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Christ in You, the Hope of Glory

(Col. 1:27)

OUR text describes an exceedingly precious experience. There are various scriptures which make reference to this happy condition; for example: "If Christ be in you" (Rom. 8:10), "Christ liveth in me" (Gal 2:20), "until Christ be formed in you."—Gal. 4:19

The Bible also describes the Lord's true people as being "in Christ," giving the thought of membership in his body—"So we, being many, are one body in Christ."—Rom. 12:5

To the fully consecrated children of God, both of these scripturally described conditions, "being in Christ," and "Christ being in us," are joyous realities, which become increasingly rich as progress is made in the Christian life. Once they were not children of God, but "were by nature the children of wrath, even as others"; "in darkness," and without any proper direction in life, not having heard the glorious true Gospel of the kingdom. But happy indeed was the day when, hearing the true good news, they yielded to God's gracious drawing power, and appreciated, little by little, the grandeur and beauty of the Gospel message being revealed to them in the Scriptures.

Realizing their own unworthiness, and real need of a Saviour, they accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Redeemer, By faith they accepted the righteousness from God on account of their faith in Christ Jesus, and fully consecrating themselves to God, the Holy Spirit then truly worked within them.

Here was the beginning of a new life, and they could gratefully exclaim in the sentiments of I Peter 1:3, 4, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." They now had a blessed hope of an actual birth to the divine nature in the first resurrection.

Christ Jesus was now their "Head." Indeed, they rejoiced to know that he is the Head over all things to the church, which is his body. Just as the human body is made up of many members, so also is The Christ. The Greek word translated Christ corresponds to the Hebrew word rendered Messiah, and in either language the significance of the word is "the Anointed."

The anointing process was pictured during the Jewish Age at the installation into office and the anointing of the kings and the high priests of Israel. The oil used in that ceremony was, according to Exodus 30:22-33, a peculiar kind, which might not be used for any other purpose. Similarly, the anointing which our Lord and the members of his mystical body have received is different from anything else in the world. It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit—the spirit of truth, the spirit of righteousness.

"YOU ALL KNOW IT"

In proportion as we, here and now, have the Holy Spirit, in that proportion we are faithful members of the body of Christ, and have the anointing in us. As the apostle says, "The anointing which you received from him abides in you"; "You have an anointing [unction, AV] from the Holy One; you all know it." (I John 2:20, 27, Diaglott) It manifests itself to us as it would not to the world.

The signification of "unction" (AV), and of its Greek original, *chrisma*, is smoothness, oiliness, lubrication. From custom, the word carries with it also the thought of fragrance, perfume. How beautifully and forcefully this word represents the effect of God's influence toward goodness upon those who come under this antitypical anointing—holiness, gentleness, patience, brotherly-kindness, love!

What a sweet, pure perfume does this anointing of the Holy Spirit of love bring to all who receive it! How-

ever ungainly, or coarse, or rude the outer man—"the earthen vessel"—how soon it partakes of the sweetening and purifying influence of the treasure of the "new heart," the new will within, anointed with the Holy Spirit and brought into harmony with whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.—Phil. 4:8

Just as the anointing of kings and high priests of old in Israel was the divine evidence that they were accepted to office, so was it with Jesus. It is described in Acts 10:38: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." Our Lord was thus set apart for a very high office, that great antitypical King and Priest "after the order of Melchisedec"—a priest upon his throne.—Heb. 5:6

During the Gospel Age, God has been, and still is, setting apart those who are to be members of the body of Christ—taking out a people for his name. (Acts 15:14) These are invited to be (with Christ) kings and priests unto God. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."—I Pet. 2:9

Consequently, when one who is begotten of the Holy Spirit, and by the Word of truth, here and now is received (through full consecration) into this body of the Anointed, under the headship of Christ, he or she comes under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And it is of vital importance that we remain in Christ so that we continue to experience, in a growing measure, the sweet, fragrant influence of this anointing—this "Christ" within us.

"LED BY THE SPIRIT"

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:14) The Lord's true people are aware that it costs something to be led by the Spirit. And in all the tests and trials full, complete consecration is to be maintained. Not even a little of our own will should be retained, because "self" is to be put completely in the background. This means a new direction in life, because of the anointing with the Holy Spirit, and on account of being fully led by the Spirit of God. What are some of the evidences of our being thus led?

We are not now conformed to this world, but are being transformed.

