



Volume XLI. No. 8 MELBOURNE, AUGUST, 1958 Price—Fivepence

Heirs Of God.

(Romans 8:17.)

(Convention Address)

The thoughts of this address were born out of the amazement that was revealed while reading an article in a recent monthly truth journal. Never before had the depth of truth been realised, that we, Christians, are to be heirs of God, sharers or joint-heirs with Jesus our Lord and Head; yet this truth is attested many times in the Scriptures.

Think how the natural man cherishes the thought of becoming heir to a fortune in material things. It may not be the lot of many to experience it, but nearly every man would covet the opportunity if it should present itself; it is this desire that prompts the weekly ticket in "Tatts" with a large proportion of the populace. To inherit something for nothing seems to have strong appeal to the natural man.

However, let us try and think what it entails to be heirs of God—heirs of all the wealth of His riches and glory, knowledge and understanding, power, etc. In the major sense it is a tremendous beneficence on the part of our God to offer us heirship; but there is also another angle in which to view it. It will not be 'something for nothing' for all who receive it will be tested, tried and proven. We who are offered the richest inheritance possible to receive were all sons of Adam and under the condemnation of the fall into sin. We were no better than other men, but the all-seeing eye of God seems to have discerned, that, coupled with an affinity for righteousness, was humility and teachableness. God can work wonders with the person whom He will to be taught, but He can do nothing with the self-willed, the proud and the haughty.

His first endowment was to give us a standing before Himself, for, as members of the fallen race we had none; we were all alienated from Him by wicked works (Col. 1:21), so He drew us to Christ, the One in whom it pleased the Father all fulness should dwell, and by whom, alone; any can be reconciled to the Father and share in any of His bounties, either earthly or heavenly, physical or spiritual. (Col. 1:19, 20.)

Those who respond to the Saviour's leading and teaching become His "brethren," and "sons of God," but the response to the exhortation to "Come unto me, and learn of me" must be sustained. We are in the "school of Christ" to be trained for our position, our inheritance. As any child of royal birth, in this present order of things, is trained from infancy with a view to the duties and privileges of the throne, so are we, but with much higher perspective.

The natural man does not like to admit ignorance; he is happy flaunting any knowledge he may have, and what he does not know he will conceal, or make believe that he does know, but cannot condescend to reveal it to any whom he considers "beneath him." However, there is no room for pride in the "sons" whom God has begotten into His family; they must be filled with the fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, long suffering, meekness (teachableness), etc. With all our training we acquire great knowledge, but we do not get it all at once, nor is it after the pattern of a natural man's mind. The fear (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; yes, and the end of it too.

A lecturer of some little note, and apparently a man of good understanding, once said, "I never considered it a shame to have to answer, 'I do not know' to a questioner. Often I have had to do it; I patiently wait for the answers. Every day brings the answer to something I could not answer yesterday. It will take an eternity to know an infinity." What wise words, and how doubly true when we apply them to ourselves as Christians, and to spiritual things. What a privilege it is to be able to go on learning, that we may be fitted for the position as heirs of God.

Though we are privileged as sons of God to know so much, yet we have the realisation of how much there is to learn. There are so many experiences of people around us, as well as our own, that we cannot explain; we understand so imperfectly why certain things should come to this one, or that, while others escape, at least in the same intensity. Almost all, Christian professors or not, look forward to “a beautiful isle of somewhere.” In times of sorrow or sadness there is a hymn that many sing, the essence of which expresses a hope that a future time will reveal the meaning of present tears; then “sometime we’ll understand.” In the minds of most people, both “the isle of somewhere” and the “sometime” are very obscure, but true Christians who understand God’s plan, have greater clarity as to where the

“isle” will be, and when the “groaning creation” will understand the meaning of present sorrows and tears. It will be right here on earth during the Millennial reign of Christ and His church; the church comprising the present sons of God, (throughout the Gospel Age) undergoing training to become His heirs.

People generally still look forward to the realisation of their present vague hopes, but to the present “trainee” sons of God the “sometime” is today, tomorrow and every day. Today, or perhaps tomorrow, we understand why it was necessary for us to have had experiences of yesterday, a month, a year, or twenty years ago—the “sometime” of our learning is today, tomorrow and continual. So what a privilege it is to go on learning.

