

## STUDY XVI

# THE PRESENT INHERITANCE OF THE NEW CREATION

A First-Fruits of the Spirit--True versus False Hopes--Our Hope--The Thief in Paradise--St. Paul's Earnest Desire--"Our Earthly House" and "Our House from Heaven"--The Transfiguration Scene--"The First that Should Rise from the Dead"--Present Joys of the New Creation --"Ask, and Ye Shall Receive, that Your Joy may be Full"-- Faith, a Fruit of the Spirit and a Part of the Inheritance of the New Creation.

NOT ALL of the blessings of the New Creation belong to the future--beyond the veil. A first-fruits of the Spirit, a foretaste of coming blessing, is granted New Creatures in the present life. Amongst these first-fruits may be enumerated the various fruits and graces of the holy Spirit--faith, hope, joy, peace, love, etc. Some may claim that these are intangible and unreal; but we answer that they are as real as the New Creatures are real; and just in the same proportion as the New Creature grows, these elements of his experiences, blessing and development increase. Indeed it will be conceded that these same qualities, as they pertain to earthly things, are the chiefest blessings of the natural man, the qualities which give him his largest degree of blessing and privilege. The New Creatures in Christ, having exchanged earthly hopes and privileges and loves for the heavenly, find the latter much more precious than those surrendered. Earthly loves are often fickle, generally selfish. Earthly hopes are usually ephemeral and illusive. Earthly joys are, at very best, of brief duration and shallow. Earthly ambitions are rarely gratified, and even then have a bitter

with their sweet. Nevertheless, we see the whole world striving to attain these ambitions, joys, hopes, loves, and we are all witnesses that their chiefest pleasure is in the pursuit--that with attainment of any of them comes a measure of

disappointment.

Not so with the New Creation. Their hopes, their joys, their loves, their ambitions, grow continually, fed by the exceeding great and precious promises of the divine Word.

And they bring no disappointment, but satisfaction and the peace of God which passeth all understanding come more and more into their hearts, as the eyes of their faith open wider and wider to comprehend the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of divine wisdom and love, to whose richest blessing they are heirs and joint-heirs through Jesus Christ the Lord.

This land of promise which the New Creatures enter figuratively at the moment of entire consecration, when they receive the spirit of adoption, is a land flowing with milk and honey; and though it has its trials, its conquests, its fightings within and without, yet not only do its victories mean joy and peace, but, under divine instruction and guidance, even its defeats are turned into sources of hope and faith and joy, by him who is able and willing to make all things work together for their good.

### **True Versus False Hopes**

The Apostle calls our attention to the fact that Satan seeks to do injury to the New Creation by presenting himself to them as an angel, or messenger of light. When any confess that they have been begotten of the light, the Truth, the holy Spirit, the Adversary realizes that they are on the way to full escape from the darkness and superstition and deception with which he has enveloped humanity. He then transforms himself, and instead of attempting further to lead directly into superstitions and darkness, he affects to be a leader into more light; and although specially alert in this direction at the present time when clearer light prevails, we

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are not to forget that he has been energetic in the same course ever since the Apostle wrote these words. We find evidences of this in the various creeds of Christendom, which mark endeavors to get out of darkness, but are replete with false theories, false hopes of a seductive character. These, while claiming to be helps to the Christian, claiming to honor God, claiming to expound his Word, are really snares and entanglements to hinder from a proper conception of the Truth. God's wonderful provision of love and mercy, so reasonable in every particular, has been opposed by the Adversary,

not only directly but indirectly, by setting before the Lord's people something which, to their imperfect judgments, might at first appear to be grander hopes and prospects than those set forth by the Truth. The tendency of error, nevertheless, is further and further away from the Truth, from the divine plan, from the simplicity of the Gospel, into confusion of thought, superstition and priestcraft.

Amongst these delusive hopes is the hope that when men die they are not dead--that when dead they are more alive than they ever were. This hope is introduced by the Adversary to antagonize the Scriptural hope of a resurrection of the dead. One or the other of these hopes must be false. The Adversary has succeeded remarkably in foisting upon "Christendom" this false hope, which God's Word does not support, and which is in direct conflict with the teachings of the Word respecting the resurrection of the dead; for if none are dead there could be no "resurrection of the dead."

Another of these false hopes is respecting the time of the rewarding of the Lord's faithful. The Adversary has been equally successful in deluding the nominal church into the belief that instead of waiting for a resurrection of the dead, instead of hoping for a share in the First Resurrection, as the time for receiving reward, they should hope that the dead (are not dead, but) enter their reward through the door of death, instead of by the door of resurrection, as set forth throughout the Scriptures. These false hopes, like all other false things, are injurious, however pleasing they may

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momentarily appear. The Word of God must be our guide, and it instructs us that our hopes respecting future blessing, joy, etc., all rest in the resurrection of the dead.

The false expectations of the past, that the moment of death would be the moment of heavenly glory (contrary not only to all the facts and circumstances demonstrable to the human mind, but opposed to a great mass of Scriptural testimony respecting the resurrection--which awaits the second coming of our Lord for its fulfilment), have been very injurious to the Lord's people, in that they have been led away from his Word and from the true hopes which it inculcates, and which are in full accord with the soundest of reason and all the facts as we see them about us.

It may be suggested that this hope of an instantaneous change to the heavenly condition at the moment of death, is for the last members of the New Creation the very hope advocated in this work. This is true, but there is a reason for

our supporting such a hope in the present time which could not be adduced prior to 1878, the date from which we claim this enlargement of the hope of the Lord's people dates. This expansion of the hopes of the New Creation in this harvest-time is in full accord with the Scriptures. Our thought is not that all men, nor even the members of the New Creation all down through the age, were changed in the moment of their dying; but holding with the Scriptures that they fell asleep in Jesus, we hold also with the same authority that their hope is in the awakening which God has promised should come to them in the new day, the Millennial day. Our hope, built upon the testimony of the divine Word, is that we are already in the dawning of this new day; that Immanuel is already present, establishing his Kingdom; that the first part is the reckoning with his servants, as he particularly pointed out in his parables illustrative of the work to be accomplished at his return to take the Kingdom of earth. The parables declare that he shall call his own servants, unto whom he has committed the pounds

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and talents, and that he will reckon with these before beginning his reckoning with the world. ***Luke 19:15; Matt. 25:14***