We are subjects of a new kingdom, and are being instructed, disciplined, and trained with a view to our development as sons of God.

We are minding the things of the Spirit, and not the things of the flesh.

We seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; and our affections are on things above, and not on things of the earth.

Through the Spirit we mortify, or put to death, the deeds of the body, fervently desiring to be more and more conformed to the image of God's dear Son.

We seek to have a growing knowledge of the manifold wisdom of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, according to a plan of the ages, which he has purposed in Christ Jesus.

We lay hold upon the exceeding great and precious promises in God's Word, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature.

We let our light shine before men, holding forth the Word of life.

It is our privilege and joy not only to suffer for Christ, but also to suffer with him.

We drink of the cup of which he drank, and are baptised with the baptism with which he was baptised.

We realize that to be planted together in the likeness of his death means that we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

Whoever find on self-examination that they have these foregoing evidences in their own hearts can be fully assured that they are "in Christ", members of his mystical body and, as a result, anointed with the Holy Spirit. Such can gladly and gratefully testify in the words of the Apostle Paul, "Christ liveth in me."—Gal. 2:20.

CHRIST FORMED IN YOU

The Apostle Paul wrote very pathetically to the Galatian Christians, "O my little children ! whom I am bearing again, till Christ be formed in you." (Gal. 4:19, Diaglott) The apostle sought, by the Lord's grace, to nourish and sustain those 'seeds!' (as it were) of spiritual being in those Galatian Christians by his own personal work and influence until they would be able to appropriate for themselves the God-given elements of spiritual life contained in the Word of truth.

How important that we, who hope to have a share with Christ in the glories of the heavenly phase of the kingdom, and in his glorious future work of establishing God's kingdom in the earth, see to it that, as individuals, Christ is now actually formed in us:

A living Christ, our spirits need,
A loving Christ, our souls to feed.
A dying Christ our ransom he,
A risen Christ, to set us free.
What more our need? A Christ within,
A life with God, afar from sin.
A Christ whose love our hearts shall fill,
And quite subdue our wayward will.

Because this is to be the personal condition of every heir of the heavenly kingdom we, individually, give diligence to make our own precious calling and election sure, and assist others to do the same.

And we must not be satisfied when those within the range of our influence are merely begotten, in the early stage, by the Word of truth, but by instruction, example, and assistance, labour diligently to have Christ formed in them. So far as possible we wish to help their faithful walking, that they also may eventually be “partakers of the divine nature,” in the first resurrection.

Experiencing, here and now, this treasured anointing by the Holy Spirit, our heart’s sentiments are those of the Lord Jesus when he exclaimed, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” —Luke 4:18,19

Jesus here quoted from the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1, 2, and applied the words to himself. And because his faithful Spirit-begotten followers are members of his body, it applies to them also.

The purpose of our being anointed by the Holy Spirit is that we might “preach,” or be “ministers” of God and of his truth. We today can extend those prophetic words of Isaiah, quoted by Jesus, and proclaim additionally, “the day of vengeance of our God,” thus announcing on every suitable occasion the scriptural explanation of present world distress, also the glorious outcome, and indeed declare the whole counsel of God, as revealed in his Holy Word.

“QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT”

This “anointing,” this “Christ” in us, is the prelude to the glory which God has promised to those who are faithful, even to be joint-heirs with Christ beyond the veil, and to be privileged to assist in the honoured and glorious work (as Abraham’s seed) of bringing earth’s dead millions from the tomb, and richly blessing all the families of the earth.

We should heed the admonition not to quench this anointing or Holy Spirit: “Quench not the Spirit.” (I Thess. 5:19) On the contrary, with the Lord’s help we are to cultivate, develop, give special attention to this treasured anointing—realizing that we as yet hold it in an earthen vessel.

“Abide, sweet Spirit, heavenly Dove, With light and comfort from above; Be thou our Guardian, thou our Guide, O’er ev’ry thought and step preside.”

The Shepherd’s Psalm

(Convention Address)

THE Book of Psalms, it can be safely said, has had more influence and has accomplished more good than any other collection of poetry ever written.

There are many beautiful poems but none with the sentiments of the Psalms which seem to touch every soul at every turn, in sorrow, and in joy. Of the 150 Psalms, Bible scholars attribute 73 to the writings of David. What a wealth of experiences David had to draw on as inspiration for these beautiful songs!

