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THE GRACE OF GOD.

“By grace are ye saved. . . is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8).

GRACE is the unmerited favor and love of God toward mankind in Christ. Of all the graces that God has bestowed and is bestowing On His children, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ surpasses all, “Jesus by the ‘grace of God tasted death for everyman.” “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” “In the beginning the Lord created heaven and earth” ; then man was created in the Father’s likeness to inhabit the earth. By man’s sinning toward God he was cursed with death, and for 4000 years man had to wait for the Lord to make some manifestation, that in Abraham would all the families of the earth be blessed. Then our Lord and Saviour descended from on high, was made flesh “to give Himself a ransom for all.” “Forasmuch, then,, as the children are made partakers of flesh’ and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Until Christ came it was a favor of God toward Abraham and his seed that God showed consideration, for He said, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth,” but here in Christ was God’s abounding grace shown to all, that

“He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever should ‘believe on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “He sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

It is God’s grace toward us that gives to all the opportunity to learn more of the Saviour, and of all the works He did, and the words He spoke, for it is common history how the Bible has been ridiculed and banished down the Ages, but we still have it in our midst, and can read more clearly than ever of the Divine purpose in regard to the world since its formation, reaching unto that glorious time in the future, when we are assured that—”God will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death,neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there ‘be any more pain, for the former things are passed, away.” We can see clearly by way of the Word, that, the restitution of all things is an act of free grace on God’s part, for in the sentence on man there was no mention made of a resurrection. “For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” And as all mankind was in Adam when he was condemned, and thereby forfeit life through him, so in Christ was paid the corresponding price for mankind. “As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For, as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

The Word also teaches us why sin and evil have been permitted to reign for so long, when in the end all

will be perfect. It is by His grace that all have the opportunity to bear witness to Him in the face of adversity that He is the One and true, living God, and we should say, “though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”

In the selection of a class, together with Christ, to bless the families of the earth in the ages to come, God gives to each individual, who will compose the class, the opportunity to conquer the evils of the world with the help of Christ’s covering robe of righteousness. To all who recognise this, the opportunities abound to “rejoice in suffering,” and “when made weak then to be strong.” “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”! As we wish to be followers of the Lord in this time of trouble, we must, with His help, employ our talents in the carrying of the cross. “Whosoever cloth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.” Jesus carried His cross under unfavourable conditions, and if we would walk after Him, now is the opportunity to heed the call, to take up our cross and follow Him, in the face of adversity, believing on Him at all times. The cross of Jesus was truly the sin and sorrow of the world, and just how we can best carry our cross is the question every Christian must ask himself. Part of our cross would be the forgiving of trespasses against us. If we are to walk anew we must keep this ever before us, and not resort to the law of an eye for an eye, and tooth for tooth. Imperfect man asks Perfect man how many times are we to forgive those who sin toward us. Peter asks, would seven times be sufficient? No! but 70 times 7 is the reply of our Lord. This would surely imply the completeness of forgiveness, 7 being the symbol of perfection, and 10 of completeness; 7 times 10, 10 times 7. This forgiveness has been given to us, and to be as He would have us we must pass on the grace in our forgiving our enemies. We can forgive no one on account of another, but when to ourselves the task is laid, we pray not to be found wanting. This is grace unbounded—being forgiven for sin while we were yet to enter in. But to grasp the full importance of this grace it is necessary to feel and respond to the call that we sin no more, and walk as New Creatures indeed. Since we have cast all our burdens and cares on the Lord, we must “lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.”

