



Volume L No. 6 MELBOURNE, DECEMBER—JANUARY, 1968

## Jehovah's Footstool Made Glorious

“Thus saith Jehovah, heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.” “And I will make the place (footstool) of my feet glorious.” “And his (Jehovah's) feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives.”—Isa. 60:13; 66:1; Zech. 14:4; Matt. 5:35; Acts 7:49.

GOD'S footstool has been anything but glorious for the past six thousand years. Sin, pain, mental and physical suffering and death have made it one vast cemetery in which now, many millions of humanity wait for the time to come when the curse of divine justice shall be lifted; and the light of divine favor, shining in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord, shall rise as the Sun of righteousness.

To this end God has made abundant provision. The **ransom** for Adam, and for all who suffered loss through him as his children, bought the whole world, and secured for each member of our race an opportunity for a trial for everlasting life under favorable conditions; but it did more, it purchased back Adam's paradise home (lost by his transgression), and his dominion as earth's king, representative of God, his Creator and Father.

Hence we read, “And thou, O Tower of the flock (Christ), the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the **first dominion.**” (Micah 4:8). The Apostle Paul also, speaks of the “redemption of the purchased **possession.**” (Eph. 1:14.) Our Lord in one of His parables referred to this also, showing that He purchased not only mankind, the treasure, but also the field, the world, the earth from under the curse; and that all who join with Him, as members of the kingdom class, share in that purchase of the field and the treasure. Matt. 13:44.

The entire work of the Millennium will consist in re-ordering and making glorious God's footstool. Paradise, when lost through sin, was but a “garden” in a corner of the earth; but inasmuch as the race of Adam has multiplied to fill the earth, in accordance with the divine intention (Gen. 1:28), and inasmuch as they all have been redeemed, it will be necessary to provide a Paradise sufficiently large to accommodate all; and this will imply that the entire earth shall become as the Garden of Eden for fruitfulness and beauty and perfection. And all this is promised as the grand future consummation of the divine plan.—Acts 3:20, 21; Rev. 2:7; 2 Cor. 12:4.

But the richest jewel of the Lord's glorified footstool in the close of the Millennium will be mankind, in whose perfection, liberty, and likeness to God, in moral and intellectual graces, will be reflected the very image of Divinity. And most gloriously will the perfect man reflect honor upon his Maker and His wondrous plan for his creation, redemption and restitution. And with that wonderful plan will always be intimately identified first the Lord Jesus, Jehovah's “Word”, and second the Bride, the Lamb's wife and joint-heir in disbursing the blessings secured by the ransom.

This beautifying and glorifying of the Lord's “footstool” will not be **completed** until our Lord Jesus, as the Father's honored agent, “shall have put down all (conflicting) rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet,” before He delivers up the Kingdom at the close of the Millennium—1 Cor. 15:24-28.

The period of the reign of Sin and Death is represented as the time when God “remembered not his **footstool** in the day of his anger” (Lam. 2:1); but following the beginning of the Millennium, the people are prophetically called upon to— “Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his **footstool**, for he is worthy.” (Psa. 99:5.) And this thought, that the establishment of the New Jerusalem, the Church of God glorified, as the new government in the earth, will mean the

beginning of the restoration of divine favor to Jehovah's footstool, is clearly set forth through the Prophet Zechariah 14:4, 5.

Jehovah's Feet on the Mount of Olives.

This prophecy is generally misunderstood, and applied to the feet of our Lord Jesus, at His second advent; and indeed, those who thus err generally go farther and assert that it will be the feet of flesh, pierced with the nails of Calvary;—not realising that our Lord gave His human nature, complete and forever, as our ransom; and that He was raised from the dead, by the Father's power, a glorious spirit being—"the express image of the Father's person."

But a glance at the preceding verse (3) shows that the prophet's reference is to the return of Jehovah's feet; for the statement (referring to the trouble by which the Kingdom will be established) is: "Then shall **Jehovah** go -forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle (in olden times for Israel). And **His** feet will stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be divided in its center, from east to west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove northward and half southward."

As soon as any recognise the fact that the feet mentioned are Jehovah's feet, they will not dispute that this language is symbolic, and refers to the Lord's re-establishment of His dominion in the earth, which has long been comparatively abandoned to the "god of this world", Satan;—except as the Lord was represented first by the typical Tabernacle, secondly, by the Temple at Jerusalem, and lastly by the present tabernacle condition of the Church of Christ, during this Gospel Age. Surely, no one will err and get the thought that Jehovah literally rests His feet upon this earth as a "footstool."

