redeemer’s sufferings in the previous chapter, it at once suggests that we are then given a picture of those new-covenant conditions which followed His death. This is ever God’s way: in the darkest night He causes the stars of hope to shed forth their welcome light, bidding His people to look beyond the gloomy present to the brighter future. God had not forgotten His promise to the Patriarch, and though many centuries had intervened, the coming of His Son would make good the ancient oracles, for all the Divine promises are established in Christ: (2 Cor. 1:19, 20).

Let us next note the *manner* in which Paul introduces Isaiah’s prediction into his discussion: “*For* it is written.” It is clear that the Apostle cites the Prophet to establish what he had affirmed regarding the allegorical significance of the circumstances of Abraham’s household. This at once fixes for us the elucidation of the prophecy. Paul had pointed out that Abraham had sons by two diverse wives, that those sons represented the different type of worshippers which the two covenants produced—that Sarah (as representing the Abraham Covenant), which he here likened unto “Jerusalem which is above,” is “the mother of us all.” In turn, Isaiah refers to two women, views them allegorically, calling the one “barren” and contrasting her from one “who had a husband,” assuring the former of a far more numerous progeny.

How pertinent Isaiah’s prediction was to the Apostle’s argument is evident. His design was to turn away the hearts of the Galatians from Judaism, and to accomplish this he demonstrates that that system had been superseded by something far more blessed and spiritually productive. “*For* it is written, Rejoice thou barren.” *Who* was the Prophet there addressing? Immediately, the godly remnant in Israel, the children of faith, those who had their standing in and derived their blessing from the Abrahamic Covenant. Isaiah addressed them in the terms of the allegory. Just as the historical Sarah was childless for many years after she became the wife of Abraham, so the mystical Sarah (Abrahamic Covenant) had for long centuries shown no sign whatever of coming to fruition. But as the literal Sarah ultimately became a mother, so the mystical one should bear a numerous seed.

Marvellous indeed are the ways of God, and remarkably is His decree wrought out through His providences. That parable in action in the household of Abraham contemplated that which took thousands of years to unfold. First, was the marriage between Abraham and Sarah, which symbolized the covenant union between God and His people. Second, for many years Sarah remained barren, foreshadowing that lengthy period during which God’s purpose in that covenant was suspended. Third, Hagar, the bondslave, took Sarah’s place in the family of Abraham, typifying his natural descendants being placed under the Siniatic Covenant. Fourth, Hagar did not permanently supplant Sarah, adumbrating the fact that Judaism was of but temporary duration. Fifth, ultimately Sarah came into her own and was Divinely enabled to bear a supernatural seed—emblem of the spiritual children of God under the new covenant.

“Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not.” The Abrahamic Covenant is here represented as a wife who (like Sarah) had long remained childless. Comparatively few real children had been raised up to God among the Jews from Moses onwards. True, the Nation was in outward covenant with Him, and thus was (like Hagar in the type) “she who hath a husband,” but all the fruit they bore was like unto Ishmael—that which was merely natural, the product of the flesh. But the death of Christ was to alter all this: though the Jews would reject Him, there should be a great accession to the spiritual family of Abraham from among the Gentiles, so that there would be a far greater number of saints under the new covenant than had pertained under the old.

“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise” (Gal. 4:28). Here the Apostle begins his application of the allegory. As Sarah prefigured the Covenant of Grace, so Isaac represented the true children of God. Paul was here addressing himself to his *spiritual* “brethren,” and, therefore, the “we” includes all who are born from above—believing Gentiles as well as Jews. “We,” the children of the new covenant, represented in the allegory by Isaac. Our standing and state is essentially different from Ishmael’s, for he (like the great mass of those under the Siniatic Covenant) belong to the ordinary course of mere nature; whereas genuine Christians are “the children of promise”—of that made to Abraham, which, in turn, made manifest what God had “promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2). The relation into which believers are brought with God originates in a miracle of grace which was the subject of Divine promise.

“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now” (Gal 4:29). Here the Apostle brings in a further detail supplied by the “Allegory” which was germane to his subject. He refers to the opposition made against Isaac by the son of Hagar, recorded in Genesis 21:9. This received its counterpart in the attitude of the Judaisers toward Christians. They who still adhered to the old covenant were *hostile* to those who enjoyed the freedom of the new. Probably one reason why the Apostle mentioned this particular was in order to meet an objection: How can *we* be the “children of promise” (God’s high favourites) seeing we are so bitterly hated and opposed by the Jews? The answer is, No marvel, for thus it was from the beginning: the carnal have ever persecuted the spiritual.

“Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman” (Gal 4:30). Here is the final point in the “allegory” (taken from Gen. 21:10, 12) and which incontestably clinched the Apostle’s argument that Israel after the flesh was finally set aside by God. Hagar represented the Siniatic Covenant and Ishmael its carnal worshippers, and their being “cast out”—Abraham’s household prophetically signified God’s setting aside of Judaism and the fact that the natural descendants of Abraham had no place among his spiritual children and could not share their heritage (cf. John 8:34-35)—the two cannot unite: pure Christianity necessarily excludes Judaism. In its wider application (for today): none who seek salvation by law-keeping shall enter Heaven.

“So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free” (Gal. 4:31). Here the plain and inescapable conclusion is drawn: since Christians are the children of promise, they, and not carnal Jews, are the true heirs of Abraham. Since the new covenant is superior to the old and believers in Christ are freed from all debasing servitude, it obviously follows they must conduct themselves as the Lord’s freeman: the time had now arrived when to cling to Judaism was *fatal*. The controversy turned on the question of

who are the real heirs of Abraham—see Galatians 3:7, 16, 29. In chapter 4 the Apostle exposes the empty pretensions of those who could claim only fleshly descent from the Patriarch. *We* are the children of Abraham, said the Judaisers. Abraham had *two* sons, replies Paul, the one of free, the other of servile birth: to *which line* do you belong? whose spirit have you received?

To sum up. Paul's design was to deliver the Galatians from the Judaisers. He showed that by submitting to Judaism they would forfeit the blessings of Christianity. This he accomplished by opening up the profound significance of the Covenant "allegory," which presented three principal contrasts: birth by nature as opposed to grace; a state of bondage as opposed to liberty; a status of temporary tenure as opposed to permanent possession. Just as Hagar was rightfully the handmaid of Sarah but was wrongfully accorded the position of Abraham's wife, so the Siniatic Covenant was designed to supplement the Abrahamic but was perverted by the Jews when they sought from it salvation and fruitfulness.—A.W.P.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

7. Its Design—Part 2

The subject of the Divine decrees is so vast in its range (whether we look backward or forward) and so comprehensive in its scope (when we contemplate all that is involved and included in it), that it is far from being an easy task to present a summarized sketch (which is as high as this writer aspires) of the same. And when attempt is made to furnish an orderly outline and deal with its most essential and distinctive features, it is almost impossible to prevent a measure of overlapping; yet if such repetition renders it easier for the reader to take in the prime aspects, our object will be accomplished. Part of what we now wish to contemplate in connection with God's design in our election was somewhat anticipated—unavoidable so—in the article on the Nature of Election, when, in showing that God's original intention was anterior to His foreview of our fall, we touched upon the positive side of His design.

We have sought to point out the infinite distance between the creature and the Creator, the high and lofty One, and that because of the *mutability* of our first estate by nature there was a necessity of *super-creation* grace if the condition and standing of either men or angels was to be immutably fixed, which God was pleased to appoint by an election of grace. And therefore did God by that election also ordain those whom He singled out unto a super-creation union with Himself and communication of Himself, as our highest and ultimate end, which is far above that relation we had to Him by mere *creation*—*thus* being accomplished by and through *Christ*. “Yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him” (1 Cor. 8:6, R.V.). Let us note first the discriminating language used in this verse: there is a pointed difference made here between the “us” and the “all things,” as of a select and special company, which is repeated in the second half of the verse.

We and all other things are from the Father—“of Him” or by His will and power, as the originating cause: this is common to “us” and all of His creatures. But the “we” He speaks of as a severed remnant, set apart to some higher excellency and dignity, and this special company is also referred to as “we through Him” (the Lord Jesus) in contrast from the “through whom are *all* things.” The A.V. gives “one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we *in* (Greek “eis”) Him,” which is quite warrantable, the reference there being to God's taking us into Himself out of a special love and by a special union with Himself: compare “the church of the Thessalonians which is *in* God the Father” (1 Thess. 1:1). But the Greek also imports our being singled out unto His glory, “*for* Him”: our being *in* Him is the foundation of our being *for* Him.