Think how much training we need to overcome impatience; God is long-suffering and His sons must learn this lesson too. Think of the training and experience necessary before we can exhibit mercy and love in anything approaching that of our Heavenly Father. We might be helped in displaying this to others, by constantly recalling how much has been extended to us. How easily we are roused to ire, to thoughts of malice; how slow to forgive.

When the Lord appeared in vision to Moses we read — “The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin . . . And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.” (Exod. 34:6-8.) The better qualified we become as God’s sons in the school of Christ, the more continually will we have Moses’ attitude.

One very helpfully explains the parable of the vineyard in Mark 12:1-12. From verse 12 it is clearly seen that our Lord directed the parable against the religious rulers of His day, and that they discerned it to be so. The man who planted the vineyard would be Jehovah, and the vineyard would seem to be the Jewish nation with all its privileges above all other nations of earth. The hedge about it would correspond to the divine law and the prophets—all the special supervision and guardianship that the nation enjoyed and which Gentile nations did not. A place for the winepress was provided, evidently picturing the temple worship etc., a place where God could expect to receive due returns from the vineyard. There was a tower too, a watch tower, seeming to represent the prophets and seers of Israel to give warning of any danger and to instruct in a right course. The “season” of verse 2 would suggest the time when fruit could be expected. The servant who was sent could well be a prophet or teacher sent to these “husbandmen”—the religious rulers, the scribes and Pharisees. The “fruit” the owner of the vineyard sought would be gratitude, love, obedience etc., for all He had done for them. He would look for meekness and teachableness, and He was disappointed at the results. Then He said, “I will send my son, surely they will pay more respect to him,” and we know who the “Son” was—Jesus. And what happened? The husbandmen (the chief priests and rulers) said, “This is the heir”—this man claims to be the Messiah; we shall have to do away with Him if the inheritance is to be ours, if we are going to retain our priesthood and power. (See verses 7 and 8 which are self explanatory.) And what did the owner of the vineyard do? See verse 9. All the time it was “fruit” that God sought; the Son, whom He sent, many times during His ministry expressed disappointment at the lack of it, where He had a right to expect it; and for that reason was Israel - rejected—“The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

For the scribes and Pharisees to desire to become and remain “heirs of God”, was commendable enough, but they sought the inheritance with a wrong heart condition. It was taken from them and given to another “nation,” but with the same proviso—it is paramount that the required “fruit” be brought forth. Are we heeding it well? The promised inheritance may be precious to us, but we will be disinherited if we do not make our calling and election sure by bringing forth the fruit that is precious in our Father’s sight, and without which character formation we would not be competent to be entrusted with His riches of glory as His heirs. Our Father has made every provision for His prospective heirs, and His Word is sure; if we fail the fault will be ours entirely. Not one of the called ones can say that the way was too hard, or that the trials were too great.

The same lecturer already mentioned has further helpful thoughts that can be applied in a spiritual way. He said that obstacles are power stations in our lives when rightly viewed. To illustrate, he used the Mississippi River in America. Being an American he wrote of his own country, but the same illustration could be drawn from our own River Murray in Australia. A mighty concrete obstacle was built right across the path of the river. He said, “Watch the river; it rises higher and higher until it sweeps over the obstacle and goes on its way. Result; light and power are developed that

vitalizes a valley and lights a hundred towns and cities. The light and power were latent in the river, but it took the obstacle and the overcoming to develop it and make it useful. Obstacles are often the power stations in our way. Moans one, 'I am so unfortunate; I could do these great things, but alas; I have so many obstacles in the way.' Says the lecturer 'You should thank God, for you are blessed of Providence.'"

We digress here to think of Paul in Rom. 5:3—"We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope,"—helping to produce the very "fruit" required to become "heirs of God." The presence of obstacles means there is much light and power in you to be developed. Do not waste your opportunities.