The Hebrew definition of Psalms gives the meaning of praises, a term that reflects much of the book’s contents. The title given to Psalm 145 is Psalm of Praise. Its name in the Latin and English bibles comes from the Greek PSALMOI which means twangings (of harped strings) or songs sung to the accompaniments of harps. Several of the Psalms have been written to music and even with the English translation little is lost of their meaning or beauty.

Probably the most well known of all of the Psalms is Psalm 23, the Shepherd’s Psalm. One scholar (Beech-

er) wrote of this Psalm “It is a nightingale amongst the Psalms, it is small, of homely feather, singing shyly, out of obscurity, but it fills the air of the whole world with joy”. Another commentator writes, “This is the Pearl of Psalms, whose soft and pure radiance delights every eye”.

Commentators feel that Psalm 23 was written quite late in David’s life. As a result, he could call upon all of his experiences of life and of his intimate relationship with God. He could draw on his experiences as a young lad attending to his father’s sheep. He remembered being anointed with oil, as we read in 1 Sam 16: 11,12—”And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he keepeth the sheep. . . And he sent, and brought him in. Now he [was] ruddy, [and] withal of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he”.

He remembered the battles with his enemies with the Lord on his side, especially with Goliath, as we read in 1 Sam 17:45 - 50. “Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou has defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD’S, and he will give you into our hands. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slung it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.”

He desired to build a house for God, to replace the temporary tabernacle which he felt did not do justice to God. We read in 1 Chron 17:1 - 4 -”Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD remaineth under curtains. Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that is in thine heart; for God is with thee. And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in:” At times, he was very close to God working in full harmony with him; but on this occasion, David’s will was not God’s will for him.

“THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, I SHALL NOT WANT.”

The opening line of the Psalm tells of the intimate relationship that David had with his Lord. “The Lord is my Shepherd” tells of the covenanted relationship that the psalmist had with Jehovah. Only those who have a covenant relationship with God can properly appreciate the sentiments that David expresses in the following verses and how they apply in their lives, David had this relationship with God through the covenant which God had made with his favoured nation, Israel, at Mount Sinai. The Israelites had a covenant to walk in the Lord’s ways and to obey His statutes, and in return God covenanted with them that, in proportion as they would walk in His ways, He would bestow His blessings upon their every interest.

Only a few of the Israelites were trying to keep their part of the covenant, but David apparently was one of these, for the Lord declared him “a man after his own heart”. If he failed God, he confessed, repented, received his punishment, and rejoiced when restored to God’s favor, striving in the future to maintain his fellowship with God. David also gives a beautiful picture of the relationship between Christ and his Church,, Jesus speaking to his disciples in John 10 :14 says “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep and am known of mine”

We too have a covenant relationship with Jehovah through Christ our Shepherd. If we accept this relationship with our Father, we can appropriate the various pictures of this Psalm. The world as a whole has no idea of this relationship. Jesus declares that there is only one way to enter the sheepfold, namely through the door. John 10: 9 “I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture”.

To fully understand the sentiments of the Psalm, we must realise there is a great difference between the shepherd in olden times in Palestine and the care of sheep as we know it today. It was the eastern shepherd who illustrated our heavenly shepherd’s care for his little flock. An eastern pasture is vast, often boundless, it has to be extensive for the greater part of it is barren, in fact, the Hebrew word for desert and pasture is the same. It consists mostly of dry stony soil out of which for the greater part of the year the sun has sucked all life. In this desert, the breaks are few and consist of paths, gorges or thickets where wild beasts lurk, as well as oases of pleasant grass and water. It is evident that the person and character of the shepherd meant a great deal more to the sheep than it does with us. With us a flock of sheep without a shepherd is a common sight but unheard of in the east.

As a rule, a shepherd during David’s time owned the sheep that he cared for, he was no hireling, he asked

and received no wages, he was acquainted with all of his sheep. He was quick to discover and supply their individual needs; it was his duty in the morning to lead his sheep out and find good pasture for them. He needed to be familiar with the territory to know the special places where good pasture could be found. It was his duty to find quiet waters where they could quench their thirst and shady places to protect them from the heat of the noonday sun. He had to defend them when attacked by their enemies.