The distinction to which we have just adverted receives further illustration and confirmation in, “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in *you* all” (Eph. 4:6). Here again we find the same difference used about the phrases of the *all things* and the *us*. Of the all things God is said to be “above all,” whereby we understand the sublimity and transcendency of the Divine nature and essence as being infinitely superior to that being which all creatures have by participation from Him. Yet, second, the transcendent One is also imminent, near to, piercing “through” all creatures. He is present with all, yet holding a different being from all—as the air permeates all our dwellings, be they palaces or hovels. But third, when it comes to the saints, it is “*in you* all”: this is

sovereign grace making them to differ from all the rest. God is so united to them as to be made one with them, in a special manner and by a special relationship.

How amazing is that grace which has taken such creatures as we are into union with One so elevated and ineffable as God is! This is the very summit of our privilege and happiness. If we compare Isaiah 57:15 with 66:1, 2, we shall see how God Himself has there emphasized both the sublimity and the transcendency of His own Person and the marvel and measure of His grace toward us. In the former, God speaks of Himself as, “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and lowly spirit”; while in the other He declares, “The Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool . . . but to this man will I look, to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit.” How this demonstrates the infinite condescension of His favour that picks up animated dust, indwells us, communicates Himself to us as to none others—we have a participation of Him such as the angels have not!

Before proceeding farther with our exposition of 1 Corinthians 8:6 so far as it bears upon our present subject, perhaps we should digress for a moment and make a brief remark upon the words, “But to us there is but one God, the Father,” which has been grossly perverted by those who deny a trinity of Persons in the Godhead. The term “Father” here (as in Matt. 5:16; James 3:9, etc.) is not used of the first Person in contradistinction to the Second and Third, but refers to God as God, to the Divine nature as such. If it could be shown from this verse that Christ is not God in the most absolute sense (see Titus 2:13), then by parity of reason it necessarily follows that “one Lord” would deny the Father is Lord, giving the lie to Revelation 11:15, etc. The main thought of 1 Corinthians 8:6 becomes quite intelligible when we perceive that this verse furnishes a perfect antithesis and opposition to the false devices of the heathen religion mentioned in verse 5.

Among the pagans there were many “gods” or supreme deities and many “lords” or middle persons and mediators. But Christians have only one supreme Deity, the Triune God, and only one Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ—cf. John 17:3. Christ has a *double* “Lordship.” First a natural, essential, underived one, belonging to Him considered simply as the second Person of the Trinity. Second, (to which 1 Cor. 8:6 refers), a derived, economical and dispensatory Lordship, received by commission from God, considered as God-man. It was to this allusion was made in last month’s article, wherein it was stated that God decreed the Man Christ Jesus should be taken into union with His Son, and so appointed Him His “sovereign end.” The administration of the universe has been placed under Him: all power is committed to Him: John 5:22, 27; Acts 2:36; Hebrews 1:2. Christ as God-man has equal authority with God (John 5:23), yet under Him, as 1 Corinthians 3:23; “ask of Me” (Psa. 2:8); Philippians 2:11 show.

The next thing in 1 Corinthians 8:6 we would dwell upon is the clause, “and we in Him” (Greek) or as the margin has it, “we for Him.” Such a supernatural union with God and communication of God is His ultimate design towards us in His choosing of us. Hence it is that we so often read that, “for the LORD hath chosen Jacob *unto Himself*, Israel for His peculiar treasure” (Psa. 135:4). “This people have I formed *for Myself*” (Isa. 43:21). “I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men” (Rom. 11:4). This choosing of us is not merely a setting apart from all others to be His peculiar treasure (Exo. 19:5), nor only that God has separated us for His peculiar worship and service to be holy unto

Himself (Jer. 2:3), nor only that we should show forth His praise (Isa. 43:21), for even the wicked shall do that (Prov. 16:4; Phil. 2:11); but we are peculiarly for Himself and His glory, wholly in a way of grace and loving kindness.

All that which grace can do for us in communicating God Himself to us, and all that He will do for us unto the magnifying of His glory, arises wholly out of the *free favour* He shows us. In other words, God will have no more glory in us and on us, than arises out of what He bestows in grace upon us, so that our happiness as the effect will extend as far as His own glory as the end. How wondrous, how grand, how inexpressibly blessed, that God's glory in us should not be severed in anything from our good: God has so ordered things, that not only are the two things inseparable, but co-extensive. If, therefore, God has designed to have a manifestative glory unto the uttermost, He will show forth unto us grace unto the uttermost. It is not merely that God bestows gifts, showers blessings, but communicates to us *Himself* to the utmost that we as creatures are capacitated for.