As Christ, by the grace of God, died for all, it is by the grace of the Lord that He is calling out during this Age a class to share with Him in the blessing to all. “Blessed is the man whom Thou chooseth and causeth to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts.” “I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore, with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” We might ask ourselves now, that having been called by God’s grace to the high calling, what do we do next? Paul tells us that “by the mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Since it is grace that abounds to us so freely, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound more? This has been asked all down the Ages, but with the enlightenment of present-day Christians, all should have no hesitation in saying, like the Apostle of grace, “God forbid—how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” Again, as God hates sin and defilement in sinners, how much more repelling it must be to find sin in any who have taken the name of Christ. We must settle down to the thought that Jesus came to save us in this life from the power and dominion of sin, and make us more than conquerors through His power. When Peter was preaching in the porch of the temple to the wondering Jews, he said, “Unto you first, God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

When Paul was telling the Ephesian church of the wondrous truth that Christ had so loved them as to give Himself for them, he went on to declare that His purpose in thus doing was “That He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or ally such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” And likewise Paul instructing Titus concerning the grace of God, declared that the object of that grace was to teach us

“that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,” and adds as a reason for this, that Christ “gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” When Peter exhorted Christians to walk as Christ, he tells them that “even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us,- leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps ; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth,” and adds, “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.” Paul, contrasting the walk suitable for a

Christian with the walk of an unbeliever, sets forth the truth in Jesus as being this. “That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the’ spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,” and when writing to the Romans said, “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death”? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness. of life” ; and adds, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that, henceforth, we should not serve sin.” Realising, then, that if our redemption through Christ is to be verified by grace, we must discipline ourselves that we may be counted worthy to overcome sin. “For the grace of God bringing salvation for all men,” teaches us discipline that we in all things show ourselves a pattern of good works, and to “study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman, that needeth not to be ashamed.” We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Besetting sins are to be conquered, evil habits overcome, wrong dispositions and feelings to be rooted out, and all by the grace of God, since man is powerless in himself, and a captive of sin. But Jesus, by His grace, sets the captives of sin free. We are to be fashioned- according to the will of God, so that we become meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work. It is in the fashioning process that the Christian has the opportunity of submitting entirely to the Lord’s will. Doubts and fears for our earthly existence too easily creep in, “For the good that I would E do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do.” And doubtless to all, the experience of Paul, in that the bode was at war with the mind, is not new, for the body “bringeth me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Adam’s sin was that of disobedience, and through Christ it now becomes our testing to learn obedience, “till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” And so we, yielding ourselves unto God, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto Him, find that He works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure, and we can say with Paul, “I laboured ; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” Then the lives we live at present, and the outlook, is not an attainment, but an obtainment. We did not earn it or win it ; all we can do is to ask, and receive of God of His grace in Christ Jesus, and thereby we “receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness.” The grace is given of God to all who will hear, and to those who do hear the Word, the Lord says to’ “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” In order to “grow in grace,” therefore, we must recognise opposition to all growth in self-dependence of self-effort of every nature. We must put our growing in to the hands of the Lord and leave it there. Devoting our wills to His, grace will grow in us without care and without anxiety, and continue to grow, since He who has planted us planted a growing thing, and has made us on purpose to grow. “Consider the lilies, how they grow,—they toil not, neither do they spin.”

And our growing in grace brings to us unspeakable joy, both now and for the future, since we know that Christ is to put “all enemies under His feet.” The joy then, is spiritual, stored away in our hearts, and ready to be looked at in the face of all opposition. Paul said in the midst of his ,sorrows, “We arcs troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed.” “For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,

worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look, not at the things which are seen, . . . for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' The Christian's joy is simply his gladness in knowing Christ, and in his possession of such a God and Saviour. We do not on an earthly plane rejoice in our joy, but in the thing that causes our joy. And on the heavenly plane it is the same. We are to "rejoice" not in our joy, but in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation." This joy no man can take from, us, and no earthly sorrows can touch, for "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

"God hath saved us and called us . with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." "The Lord God is a Sun and Shield; the Lord will give grace and glory ; no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." What grace: What peace of mind and comfort in our Lord we have, "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations." And there is no tribulation, either of sin or sorrow, that has not the assurance of God's all- pardoning grace to us, "that all things work together for good to them that love God." "Grace be with you, mercy and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love."

The Christ Head and Body.

The philosophy of the sin offering and the Church's association with it is frequently misunderstood, and must never be confused with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

Whatever blessing ultimately shall come to every man must result from the death of Jesus however others may be subsequently associated with Him in the work.

The grand truth that none can ever have eternal life except by relationship with Jesus in no way hinders the Lord from using the Church as His assistant and agent in bringing the world into that blessed state.