This work begins first with the house of God, the Church, the New Creation; and, as already pointed out,\* 1878, A.D., marked the date at which the "dead in Christ" should rise "first." It is in full harmony with the Scriptures, therefore, that we believe that the apostles and faithful saints of the entire age, down to our own day, are already glorified, already possessed of the glorious spiritual bodies promised them, but, because "changed" and made like the Master himself, and hence, as spirit beings, obscured from human sight, beyond the veil. It is in full accord with this Scripturally built hope that we teach that each member of the New Creation still in the flesh will not need now to "sleep," and to wait for the time and establishment of the Kingdom, because the King and Kingdom already are here, the life-giving work of the new dispensation has already commenced, the major portion of the elect New Creation have already been glorified, and the living members merely receiving the completion of their polishing and fitting and testing preparatory to experiencing their share in the First Resurrection--to be "caught away" or "changed" in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye--to be, in the moment of death of the flesh, invested with the new house, the spiritual

body. *2 Cor. 5:1; 1 Thess. 4:17*

In considering this subject, however, we must have before our minds not only these special hopes of this "harvest" time, but also comprehensively what have been the hopes of all the brethren, all the members of the New Creation--the hopes set before us in the Gospel. Let the inspired Word declare these hopes, and then let not the fact that they are very different from those generally entertained by the so-called Christian world cause us concern. True, the "Christian World," in its creeds, sets forth a belief in the second

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\*Vol. II, Chap. vii.

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coming of Christ, and in the resurrection of the dead, but these are merely verbal expressions by which it seeks to maintain some relationship to the Scriptures. These are not the *hopes* of the Christian World--the nominal church; rather, they are its *dread*. They dread the second coming of Christ rather than hope for it; and they dread the resurrection of the dead rather than hope for it; because they have been misled by the great Adversary into a misapprehension of the divine character and plan, and generally believe that the second coming of Christ means the end of hope, the end of probation, the end of mercy; instead of understanding it, as the Scriptures point out, to be really the beginning of great blessing of all the families of the earth, which God long ago promised and has for four thousand years been preparing.

Resurrection, too, is regarded with dread, because false teaching has led to the supposition that the spirit, or breath of life, has a consciousness without a body, and that the body is a sort of prison-house from which spirits are glad to be liberated--a return to which would be in the nature of a punishment. Thus have the traditions of men made void the Word of God, under the influence of the great Adversary, the god of this world, who now blinds so many. But let us look at the Scriptural testimony on this subject, and see how clearly and explicitly it points in every instance to the second advent of Christ, and to the resurrection as, first, the hope of the Church, the New Creation, and second, the hope of the world.

*"Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

*1 Pet. 1:13--R.V.*

*"Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we*

*ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption [deliverance] of our body [the Church, the body of Christ]. For we are saved by hope [not actually saved yet, but merely in an anticipatory sense]." Rom. 8:23,24--R.V.*

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a hope of life by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible,*

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*undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein [in which hope] ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold temptations: that the proving of your faith, being much more precious than gold which perisheth, though it be proven by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. 1:3-7*

*"There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. 4:8*

*"I am not ashamed, for I know him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2 Tim. 1:12--R.V.*

*"We should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us." Titus 2:12-14*

*"This I [Paul] confess unto thee [Felix], that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the prophets, having hope toward God, which things also they themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead." Acts 24:14,15*

*"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."*

**Col. 3:3,4**

*"For the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am called in question this day." Acts 23:6*

*"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever [then] liveth and believeth on me shall never die." John 11:25,26--R.V.*

*"The hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life [the First Resurrection]; and they that have done ill [whose course in the present life will not pass the divine approval as worthy of eternal life] unto the resurrection of judgment [the gradual resurrection under disciplines and rewards during the Millennial age]."\* John 5:28,29--R.V.*

*"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place*

*for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also."* **John 14:2,3**

*"The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."* **Matt. 16:27**

*"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me."* **Rev. 22:12**

*"Behold thy salvation cometh; behold his reward is with him."*

**Isa. 62:11**

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\*See Chap. xvii.

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*"Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the presence [parousia] of the Lord;...stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."*

**James 5:7,8**

*"Say unto them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped,...for in the wilderness waters shall break out and streams in the desert."* **Isa. 35:4-6**

*"At that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book [of life], and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to lasting life [the First Resurrection] and some to shame and lasting contempt [dishonor--from which, however, they may be recovered by the restitution processes then put into operation]; and they that be wise [the little flock, the wise virgins] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament [as the sun--**Matt. 13:43**], and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars [luminaries] forever and ever...But go thy way till the end be [till the "harvest" or end of the age be come]: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."* **Dan. 12:1-3,13.**

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*"A book of remembrance was written before him [Jehovah] for them that feared the Lord; and that thought upon his name; and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."* **Mal. 3:16,17**

Distorted theories and fanciful imaginations come chiefly from human philosophers, who had not the guidance of the lamp of the divine Word, and who have so perverted the judgments of many of the Lord's dear saints that the foregoing and many other explicit declarations respecting the true hopes of the Lord's people are negatived and robbed of their force and beauty and power by other more or less figurative scriptures, which are so wrested out of their true position and meaning as to make them antagonistic to these plain statements. We must examine these in order to have the way of faith and hope and obedience made clear and plain to the eyes of our understanding. We will then proceed to note various other blessings additional to our

hopes, which belong to us in the present life, as a part of the first-fruits of our inheritance.

### **The Thief in Paradise**

*"He said to Jesus, Remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom. And he [Jesus] said to him [the penitent thief], Indeed I say to thee this day, thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Luke 23:42,43*

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Those who consider salvation to be an escape from everlasting torture to a paradise of pleasure, and dependent only on accidental circumstances of favor, think they see exemplified in this narrative the doctrine of *election*--that our Lord Jesus, pleased by the consoling words of the one thief, elected him to heaven, and equally elected that the other should suffer to all eternity, unpitied and unrelieved. Truly, if God has made salvation such a lottery, such a chance thing, those who believe it to be such should have little to say against Church lotteries, and less against worldly ones.

But this is not the case. This scripture has been much misunderstood. To get its true import, let us take in the surroundings and connections.