This is so far above poor human reason that nothing but faith can apprehend it, that we are yet to be "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19). In communicating Himself, God communicates *the whole* of Himself, whether of His Divine perfections so far as to bless us therewith, or of all Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for us to enjoy and have fellowship with. All in God shall as truly serve to make the elect blessed (according to a creature capacity) as serves to make Him blessed in His own immense infinity. If we have God Himself, and the whole of Himself, then are we "heirs of God" (Rom. 8:17), for we are "joint heirs with Christ"; and that God Himself is Christ's inheritance is proved by His own declaration, "the LORD is the portion of mine inheritance" (Psa. 16:5). More than this we cannot have or wish: "He that overcometh shall inherit *all* things; and I will be his *God*, and he shall be My son" (Rev. 21:7).

In consequence of having chosen us for Himself, God *reserves Himself for us*, and all that is in Him. If Romans 11:4 speaks of God's having "reserved to Himself" the elect (see v. 5 and note the "also"), so 1 Peter 1:4 tells that God is "reserved in Heaven for you" as is clear from the fact that God Himself is our "inheritance," and none shall share in this wondrous inheritance but the destined heirs. And there He waits, as it were, till such time as we are gathered to Himself. There He has waited throughout the centuries, suffering the great ones of each generation to pass by, reserving Himself (as in election He did design) for His saints—"as if a great prince in a dream or vision should see the image of a woman yet to be born, and should so fall in love with his foreview of her that he should reserve himself till she is born and grown up, and will not think of or entertain any other love" (Thomas Goodwin). Christian reader, if God has such love for you, what ought to be your love to Him! If He has given Himself wholly to you, how entire should be your dedication unto Him!

When God has brought us safely through all the trials and troubles of this lower world to Heaven, then will He make it manifest that His first and ultimate design in electing us was for Himself, and therefore our first welcome there will be a presenting of us to Himself: "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from failing, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy" (Jude 24), which is here mentioned that we might praise and give Him glory beforehand. The reference here is (we believe) not to Christ (*that* we have in Eph. 5:27; Heb. 2:13), but to the *Father* Himself, as "the presence of His glory" intimates, that being what we are "presented" before. It is the

same Person who presents us to Himself whose glory it is. This is further borne out by, “to the only wise God our Saviour (note the “Father” is distinctly called “our Saviour” in Titus 3:4) be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever. Amen” (Jude 25), all which attributes are those of God the Father in the usual current of doxologies.

God will present us to Himself “with exceeding joy.” This “presentation” takes place at the first coming of each individual saint into Heaven, though it will be more formally repeated when the entire election of grace arrives there. As we on our part—and with good reason—shall rejoice, so God on His part, too. He is pleased to present us with great joy to Himself, as making our entrance into Heaven more His own concern than it is ours. This presenting us to Himself, “before the presence of His glory,” is a matter of great joy to Himself to have us so with Himself: as parents are overjoyed when children long absent return home to them—compare the joy of the Father, in Luke 16. It is because His purpose is accomplished, His eternal design realized, His glory secured, that He rejoices. With this agrees, “He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love: He will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph. 3:17). It was for Himself God first chose us as His ultimate end, and this is now perfected.

Another Scripture which teaches that God has chosen His people *for Himself* is, “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ *to Himself*” (Eph. 1:5). The Greek word rendered “to Himself” may as indifferently (with a variation of the aspirate) be rendered “for Him,” so that with equal warrant and propriety we may understand it, first, as relating to God the Father, He having predestinated us to Himself as His ultimate end in this adoption; or second, to Jesus Christ, who is also one end in God thus predestinating us unto adoption. That the preposition “eis” often signifies “for,” as denoting the end or final cause, appears from many places: for example, in the very next verse, “to (or “for”) the praise of the glory of His grace,” as His grand design; so too in Romans 11:36 “to Him (or “for Him”) are all things.” We shall therefore take this expression in its most comprehensive sense and give it a twofold meaning according to its context and the analogy of faith.