Truly, our Lord is already the propitiation for the Church's sins, because He appeared in the presence of God for us. It is also true that the satisfaction of justice which He effects will ultimately be extended to all mankind at the close of this Age, but this does not hinder our Lord from accepting the Church as members of His body and sacrificing them as such during this antitypical atonement day.

Our Lord truly gave Himself a ransom for all eighteen centuries ago, but evidently He has not applied the benefits to any but the household of faith . . . By the Father's Plan our Redeemer reckons to adopt the Church as members of His body, and allows these to participate in the sufferings of Christ in this present time, and thus also to share coming glories.

We believers have no personal standing before God, nor share in the sacrifice of the sin offering. It is only those who are "beheaded," and thus cease to be themselves and are accepted as members of the Anointed One, of Christ.

All the under priests are represented in the High Priest The Christ, that participate in the suffering or glory as His members. They all are associated, but the Head is the recognised representative of all.

NAZARETH.

Here dwelt with glory veiled the Son of God,
For thirty years in this enclosure green
Of Galilean Hills, the power serene
Who framed the universe, and with a nod
Sent planets on their courses, meekly trod
The village streets and lanes; and might be seen
Over His humble handicraft to lean,
Or pace in prayer the dewy mountain sod
O mystery of godliness how great;
Obedience of a lifetime how complete ;
Who now can murmur at his low estate,
Or who but feel the humblest duty sweet;
When "Is not this the carpenter ?" was heard
Of Him who built all things with a word.

—Rev. Wilson

PEOPLES PAPER.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression "sed, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

A Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to " Peoples Paper" is overdue.

The doctrine of the Trinity.

EVIDENTLY some of the leading Christian ministers are beginning to exercise their minds concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. Only a very short time ago to have questioned the doctrine would have meant expulsion from the ministry, and such would have been looked upon as outside the pale of salvation. In fact, the Prayer Book condemns to eternal torture all who do not believe that there are three Gods, yet not three but one, three almighties, yet not three but one almighty, three incomprehensibles, yet not three but one incomprehensible.

Augustine evidently realised the statement as being confusing when he said, "We say three persons, not that it may be so, but that we may not keep silence ;" but silence would have been golden rather than the uttering of such meaningless nonsense.

We are living in a day when everything takes its turn to come before the bar of reason, and surely every doctrine claiming to be Christian must have Biblical foundation.

Dr. Selbie, of Mansfield College. Oxford, writing in the "Christian World," admits that "There is no such doctrine in the New Testament, though there are there recorded experiences and materials, out of which the doctrine grew," yet he still refers to the teaching as a "Christian" doctrine in spite of the plain statements of our Lord and the Apostles to the contrary. Jesus said, "I can do nothing of Myself ; it is My Father that doeth the works." My Father is greater than I," and cried out in His agony, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me," and in Gethsemane He prayed, "Not My will but thine 'be done." Paul states the matter very plainly (1 Cor. 8 ; 6), "To us there is one God, the Father of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by Him." This agrees with the statement rightly translated in John I:1-3, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word (Logos) was with the God and the Word was a God." (The word god means a mighty one and is used, not only for angels, but also for the judges in Israel).

Dr. Selbie certainly makes a mistake in terming the Trinity a Christian doctrine, for it is entirely anti-Christian and the whole tenor of Scripture is antagonistic to it from Moses' "Hear O Israel the Lord our God is one," to John's Rev. 1:1 or Paul's 1 Cor. 15:25-28, which speaks of the Son having accomplished

His work of "restoration of all things" (Acts 3:19-22), and handing over the Kingdom to God, and the Son as being subject to the Father.

Dr. Adam Clark has pointed out a thing that is so palpable to anyone who will consider that the Father must have existed prior to the Son, and, therefore, could not be in that sense co-existent from everlasting.

The doctrine of the Trinity came into Church teaching in the Dark Ages, when pagan teachings became mixed with Christian teachings and men spent time in formulating creeds and prayers and formulas of worship. instead of studying the Scriptures.

REGARDING UNITARIANISM.