The Lord had just been condemned, and was now being executed on the charge of treason against Caesar's government, in saying that he was a king; though he had told them that his Kingdom was "not of this world." There, upon the cross above his head, written in three languages, was the crime charged against him: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." Those about knew of his claims and derided him, except one of the thieves crucified alongside. Doubtless he had heard of Jesus and his wonderful character and works, and said in his heart: This is truly a strange and wonderful man. Who can know that there is no foundation to his claims? He certainly lives close to God. I will speak to him in sympathy: it can do no harm. Then he rebuked his companion, mentioning the Lord's innocence; and then the conversation above noted took place.

We cannot suppose that this thief had correct or definite ideas of Jesus--nothing more than a mere feeling that, as he was about to die, any straw of hope was better than nothing. To give him credit for more would be to place him *in faith* ahead of all the Lord's apostles and followers, who at this time had fled dismayed, and who, three days after, said: "We [*had*] trusted that it had been he which should



have redeemed Israel." **Luke 24:21**

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We can have no doubt as to the import of his petition. He meant that whenever Jesus reached his Kingdom power, he desired to be favored, cared for. Now note our Lord's answer. He does not say that he has no kingdom; but, on the contrary, he indicates by his response that the thief's request was a proper one. The word translated "verily" or "indeed" is the Greek word "*amen*," and signifies "*So be it*," or "Your request is granted." "I say to thee this day [this dark day, when it *seems* as though I am an impostor, and I am dying as a felon], thou shalt be with me in Paradise." The substance of this promise is that, when the Lord has established his Kingdom it will be a Paradise, and the thief will be remembered and be in it. Notice that we have changed the comma from before to after the word "today."

This makes our Lord's words perfectly clear and reasonable. He might have told the thief more if he had chosen. He might have told him that the reason he would be privileged to be in Paradise was because his *ransom* was then and there being paid. He might have told him further that he was dying for and ransoming the *other* thief also, as well as the whole gaping and deriding multitude before him, the millions then entombed, and the millions yet unborn. We know this, because we know that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man," "gave himself a ransom for all," that all in due time might have opportunity to return to the Edenic condition, forfeited by the first man's sin, and redeemed for men by Christ's righteous sacrifice.

**Heb. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5,6; Acts 3:19**

As already shown, the garden of Eden was but an illustration of what the earth will be when fully released from the curse--perfected and beautified. The word "paradise" is of Arabic origin, and signifies *a garden*. The Septuagint renders **Gen. 2:8** thus: "God planted a *paradise* in Eden." When Christ shall have established his Kingdom, and bound evil, etc., this earth will gradually become a paradise, and the two thieves and all others that are in their graves shall come into it, and then by becoming obedient to its laws they may

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live in it and enjoy it forever. We doubt not, however, that the kind words spoken in that dark hour to the suffering Savior will no more lose a special and suitable reward than

the gift of a cup of water, or other small kindnesses, done to those whom this King is "not ashamed to call his *brethren*."

***Matt. 10:42***

In the Scriptures Paradise is used to describe man's primeval state of bliss, in harmony with his Creator, before the curse and blight of sin entered into the world. This Paradise lost to mankind is promised to be restored; and in a more or less vague manner the whole creation has been and is waiting and hoping for the Golden Age thus to be inaugurated.

The Scriptures present to us the thought that the Paradise state has been redeemed for man by our Lord Jesus' death, and that as a consequence a part of his glorious restitution work will be to restore Paradise--"that which was lost"--the purchased possession. ***Matt. 18:11; Eph. 1:14; Rev. 2:7***

But have we a right to alter the position of the comma? Certainly: the punctuation of the Bible is not inspired. The writers of the Bible used *no punctuation*. It was invented about four hundred years ago. It is merely a modern convenience, and should be so used as to bring out sense, in harmony with all other scriptures.

Instances of a similar use of the word "today" in modern literature are quite frequent; and in the Scriptures we call attention to the following:

*"Therefore I command thee this thing today." Deut. 15:15*

*"I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil."*

***Deut. 30:15***

*"I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God." Deut. 30:16*

*"I would to God that not only thou but also all that hear me this day were both almost and altogether such as I am, save these bonds." Acts 26:29*

Not only does the sense of this passage require the punctuation suggested, but its harmony with all the remaining scriptures similarly demands it, and there can be no reasonable or valid objection to it offered. To suppose that our Lord went to Paradise immediately, would be to suppose

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an impossibility, for Paradise has not yet been re-established. Furthermore, it is distinctly stated that our Lord's body was buried in Joseph's tomb, and that his soul, or being, went to sheol, hades, oblivion, and that he was *dead*, and not alive in Paradise or elsewhere, in the interim. The Scriptures distinctly assure us, not that our Lord came down from heaven, or from Paradise, at his resurrection; but that he "rose from the dead, on the third day, according

to the Scriptures." (**1 Cor. 15:4**) Our Lord's own words, after his resurrection, were, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." (**Luke 24:46**) Again he said to Mary, "I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; unto my God and your God." **John 20:17**

### St. Paul's Earnest Desire

*"For me to live is [to live] for Christ, and to die, gain. But if to live in the flesh, this is to me a fruit of labor; and what I should choose I do not exactly know. I am indeed hard pressed by the two things [I have an earnest desire for the returning and being with Christ, since it is very much to be preferred]; but to remain in the flesh is more requisite on your account."* **Phil. 1:21-24**, Diaglott translation

It will be observed that the chief difference between the above and the common English version of this passage is the substitution of the word "return" for the word "depart." In justification of the use of the word "return" the translator in a footnote says:

*"To analusai, the loosing again or the returning, being what Paul earnestly desired, could not be death or dissolution, as implied by the word depart in the common version; because it seemed a matter of indifference to him which of the two--life or death--he should choose; but he longed for the analusai, which was a third thing, and very much to be preferred to either of the other two things alluded to. The word analusai occurs in **Luke 12:36**, and is there rendered return--'Be you like men waiting for their master, when he will return,'*

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etc. Jesus had taught his disciples that he would come again, or return (**John 14:3,18**); thus, also, the angels said to them at his ascension. (**Acts 1:11**) Paul believed this doctrine and taught it to others, and was looking for and waiting for the Savior's (analusai) return from heaven (**Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:16,17**) when he would 'ever be with the Lord.'"