And if the placing and resting of Jehovah's "feet" is symbolic, and signifies the return of divine favor and dominion to earth, so, we may be sure, other features connected in the same prophecy are symbolic; the Mount of Olives, its peculiar division, its valley, the flight of the people, the waters of life from Jerusalem (compare verse 8 with Ezek. 47:1-9), etc., are all symbolic statements,—pictures of grand spiritual truths.

The olive is a symbol full of meaning: in olden times it was the source of artificial light, its oil being generally used for this purpose. (Exod. 27:20.) Indeed, in the Hebrew the olive tree was called **shemen** or oil tree. Olive oil was also used as the basis of many of the precious ointments of olden time—such as that used in anointing the priests and kings, typifying the holy spirit upon the anti-typical "royal priesthood." (Exod. 30:24.) And from 'time immemorial the olive branch has been used as a symbol of peace.—Gen. 8:11; Neh. 8:15.

If then the olive be the symbol of **light, peace** and **divine blessing** through the holy spirit, and if 'mountain be considered as elsewhere the symbol for a Kingdom, the significance here of the term Mount of Olives is easily seen to be—the Kingdom of Light, Peace and Divine Blessing. And the standing or establishment or fixing of Jehovah's "feet" upon it, signifies that the divine favor and law will be re-established in the earth by and through the holy Kingdom.

This application of the term Mount of Olives, is in full accord with the Apostle's statement (Rom. 11:17, 24) in which he compares Fleshly Israel with the original cultivated olive tree, and Gentile converts to wild olive branches grafted in where the natural branches had been broken off. (Compare Jer. 11:16, 17.) And he explains that the root of the tree is in the promise of God,—the Abrahamic promise, that the seed of Abraham should eventually bless all the families of the earth, etc. Eventually the same root or promise will bear two kinds of branches—the ingrafted wild olive branches, and the reingrafted natural branches: when fleshly Israel shall have his blindness turned away, and shall look with the eye of faith upon the Saviour crucified and pierced nineteen centuries ago;—a sacrifice for sin. We remember also that fleshly Israel was God's typical Kingdom or mountain for a long time, and that spiritual Israel of the Gospel Age is called to be the real Kingdom of God, as our Lord declared, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

Moreover, from these **two Kingdoms** (even before Jehovah's **glory** rests upon them, to make them His channels of blessings to the whole world of mankind) has proceeded all "the **light** of the world" during all the darkness of the past. Do not these correspond to the Lord's two witnesses and to the two olive trees of Zechariah (4:3, 11, 12) distinctly mentioned also in Revelation (11:4)?—in that these two parts of the mountain symbolize the results of the witnessing—the Kingdom in its heavenly and its earthly phases?

Here we see, then, that the **two halves** of the Mount of Olives signify the **two parts** of the Kingdom of God, distinctly separated according to a divine order or arrangement. The separation indicates no opposition between the two parts of the Kingdom. It is, on the contrary, for the purpose of producing the "Valley of Blessing" between—to which all who desire divine aid may flee and find succor under the blessed protection of both the heavenly and the earthly phases of

the Kingdom.

The Prophet David (Psalm 84) seems to have been given a foreview of this great “Valley of Blessings” close to Jehovah’s “feet,” when he sings first of the saints of the Gospel Age and then of those blessed in the next age, saying:—  
“How lovely are thy dwelling places O Jehovah of Hosts!

My soul desired, yea, it even fainted  
For the courts of Jehovah.  
My heart and my flesh shout with joy  
Unto the living God.

Even as the sparrow hath found a house,  
And the swallow a nest for herself,  
Where she may lay her young: (so I have found) thine altars,  
O Lord of Hosts,  
My God, my King.

Happy are they that dwell in thy house:  
They shall be continually praising Thee. Selah.  
“Happy is the man whose confidence is in Thee,  
Whose heart reflecteth (wholly) on the paths of (righteousness).

Passing through the valley of mourning,  
They change it into a place of (joy) springs—(Valley of Blessings).  
The Autumn rain brings them blessings (Joel 2:28):  
They go forth from strength to strength  
That each of them may be presented (perfect) Before God in Zion.”