It seems that when one questions the doctrine of the Trinity, it is hastily assumed that he is an Unitarian or something worse, and, therefore, it is necessary to say that to us Unitarianism appears possibly worse than Trinitarianism, for while the doctrine of the Trinity makes the Cross of Christ seem like a sham, for if Christ were God in the Trinity sense, he could not have died ; the Unitarian denies any efficacy in the Cross other than as a noble example of sacrifice, as a martyr, not perceiving the truth that the precious

blood of Christ bought us, by paying the penalty of death, which was against mankind (Rom. 5:12-19 ; Rom. 14:9) . “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Con 15:3; 1 Thes. 5:10 ; 1 Pet. 2:24, etc.).

What we would like, Dr, Selbie and others to do is, first to recognise that belief in the Trinity is no mark of a Christian, that there are many earnest believers in Christ as the great atoning Lamb of God who died for all, who are earnestly endeavouring to live true Christian lives, and who do not recognise the doctrine of the Trinity as Christian, but rather as a relic of paganism. Secondly, that they should search the Scriptures and note that nowhere does Christ claim equality with God, but always to the contrary and in agreement with Paul’s statement (1 Cor. 11:3) , “The head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.”

We must remember in our search that our Bible has been translated by men who believed in the doctrine of the Trinity, -and, however noble was their work and sincere their motive, certain passages have ‘been affected by their belief. Take, for instance, Phil. 2:5-9, in saying he “thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” an exactly opposite statement is given to that intended by the Apostle. How strange it would be for the Apostle (in Verse 5) to say, “Let this mind, be in you which was also in Christ,” not to think it robbery to be equal with God. But no ; the R.V. gives a better rendering and the Wilson Diaglott one clearer still, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who did not meditate an usurpation to be like God, but made Himself of no reputation,” etc.

It is said that the worthy John Wesley asserted that the only verse in the Bible to support the doctrine of the Trinity was 1 John 5:7, and this is acknowledged to be an interpolation as not being in the most ancient MSS., and is, therefore, left out of the Revised Version Bible.

DAVID'S GRATITUDE TO GOD.

"The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer" (2 Sam. 22:2) .

THIS entire chapter is one of David's songs of praise and gratitude to God for His goodness and His loving providences, which had been so manifest toward Him ever since His anointing by Samuel, the prophet, and doubtless, before that as well. It calls to mind another expression of one of his psalms, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous ; for praise is comely for the upright" (Psa. 33:1) . Indeed, the writings of David, and all the Prophets and Apostles as well, abound in fervent expressions of praise and thanksgiving to God. They not only praise the Lord themselves, lovingly and gratefully recounting all His mercies, but, with impassioned eloquence and holy enthusiasm, they call upon all the sons of men, and everything that hath breath, and even inanimate nature, to laud and magnify His holy name. The worshippers are also bidden to bring with them to the concert of praise every musical instrument of human device ; and grateful reverence exclaims, "Blessed be His glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen" (Psa. 33:2, 3 ; 50:1-6 ; 72:19 ; see also Exod. 15:1-21) .

As we thus consider that, by the voice of inspiration, the whole human race is called to praise and worship and thanksgiving, we are led to consider further the relationship, which the spirit of praise has to the Christian or godly character. David - . it is "comely for the upright." But why so ? It is because loving gratitude is one of the divinely implanted instincts of a soul bearing the image of God, and one which should therefore be cultivated. It is this element of the intelligent creature that is designed to be responsive to the divine goodness and benevolence ; and it is this element of character in man which makes fellowship and communion with God possible.. If the goodness of God could awaken in us no sense of grateful appreciation ; if we were wholly dead to such sentiments, there could be no pleasure on God's part in manifesting His goodness to us, and there would be nothing in us to call out His love ; and so also nothing. of all His goodness and grace, would awaken love in us. But since for the divine pleasure we are and were created (Rev. 4:11) , God endowed' His intelligent creatures with this element of character which, being responsive to His own goodness, institutes a lively and delightful fellowship with himself, , which is the chief end of human existence, both on the side of the creature and of the Creator (Psa. 16:11 ; Prov. 11:20; 15:8) .