The lecturer says, "I hear a person say, 'I hope the time will soon come when I shall have no more obstacles to overcome.' When that time comes they can ring up the hearse, for you will be a 'dead one.' "

Remember Paul—"I do not beat the air; I keep under my body,"—the exercise of self-control under stress. What an example was he! Did any Christian meet more obstacles? At the end he was able to say—"I have fought a good fight." Yes, he fought, and it was a fight; it was no armchair victory for Paul, but he won through; he became an heir of God, the crown of righteousness was won, the required fruits were developed.

Many years ago when Thomas Edison had first success with phonograph recording, he was showing a friend the result of his long inventive work, and is reported to have said "I made over 7,000 experiments and failed each time before I hit upon that." How many would have gone on in the face of 7,000 failures? Are we going on in the face of

our failures? We have all made them and are still experiencing them. Like Paul in his earlier days we can say, "I have not yet apprehended that for which God has apprehended me in Christ Jesus." But with our great Teacher at our side, and as our Advocate before the Father, we can go on and succeed at last, becoming heirs of God.

Bible Student's Hymnal (Music)—A supply of these music hymnals is now available. Containing 462 hymns with appropriate tunes, and well bound, these books are priced at 24/ post paid.

"Hymns of Dawn Music Book."—Containing the original 333 hymns, 27 additional in an Appendix, well bound in strong cloth, with silver lettering, this new edition is priced at 10/- post paid.

A very good Oxford Bible, with References, India paper, thumb index, Brevier clear type, Persian Morocca binding, is now available at 60/-. Same Bible with Concordance and Subject Index at 70/-.

Revised Standard Version.—A new edition of this Bible is now available in strong cloth binding at 19/9, plus 1/3 postage.

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

(Monthly) 5/- (60 cents) per annum, post paid.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, E.4, Melbourne, Victoria Australia

Correspondence.

Dear Brother.— We are very sorry in delay in sending the money for the “Peoples Paper”; it is just that we keep forgetting to send it. We enjoy reading the “Paper” also hearing the broadcast on Sundays; it is the only thing we can get to listen to. We do not get to the Class as the transport is not convenient, and we find at our age the hill is too steep to climb, so just have to be content to study at home. We trust you are keeping well; you will find enclosed £1. Praying God’s blessing on your work. Yours in Christian love.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Brethren.—Am enclosing \$2 to pay for my subscriptions; I don’t know how much I owe you, or when the subscription expires. We love your little “Paper” and receive so much spiritual uplift. May God bless you brethren in your service to Him, our God and Maker. Our prayers and love to you all there. Sincerely,— (U.S.A.)

Dear Brother.—Warmest Greetings from “The Promised Land,” in the name of Him who would have done so much for it, even in His earthly life. “How often would I have gathered you . . . but ye would not.” Today, were you here (and I wish you could have been many times), there could be seen the foundations of a great future state. Even in the three years since my previous visit much has been done, especially as far as building and land reclamation is concerned. This is particularly noticeable as one journeys up to Jerusalem, where the once barren hillsides are being terraced and planted in vineyards, olive groves etc. In former times they were intensely cultivated, and the remains of the ancient terracing are still traceable with the eye.

How lovely this land will look after some hundreds of years in the Millennium, when we have reason to believe it will extend from the Euphrates to the Nile, and be the chief nation on earth. May those days hasten forward, for sin today is becoming a terrible weight on the nations, and even we ourselves, who strive in the “Narrow Way” groan greatly because of its shackles.

The Jewish Christian Group that was here in 1955 seems to have almost vanished in one way and another. They did not hold a Memorial, but the “Seder”; that is, a commemoration of their coming up out of Egypt. Much as I would have liked to have been with them, I was unable to do so, as they do not acknowledge our Lord. The commemoration was held on the Friday night. Your article on the Memorial was a very good one, and in perfect accord with certain statements made in the “Reprints” which remove any doubt about the matter in question . . . There are Jews here from nearly 30 countries, and it is an education in itself just to live here. Living conditions are quite good . . . With warmest Christian love. Yours in the Blessed Hope.