The 85th Psalm also pictures the return of divine clemency and blessing under the Millennial Kingdom—the Olive Mountain (Kingdom) of two parts.

The removal of one part of the mountain to the north and the other to the south is significant; the North is the direction of the group Pleiades, the celestial center of the universe, the supposed seat of divine empire. This would seem to indicate the “**change**” of the Gospel Church at this time, from human to spirit conditions as “partakers of the divine nature:” and the removal of the other half of the mountain would seem to signify the complete restitution, to perfect human conditions, of those ancient worthies accounted worthy to constitute the earthly representatives of God’s Kingdom.

The valley thus produced would be one full of light—free from shadows: for the sun would stream through it from east to west. This speaks symbolically of the Sun of Righteousness and its full light of divine truth and blessing scattering the shadows of sin, ignorance, superstition and death, and healing and restoring the willing and obedient of humanity who will flee to this valley of blessings, the valley of mercy. The valley of mercy, **between** and under the care of the spiritual and human phases of the Kingdom of Light and Peace (the establishment of Jehovah’s feet) will surely be a “Valley of Blessings” to all who enter it with broken and contrite hearts.

We must remember, further, that while it is to Israel only that it is said, “Ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains,” yet as a name Israel signified “The people blessed of the Lord,” “The people of God,” “The Lord’s people,” (2 Chron. 7:14.) And while, as we have seen, the first or spiritual blessing of the Kingdom shall come to spiritual Israel, and the second or earthly blessing shall begin with Israel according to the flesh, yet it will not stop there; for whosoever will may become an Israelite: by exercising the faith and obedience of Abraham, all mankind may become Israelites indeed,—“the people of God.” And hence the Prophet Isaiah declares that when Israel is called back to divine favor, at the establishment of the Kingdom, it will include “**Every one that is called by my (Jehovah’s) name:** for I have created him for my glory; I have formed him, yea, I have made him.” (The name Israel will then apply to all who are God’s people.)—Isa. 43:7; Rom. 9:26, 33; 10:13.

“And (thus) will Jehovah my God come in, and all the holy ones shall (thus) be (united) with him.” (Zech. 14:5.) When God’s time shall have fully come, when the lease of power to the Gentiles shall have run out, when the sacrificing of the great Day of Atonement (the Gospel Age) shall have ceased, when the High Priest shall have finished making atonement, not only for His own “body,” the Church, but also for His “house,” and for “all the people,” and He shall come forth to bless all the people, then Jehovah’s curse, or sentence of death, shall be lifted from the earth, His footstool tabernacle will again be recognised, and its beautifying in righteousness and truth and in the holy spirit of love shall

begin and progress, until, in the end of the Millennium, all the willingly righteous shall have reached perfection, or been reunited with Jehovah, and all the unwilling shall have been destroyed.—Acts 3:23; Rev. 20:9. •

Carrying the picture further, the Prophet declares, respecting that day in which gradually the earth shall be made glorious as Jehovah's footstool,—”And it shall come to pass in that day that the light shall not be bright nor the darkness thick; but the day shall be the one foreknown to the Lord —neither full day nor night: but it shall come to pass that at its close (evening) it shall be (clear) light.”—Zech. 14:6, 7.

Some confounded the “day” here described with the “day of Vengeance” which is “a day of clouds and thick darkness with no light in it” (Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15) and the translators have, seemingly; generally tried to harmonize the translations. But not so; the day here referred to by Zechariah is only partially bright is the Millennial day, although in it the Sun of Righteousness will arise and shine, to scatter earth's sin and superstition and death. It will nevertheless be only partially bright, because it will throughout be dealing with generation after generation of the fallen race as brought from the tomb, and in various stages of restitution toward perfection. But how refreshing it is to be assured that in that day of the re-establishment of Jehovah's feet upon His footstool, there shall be no more “thick darkness;” and that at the close of that Millennial Day, instead of growing darker, the world will only have reached the high noon of its “light of the knowledge of Jehovah;” and that its sun shall never set.

The reference to the rivers of living waters flowing from Jerusalem, during this Millennial Day of the re-establishment of Jehovah's feet upon His footstool (Zech. 14:8, 9), reminds us of the corresponding testimony of Ezekiel (47:1-12) and of John's Revelation (22:1, 2) which, under this same symbol of living waters proceeding from the throne of the Millennial Kingdom, show us the restitution blessings under the symbols of “waters of life,” to which whosoever will may come and drink freely, and fruitful trees of life everlasting whose leaves will heal the repentant peoples of earth of all imperfections.

