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The High Priest of Our Profession

In Hebrews 6:20 Paul tells us that our Forerunner, the One we are endeavouring to follow, even Jesus, has become “a High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” The principal likeness here is in the fact that Melchisedec was a king as well as a priest. So, in harmony with the typical picture, during the Millennial Age, but not during the Gospel Age—the latter mentioned period being for the gathering out of the church—Jesus will reign as a King as well as a Priest, and will bless not only Abraham and his natural seed, but all the families of the earth.—Gen. 22:17, 18; 26:4; 28:14; Rev. 20:6.

In Hebrews, chapter 7, Paul shows that our Lord’s sacrificial work as our High Priest was pictured in the Levitical priesthood, and particularly by Aaron and the high priests who succeeded him in office. In the earlier part of this chapter Paul endeavours to show the greatness of Melchisedec as a typical figure. He refers us to Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel, to whom God made such wonderful promises, including the promise that Messiah would come of his seed, and how through this seed of Abraham God would bless all the families of the earth. Yet as Paul points out, in spite of his greatness and favour with God, Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec, and Melchisedec, “blessed him that had the promises: and without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.”—Heb. 7:6, 7.

A further argument showing the greatness and the superiority of Melchisedec as a high priest is seen in the fact that the sons of Abraham’s great-grandson Levi, who were appointed to the priest’s office and were commanded to take tithes from the people, paid tithes to Melchisedec. Paul says, “Through Abraham even Levi who receiveth tithes, hath paid tithes: for he was yet in the lions of his father when Melchisedec met him.”—Heb. 7:9, 10, RV.

According to the same argument the sons of Levi and the long line of typical high priests who received tithes of the children of Israel paid tithes, in Abraham, to Melchisedec. Hence Melchisedec must have been a greater high priest than any of the descendants of Aaron.

By the same reasoning, the Messiah, High Priest after the order or similitude of Melchisedec, would be a still greater High Priest than any of the priests of the line of Aaron who preceded him; and even a greater High Priest than Melchisedec, for the anti-type is always far greater than the type. “Having [then] a [great] High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near” to God through him.—Heb. 10:21, 22.

Scholars have pointed out that the Hebrew word for priest, “Kohen,” comes from an Arabic root meaning “to draw near.” Mediation and greater nearness to God is the cardinal idea in a priest. He therefore was looked up to that he might draw near to God on behalf of others, at the same time opening the way for others to draw near. And so Israel’s priests, by presenting the atonement for the congregation and the gifts of a reconciled people, brought them near to their God, Jehovah. As the antitype of this Paul says, “Having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.”—Heb. 10:21, 22.

Our Lord, through his perfect obedience to the Law, had the right to draw near to God with full acceptance, not as a priest, but as a perfect man. His offering of a perfect sacrifice gave him a further right to draw near to God, this time as a Priest, entering into the antitypical Holy, and then into the Most Holy, heaven itself, “now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Heb.—9:24, 11, 12.

Jesus’ perfect offering and his faithfulness even unto death not only enabled our Redeemer to draw near to God and, in resurrection, come into his very presence, but his perfect offering enabled him to appear in the presence of God for us, that we, who were at one time sinners, might similarly offer ourselves to God and, through the merit of Christ, be accepted. As Israel, in keeping with the divine arrangement, had a typical priesthood that received tithes from the people and drew near unto God, offering typical sacrifices, thus en-

abling the people to come before him with acceptance, even so, in God's purpose, a great Priest after the order of Melchisedec has been provided, to whom we (the church)—and eventually all mankind—may draw near to God.

WORLD'S SALVATION FUTURE

However, instead of the Gospel Age being the time for the world to get the benefit of the great antitypical sacrifice for sins, God's purpose is that "a little flock" from the world should be brought in as a part of Christ's priesthood—underpriests—even as Aaron's sons in the type were priests under him. Hence the Gospel Age is not the time for the salvation of the world, but is the time for the salvation of only the few—the church, the body of Christ.

Just as Israel had underpriests as well as a high priest to bring them to God and, in a typical sense, to offer sacrifices as well as being the teachers and instructors of the people that they might know how to draw near to the Lord, so, to enable the world to draw near with acceptance, the divine plan has been to provide not only a Priest, but "a royal priesthood," "a holy priesthood," to assist in this work of reconciliation. Thus we have pictured in type the future work of Christ's priesthood, after being gathered out and perfected. So it was that Peter wrote, "Ye are . . . an holy priesthood, . . . a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." — I Pet. 2:5,9

Not seeing this feature of the divine plan in type and antitype, numbers have believed the Gospel Age to be the only day of salvation rather than the day for the salvation of the church, the royal priesthood, the divine agency for later enabling the world to draw near to God. The prophetic vision of the millennial kingdom shows a company of kings and priests reigning over the nations for their blessing. (Rev. 20:6; 2:26, 27) When God's true priesthood begins this great work, many will say in the words of the prophet, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." — Isa. 2:3

COUNTERFEIT PRIESTS

Misunderstanding the time for the salvation of the world, the nominal church has sadly departed from the faith and work of the Early Church, and they have conceived that their present work is to convert or Christianize the world. In the furtherance of this work many branches of the professing church have appointed some of their number to the priests, members of a priesthood, presumably being specially qualified to draw near to God on behalf of those they represent. Particularly in the older churches, such as the Roman and Anglican communions, their ministers are called priests, who have been ordained, or consecrated to this office by means of a quite elaborate consecration ceremony, based to a large extent upon the typical consecration ceremony participated in by the Levitical priesthood. Later reform movements rejected the title "priest" as applicable to one called to be a pastor or shepherd of the flock because of its unscripturalness if applied to any special class of God's professed people.