Rejoicing and the spirit of praise are thus seen to be indissolubly linked together in the divine economy ; and so David links them, saving, "Rejoice in the Lord, for praise is comely," thus making the two almost synonymous. To see this principle illustrated, take as examples, the dog and the hog. Neither can have any appreciation of the divine goodness, neither being created in the mental moral likeness of God, and hence being utterly incapable of knowing or thinking of .1\1 an is the highest being that they can know in any sense or degree ; and that is first, because man is visible and tangible to them ; and second, because they have some similar faculties, though very inferior and exercised within a much narrower sphere. The dog has in him to a considerable degree, the sense of gratitude : feed and caress him, and he shows signs of gratitude and affection, and a desire to reward you with a manifestation of appreciation. He wags his tail, looks kindly into your face, licks your hand, caresses you with his head and watches to see what errand he can do for you. But the hog, on the contrary, makes no demonstration of appreciation : he takes all he can get without even so much as a look of recognition ; his eyes are always downward, and his snout continually rooting in the earth for more ; and a grunt is the only sound to which he gives expression. A hog, therefore, can have no pleasure in man; nor can man find any pleasure in the hog. There is no bond of fellowship whatever, and man, therefore, tolerates his existence only until his flesh is fit for the slaughter and the market, while between the dog and his master there is strong friendship, which, when cultivated, gives pleasure to both, and they become life-long friends, irrespective of any commercial value.

It is plain, therefore, that in the cultivation of the spirit of praise, thanksgiving and loving appreciation of

all the manifest goodness of God. is the Christian's secret of a happy life. And in order to the cultivation of such a spirit it is necessary that we continually call to mind His acts of mercy and of grace ; that in our prayers we frequently tell Him how all His goodness is remembered, how every fresh evidence of His love and care causes faith to take deeper root and makes the sense of His presence and favor more fully realised ; and how through such experiences our love and joy are made to abound more and more. We love Him because He first loved us ; and every time we see some new mark of His love, our love, if we have truly appreciative hearts, is called out more and more, and we are made to rejoice in God, in whose presence is fulness of joy. It is to this end that our Lord encourages our frequent coming to God in prayer with large requests for His favor, saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

We observe that in Israel the spirit of praise was cultivated by calling to mind and recounting what the Lord had done for them. "If I do not remember thee," says David. "let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth" (Psa. 137:6 ; see also Exod. 15:1-21 ; Dent.:17, 18; 8:2 ; 15:15; 32:7 ; 1 Chron. 16:12 ; Psa. 20 : ; 63:5-7 ; 143:5, 6; 77:10-12) .

So must the Christian continually call to mind the works of the Lord.. especially his own individual experience of the Lord's leading and care and 'deliverances from dangers and snares, and the wiles of the adversary. If we keep these things in mind and meditate upon them, our appreciation of God and His goodness grows, and the spirit of love and praise takes possession of the heart, and thus we are made to rejoice in the Lord always, and in everything to give thanks. So also the soul is made to hunger and thirst after God and to realise that God alone is its satisfying portion, and to desire more and more of His fulness. Thus, as the Psalmist suggests, our prayer will be, "As, the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (Psa. 42:1).

This same principle of gratitude and praise, which reciprocates loving kindness and generosity,, is that which also makes human friendship and fellowship possible and delightful. In our intercourse one with another, if the kindnesses we show awaken no sense of appreciation, receive no acknowledgment, and their repetition is expected as a matter of course, there can, in the very nature of things, be no such thing as fellowship. True, as Christians, we may not relax kindness and generosity on this account ; for we, like our heavenly Father, are to be kind to the unthankful as well as to the thankful (Matt. 5:44-48) ; but when this goodness awakens no appreciation, no love, fellowship becomes impossible.