God’s having predestinated us “to Himself” is not to be understood as referring primarily or alone to adopting us as sons to Himself, but as denoting distinctly and immediately His having elected and predestinated us to His own great and glorious Self, and for His great and blessed Son. In other words, the clause we are now considering points to another and larger end of His predestinating us than simply our adoption; although that be mentioned as a special end, yet it is but a lower and subordinate end in comparison with God’s predestinating us *to Himself*. First, He chose us in Christ unto an impeccable holiness which would satisfy His own nature; in addition, He, predestinated us unto the honour and glory of adoption; but over and above all, His grace reached to the utmost extent by predestinating us to Himself—the meaning and marvel of which we have already dwelt upon.

God’s having predestinated us “to Himself” denotes a *special propriety in us*. The cattle upon a thousand hills are His, and they honour Him in their kind (Isa. 43:20), but the Church is His peculiar treasure and medium of glory. The elect are consecrated to Him out of the whole in a peculiar way: “Israel was holiness unto the LORD, the firstfruits of His increase” (Jer. 2:3), which denotes His consecrating them to Himself, as the type in Numbers 18 explains. Christ made a great matter of this in God’s taking us to be His: “I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are *Thine*” (John

17:9); so, too, the Apostle Paul emphasized the same note in, "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. 2:19). It denotes, too, a choosing of us *to be holy* before Him, as consecrating us unto His service and worship, which is specially instanced in Romans 11:4, where the, "I have reserved to Myself" is in contrast from the rest which He left to the worshipping of Baal. But above all, it imports His taking us into the *nearest oneness* and communion with and participation of Himself.

Consider now the phrase in Ephesians 1:5 as meaning "for Him," that is, for Jesus Christ. The Greek words "autos" and hautos" are used promiscuously, either for "him" or "himself," so that we are not straining it at all in rendering it "for Him." It is in the prepositions which are used with reference to Christ in connection with the Church's relation to Him, that His glory is proclaimed: they are in Him, through Him, for Him. Each of these is employed here in Ephesians 1:4, 5—and in that order. We were chosen *in* Him as our Head; predestinated to adoption *through* Him as the means of our sonship; and appointed *for* Him as an end—the honour of Christ as well as the glory of His own grace was made God's aim in His predestinating of us. The same three things are attributed to Christ in connection with creation and providence: see Greek of Colossians 1:16. But it is of God the Father alone, as the Fountain, we read "of Him," (the Originator): Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 5:18.

First God decreed that His own dear Son should be made visibly glorious in a human nature, through an union with it to His own Person; and then for His greater glory God decreed us to be adopted sons through Him, as brethren unto Him, for God would not His Son in humanity should be alone, but have "fellows," or companions to enhance His glory. First, by His comparison with them, for He is "anointed *above* His fellows" (Psa. 45:7), being "the Firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). Second, God gave to His Son an unique honour and matchless glory by ordaining Him to be God-man, and for the enhancing of the same, He ordained that there should be those about Him who might see His glory and magnify Him for the same (John 17:24). Third, God ordained *us* to adoption that Christ might be the means of all the glory of our sonship, which we have through Him, for He is not only our Pattern in predestination, but the virtual cause of it.

Now in God's councils of election, the consideration of Christ's assumption of man's nature was not founded upon the supposition or foresight of the Fall, as our being predestinated *for Him* as the end intimates. Surely, surely, this is obvious. Why, to bring Christ into the world only on account of sin and for the work of redemption were to *subject Him unto us*, making *our* interests the end of His becoming incarnate! That is indeed to get things upside down, for Christ, as God-man, is *the end of us*, and of all things else. Moreover, this were to subordinate the infinite value of His *Person* to the benefits we receive from His *work*; whereas redemption is far inferior to the gift of Himself unto us and we unto Him. It might also be shown that redemption itself was designed by God first for Christ's own glory rather than to meet our need.—A.W.P.

N.B. For much in both parts of this article on *Its Design*, we are again indebted to the invaluable writings of Thomas Goodwin.

OUR ANNUAL LETTER.