An examination of the Greek word *analusai* shows that it is used in Greek literature by Plato in both ways--as signifying sometimes *depart*, and sometimes *return*; but the word occurs only twice in the New Testament, here and in **Luke 12:36**. In the latter instance, as stated above, it is rendered "return," and manifestly could not be otherwise rendered and preserve the sense. In the case we are discussing

(*Phil. 1:23*), we hold that it should be rendered *return*, for the very simple reason that, even when used to signify *depart*, it must carry with it the thought of depart *again*--to depart to a place where one had previously been. The Greek prefix *ana* in *ana-lusai* signifies *again* as our prefix *re* in *re-turn* signifies *again*. Hence, if rendered *depart*, we would be obliged to add the thought *re-depart* or depart *again*. And this would spoil the matter as related to St. Paul; for he had never been with Christ in glory, and, hence, could not "depart *again*" to be there with Christ. But when we translate *analsai* "re-turning," and apply it to our Lord, every difficulty seems to be removed.

Let us note the circumstances which gave rise to the expression. The Apostle had been for some time a prisoner at Rome, and while at times well treated by some of the Emperors, he was constantly liable to be put to death on some caprice. He wrote this Epistle in acknowledgment of a substantial gift from the Church at Philippi, and took the opportunity to tell them fully of his own condition, the progress of the Lord's work, etc., and to encourage them to steadfastness to the end.

Since they would like to know his prospects for release, he tells them that enemies (seeing his liberty for two years--

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*Acts 28:30*) were explaining Christianity, hoping thereby to add affliction and perhaps death to his bonds. (*Phil. 1:16-19*) But he realized the prayers of the Church on his behalf and expected that his trial before Nero would result in his *deliverance*--either by acquittal or by death. Then he tells them that, as to his *own* preferences, it would be difficult for him to choose between life (with its sufferings) and death (with its rest from toil); but while he had no choice as between these two things possible, he had a longing, an intense desire, for a thing he well knew was impossible, a thing which he knew, and had taught the Church, was a long way off (*2 Thess. 2:1-8*)--the *returning* of Christ and being with him. Then, leaving the impossible and returning to the possibilities, he assures them that he has a conviction that God has a work for him yet to do for the Church, and that he would be released. And although the Scriptures give no account of it, tradition declares that he was acquitted by Nero and had some five years of liberty and service before being rearrested and executed.

It is worthy of note here that other words are repeatedly used in the writings of both Paul and Luke when *depart* is

manifestly meant. And it should be remembered that Luke was the Apostle's amanuensis, who traveled much with him and was accustomed to use words in the same sense.

But if any yet contend for the word "depart," rather than "return," we submit the following:

No doubt Paul would have desired, especially in view of his knowledge that the Lord's second coming could not occur soon, that he might depart to heaven or anywhere else in order to be with the Lord at once. But he knew that such a desire could not be granted in harmony with the divine plan; and hence, although it would have been his earnest desire, it did not enter into consideration as one of the possible things. He was still left in a strait of indecision as to his own preference of the two possible things--to live and serve the Church in suffering, or to die and rest from his labors--waiting "for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing

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of the great God [our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ]," "who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." *Titus 2:13; Phil. 3:21*

#### **"Our Earthly House" and "Our House from Heaven" --2 Cor. 5:1-10--**

The Apostle is writing to the New Creation respecting their condition--not including the natural man. He recognizes the new will as the New Creature, and the old body as its "tabernacle," or tent, which is much better than none, though quite unsatisfactory. The New Creature cannot feel perfectly at home in it, but earnestly longs for the perfect body, to be his in the resurrection--his permanent home, or share in the "mansion" our Lord promised to prepare for the New Creation. (*John 14:2*) "We know that if our earthly house of this temporary dwelling-place were dissolved, we have a permanent structure of God, a house not made with hands [not produced by human powers], everlasting, heavenly."

It is true that in this present body, or temporary house of pilgrimage, we groan--oppressed not only by the evil influence of the world and the devil on every hand, but also and especially by the weaknesses of our own flesh. For when we would do good, evil is present with us, so that the good which we would do we are often hindered from doing,

while the evil which we do not approve often obtrudes itself on us and requires to be continually resisted and overcome. As the Apostle elsewhere declares, we "which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the deliverance of our body"--the Church, into the glorious likeness of our Lord.

But our groaning is not with a desire to be unclothed. We do not wish to be without a body, for that at very best all down through the Gospel age would mean to be "asleep," waiting for the resurrection morning to be "clothed upon

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with our house from heaven," our new, perfect and permanent body, our "home." What we prefer is not to have the little spark of present life extinguished, but to have it swallowed up, absorbed into the perfect conditions of the perfect life to which we are begotten. We long for resurrection birth, with its perfect body.

"Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit." This perfect condition, which we are to obtain in the resurrection, will be the grand consummation of our salvation, which God has promised; and the new mind, the new will begotten by the Word of truth, is reckoned as the beginning of that New Creature, which will be perfected in the divine nature when the first resurrection shall have completed it. The holy Spirit granted us in the present time is a prepayment, so to speak--an "earnest" or assurance of the grand and gracious results for which we are hoping and striving, groaning and praying.

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body [so long as we feel entirely contented with present conditions--ourselves and our surroundings], we are absent from the Lord." If we were living near to him, "walking with God," we would not feel perfectly satisfied with present attainments, conditions, etc.; but would feel like pilgrims and strangers, seeking a better rest, a better home, "which God hath in reservation for them that love him." But this, as the Apostle explains, is true only of those who walk by faith and not by sight.

But we are confident [full of faith toward God, we rejoice to walk by faith], and are well pleased rather to be from home [homeless, pilgrims and strangers on the earth] and to be at home with the Lord in the spirit of our fellowship.

For this cause we are striving, that whether it be by and

by when we reach our home, or whether it be in the present time when we are actually away from home, pilgrims and strangers, we strive that we may be acceptable with the Lord; that we may have his favor and blessing and realize

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his fellowship and presence and know that we shall ultimately be accepted by him.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." All through this pilgrimage we are standing at the bar of our Lord's judgment: he is testing us, proving us, to see whether or not we love him and the things which make for righteousness and peace; and if so, how much we are willing to sacrifice for righteousness' sake. He marks the degree of our love by the measure of our self-denials and self-sacrifices for his sake, the Truth's sake.