Script Writer, Frank and Ernest Programme, Dear Sir.—I was interested to hear part of your programme, a couple of Sundays ago, about the gates of hell being thrown open. I may have missed a few important points in the beginning of this programme but I gathered that you claim that some time in the period following our Lord’s second coming the gates of hell would be opened to allow those within the privilege of eternal life with Christ. I cannot see how this could possibly be. If it were the case, then it would appear that the punishment for sin was only temporary and would be more than compensated for by the joy to follow. Does not the Bible contrast imprisonment in hell with eternal life when it says—“The Wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is Eternal Life.” If the prisoners of hell are later to be released, then it seems to take away some of the motive of putting one’s trust in Christ. I know that there should be love for the One who has loved us first, but I wonder how many of us would be Christians if we knew that we were to spend eternity in the same way as those non-Christians who are enjoying the pleasures of life which we must forfeit. The joy of the Lord is far greater, but most of us would be tempted to leave this for later and have a taste of the world first. Please send me a copy of the script of this programme as soon as possible. Yours in Christ.

(Literature is gladly supplied to all readers respecting the two phases of God’s Kingdom—heavenly and earthly. The world of mankind, awakened from the death or hell condition, will, of course, not inherit the heavenly kingdom with Christ, but rather the earthly paradise restored, if they obey the laws of the kingdom at that time.—B. B. Institute.)

Dear Brothers of Frank and Ernest Bible

Discussion,—I have been interested in your Bible Discussions Sunday by Sunday, and have found much help in my Christian life. I have been a Christian for three years, and I am now 19 years old, and, God willing, I will enter an Institute to train for overseas Missionary Work.

Could you forward each Sunday’s Bible discussion to me? You could send them weekly or monthly, and I enclose 10/- to help expense of postage and printing. These discussions will give me a lot wherein to get parts for sermons in services I hope to take. Yours in Christ’s Service.

Frank and Ernest.—From time to time we have listened-in to your broadcasts with much interest, and were particularly refreshed and helped by that given today on “Your Adversary the Devil.” Could you kindly forward a copy of same ? I am anxious to forward it on to my daughters. Thanking you in anticipation. Yours very sincerely.

Dear Sir—I thank you for the printed copies of broadcasts from 2KY, copies of the monthly “Peoples Paper”, the booklet “God and Reason,” and your promise to send me the Bible study—”Divine Plan of the Ages” after you will get this letter from me.

I read carefully all sent literature and there is only one question I would like to ask you relating to the “God and Reason.” I understand that the “seven times” of the Gentiles represent 2,520 years, but I could not find any reference to the Bible from where it could be seen that Gentile supremacy was prophesied to last “seven times.” I am very glad to know that soon you will send me the Bible study “Divine Plan of the Ages.”

I feel that I need guidance for my Bible Studies. I already found a way to make my Bible study easier. Knowing a few European languages, among them English, German, Latvian and Russian, I decided to use a couple of Bibles in different non-similar languages to be able to make difficult places in the Bible clear. From this point of view an English and a German Bible would not be good because of similarities of the English and German languages. I realised that I must look for two languages with no similarity. Therefore I have chosen an English and a Russian Bible. In this way I am able to make clear the most difficult texts in the Bible. Thank you for your help in my Bible studies. Yours faithfully.

Frank and Ernest, Dear Sirs.—I would be very obliged if you would send me your booklet “Hope Beyond the Grave,” also any reading pertaining to reunion with our dearly departed. Your talks are most helpful and enlightening, and I wish you every success. Thanking you; Yours sincerely

Frank and Ernest, Dear Sirs.—I am a regular listener to your session on 2KY, and find it very interesting. If you would send me some literature I would be very grateful, also information concerning the “Trinity” to enlighten me about this subject would be a great help. Thanking you; Yours faithfully.

Dear Frank and Ernest.— On listening to your programme, I learnt many interesting facts from the Book of Revelation in the Bible. I would be extremely pleased if you could send me some of your literature to the above address. Hoping to receive the literature as soon as possible. Yours faithfully.

Berean Bible Institute, Dear Sir—Please forward your free literature as described in the “Chronicle” to me at the above address, as I would like to know the answers to these questions on religion. Thanking you; yours truly.

Children of the Promise

(Convention Address)

“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of the promise.” (Gal. 4:28.)