WILL REIGN WITH CHRIST

The members of the royal priesthood who will be privileged to reign with Christ during the Millennial Age will not be priests made by a formal ordination ceremony, or, to use Paul's expression, "made . . . after the law of a carnal commandment." Like their Lord and Head, the great High Priest, they become priests by "the power of an endless life," "an indissoluble life" (RV), "an indestructible life" (Weymouth), "an imperishable life" (Conybeare and Howson). — Heb. 7:16

The Greek word "akatalutos" here rendered "endless" seems to be very close in meaning to our word "immortal." Young gives its literal meaning as "not loosed down," suggesting a kind of life that will at not time cease. In addition, Christ has proved worthy of a position or office which he will never relinquish. And Young suggests that the Greek word "dunamis" here translated "power" is a word used to indicate something accomplished through the exercise of an exceptional measure of power - appropriately picturing the manner of the making perfect of a divine new creature through suffering.

The typical priests of the line of Aaron were made by means of a mere formal ceremony not likely to affect them in a moral sense. The same must surely be said of the members of the various priesthoods of the nominal church. Although some of their number have doubtless been servants of God, the majority, it is to be feared, come into the category of those who "eat their own bread [enjoy their own brand of spiritual food], and wear their own apparel: only [they say] let us be called by thy name." They want to bear the honourable title of "priest" in the Christian church.—Isa. 4:1

But Jesus was prepared for his office in a very different way from this. For him it meant three and-a-half years of sacrificial ministry, laying down his human life in the service of his Heavenly Father, and at the same time suffering for so doing; suffering for righteousness' sake; passing through experiences which tested his faithfulness to such a degree that it prepared and perfected him as a new creature for the immortality of the divine nature. Surely all this, and more, is contained in Paul's words, "Made not after the law of a carnal com-

mandment, but after the power of an endless life.”— Heb. 2:17, 18, 4:15, 16; 7:16

Let us remember that if we would be of the number God is calling to be of his priesthood to assist the world to draw near to him, we must perform our share as sacrificing priests by presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, and then keeping the sacrifice on the altar until wholly consumed in the Master’s service, refusing to draw back from the fiery trials sent to help us to become touched with a feeling of the world’s infirmities to whom we seek to minister.

It is in this way that the priests who will reign with Christ are made: “Not after the law [regulation] of a carnal commandment [going through a purely formal ordination ceremony], but according to the power of an endless life.”

How many identified in this age with churchianity who have prided themselves in the title of priest will find that neither for this nor for anything else wrongfully appropriated will there be any place during the period of the kingdom! Neither will any in that enlightened time desire to hold on, either to this or to any other humanly bestowed titles, civil or ecclesiastical. “It shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a hairy garment [a distinctive dress] to deceive.” — Zech. 13:4

Just as many of the typical priests in Israel were unworthy of their office, so the Scriptures intimate that many who have mistakenly assumed the title of priest among God’s professed people during the Gospel Age have been equally unworthy. — Ezek. 22:26; Micah 3:11; Zeph. 3:4

Thank God that the great High Priest of the Father’s appointment will, ere long, use his great power and reign for the purpose of undoing the evil work of the great Adversary and the corrupt counterfeit priesthoods he has used to deceive and mislead the professed people of God.

With Jesus in that day will be a little company of those who have truly followed him, and who have been similarly despised and rejected of men, but who, as a reward, will come forth fully anointed royal priests to reign with Christ for a thousand years. “For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy [of mankind] that shall be destroyed is death.” — I Cor. 15:25, 26

Concerning the work of this great Priest after the order of Melchisedec the prophet says, “He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor [world], and reprove with equity for [the benefit of] the meek of the earth:... for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” — Isa. 11:3, 4, 9

I Can Trust

I cannot see, with my small human sight
Why God should lead this Way or that for me;
I only know He said. “Child. follow me”.
But I can trust.

I know not why my path should he at times
So straitly hedged, so strangely barred before;
I only know God could keep wide the door,
But I can trust.

I cannot know why suddenly the storm
Should rage so fiercely’ round me in its wrath;
But this I know. God watches still my path
And I can trust.

To be a Pilgrim

He who would valiant be,
 `Gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy
 Follow the Master.
So shall discouragement
 Ne’er make him e’er repent
Of his avowed intent

To be a pilgrim.
(John Bunyan)

Divine Protection - Psalm 4

"Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." (Psalm 4:8).