But thus to speak of our bodies as houses can be true only of the "saints," the "New Creatures" in Christ. Others of mankind have not duality of nature, and could not properly apply to themselves such expressions as that of **Romans 8:10,11**, "If Christ be in you the *body* is [reckoned] *dead* because of sin; but the spirit alive because of [the imputed] righteousness" of Christ. The new nature of the saints, begotten by the Word of truth, is really only the new *will*, which, however, is thenceforth addressed as the real person, and it alone is recognized of God, who knows us not after the flesh but after the spirit of our new minds--Christ-minds. Notice also **Romans 6:3,4**. These "New Creatures" have an old man, or outward man, that is perishing, and a new man, inward man, or hidden man of the heart, who is being renewed day by day. **2 Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:9,10; Eph. 4:23,24; 1 Pet. 3:4**

### The Transfiguration Scene

Little did the disciples imagine that our Lord's statement that some of them should not taste of death until they had seen the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom, would be fulfilled within six days to Peter, James and John in the Mount of Transfiguration. Yet so it was; and evidently it produced a great and designed effect upon the witnesses, one of whom, writing respecting it, says (**2 Pet. 1:16-18**),

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"We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."

The transfiguration scene was not all that it appeared. It was a "vision," as our Lord explained to the disciples when they were coming down from the mount. In this vision, as in all visions, the unreal appears real. Just so it was in the vision of John, on the Isle of Patmos, described in the book of Revelation. He saw, he heard, he talked; yet the things thus shown him in the vision were not realities--not beasts with many heads and many horns, and angels and vials and thrones, nor real dragons, etc., merely a *vision*. And a vision was in every sense of the word just as good, and really better suited to the purpose than realities would have been.

### **"The First that Should Rise from the Dead"**

Moses and Elias were not present on the mountain, personally, but were merely represented to the disciples in the vision. We know this not only from our Lord's statement, that it was a "vision," but also from his statement that no man had ascended up to heaven. (*John 3:13; Acts 2:34*) We know also that Moses and Elijah could not have been there, since they were not resurrected from the dead; because our Lord Jesus himself was the "First-fruits of them that slept"--"The first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." *1 Cor. 15:20; Col. 1:18*

Furthermore the Apostle to the Hebrews distinctly mentions Moses and the prophets (which would include Elijah) and their faithfulness in the past and their acceptance with God; but he points out that they had not yet received their reward, and that they would not receive it until after we (the Gospel Church) shall have received our reward as

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joint-heirs with Christ in his Kingdom. "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the [blessings of the] promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." *Heb. 11:39,40*



Since, then, the appearance of Moses and Elias with our Lord was an appearance merely, we properly inquire, What was the significance or meaning of this vision? We reply, It was a tableau, illustrative of the glorious Kingdom of Christ, as our Lord had predicted, and as Peter understood it and expressed it. In this tableau, the three disciples formed no part. They were merely witnesses. Christ was the central figure; his features and garments, shining with miraculous lustre, represented in figure the glories which belong to the spirit nature, which our Lord received at his resurrection, "the express image of the Father's person." It is this same spirit glory that is represented in the visions of Revelation, where our Lord is represented with eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet bright as burning brass, etc. (*Rev. 1:14,15; 2:18*) At his second advent our Lord will no longer be flesh, because, as he testified, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." He is now, and ever will be, a glorious spirit being of the highest order--the divine nature: and the transfiguration was intended to convey to the minds of his disciples a faint conception of the glory which excelleth.

Moses represented the faithful overcomers who preceded our Lord, described by the Apostle (*Heb. 11:39,40*), who cannot be *made perfect* until the Kingdom shall have been established. Elijah represented the overcomers of the Gospel age. See Vol. II, Chap. viii.

### **Present Joys of the New Creation**

*"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11*

All who from a standpoint outside the "house of sons"--those who have not consecrated themselves, and have not

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therefore become members of the New Creation, the Royal Priesthood--seeing that the members of the body of Christ have, like their Lord, made a full consecration of self and every earthly interest to the Lord and his cause, are apt to consider that in this sacrifice every joy is lost. But every member of the New Creation knows the contrary, and can testify that this is a great mistake--that though some earthly joys, once held very dear, are sacrificed one by one, in their places come heavenly joys that far more than compensate

for the loss. As our Lord again said, "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." (*John 16:20*) The New Creation must all taste of the bitter cup which the Lord drained to the dregs; they must all be touched with sympathy for the infirmities of the flesh; they must all realize distinctly the exceeding sinfulness and bitterness of sin; they must all be tested concerning their loyalty to the heavenly Father, and their willingness to sacrifice every earthly thing as the interest of his cause and faithfulness to the right may demand. But blessings come through all such tears and sorrows and disappointments--the blessings of a realization of divine approval, a joy superior to that of the natural man, the joys of the Lord, fellowship and communion with the Father.

There could be no such joys were it not for our blessed hopes. If our joys were dependent upon circumstances of this life merely, we should be without joy; and, as the Apostle has declared, be "of all men most miserable." (*1 Cor. 15:19*) It is when hope has laid firm hold upon the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word, that joys spring up as flowers in a desert, vivified by our tears--such flowers of joy and blessing as the poor world in its wilderness condition could not produce or imagine. And as our joys depend upon our hopes they depend also upon our activities. It is not sufficient that a promise has been left us, and that our hope has grasped the promise. By divine arrangement the joy which springs into being through the implanted hopes and prospects must be nourished by prayer,

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and by activity in the Lord's service. Our Lord indicates the close relationship between prayer and the perpetuation of our joys, saying:

**"Ask and Ye Shall Receive, that Your  
Joy may be Full"  
--John 16:24--**

"In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore," declares the prophet. (*Psa. 16:11*) It is because prayer brings the soul into the presence of the Lord that it prepares the way for divine blessing and superlative joys. Evidently the opening of the way for the Lord's people to approach the throne of grace is not with the object of their changing the divine will or plans. Such a thought is incompatible with every reasonable consideration

of the subject; hence, the Lord instructs us that proper praying is not along the line of making requests that our wills be done, in opposition to the divine will, but along the line of full submission to the latter. The Apostle declares of some, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss"--in harmony with your own desires, and not in harmony with the divine arrangement and plan. **James 4:3**

Along the same line our Lord admonished: "Use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking; but your heavenly Father *knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him*. Be not careful [worried], therefore, respecting what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, and wherewithal ye shall be clothed, for after these things do the Gentiles seek; but seek ye primarily the Kingdom of God and righteousness in harmony with it, and all these needful earthly things shall be added unto you--by your Father in heaven, according to his wisdom." (**Matt. 6:25-34**) Again, our Lord says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." (**John 15:7**) The following conditions are all-important:

(1) The one offering the prayer must be in Christ--must

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have come into vital relationship with him by the acceptance of the merit of his atonement sacrifice, and by a consecration to his will and service; and, more than this, he must continue to abide thus in Christ as a member of his body, as a member of the New Creation, in order to have the privileges of prayer here referred to.