OTHER translations express our text—“But you, brethren, like Isaac, are the children of a promise.” In Romans 9:7, 8 we read, “Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” You will have noticed a great separation has divided two classes, the children of the flesh and the children of God.

The “promise” has come between. The Apostle Paul, in our Galatians text, has told us that these children of God are in some ways similar to Isaac. He was, of course, a “child of promise.” He was born out of season contrary to all human wisdom. Abraham, Isaac’s father, was in favour with God, for, some time previous to this he had shown his faith by his works, and had left his own people to sojourn in a strange land that he may know God the better. God had promised him that in him and his seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. (Gen. 12:1-3.) He was seventy-five when he departed out of his own land; he had varied fortunes but found things combined together for his good, and he always came out on top.

Yet, time was creeping on, and while Abraham had never forgotten the promise that in him and his seed the blessings would come to all, he probably imagined that it would come through the child born to him by Hagar. This was discounted by the messenger of God when Abraham was ninety-nine years of age, and this messenger confirmed the original promise. Both Abraham and his wife, Sarah, laughed at this “impossibility.” There are many kinds of laughter; the kind here recorded for us limits the power of God to work His wonders according to our understanding of natural wisdom. It borders on the edge of disbelief. It laughs at a seeming impossibility. It measures God’s ability by the strength of our own efforts, by our own works, as it were. And so, to emphasize what has been made so plain to us again and again through the Gospels and Epistles, the new life came into existence because of God’s condescension and love towards us.

Isaac was born to the favored pair, and now it was clear that the “child of promise” inherited the chief favors. The difference between the two boys, the difference that separates, was that one was born according to the flesh and the other according to a “word of promise,” outside the course of nature. Both were Abraham’s offspring, one was taken and the other left. Watch this principle of selection right down to the present time. It is God’s work; we are His workmanship. Heirs of the promise—children of God; who are they, where are they? The covenant was made with Abraham and his offspring, and we have seen that it was offspring according to God’s choice, not man’s.

Look into the next illustration of the sovereignty of God in choosing whom He will. Isaac, the inheritor of the covenant promise is about to become the father of twin boys. Here was a problem. According to accepted tradition the elder inherited the chief blessing. But before these boys were born it was intimated that God’s choice was that the younger should have preference over and above the elder. “The elder shall serve the younger” was the command.

It could be argued with Abraham’s offspring that one child was by agreement with Sarah’s maid and so forfeited the right to the blessing that should go to the younger son Isaac. Yet with the later illustration of how God chooses whom He will, the same father and same mother are involved. None could gainsay this, and so it is Scripturally proved that not all are children of the promise just because of descent from Abraham. There has been a selection, and again God’s choice differs from the way man would have chosen. “The elder shall serve the younger.”

The blessing of the Lord that maketh so rich very often begins its work by making us very poor, dejected, isolated, in short miserable, and needing consolation, strengthening, and a confirming of faith. Abraham left all, not knowing where he was going or whom he would meet. A number of important incidents in Abraham’s life seem to have been duplicated in the life of Jacob. He too, like Abraham, respected the blessing of the Lord and sought it with vigilance and determination. The inheritance that was rightfully his was so valuable in his sight that he would sacrifice his own goods, his comfort and security, for the sake of harmony. He desired harmony and agreement between the unfavored one and the selected vessel of grace. “Sell me this day thy birthright.” Is it any wonder that a “fornicator and profane” person “despised” an inheritance that needs discipline and sacrifice? (Heb. 12:16.)

It is recorded that Esau’s conduct was a “grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah.” He sold his birthright, confirmed the sale with an oath, and when his father called him to bestow the blessing of the eldest he had the audacity to think it was rightfully his. Is it wrong to outwit a schemer and thief? The fraud practised this day belonged to Esau, and because he was thwarted in his deception he immediately became enraged, grieved, self-piteous, and in his own eyes justifies the

murderous thoughts entertained towards his brother. Isaac was surprised at the early return of "Esau." "How is it thou art returned so quickly, my son?" Note this answer; Jacob replied, as if it were Esau speaking, "Because the Lord thy God brought it to me." Why did he not say, "Because the Lord our God . . .", or "The Lord my God"? Simply because Esau had no respect to the God of his fathers. Isaac knew this; Jacob knew it; Rebekah knew it. It matters not from which angle you view this matter, the deceiver this day was Esau, claiming something that he had already covenanted to sell, and confirmed the sale with an oath, and on top of that, claiming an inheritance in which he had not the slightest interest. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." There must be a separation, sooner or later. In some cases it is sooner, and in others it is later. This is the separating work going on today, just as surely as it separated Esau and Jacob.