It was his duty to seek out straying sheep and to bring them back to the fold, to carry the weak lambs in his arms and tenderly to lead those who were lame or footsore. Occasionally he would be called upon to protect his sheep against the ravages of the wolves and bears who were lurking near some of the best feeding places, preying especially upon the weaker sheep. When the day was done, before darkness set in, the shepherd led them back to the fold. If any were wounded, he poured oil into the wound and bathed the bruises. When he found one hot and thirsty, and almost exhausted, he filled the large cup that hung by his side with cool water and gave it drink. The day's toil was over and the Shepherd settled down to guard the sheep over night.

David could not have put his faith in God more strongly than in the words "I shall not want". He shows us the trust that we too are to have in our Heavenly Father. Isaiah tells us in 33:15, 16—"He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly, . . . Bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure." "What a beautiful promise to us from our Heavenly Father. Jesus speaking to his disciples during the sermon on the mount, Matt. 6:25-34—"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, neither gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought saying, what shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

The Lord's sheep, abiding in perfection of relationship with Him, will lack nothing. Their every need will be supplied. This may not mean great earthly wealth, fame or name or luxury. The Lord's blessings to natural Israel were earthly blessings, supplying their every earthly need; but his blessings to spiritual Israel are spiritual blessings. Psalm 84: 11 "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." again re-affirms God's commitment to his sheep.

"HE MAKETH ME TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES: HE LEADETH ME BESIDE THE STILL WATERS".

Although the experiences of the Lord's sheep include many experiences in the parched wilderness of sin, yet he graciously gives them experiences in the oases of divine favour. These are not always with immunity from trial but certainly are seasons of rest and refreshment. The Psalmist assures us that, as the Lord's sheep, we will be provided with green pastures and cool refreshing waters of truth. Moreover, while being spiritually fed and refreshed, we shall have the peace of God as is implied in the suggestion that the sheep will lie down in green pastures. We may truthfully say, "The peace of God which passeth all understanding" rules in our heart. Which of the Lord's sheep has not found such green pasture of spiritual refreshment in his private devotion and studies or when assembling together with those of like precious faith to study and pray and give thanks for the Lord's goodness and mercies?

The still waters are contrasted with the rushing torrents of the mountain slope. They are not stagnant waters but rather smooth flowing so that the sheep can receive proper refreshment. The Hebrew meaning is water of quietness and Christ speaking in John 14:27 tells us "Peace I leave with you my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth unto you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid". Alas! not all of the sheep have full confidence in the Shepherd and are fully resigned to have no will but His. Some are continually getting into trouble because they wander off into the desert straying far from the Shepherd. Only after difficult experiences do they return to the quietness offered.

"HE RESTORETH MY SOUL: HE LEADETH ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE."

"He restoreth my Soul" These words are amongst the most precious of this priceless Psalm. They are words that everyone of God's children will have been able to say on many occasions, We are often tempted and troubled by the world; this can lead us into lethargy and indifference and as a result we need our souls restored. If He alone was always followed and if His commands were instantly obeyed, we would not need this restoring.

In order that we may follow in His footsteps and become living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service, our Lord provides the right paths which are advantageous to our development in righteousness. These paths are not always easy, they can be difficult and trying. How fortunate are we that our Master has trod the pathway before us, so He knows of the difficulties, the dangers, the snares, the pitfalls by the way, so that we are not tried beyond our capabilities. He leads us not contrary to our wills but in harmony therewith, to prove what is good, next the acceptable, and finally the perfect will of God, as Paul tells us in Romans 12 :2 “Be not conformed to the world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

“YEA, THOU I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL: FOR THOU ART WITH ME; THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME.”

The whole of mankind is walking through this valley of death as the result of the sin of father Adam, living with the daily prospect of death. Adam had fallen from the mountain top of life, he lost his footing there and descended into the valley of the shadow of death. Mankind as a whole fear this valley as they can see no way of escape. Scientists have for years been trying to find the key to increasing our life span, looking for the fountain of youth, even to deep freezing of the human body in the hope one day of finding the secret to eternal life. Mankind’s journey through this valley is one of sickness, pain, sorrow, culminating in death. As the Apostle Paul states-Romans 8:22,19 “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now . . . waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.” The world is yet to realise that only through Christ and his Church during the Millennial Age can they be lifted out of the “valley of the shadow of death”, back to the heights of light, love and Divine likeness.