Ah yes! “In that day the Lord shall be King over all the earth;” His Kingdom shall have come as His faithful have long prayed; and by the end of that day His will shall be done on earth even as it is done in heaven. God's footstool shall then be glorious indeed: as it is written:—”As truly as I live, the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah.”—Num. 14:21; Isa. 11:9; Habak. 2:14. (Reprinted from Volume 4, “Scripture Studies.”)

PEOPLES PAPER AND HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM (Bi-Monthly) 60 cents per annum, post paid.

Published by the Berean Bible Institute,

# Good Tidings of Great Joy for all People

(Read Luke 2:1-20)

THIS record of the birth of Jesus, and the wonderful message of the angel, then the multitude of angels, is ever fresh and inspiring to our hearts and minds. At this time, our thoughts center particularly around verse 10—the words of the heavenly angel—“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which **shall be to all people.**”

Of all the religions in the world, Christianity is the only one which provides that all people who have ever lived shall hear and benefit from “good tidings of great joy”—that a Saviour was born who would provide the means of salvation from death for all mankind. In making this claim that Christianity is the only religion which contains such a glorious hope for the fallen human race, we refer to TRUE CHRISTIANITY, and not the many distorted teachings which go under the name of Christianity throughout the world today.

Throughout the Bible we find that our Heavenly Father is revealed as a GOD OF LOVE, and yet many who claim to serve God proclaim teachings that dishonor and even blaspheme His name. Their teachings often present God as a great monster to be feared and dreaded because they believe He has prepared a place of torment for the great majority of humanity after death. How important are the words of the prophet Isaiah, speaking for the Lord in Isa. 29:13.—“Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.”

While, then, reverence is the true attitude of all humanity to the great Creator, when we learn of His loving kindness, revealed through His wonderful plan of salvation, our hearts go out to God in full trust and adoration, knowing that He so loved the world—not just a few—that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. It is well to note that it is “whosoever believeth in Jesus should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Examining our Lord’s ministry at His first advent, it is of much interest to find how many really did believe in Him at that time, as a result of His perfect presentation of the gospel, an example of which is found in Luke 4:14-22. After the record of verse 22, where “all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth,” we find in the following verses that Jesus had cause to refer to the lack of Israel’s devotion to God in past times, as a prompting to His hearers in Nazareth, for even then, “no prophet is accepted in his own country.” This shows that even the “gracious words” He spoke had real effect upon only a comparatively few of His hearers in the synagogue of the town where He had been brought up.

Further on in Luke 4:31, 32 we read that Jesus came down to Capernaum, “And they were astonished at his doctrine; for his word was with power.” His preaching must have been very impressive, but so often those who heard allowed the good influence from our Lord to fade out of their lives. Again, after our Lord had cast out an unclean spirit from a man, we read in verses 36, 37 of their amazement,—“And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.” (See also verses 38-40.) We might think that with all the demonstrations of God’s power shown by our Lord that multitudes would have accepted Him and become His disciples indeed, but it was not so.

Turning to Luke 8:1, we read of Jesus “preaching and showing the **glad tidings** of the kingdom of God.” We know what this would mean; it would be a definite explanation of the invitation to the heavenly kingdom perfectly presented, and yet, so few, in comparison with the multitudes who heard our Lord, were able to grasp the privilege of walking in the steps of Christ, and gaining the inheritance with Him. An explanation as to why this was so, is given in this same chapter, verses 9, 10, after Jesus had spoken a parable, and received the question from His disciples, “What might this parable be?” Jesus’ answer was,—“Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.”

Does this mean that Jesus was making a selection from those who heard His preaching of the good tidings of salvation for the heavenly kingdom? Yes, it means just that. So many were not of the right disposition for the heavenly kingdom, and it was to their advantage that they did not understand the mysteries of the kingdom for the heavenly inheritance at that time. Our Lord’s words in John 6:44 are very explanatory in this respect, —“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

The outcome of our Lord’s ministry for 3-1 years in Israel is summed up by the words of John 1:10-12,—“He came unto his own (Israel) and his own (as a nation) received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” That was definitely a selection, according to fitness, to be invited to run for the heavenly calling; and the fitness test was—to them that believe on His name to the extent of full consecration, to walk in the steps of Christ’s sacrifice.