Strange as it may seem if the "deception" that so many people believe belonged to Jacob, you would expect some recrimination or word of reproof at a later date from Isaac. Quite the reverse; when Jacob was about to depart, Isaac called him to his side, gave him some good counsel which amounted to this, "Do not on any account do as your brother Esau has done." No, with fatherly advice he concludes with his own benediction, and on top of that, "May God Almighty bless thee . . . and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and thy seed." You would hardly expect such blessings to be bestowed on the head of an "arch-deceiver" as many think of Jacob.

The harmony that Jacob desired was missing. In its place was hatred; so much so that his father and mother counsel him to go for a change of air. Here is Abraham's flight duplicated. Jacob sets off, fearing an attack from the rear by Esau and not knowing what each forward step would reveal. No wonder he is all but exhausted when he arrived at Bethel. Note what respect to the promise meant to him: privation, suffering, anxiety, separation. After these things fail to dim his love for righteousness, he is rewarded. God confirms His original covenant, and gives him abundant inspiration and courage to press on. Read the wonderful promise and protection that was guaranteed him in Genesis 28:12-16. No wonder he could take up his journey with a light heart, armed for not only the journey but for whatever experiences were ahead of him. Promises for the present and the future; who could want more when they are guaranteed by the Judge of all the earth? He, like his father, would understand that the blessing was not so much for him personally, but would unfold with later generations. Note particularly that although the chief blessing may be in the future, there is a lesser blessing that takes care of all today's worries. Are not the "children of the promise" enriched beyond understanding?

The succeeding days and years proved this beyond doubt in Jacob's life. Not only did he enjoy the Lord's protection, but others also came under its influence because of Jacob. The wily Laban quickly recognised this. Laban, who had little before the coming of Jacob, became one of the richest in the land. The account is in Genesis 30. Jacob had his worries, trials, and work to perform, but he also had that something that was missing in other men. Laban schemed and contrived to keep this man with him; "changed his wages ten times" and was loth to let him go. He admitted "I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake."

It is interesting to note that Sarah, the beloved of Abraham, was barren. God intervened and then we have the problem of who is the rightful heir, since Ishmael was the elder. Next the rightful heir is pointed out, and he under singular circumstances marries Rebekah. That promise given to Abraham that in "thee And thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" had its worrying aspects when the rightful successor to Abraham also found his wife barren. Special intercession was made, and the prayer answered; then we have the mix-up with Esau and Jacob. Who is the rightful heir? It is pointed out that Jacob is the successor to inherit the "blessing of Abraham." Next we have the complications of tracing the seed with Laban's trickery. Rachel was certainly the beloved wife, but she too was barren. In fact, ten children Jacob could count as offspring before Divine providence again intervened and we have the birth of Joseph, who, without doubt, was the "firstborn" of the real affections, especially as the others, Reuben, Judah, and Co., all had blemishes against their names that excluded them from God's favor. The complications increase rather than diminish, and upon the death of Jacob the twelve brethren realise that the Abrahamic blessing is now a tribal, a national matter, "twelve brothers, and we are of one." It is common history how this little nation of Israel has been blessed of God right down through the ages, yet the mystery of the Abrahamic Covenant deepens rather than clears. "He came unto his own, but they received him not, but as many as did receive him to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe on his name." "Ye must be born again."

It was the same with Joseph. God was with him, and despite all the suffering and varied experiences of Joseph, he knew "God had sent him before the others to preserve life." They may have intended it for evil but God intended it for good. It does us good to be reminded of these wonderful lessons.