The sheep however that hear the Shepherd’s voice and follow his directions, although still in the world, walking through this valley, learn to be neither careless nor anxious as they walk. Fear and tremblings, doubts and perplexities are replaced with the realisation that God through his Son has provided a way out of the valley of the shadow of death” He has assured us that death shall not mean extinction of life, but merely, until the resurrection, an undisturbed sleep in Jesus. As we are told in 1 Cor 15 :55 “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” No wonder then that the world looks upon these sheep with amazement as they pass through this valley singing, and rendering praise unto the Lord. They surely “fear no evil” as their shepherd has promised “I will never leave thee or forsake thee”

“Thy Rod and Thy Staff they comfort me” tells us of the ways in which God looks after us as we walk. The Shepherd’s crook or staff was used to assist the sheep out of difficulties, to defend it from its too powerful enemies and to chasten it when inattentive. The word staff means “a support, a stay.” The rod was also used to count the sheep to make sure all were present. How glad we are to know that all power in heaven and in earth is committed unto our Shepherd and that under both his protecting and correcting care we are safe from all foes, and nothing can by any means do us harm.

“THOU PREPAREST A TABLE BEFORE ME IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES”

The figure of the shepherd caring for his sheep is still before us in this verse, and it serves to illustrate the love and care of the Great Heavenly Shepherd for His people. A very important part of the Eastern shepherd’s duties would be that of preparing a suitable pasture for the sheep under his care. Not only must he find a supply of water, and plenty of the right kind of grass for the sheep, but he must also prepare the pasture in the sense of driving off the wild animals and reptiles which may be lurking around. The shepherd walking ahead of his sheep would be able to note any poisonous grasses and avoid such places; also the presence of snakes would be detected; and wolves and hyenas would need to be guarded against. How true of the Good Shepherd who provides the food for His trusting ones, but sees to it that no poisonous elements shall get into it. He sees to it that they are not injured thereby. The Good Shepherd has spread a table for his trusting sheep in this time in the very presence of enemies, but we need to listen and thus keep ourselves in his love and care, by earnest efforts to know and do his will.

“THOU ANOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL, MY CUP RUNNETH OVER”

Throughout the Psalm, the leading thought is that of the Lord’s love and care and interest in His people, illustrated by the figure of a shepherd caring for his sheep. The Psalm has sung the whole round of the day’s wandering—all the needs of the sheep, all the care of the Shepherd. Now we close with the final scene of the day. At the door of the sheepfold the shepherd stands, and he carefully inspects each sheep as they pass one by one before him into the fold. He has the horn filled with olive-oil and he has at hand a supply of Cedar-tar, and he anoints a knee bruised on the rocks, or a side scratched by thorns. If one is simply worn out and exhausted, he bathes its face and head in the refreshing olive-oil; he takes the large two-handed cup and dips it brimming full from the water he has brought for that purpose, and he lets the weary sheep drink. There is nothing finer in the Psalm than this. God’s care is not for the wounded only; it is for those who are just worn and weary, to the point that we can say his mercies and goodness are such that our Cup overflows, all our needs are fully

supplied.

“SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE”

These words seem to indicate the ending of the day's experiences, a realisation that the Shepherd's care has lead them safely through another day, and the feeling that while we too are under his watchful eye and obey his commands, we have safety and peace. The sheep have all been led home and are safely sheltered in the fold. David in reflection could see the pictures of his childhood experiences associated with the watching over of his father's sheep, and how these reflected the care Jehovah had shown him as he led him from his position as shepherd boy, through divine intervention, to become King of Israel and to grow old in service to his people and to Jehovah. His life had been a combination of various scenes, experiences both joyful and sorrowful. As he looked back over the long years of his earthly pilgrimage, memories of his life as a shepherd came to mind inspiring him to use these experiences, in caring for his sheep, to create this beautiful song telling of his own life of faith and trust in God.

The roles have been reversed, he no longer thinks of himself as the Shepherd, responsible for all the sheep's needs, but as one of the lowly sheep requiring the protection of the Great Shepherd, Jehovah. He tries to peer into the dim unknown future with a confidence brought about by a long experience. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the (remaining) days of my life." Only one who had experience of trials and adversities, as well as the blessings that inevitably come in this life on earth, one who had come to realise the need of divine mercy and grace, could have written these words. These words describe the experience of learning good by coming in contact with evil, even at times being overcome by evil, realising that amid the scenes of human life, the only power to deliver us from evil comes through the goodness and mercy of the Lord.

The power to bless, to heal, to work deliverance, is expressed in the Psalm as coming not from man but from God, Every verse covers some aspect of God's dealings with those who put their trust in him. David firmly believed that Jehovah was deeply involved in every aspect of his life, that He was full of compassion for him, remembering him in his weakened fallen nature.