The important question is, When will all people hear good tidings of great joy, as promised by the angel at the birth of Jesus? Did all Israel to whom Jesus preached the good tidings of the kingdom really HEAR, in the sense of understanding? Apparently not! As previously mentioned, our Lord spoke in parables so often, “that seeing they might **not see**, and hearing they might **not understand**.” Apparently the “good tidings of the kingdom” that our Lord preached did not register in the hearts of the multitude in Israel. Therefore it can be said they **did not truly hear** the good tidings. Were they cast off forever by the Lord when they were not worthy of selection to understand the good tidings of the kingdom? The Apostle Paul answered this question very clearly when he declared,—”Hath God cast away his people? God forbid . . . God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew ... What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.” (Rom. 11:1, 2, 7.)

The Apostle goes on in Romans 11 to explain that the opportunity for the heavenly kingdom passed to the Gentiles as individuals, without excluding individual Israelites from that same opportunity. It was as a nation that Israel was cast off from the invitation to the kingdom of heaven, but not as individuals if they accepted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. Paul declares, “I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery . . . that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,”—until the Bride of Christ is complete. “And so all Israel shall be saved,”—for an earthly inheritance in the kingdom age—”There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” (Rom. 11:25-27.)

In Jeremiah 16:10-18 the prophet explains how “all Israel shall be saved.” “... Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them; and I will **bring them again into their land** that I gave unto their fathers.” See also Jer. 31:27-34. The Lord’s promise on behalf of Israel, “to watch over them, to build, and to plant” now in progress, will be fully operative after the period of “Jacob’s trouble” in the coming Millennial Age, when the new covenant is established with Israel, when the Lord will “put his law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be His people.”

Confirmation of this happy time is found in Acts 15:13-17, where the Apostle James sums up the Apostle Peter’s declaration, that “God for the first time did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.” Then, quoting the prophet Amos, James continued—”After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof; and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and **all the Gentiles**, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.” This wonderful message from Amos clearly states that all the people of the Gentile nations shall then **hear and understand** the good tidings of great joy that Jesus Christ was their Saviour from death, thus enabling all who accept Him to gain eternal life on earth. This gracious provision in God’s plan of salvation is good news indeed!

It is also of much interest and importance to find that Israel when blessed of the Lord with enlightenment in the kingdom age will then be used of God to enlighten the Gentiles, as shown from Isa. 60,—”Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ... And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising ... thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.” (Isa. 60:1, 3-5.) The blessing and enlightenment of all the nations through Israel under their New Covenant is further clearly revealed in Isa. 52:9-10,—”Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” They shall hear and understand the fulfilment of the angel’s message at the birth of Jesus—”Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

The quotation from Isa. 60:5 mentioned above that “the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee” (Israel), agrees with the words of Jesus —”And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12:32.) This truly will be the time when “the law shall go forth of Zion (from the Lord and His church in glory), and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,”—through natural Israel, with their “princes in all the earth” to guide, teach and bless all the families of the earth. To accomplish all this will mean the resurrection of the human family, as the Lord declared through the prophet again,—”And he will destroy in this mountain (kingdom) the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it.” (Isa. 25:7, 8.)

# Partaking of the Fruits and Laboring

“The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.” 2 Tim. 2:6.

IT is a very significant fact to all who search the Scriptures that very rarely does the truth lie on the surface. Because this is so, many give up Bible reading altogether. No beauty is found between the covers of the Sacred Book very often, just because the reader expects the unfolding as simply as reading a novel. We must read carefully and thoughtfully, and above everything else with prayer to God that He, through the spirit, may shed light upon our searching.

If we were looking at the above text on the surface only, we might say, “Oh, well, it simply means that the man who does the work is entitled to the first share in the dividends, or to his wages; or that the farmer who ploughs, sows and reaps is entitled to the first portion of the crop.” There is a sense in which this may be so, but it does not appear to have been the Apostle’s thought here, as evidenced by the following verse:—“Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.”

There is a deeper meaning if we can but grasp it. While many have taken the words to infer that before we can expect to receive the fruits or to be partaker of the fruits we must be prepared to labor, the Apostle’s thought seems to have been somewhat contrary — that before we can labor effectively, we must be first partaker of the fruits.