However, the "child of promise" had now become "children of promise." Reuben, pleading before Joseph, said, "We are all one man's sons; twelve brethren, the sons of one man." The heads of twelve tribes that were to form the nation of Israel. Where are the children of the promise? They are to be found among these people. Yet "not all Israel which are of Israel." Neither because Abraham was their father are they heirs of God. God selects His heirs according to His own method, and one signal mark of acceptance is faith. "Have faith in God." "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

As a means of justification we have pictured for us in the lives of these ancient people the unbridgeable gulf separating works and faith. "By the deeds of the law," which rested solely on works, "shall no flesh be justified," because all have come short of the glory of God. Perfection is impossible because of our natural inheritance from father Adam and mother Eve. Some other way of reconciliation must be found if we are to inherit some of these blessings that belong to "the children of the promise." And another way has been found.

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Like these good works practised by the sincere folk in Israel, it left us with only a nasty taste in the mouth, and the more one honestly sought to do the works contained in the law the more apparent it was that instead of the Law becoming a blessing it became a curse.

When faith-righteousness opens its arms what joys and peace belong to the happy believers. "All the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus." Galatians the third chapter enlarges on this wonderful theme, and we now find that the "blessing of Abraham," that wonderful promise that God spake unto Abraham, confirmed to Isaac and then again to Jacob, carried on through selected vessels among Israel, right down to "as many as the Lord our God shall call," "for ye are all children of God (children of the promise) by faith in Christ Jesus."

Remember, there was the chief blessing, still future, and the lesser to be now enjoyed. This is it, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose." Jesus Himself declares, no man has left anything behind him but that he does not benefit now, and greater benefits later. Let us go forward, like Jacob, with this assurance, "I am with thee and will keep thee in all the places whither thou goest."

It was during the memorial service that our Lord used the endearing term "little children." Children of the promise, as Isaac was, born not according to the will of man, but according to the will of God. Paul is emphatic in Rom. 9:8 that the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." These heirs may claim the rich title, "Children of the living God." (Rom. 9:26.)

"Children of the promise"; how can we define it? Remember the "Land of promise"? It is a land specially marked out for a special purpose. Other lands may be richer or more beautiful, more productive, abounding in natural resources, but there is a difference, a separation. The Land of Promise is a particular land; in our day we have seen it change from a barren waste to a productive and inhabited country. That is beside the point; the main point is that God intended this particular land for a special purpose. Many would possibly doubt the probability of Jerusalem becoming the capital of the world when they think of the commercial wealth and influence in London; the engineering and scientific glory of New York, or the rugged starkness and overcoming of natural disabilities of Moscow. Yet, if "the Word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem" as declared in God's Word, well, we can count it as good as done, and a new capital will arise to be a meeting place of these peoples needing direction to rebuild according to a city that has foundations. What blessings will flow from the "new Jerusalem."

So with "children of the promise", special people marked out by God for a special purpose. Where do we fit into this scheme of things? It will be nice to belong to either class, either those blessed or those blessing. The latter certainly have the chief blessings, the inheritance of the first-borns, the "children of the promise," or, as Paul has it, "children of the living God."

Consider the Land of Promise; the work put into it, from within and without, yet if God did not grant His increase the labor would be in vain. Exactly the same with the children of promise; it is not what they are that counts, but what God can make of them. There is the transforming work going on all the time, the work from within and without. Yet, if the increase is not granted by God, this work too will not be of lasting benefit. Yet if He adds His blessing, the blessing that maketh rich, what power or thing can thwart His purpose?

Another similarity among all these "children of promise." Have you noticed how they all must travel? Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the nation of Israel; it seems none escape this necessity for travel. The believer of today is not exempt, for he, too, must "leave all", "forget also thine own people and thy father's house." (Psa. 45:10.) He may not be called to make the physical separation that so many have experienced, but he will have his "wilderness" experiences, when that relationship between Father and child will become reality indeed. There will come experiences that you alone can solve; not even the nearest and dearest can sympathise with you. But once the relationship of God and child of promise is real, you will find help from every quarter; even the things that otherwise could be harmful will but accomplish God's will. Just as all these folk of olden times have enjoyed the blessing of the Lord, so we, too, may enjoy it to its full, and find "all things working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."