(2) He must also let the Lord's Word abide in him; he must partake of the Word of truth and grace if he would have the wisdom necessary to ask, in harmony with the Lord's will, things which he would be pleased to grant--otherwise, even though in Christ a New Creature, his prayers might frequently go unanswered, because "amiss." It is only those who profess both of these qualifications who may expect to approach the throne of heavenly grace with full confidence, full assurance of faith that their petitions will be answered--in God's due time. Only such can realize fullness of joy.

As the Scriptures explain, prayer is the attempt to gain access to the presence of God, and to hold communion with him. Who then may approach the throne of the heavenly grace to "obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need?" (**Heb. 4:16**) We answer, with the Apostle, that the

world in general does not have this access, does not have this privilege of prayer. True, indeed, millions of heathen people are offering prayers to Deity with varying conceptions of who and what he is; but their prayers are not acceptable to God. "He that cometh unto God must believe that he is [must recognize him as the self-existing One], and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him [seek to know him, to obey him, to serve him]." (*Heb. 11:6*) Cornelius was one of this latter kind, who recognized the true God and revered him, and sought to know and do his will; and, as soon as the divine plan had reached the necessary stage of development to permit God's favor to be extended to the Gentiles, his prayers and his alms received a response. He was not, however, permitted to have communion with God in the full, proper sense; but was instructed to

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send for Peter, who would tell him "*words*" by which he might be brought from his condition of alienation and separation into a condition of harmony and sonship, in which he would have the privilege of a son--the privilege of access to the Father at the throne of heavenly grace.

The generally loose ideas which prevail in respect to this subject, under which it is supposed that any person, anywhere, and at any time and under any conditions, may approach the throne of grace with acceptance, are erroneous. As it was necessary, before Cornelius could use this privilege of prayer-communion, that he should hear and believe and accept the *words* of Peter--explaining to him the redemption through the blood of Christ and the reconciliation thus effected and the privilege thus granted of being brought into God's family--so a like knowledge is equally necessary for every person.

The Apostle Paul expresses the same thought, declaring that Christ opened up for *us* "a new and living way," or "a new way of life," through the veil--that is to say, his flesh; and that we may have boldness as *brethren* to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Such "brethren," related to the great High Priest over the house of God, are exhorted to "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith," recognizing that their sins and iniquities have been fully covered, and that they themselves have been fully accepted of the Father. (*Heb. 10:17-22*) Again, the same Apostle declares that it is *we* who have an High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who may "therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that *we* may obtain

mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

**Heb. 4:15,16**

But while only the consecrated class, the under-priesthood, the New Creation, are thus encouraged to approach the throne with courage and confidence, very evidently all who even but tentatively belong to the "household of faith" may to some extent enjoy the privileges of thanksgiving and praise, and may rejoice in God, in a realization of the

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provision he has made for the complete forgiveness of sins through the merit of the atonement. Nevertheless, it is not their privilege to come with boldness, or in any other manner, into the Holy of Holies. Only the consecrated, the New Creation, the members of the body of the Priest, are privileged to enter into the presence of God in prayer in this special sense; and they only, therefore, may have the fulness of joy which the Master promised. Hence, while we may not even suggest to unbelievers the propriety of prayer, but should first instruct them with the "words," as Peter instructed Cornelius, that they may know him upon whom they must believe before they could have any standing before God, we may nevertheless, encourage all who have believed on the Lord Jesus to give thanks and to offer praise to the Father through Jesus Christ. Such should, however, be given freely to understand that their tentative justification through faith is not the accomplishment of the divine will in them, but merely the beginning of the proper course of approach to God--the first step in that approach--and that the second step of full consecration to the divine will must be taken by those who would enjoy the proper privileges of prayer, of communion with God and of the fulness of joy associated therewith.

It should be pointed out to them that a failure to take the second step would imply a disposition to receive the grace of God [justification] in vain. (**2 Cor. 6:1**) After enjoying prayer-privileges of this kind for a season, and refusing to go on to make a full consecration of themselves to the Lord, these should very properly feel a diffidence in respect to prayer--should feel it to be improper to be continually receiving divine favors and asking for more, while withholding from the Lord the consecration of their hearts--their reasonable service. As the consecrated class is in the Scriptures designated the spouse of Christ, so the general household of faith would properly represent those to whom the privileges of espousal are thrown open. The New Creation,

as the espoused Bride of Christ, having surrendered heart

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and tongue and every power and energy to its Lord and his service, may reasonably and gratefully accept from him the blessings, privileges, protection, supervision and gifts which he has been pleased to promise to it as his espoused Bride.

As a woman who had rejected a suitor and had refused to give him her hand and heart could not reasonably look to him afterward for the care and protection and blessing and privileges and joys which he had already freely tendered her, so those who continually reject divine favor, to the extent of refusing to make a consecration of their little all to the Lord, could not with any propriety look to him, or ask of him the blessings which he has promised to those who love him and who manifest their love by their devotion, their consecration. A proper recognition should be made of this distinction between those who merely believe in the forgiveness of sins at the hands of the Lord and those who have appreciated that favor and gone on to consecration and full relationship with the Lord. The fact that these divinely drawn lines between the different classes of believers are not more clearly recognized is a disadvantage to both. The distinction between the believers and unbelievers should be sharply defined. All of the former should be recognized as brethren, "of the household of faith," but not so the latter. Again, the distinction between those believers who have consecrated themselves and those who have not should be clearly traced, and the former should be recognized as the Church, the New Creation, the Royal Priesthood, to whom all the exceeding great and precious promises belong.

If these distinctions were clearly recognized it would be of advantage (1) to the world, leading to more thorough investigation and a more tangible faith; (2) of advantage also to the unconsecrated believers, leading them to realize that unless they go on to a full consecration they are not joint-heirs with the saints in any sense of the word, either in the future glories or the present privileges and joys. (3) To realize this would, we believe, have also a stimulating effect upon the unconsecrated, leading them more frequently to a

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positive decision by dispelling their unfounded imaginings that somehow or other merely believing in Christ, without

consecration, constitutes them sons of God and heirs, and entitles them to participate in the richest divine promises which lay hold upon the present life and that which is to come.