We all know that in the varied experiences of our earthly course, if we find someone in trouble or distress of any kind, that we can help far more effectively, and are always more readily sympathetic, if we have passed through some similar experience ourselves. So it seems that the Apostle Paul is trying to show us that before we can become effective laborers in God’s vineyard we must be first partakers of the fruits.

What is the fruit of which we must be partakers? *We* have the answer surely in Gal. 5:22, 23. “The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” We are told that against all such there is no law. There can be no doubt that this is the fruit to which our Lord Himself referred in John 15:8, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.”

# “One Thing Have I Desired”

(Contributed Address.)

(Psalm 27.)

THIS Psalm is quite a popular one with us all. Many years ago we were given a Bible with the fourth verse of this psalm written on the fly leaf. Unfortunately the Bible has been lost, but we have not lost the message of verse 4,— “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.”

This verse 4 gives us three thoughts; the psalmist’s desire that he might dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, that he might behold the beauty of the Lord, and might inquire in His temple. The psalmist is a wonderful poet; and it cannot fail to strike that responsive chord in our own hearts, because the aspirations of the psalmist are so much akin to our own desires, for we would know God as he desired to do. David was a man of mixed character, but one who we cannot help admire. He was a man of war and did many wicked things, yet had the wonderful testimony that he was a man after God’s own heart. When we read these psalms, we can realise how it was that David was a man after God’s own heart.

His sentiments reach down the centuries to us, and are just right for us today, for it is our desire to know and love and serve our Heavenly Father, and feel the joy of His constant nearness to us. Indeed, down through the ages this has been the desire of those who would serve God in both Old and New Testament times. Those of the right heart condition God has been pleased to use for His purposes, and has been pleased to dwell with them. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isa. 57:15.)

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul assures us that not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but chiefly the poor of this world. Through God’s loving mercy we can aspire to the blessing of dwelling daily in the house of the Lord, there to behold His beauty and inquire in His temple. Perhaps the thought of dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives might suggest a withdrawal, a shutting away in isolation. But this is not the thought of a dwelling or home, and this is surely what the psalmist was longing for. He longed for a safe retreat where he might find refreshment and reinvigoration, thence to go forth and meet the requirements of the new day. In these aspirations there is no retreat from but a desire to be daily prepared for all its challenges. There is a longing to be in tune with the Lord, and thus be able to do His will in every way. Many a weary traveller far from home has confessed that his heart is far across the sea in the place that conjures up to him all the love and security of friends. So with the psalmist and the Christian, we love to keep our hearts uplifted to Him who is our loving Father, who can give us strength for every affair of life. We rejoice to know He will never leave or forsake us. His everlasting arms are under and around His people, and His wisdom is available to all who ask in faith, so we may boldly say, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” (Heb. 13:6.)

What does it mean to the believer, to dwell in God’s house? It may mean many things to all of us. It must mean a constant awareness of our Father’s nearness and concern in all our affairs. In the rush and bustle of today’s world, this can be difficult to remember unless we are constantly reminded of it. It is easy to be engaged in what are correctly important duties and responsibilities, and feel we are all alone in the fight, that it all depended on our own work, our own strivings and efforts. It is just at these moments we need to lay it all down for a while and lift our eyes above to “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (2 Cor. 1:3.) We shall surely find that instead of being time we could not spare, it has been a time of new inspiration and vigour to carry on in the path our Father has prepared for us.

These occasions will be the oases experiences of our lives, times of sweet refreshing spent in our Father’s house. These will prepare us for the task ahead. Not that when we come forth we leave our Father behind, for He is with us every step of the way.

When we meet people for the first time, particularly if they are younger people, we often remark, “he must come from a good home.” With the Christian, the inner experiences of our own lives spent in the Father’s house must carry through to every sphere of life. All of our life is service rendered to God. Freely we have received of God’s love, freely we must give to all men. “Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him ... Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not as to men.” (Col. 3:17, 23.)

Our Saviour’s precious promise to His followers is that He has gone to prepare them a place in His Father’s house, and

we can only wonder what the glory of that house shall be. Then we shall know as we are known, and see our Saviour as He is,—“As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness.” But we are privileged even now to have a foretaste of the joys laid up for us. Unless this is our present experience, we are missing out on what our Father has planned for us. This is the Saviour’s prayer for His people—“That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” (John 17:3.) Through our Saviour’s merit we may come to know God; as we allow Him entry to our lives so He will work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. So we may say with Job after all his experiences at God’s hand, “Now mine eye seeth thee.” (Job 42:5.) As we have journeyed on He has confirmed His love to us in so many ways.