In David's thanksgiving for victories over his enemies we observe that those enemies were the enemies of the Lord and His people, whom David was commissioned of God to conquer. These battles he undertook in the strength which God supplied, and the victories he properly ascribes to God, the rock of his salvation. The words, regarded from the standpoint of the future, are also prophetic of the victories of Christ, of whom David was a type, and to whom. Jehovah will grant victory full and complete over all His enemies—the enemies of God, the enemies of truth and righteousness. The whole strain of thanksgiving, thus viewed in its wider application to the conquests of Christ, is eloquent in its prophecy of His glorious victory, as well as in praise to Jehovah (1 Cor. 15:27, 28). The prophecy of a future wider dominion, contained in verses 44-46, can only be considered as fully applicable to the wider dominion of Christ Jesus as earth's future King.

The text is a blessed assurance, applicable to all of the Lord's people, and it is amply verified to all those who delight themselves in the Lord, who meditate upon His goodness and render to Him the praise that is due to His holy name.—"The Lord is my rock (upon which I may safely build my hopes), and my fortress (in which I may safely hide), and my deliverer" (in every time of trouble).

Necessity of Appreciating God's Favours.

God's favors to Spiritual Israel and His protection are along spiritual lines, against spiritual enemies and spiritual difficulties; and yet how few spiritual Israelites, when they get into spiritual difficulties, realise that it must, in some sense of the word, 'be traceable to the Lord's providences ! flow few of them. properly look to see to what extent their spiritual adversities, weaknesses, coldness, alienation from the Lord, etc., are due to the permission of some kind of idolatry in their hearts! ,Not an idolatry, probably, that entirely ignores the Lord ; but one which, while thinking favorably of His spiritual blessings and victories of the past, simply wonders at His disfavor of the present, and fails to recognise that it is impossible to serve at the same time both God and Mammon; that God's favor and close communion_ and protection can not be expected while we permit in our hearts a rival reverence for wealth or fame or human institutions and creeds, or self or family to any degree or extent.

Why There is Diversity Amongst God's People.

"Who maketh thee to differ from another ? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive ?"—1 Cor. -I:7.

WHILE it is true that all men are born with inalienable rights and privileges, yet no man is born without sin. The Scriptures very properly declare that the race in Adam was sold under sin six thousand years ago. In this sense then we are not born free, but slaves of sin. Neither are we born equal. No two persons are exactly alike in opportunity, talent and ability. We differ from one another. God did not create some better and some worse—some more richly endowed and some less richly endowed.

We are to take the Bible statement of the origin of humanity, and understand that God made Adam perfect. All the imperfections which encumber the human race are the results of the dying process. Sin has made us all to differ, then, from the original image and likeness of God. Satan brought that difference through Mother Eve.

In our text, however, the Apostle Paul has in mind a New Creation in Jesus Christ—a new order—amongst whose members there is a difference. Some in the Church have many talents, others few talents; some have special talents, others ordinary talent. The Apostle says that it is God who has set the various members in the Body as it has pleased Him ; and that both this setting, or apportioning, of the different members of the Body and the bringing forth of the different degrees of fruitage are manifestations of God's grace in our hearts. Thus we are made to differ from each other.

CAUSE OF DIVERSITY OF ATTAINMENTS.

The matter of growth in the Holy Spirit is one that is dependent in large measure upon each one's zeal to know, to do the will of God. We are put into the school of Christ to learn of Him. Some learn more rapidly, others less rapidly. In proportion as they learn they have greater opportunities and blessings. All are granted a measure of the Holy Spirit— all granted some blessing. Those who are anxious to know the will of the Lord and to study it grow the more rapidly, and thus have more of the Holy Spirit. These are zealous to do the Lord's will. Their progress is not attributable wholly to themselves, but especially to the favour of God.

The Apostle goes on to say, Ye are God's workmanship. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." We could not do this work ourselves. The power that is working in us is of God. He is preparing a glorious Temple. He has provided who shall be the chief corner-stone of this Temple, and who shall be the members of this Temple class. We could not choose the place for ourselves.

But in God's providence we each responded to the call to be a living stone. The stones were first cut out of the dark quarry, and now are being shaped and prepared for places in the glorious building.

DIVERSITY OF ANOTHER KIND.