The bruised reed we would not break, and the smoking flax we would not quench; but we would have the bruised reeds realize that in order properly to share in the blessings of God, present or future, they must avail themselves of divine favor upon divine conditions--they must wholly consecrate themselves, if they would cease to be bruised reeds, and become useful in the Lord's service. The smouldering faith we would not quench, but would fan it into a flame of sacred love which would induce a full consecration of self--a full sacrifice, according to the divine invitation, and thus lead to participation in the joys present and to come.

As we have already noted,\* the Apostle declares that the children of believers are counted in with them as sharers in the divine grace of justification--as no longer unholy, but justified in a *tentative* sense. This justified standing and its relationship to divine care and providence continues from birth until the age of discretion; and such children evidently have much the same privilege as the justified in the matter of prayer, receiving also in like proportion of the joys and blessings resulting. From earliest infancy they should be taught to regard the Almighty, the God of their parents, as their God, and from an early age they should be given to understand that as the parent has his standing with God through Christ, so indirectly the child has its standing and relationship with Christ through his parent. The consecrated parent or parents in every Christian home may be considered, therefore, as in a sense the priests of the household, and while the child may properly be encouraged to pray to the Lord, the lesson should not be neglected that the family and all of its interests and concerns

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are under divine supervision as a family, on account of the consecrated parent or parents, members of the New Creation. The child should be taught to look eagerly forward to the time when its expansion of mind and judgment would properly permit it to make full consecration of itself to the Lord, and thus to enter into the privileges and joys promised to such.

While the New Creatures in Christ Jesus are exhorted in

the above text not to seek for, not to be anxious concerning, and not to pray for earthly things--what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, and wherewithal shall ye be clothed, but to trust all these matters to the wisdom and love of the Father --they are instructed concerning one thing which the Father will be very pleased to have them pray for, and concerning which he will be pleased to answer their petitions largely. That one thing for which they should specially seek and specially pray is the holy Spirit--the spirit of holiness, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Truth, the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of love. The Master's words are, "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good [earthly] gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?" *Luke 11:13*

Here, then, we have distinct information respecting what should be the basis of all our petitions, if we would have them answered. Thus we must pray if we would not ask amiss. Our affections must be set on things above, and not on things beneath--upon the robe of Christ's righteousness and our future glorious apparel, when we shall be like our Lord and see him as he is, rather than on earthly apparel. Our affections must be upon the spiritual food--upon the bread which came down from heaven, and upon all the precious promises of God of which Christ is the center and substance. These we must seek, these we must appropriate; and for these, therefore, the substance of our prayers will be. Thus our watching, praying and daily seeking will be in full accord. Moreover, thanksgiving must largely take the place of requests, from the time that we learn of the lengths

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and breadths and heights and depths of the divine provision, for both the New Creation and for our dear ones according to the flesh, and for all the families of the earth. What could we ask for more or better than God has already promised?

Surely we could ask nothing more than has been promised respecting the future glories of the New Creation; nor could we ask more respecting the present joys of the same class. Every provision that reason could imagine, every want, every necessity, has already been anticipated for us and provided--given to us for the taking. We merely lack wisdom as to how to take, how to appropriate these divine provisions. Giving thanks, therefore, we merely ask for wisdom and grace so to partake of them that our joy may be



full. Our requests, therefore, must be for increased filling with the holy Spirit--wisdom from above.

What more could we ask on behalf of the world than divine providence has already arranged? Nothing! The glorious "times of restitution" promised in the Word more than meet all the grandest anticipations or hopes that the wisest of men could have ever entertained. We can, therefore, only thank God and acknowledge his goodness, seeking to cooperate therewith, and to realize our need of wisdom. Hence the invitation that we may ask this help of God's holy Spirit or power--"wisdom from on high." "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not." (*James 1:5*) By this wisdom we may be enabled so to conduct ourselves, so to speak and act, as will be helpful to others; and in this direction, therefore, should be our prayers, that we may cooperate with God along the generous, benevolent lines which he has already marked out--to ask a betterment of which would be an absurdity.

This great privilege of access to the presence of God, of entering by faith into the Most Holy, of approaching the throne of grace, and obtaining mercy and finding help in every time of need, may be adapted to all the varying conditions with which we are surrounded.

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It is ours for personal use--that we may individually closet ourselves with the Lord and commune with him; and by his mercy this communion with him, this separation from distracting things, may be enjoyed when actually withdrawn from the company of others. Where this is impossible, and where no opportunity comes for bowing the knees, and raising the voice even to a whisper, it is the privilege of the New Creation to have access to the Father in mental communion. When on the street, when surrounded by confusion and turmoil, the heart may uplift itself and seek both wisdom and strength at the throne of grace. How blessed are these privileges! Those who most use them most enjoy them. Unlike earthly things, they become the more precious as they become the more familiar.

Prayer in the family circle is the going of the family into the "secret closet"--into the Lord's presence, away from the world. This may not always be possible; but where the opportunity exists, it should not be neglected. If, however, favorable occasion cannot be made, doubtless the Lord will take the will as instead of the performance, and grant blessings

accordingly. The influence of the family altar and of the prayer incense ascending therefrom to the heavenly Father, and the acknowledgment there made of his grace, mercy, power and blessing, are sure to bring additional blessing, not only to the Royal Priest who serves his family thus, but to every member of that family. A feeling of reverence for God, of responsibility to him and a realization of his loving, protecting care, goes with that family throughout the day. And if in the evening it be possible again to gather as a family to acknowledge divine mercies, and to render thanks, the blessing is only increased, as was the widow's cruse of oil, as it was poured forth continually into vessel after vessel. **2 Kings 4:1-7**

Prayer in the Church is the going of the Lord's family into the "secret closet" of divine presence, apart from the world. It is vitally necessary to its progress, its health, its spiritual development. Its neglect is sure to result in a loss of power, a loss of privilege and service, and a corresponding

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loss of joy. We are wholly out of sympathy, however, with the kind of public praying referred to by a Boston newspaper, when, in reporting a religious meeting, it said: "Rev. Dr. ----- made the most beautiful and eloquent prayer ever offered to a Boston audience!" There is too much of this matter of praying to the audience instead of praying to God. The Scriptures not only encourage public and audible prayers amongst the Lord's people, but point out, also, that he who prays should remember his audience in connection with his ministry, and perform the service so that he who hears may be able to say "Amen," whether audibly or in his heart. **1 Cor. 14:13-17**

It was the wisdom from above, the holy Spirit, which guided the Apostle Paul when going into a new city with the Gospel, to seek out those assembled at a place "where prayer was wont to be made." (**Acts 16:13**) And it is a fact, still, that both the knowledge and the love of God abound most amongst those of his people who pray one for another, that their joy may be full. However many meetings the Lord's people may have for the study of his Word, and for the building up of one another in the most holy faith, we advocate that no service be considered as properly commenced except the Lord's blessing upon the study be first invoked; and that no meeting be considered properly closed until the Lord be thanked for the privilege and blessings

enjoyed, and for his blessing bestowed--that the Word of his grace may be meat indeed to the hearts of those who have heard with sincere desire to know and do his will.