“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:6). What need there is for an unerring Guide to direct us through this trackless desert, for none of the world’s ways lead to the celestial Canaan. Never, perhaps, was there a time in human history when it was more urgent for the Christian to be Divinely directed than now. How blessed, then, is the promise in Proverbs 3:6. Yet, be it carefully noted, it is a *conditional* one, and, therefore, cannot be rightfully appropriated by any who ignore that condition. During the seventeen years’ life of this magazine we have (by Grace) to acknowledge the Lord—His supremacy, holiness, and goodness; and now we beg Him to direct us in all our ways concerning it.

At the close of another volume we have abundant cause to acknowledge the Lord’s wondrous grace, in His longsuffering mercy toward us, and in His unchanging faithfulness to the magazine. Once more we are permitted to record that both the editor and his wife (a frail little woman) have been preserved from all sickness, and all our needs have been abundantly met. We have again been spared any financial anxiety: gifts for the “Studies” having come in so freely that every bill has been promptly paid, and a goodly balance is being carried forward. Many letters of encouragement have again come to hand, and we are especially thankful for those from gracious friends whose views of Prophecy differ from ours—something which ought never to alienate affections of saints.

We much regret that we have to chronicle a further small decrease in our circulation, yet seek grace to acknowledge the Lord here, too—owning His sovereignty therein and submitting to His will. The falling off in the number of readers often disheartens us, but we are thankful for those we do have. It is for the sake of the few really interested ones we continue plodding along. Many names now on our list will be dropped with this issue, for unless readers assure us they are genuinely unable to financially support this work, we are not prepared to send the “Studies” to them year after year: it would be wrong in God’s sight to do so, and an injustice to those who gave to the point of sacrifice to use their money in sending to others who are merely looking for something for nothing.

After prayerful deliberation we have decided to reduce the size of “Studies,” so that next year, (D. V.), we shall revert to what it was prior to 1935, namely, twenty-four pages an issue instead of thirty-two. No doubt this will be disappointing news to those cut off from oral ministry and who (under God) look principally to these pages for their spiritual food: yet half a loaf (in this case, three quarters) is better than none. Others, who have less leisure and are pressed for time to give an attentive reading unto so many articles, will welcome the curtailment. We shall endeavour to abbreviate our style and pack more into a smaller compass, while seeking to avoid mere generalizations and the superficial platitudes which characterize so much of the current religious literature.

As we have now completed the lengthy series upon “The Divine Covenants,” we shall, (D.V.), take up in their place the vitally-important subject of the Holy Sabbath. There is urgent need for pressing the claims of this Sacred Day not only upon professing Christians, but also upon the general public. God is very jealous of His Sabbath, and a proper observance of it is both a fundamental criterion of personal piety and of national well-being. There has been a fearful disregard of the Fourth Commandment by the present generation, and unless such wicked desecration be promptly arrested, we can look for nothing else than an outpouring of God’s righteous wrath upon us. Please pray that we may be Divinely guided in preparing these articles. The series on Election will be contin-

ued, and when those on the life of David are completed, we hope to take up the life of Elijah.

As less space is here available we are obliged to be briefer than usual. A few—but very few—responded to our pressing appeal of a year ago; that interested ones would make a real effort to secure some new readers; and we deeply appreciate their kindly efforts—would that more emulated them. We also wish to warmly thank many of those who sent in annual gifts of seven shillings (two dollars) and upwards for allowing us to mail them two or more copies of each issue: this is a great help to us, and we sincerely trust that none of them will ask us to now send them only one copy—mail the extra one to a missionary if you know of no one locally. It is only by thus sending two or more copies to the most interested friends that we have been able to continue publishing until now.

We are most grateful to our prayer helpers, and earnestly solicit a continuation of their intercession both for us personally, and for the fruitfulness of this written ministry—unless God be glorified thereby, we had far better terminate it. We regret that it is not convenient for us to receive any visitors, and respectfully ask that readers who may visit these parts to kindly refrain from calling upon us; but please note that we are always glad to hear from Christian friends, if it be only a line or two, whether it be accompanied by a gift or no. The 1938 bound Volume of the “Studies” should be ready for mailing by the middle of December: to regular readers the price is 4/- (one dollar) post paid, to others 6/-: please note that *all* previous volumes are now out of print. As there is more likelihood of letters being lost during the Holiday rush, we request that no paper money be enclosed in letters likely to reach us during the second half of December, but *only post office orders* (not crossed), but made out to us at Hove, England. With our united Christian love and best wishes to all the Lord’s people, we remain, by God’s sovereign grace, A.W. and V.E. Pink.