Who can define goodness? Applying goodness to man and his dealings with his fellow man is difficult, nearly impossible, to sum up in one word, but God's goodness to imperfect ones who fear and reverence Him is not measureable. His benevolence of heart is manifested in His gifts of grace, and his discipline.

Mercy is defined as that benevolence, mildness, tenderness, which disposes a person to overlook injuries or to treat an offender better than he deserves. It is the disposition that tempers justice and induces an injured person to forgive trespasses and injuries and to forbear punishment, or to inflict less than the law or justice will warrant. It is said that no word in our language precisely fits the meaning of mercy.

“AND I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER”.

The shepherd's song is finished, the sheep are all at rest, safe in the good shepherd's fold, home at last.

To dwell in the house of the Lord forever will require a change. We have but temporary abode on earth waiting as strangers for our calling home to be with our Master in the Heavenly mansions or abodes, as some translate the word. This is the promise of Christ when He went away to prepare a place for his disciples. We can only imagine the joy that is set before us when we can dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

We realise more and more as we look back over the way, that He has been with us all the way during the sunny, days, cloudy days, days of joy, days of sorrow, days of trial, days of toil and days of weariness. Along with David we can say that surely goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our lives and we look forward to dwelling in the house of the Lord forever.

RC: 1992

Crucified & Risen

“Jesus our Lord Who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification” Rom. 4:25.

“IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME”

At this time of the year, our thoughts turn particularly to those momentous events in Jerusalem nearly 2000 years ago.

There it was that our dear Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, He who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners was cruelly put to death upon a Roman cross. There He suffered and died, “the just for the unjust”; there all the various types and prophecies of the Old Testament found their fulfilment in that One whom John the Baptist had earlier announced as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world”.

So at this season, in remembrance of Him, Jesus our Saviour and Lord, we keep that simple Memorial service which He Himself instituted in that upper room, so long ago. We see again in the elements the giving of

His life, the shedding of His blood, ultimately for the blessing of all mankind, but here and now for all those who have ears to hear His loving “follow me.” Again we take to ourselves the merit of His blood and feast on Him who is the Bread of Life. We recall our privilege of following in His footsteps, to be dead with Him, of fellowship with Him in lives of obedience and sacrifice, and we renew our vows of consecration to His service.

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord’s death, till He come,” 1 Cor. 11:26. May each dear child of God be richly blessed as once again we heed His loving words. “This do in remembrance of me.”

“HE IS RISEN”

But how thankful we are that the story does not end at the cross. Praise God, we serve a risen Saviour, and once more we can rejoice as we read the words of the angelic messengers to the two Marys who had gone so early on the first day of the week to the tomb where Jesus had been laid. “He is not here, He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay, and go quickly, and tell His disciples.” Matt. 28:6,7. The account goes on to tell that the two women departed quickly with fear (awe) and great joy and ran to tell the disciples. What joyous, awesome news indeed!

The resurrection of Jesus is truly the key to all the hopes of the Lord’s people, as so beautifully reasoned out by the apostle Paul in the great resurrection Chapter 1 Cor. 15. Our Lord’s own words to His disciples, in His tender last-night discourses recorded by John, might well be thought of as a “text” for the apostle’s masterly exposition. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me; *because I live, ye shall live also.*” John 14:19.

The well-attested fact of Christ’s resurrection is, furthermore, the assurance of the resurrection in due time and order of all mankind; firstly, the faithful followers of Jesus of this age in the “first” resurrection (Rev. 20:6), then the faithful servants of God of old times in that “better” resurrection, for which they looked (Heb. 11:35), and, finally, the remainder of mankind in the resurrection to judgement. John 5:29.

Well may we marvel at the fullness and the comprehensiveness of God’s love and wisdom, as seen in His plans and guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” Rom. 11:33.

Note: It is planned to include the address “Resurrection for All” in our next issue.

Master, Speak!

Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,
Waiting for Thy gracious word,
Longing for the voice that cheereth;
Master, let it now be heard.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee;
What hast Thou to say to me.

Speak to me by name, O Master,
Let me know it is to me.
Speak that I may follow faster,
With a step more firm and free.
Where the Shepherd leads the flock
In the shadow of the Rock.

Master, speak, and make me ready,
When Thy Voice is truly heard,
With obedience, glad and steady