The great Master-Workman is doing a work upon us. He is chiselling and fashioning us. He is making us what we are. Consequently there is to be no boasting. There is a certain amount of personality connected with each one, however, and if there is too much cross-grain in the stone it will be abandoned. As the Apostle Peter exhorts, we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due time. The same Apostle also reminds us that we should look up to God and give Him praise for all that we have and are.-1 Pet. 5:6; 4:11.

We are co-labourers with God. We give God the praise that He has made us to differ from our former selves, that He is making us thus to differ more every day, and that He will continue the good work as the days go by and as we seek to do His will. What have we of ourselves? Nothing! We were wholly dead through Adam's disobedience; we were born in this condition, having no right to everlasting life. But God has a plan which is world-wide in its scheme of blessing. He has proffered the blessings of the highest feature of this Plan to us. and invited us to come to Him in advance of the world. And this we receive through His grace.

DAILY SERVICE.

THE Lord's business is His people's vocation. "Vocation" is the term that describes the special business of any person, while the word "avocation" describes an occasional business. The Apostle Paul's vocation was that of a minister of the truth, while his avocation or occasional employment, when necessary to provide things honest and decent in the sight of God and men, was tent-making. Similarly all of the Lord's people should consider that their vocation or calling is of God, and relates to the special or spiritual ministry in which He privileges us to engage as fellow-servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to provide the necessities of life it is necessary that we should also have some earthly employment ; but this we should always regard, not as our vocation, not as our chief business in life, but merely as our avocation or temporary engagement incidentally necessary to our chief or principal business.

The question should now properly be in the minds' of all who realise themselves as consecrated to the Lord, members of the Royal Priesthood : To what extent am fulfilling my present priestly office, and performing daily as I have opportunity my appointed work of sacrifice?

Too many, under the false teachings of Babylon, both in word and custom have come to consider that worldly gain, honour, ease and general self-preservation constitute the reasonable service of the Lord's people. Sacrificers are looked upon as deluded fanatics, especially in proportion as the sacrificing is done for the truth's sake, in the interest of spiritual things. We are, however, not to be taught of the world, nor by a cold worldly-wise churchianity ; but we are to hearken to the voice of the good Shepherd, to hear His Word, to learn of Him, if we would be prepared by Him, in the school of Christ, for the glorious things promised us as His joint-heirs in the future. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him."

We can see how the Apostle, even though finding it necessary at times to engage in the business of tent-making, might be considered as a priest, whose time, energy and talents were all sacrificed to the Lord, and given freely in serving His people, in doing good unto all men as he had opportunity, especially unto the household of faith ; but how can others who have not the opportunity, not the talents, nor the open

door for such special service as his, be sacrificing priests, when as a matter of necessity nearly all of their time must be given to their various employments, which Providence seems to have opened before them as their avocations? When it is necessary to spend nearly all of eight to twelve hours per day in the service of our avocations, how can such consider or serve the interests of their vocation, the priesthood?

The Lord has very graciously made arrangements for this very condition. He assures us in His Word that it is not the amount we shall accomplish in His cause, but the spirit, the desire and the effort which is manifested, that in His estimation would indicate the degree of self-sacrifice. He graciously declares that if our hearts be given to Him, whatsoever we may have need to do, may be done as unto the Lord, and will be accepted by Him. From this standpoint we can see that the work which the Apostle Paul did in his avocation passed to his credit as a part of his vocation, just as much as the other part of his time which he spent in more congenial methods of proclaiming the Gospel. Similarly, we can see that those working at their different occupations, if at heart fully consecrated, would be seeking to do their work as unto the Lord. If they are careful to use all other opportunities for proclaiming the truth, for serving the brethren, for doing good unto all men, the improvement of the few opportunities coming to them and their willingness to sacrifice personal taste and convenience for the service of the truth and for the brethren, would be counted by the Lord as a full sacrifice, because such a disposition in respect of little things would imply an equal faithfulness in the presence of larger opportunities.

Endurance is nobler than strength, and patience than beauty.—Ruskin.

“God be Merciful to Me, a Sinner.”

Luke 18:9-17.

“The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, .Clod be merciful to me, a sinner.”—Luke 18:13.