“Our Father knows what things we need  
Each step along the way;  
His eye of love doth never sleep;  
He watches night and day.”

In God’s dealings with us we are able, in the hour of meditation and in the time of trial and distress, to see something of the beauty of our Lord. “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.” (Psa. 103.)

What beauties there are in all the plans and purposes of God! “How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” We can visualize the psalmist as the shepherd boy, meditating on the works of God in nature; so he cries out, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork!” In all the grandeur of His love and mercy, in all the splendour of His plans and purposes, how can we fail to see and marvel at the beauty of our Lord? May His holy spirit keep our hearts alive and alert to never weary or become immune to it, but rather say,

“When all Thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view, I’m lost  
In wonder, love and praise.”

“O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and His wonderful works to the children of men!” Before mankind does this, they have first to realise the surpassing beauty of God, and His kindness and loving mercy to them. But His Word assures us of a time to come when every creature shall praise our God. What a wonderful harmony that will be, when the whole creation reflects the beauty of Him who first designed and created it! How favored are we, to see through His Word something of His beauty; so we learn to be transformed into the image of His dear Son, the express image of the Father. (Heb. 10:3.)

In the Tabernacle of Israel God’s glory shone in. The New Testament tells us our Heavenly Father, “who causeth the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” What wonderful glory and beauty there is for us to experience! What a privilege, that we may also enquire in His temple! But there must of necessity be the desire to learn and know our Father better, to more fully understand His ways and purposes for us. His promises belong to those who have the enquiring heart, the longing for the blessing of God.

James, in counselling us to ask of God wisdom, further expounds that our asking must be in faith, without wavering. Also, in Heb. 11:6 we read, “Without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” So then, whether it is in our private meditations or fellowship with other Christians we meet, we need the indwelling of faith in order that our Heavenly Father may bless us. All our Lord’s footstep followers are spoken of as being built up together into an holy temple. How appropriate that not only singly, but also in unity His people should enquire together for His will. Above all let us help one another to know and love God better, to be filled with appreciation of His divine character and more clearly discern His will and way for us.

For any undertaking of value there must be a plan. For every day of our Christian experience we need the assurance that He knows the way we take. As we enquire of Him, we shall learn the lessons He has for us, and so be growing Christians. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” (Col. 3:1.) Let us realise more and more the privileges we enjoy as members of God’s household, the household of faith. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.” (Heb. 10:19-23.)

Let us live up to these privileges of fellowship with our Heavenly Father. Let us be found daily and confidently enquiring in His temple, and understanding more of His wondrous works and ways.

## THE QUESTION BOOK

Word is to hand from our brethren in Chicago, U.S.A., who had published the "Bible Students Manual" that they now expect to publish the Question Book—"What Pastor Russell Said, His Answer to Hundreds of Questions." These books are expected to be ready about March 1968, and brethren desiring copies may order through us, if they wish.

The price is expected to be about \$3.50, plus postage. Orders should be placed as soon as possible for early delivery.

### Adelaide Easter Convention

This early announcement is made to the effect that the Adelaide brethren expect to hold their Easter Convention next year (D.V.) from Good Friday to Easter Monday. Further information from the secretary—Mr. J. Jordan, P.O. Box 47, Kingswood, South Australia, 5062

### Melbourne Christmas Convention

The brethren of the Melbourne Class extend a cordial invitation to all friends able to attend their Annual Convention to be held this year (D.V.) on December 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th in the Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond. Further information from the Berean Bible Institute, 19 Ermington Place, Kew, Victoria, 3101.

## Life and Death

So he died for his faith; that is fine  
More than most of us do.  
But, stay, can you add to that line  
That he lived for it, too?

In his death he bore witness at last  
As a martyr to truth;  
Did his life do the same in the past  
From the days of his youth?

It is easy to die; men have died  
For a wish or a whim  
From bravado or passion or pride—  
Was it harder for him?

But to live—every day to live out  
All the truth that he dreamt,  
While his friends met his conduct with doubt,  
And the world with contempt;

Was it thus that he plodded ahead,  
Never turning aside?  
Then we'll talk of the life that he led  
Never mind how he died.

—EC.