### **Faith a Fruit of the Spirit and a Part of the Present Inheritance of the New Creation**

Faith must be ours before we can become children of God at all--yea, before our justification--for we are "justified by faith" ere we receive peace with God and forgiveness of sins. This faith which we had before we received the holy Spirit cannot, therefore, be the faith which is the fruit of the Spirit--the gift of the Spirit. Faith is the operation, the exercise,

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of our minds in respect to God and his promises. Those who cannot exercise confidence in God, whether because of ignorance or because of fallen conditions of the mind, are in a state in which it is impossible for them to be blessed under the provisions of this Gospel age; but not in a condition which would bar them from a share in the blessings of the age to come--the Millennial age. The call of this Gospel age is to those who can and who will walk by faith, not by sight--and whoever cannot or will not so walk cannot now walk with God. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Whoever has not such faith to begin with can make no beginning at the present time; and even if he have the faith to begin with, unless it grows and develops he will lack the power of being an overcomer; because "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." **1 John 5:4**

We should recognize a wide difference between faith and credulity. Millions of people are credulous and superstitious, and believe a thousand and one unreasonable things for which they have no adequate evidences. Nor are these superstitious people, believing what they ought not to believe, to be found only in heathen lands. Millions of them bear the name of Christian, with some denominational attachment. Superstition and credulity are to be condemned, reproofed, avoided, overcome. The true faith is to be encouraged, built up, strengthened, caused to grow. The faith of God is the faith, confidence, trust, which builds upon the divine promises and not upon human traditions, philosophies or imaginings.

If we believe that God is what his name implies, the self-existing One, the all-powerful, all-wise, all-just and all-loving Creator, and if we believe that he is the rewarder of

those who diligently seek him, the effect will be that we will seek him--seek to know and to understand his Word; and that knowing and understanding it, we will have confidence in it; and that having confidence in it, we will direct our course in life accordingly. This beginning of faith, under divine favor, is pointed to Christ as the new and living

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way of reunion with God and return to his favor. As this faith grasps Jesus, and exercises itself in obedience, it increases, and the Lord's blessing comes upon it the more, enlightening it respecting the terms of acceptance and of membership in the New Creation. The growing faith grasps the promises of God--of becoming heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ the Lord and Redeemer. The result is the blessing of the Spirit--the begetting, the anointing, the adoption as sons.

The further result is the greater enlightenment with the light of the golden candlestick in the Holy, enabling the eye of faith to see things not seen from without--to recognize the High Priest's special ministry in respect to the light, in respect to the shewbread, in respect to the incense of the golden altar, and at the mercy seat beyond the veil. As the living, obedient faith gradually takes in these various features of divine favor and blessing, as revealed in the divine Word, it grows stronger and stronger, clearer and clearer, and becomes an elementary part of the new mind. It sees from this vantage point things which it could not see previously, and respecting which the Apostle declares, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man [the natural man] the things which God hath in reservation for those who love him." *1 Cor. 2:9*

Through the Word of promise, illustrated by the Spirit, it sees exceeding great and precious things, heavenly things, the glories to be attained in the First Resurrection--the Kingdom, then to be established--the reign of righteousness bringing blessing to all the families of the earth--the subjugation of sin and the destruction of every individual and thing that will not cooperate to the glory of God and in accordance with the divine law of love. The New Creature sees all this with the eye of faith, the eye of understanding; and the Apostle assures us that this eye can behold many of these things that are not clear and distinct to the natural man--because "God hath revealed them

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unto us by his Spirit, which searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." *1 Cor. 2:9,10*

This Spirit-begotten faith in things not seen as yet is a part of the present inheritance of the New Creation, and is intimately associated with its every hope and every joy--giving the only possible foretaste of the "glories to follow." Indeed, as the Apostle explains, it is the foundation upon which all our joys and hopes are builded. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen." By it things that are not yet seen become as tangible to our minds as the things that are seen; yea, says the Apostle, from this standpoint we learn to esteem that the things we see with our natural eyes are temporal, while the things we do not see with our natural eyes, but behold with the eyes of our faith, are the real, the tangible, the eternal ones.

How necessary faith is to the attainment and retention of our present inheritance, the foretaste of coming blessings, is clearly shown by the Apostle James, who, after saying, "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God that giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him"--adds, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." (*James 1:5-8*) The Apostle thus shows how impossible it would be for anyone to become an overcomer without becoming strong in faith. Hence, the Scriptures everywhere inculcate growth in faith, and all of the Lord's people need to pray as did the apostles, "Lord, increase our faith"; and praying thus they need to use the means which God has designed for the fulfilment of this prayer. If their prayer be sincere they will use those means earnestly--they will seek the Lord in prayer, seek to know his Word, seek to obey it, seek and enjoy his service, seek to put on all the graces of the Spirit; and this being their attitude they will have strong faith, full assurance of faith, and "shall never

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fall, but so an entrance shall be ministered unto them abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"--in due time. *2 Pet. 1:10,11*

## **The Life-Song of the New Creation**

My life flows on in endless song;  
Above earth's lamentation,  
I catch the sweet, not far-off hymn,  
That hails a New Creation.  
Through all the tumult and the strife,  
I hear the music ringing;  
It finds an echo in my soul--  
How can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comfort die!  
The Lord my Savior liveth;  
What though the darkness gather round!  
Songs in the night he giveth.  
No storm can shake my inmost calm,  
While to that refuge clinging;  
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,  
How can I keep from singing?

I lift mine eyes; the cloud grows thin;  
I see the blue above it;  
And day by day this pathway smooths,  
Since first I learned to love it.  
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,  
A fountain ever springing;  
All things are mine since I am his--  
How can I keep from singing?