WHILE the Pharisee presents to our minds the extremes of conceit, selfishness and hypocrisy, it is always well to remember that there are many approaches to that disposition which give sure signs that those who have and who are cultivating them will by and by mature the same kind of fruit unless they, change their course. The spirit of meekness, which is the spirit of all true children of God, is the very opposite of the spirit of proud, boastful self-righteousness. It is only this spirit that can gain the ear of the Lord and bear away the answers of peace, as illustrated in the case of the publican so strikingly in contrast with that of the Pharisee.

How this calls to mind the words of wisdom and of warning to guard against every approach to a spirit of pride and vainglory. “Be sober, and watch unto pray” ; “Be sober, he vigilant” against “your adversary, the devil; I say . .

. to ‘every man . . . not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly’; “In simplicity and godly sincerity” have your “conversation in the world.” (1 Pet. 4:7; 5:8; Rom. 12:3 ; 2 Car. I:12.) It is the intoxication that comes from imbibing the spirit of the world that leads to that foolish boasting of which a man in his sober senses would be ashamed, and such intoxication is an abomination in God’s sight and is unworthy of the least of His children ; for every sober man must realise that he is far, very far, short of perfection. Boasting, therefore, is only an evidence of intoxication with the worldly spirit.

To further enforce this teaching, our Lord calls attention to the beautiful, artless simplicity of childhood as a pattern, in this respect, of what all must be who would enter the Kingdom of God. To be a child in

guilelessness and simplicity, however, is one thing, while to be a child in understanding and development of character is another ; and it is in the former, and not in the latter respect, that we are to be children. And it is in this respect that the people of God are spoken of as His “little ones” (Luke 17:2) ; and by the beloved John as “my little children.” They may be old, in years and grey-headed, but their hearts are young and preserve the sweet simplicity of childhood. On the other hand, they may be ripe in character and learned in the wisdom of God, as was the Apostle Paul, who said, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things.” And the same Apostle also says, “Brethren, be not children in understanding ; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.” “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”-1 COT. 13 ; 11; 14 ; 20; 16; 13,

The simplicity of childhood, realising its need, confesses it and asks mercy, instead of attempting to deceive itself by philosophising. In this respect we must continue “children” ; we must continue to admit our own imperfection, continue to admit our need of mercy, continue to trust in the precious blood provided to cleanse us from all sin, if we would continue to have the Heavenly Father’s care and favour, and if we would continue to be “justified” in His sight.

We urge upon all the importance of sincere prayer—private or “closet” prayers, “family” or “household” prayer, and “social” prayer with fellow-Christians. Each has its special importance to everyone who is running the heavenly race, and each has Scripture sanction. They need not be lengthy ; indeed, few of the Scriptural examples of prayer were so; but they must be sincere, from the heart and not a lip service. Heart prayers are always accompanied by efforts of life in harmony with the prayers ; while lip prayers are usually in contradiction of the living epistle. Prayer without corresponding endeavour is like faith without works : it is a dead, worse than useless, thing.

Prayer is required, not to change God’s plans, but to ‘bring our hearts into such a condition as will ‘prepare us to receive and appreciate the blessings which God has freely promised and which He delights to grant to His children.

Hence our requests should be such only as God has authorised us to ask and expect. Our requests should be unselfish. The Apostle remarks that some ask and receive not, because they ask amiss (not in harmony with the Lord’s arrangements), to consume the things asked for upon selfish desires.—James 4:3.

COMMUNION WITH OUR FATHER.

Oft when alone in prayer I kneel
Before my Father's throne;
I cannot tell Him all I feel,
Nor make my wishes known.

With heart subdued, and head bowed low,
I lean upon His breast,
And while the tears unbidden flow,
My love for Him, confess.

I have no boon to ask of Him,
Save that His will be done,
To make me holy, pure within
An image of His Son.

But as He smiles and draws me near—
His Spirit from above
Floods all my soul with peace so clear,
And fills my heart with love.

Though from my gaze He hides His face,
My soul, from self apart,
Has found its happy resting-place
Close to His loving heart.

—L.C.R.

The one who will be found, in trial, capable- of great acts of love, is ever the one who is always doing considerate small ones.—F. W. Robertson.

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