It is good to review the past, to look at the present, and then to contemplate the future, because in this way we inevitably obtain exhortation and encouragement from the Divine Word as we see the "exceeding great and precious promises" in their true light. This spiritual exercise is specially opportune in the times in which we live, and the text chosen for our meditation is peculiarly appropriate to our present needs, "Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." Nothing is more obvious from the natural standpoint than the absence of true safety to-day, indeed crime, famine, natural disaster, and death are everywhere evident.

It was in circumstances also of real danger that the Psalm in question was composed. David was a type of Christ, and he was often in severe trouble, as may be judged from Psalm 3, when he fled from his rebellious son, Absalom. Generally, Psalms 3 and 4 are regarded as a pair, and they are often termed morning and evening Psalms respectively. As we are in, so to speak, the evening time of the Age, Psalm 4 has a valuable message for us.

THE PSALM SUMMARISED

Verse 1 is in the nature of a testimony to the goodness of God, "*Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress*" coupled with a prayer for mercy and succour—"have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer."

Verse 2 is doubtless a reference to Absalom and Saul, with the distress of heart and mind thereby brought to David. "*O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame?*"

Verses 3-5 strike a different note for they are suggestive of reassurance. If we likewise remember in our day that "*the Lord will hear when I call unto him*" we shall have no fear, come what may, and the shades of adversity will become bright with the fulfilment of His promises, for, "certainly I will be with thee" (Exod. 3; 12). It is essential, of course, that we should "offer the sacrifices of righteousness" while we at all times put our "trust in the Lord" who is ever-present with His people.

Verses 6-8 tell us of the blessed results. The Lord lifts up His countenance upon us (a symbol of favour) and, in consequence, we receive great gladness of heart "*more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.*" Our joy is greater than that associated with these temporal blessings, while there is also the realisation of Divine protection. "*I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.*"

The thoughts associated with the concluding section may be examined from three standpoints:—

1. The joy of blessings received—"My heart thou hast already given more joy than theirs who harvest corn and store new wine" (Moffatt).
2. Divine protection—"Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety."
3. Peace and calm in consequence in this Age. Indeed, it is only as we recognise the Psalm to be prophetic of this Age that we can examine it in its proper perspective.

1. THE JOY OF BLESSINGS RECEIVED

As the years come and go, so we cannot fail to realise the tremendous blessings that are ours. In this attitude of mind, moreover, our troubles surely appear to be light afflictions, "but for a moment," working out for each one a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Past blessings impart confidence in relation to the future, and we cannot dwell too much on this aspect of the Christian life.

The Psalmist contrasts spiritual blessings against material good things—"Thou hast put gladness in my heart, *more than* in the time their corn and their wine increased." In the days in which we live, there are special blessings of truth such as have never before been enjoyed by the Lord's people. "E'en now I see, and hear, and know, More than I hoped for here below." Another source of joy is to be found in our fellowship together, in our class studies, in our testimony meetings, and in our gatherings for worship, when the Word is publicly expounded. All these spiritual exercises are designed to build us up in the most holy faith. The truth means much in the individual life, too, for the Christian life is essentially personal.

Meditation upon the blessings received, then, is a *great power in the life*, and it is to be noted that the Psalmist speaks of gladness in the heart. Our joy and gratitude for blessings received must affect both heart and mind—the one is useless without the other. In this attitude of thanksgiving for blessings received, we can with the Psalmist now turn attention to the Divine protection given on our behalf.

1. DIVINE PROTECTION

The account of David's flight by reason of the rebellion of Absalom, is given in 2 Samuel 15: 12-14. Following through to chapter 18, we eventually see the Divine deliverance in verse 28: "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king."

Our life is hid with Christ in God, and this represents an even more wonderful illustration of Divine protection. The blessed consolations of Psalm 91 apply primarily to the New Creature. In this day of ours the Adversary is very busy, but God is for us, He is on our side, and we need have no fear of what man may do unto us. On the contrary, we can testify in the words of Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." We shall be kept at all times in the Narrow Way if we rely on God, as David did.

We do well to contemplate His protection as a spiritual power, especially in the light of Ephesians 6:12 (Moffatt): "For we have to struggle, not with blood and flesh, but with the angelic rulers, the angelic authorities, the potentates of the dark present, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly sphere." The Adversary is possessed of mighty power, but God's power is still greater; and we are exhorted to take unto us the whole armour of God whereby we shall be able to stand and withstand in the evil day.

3. PEACE AND CALM.

Our joy on account of blessings received, and our realisation of the Divine care over us to keep us in all our ways, lead to an indwelling of peace and calm amid the storms of life. Indeed, whatever may be our present or future conditions, these should not in any way interfere with our inward peace.

The peace and calm which we enjoy are likened in the Psalm to the literal rest at night, which is surely a beautiful picture of our standing in the sight of God. "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." The peace which comes from God is begotten of the ability of Omnipotence as illustrated by the picture given to us in Revelation 4, with the sea of glass in the Throne vision.

We do well at all times to remember the Apostle's exhortation "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4: 6, 7). This summarises our attitude towards life if we would be pleasing to the Lord, and thus demonstrate to Him and to those around that His risen power is a mighty force in moulding us after the likeness of the perfect Pattern.

It is as we grow older and richer in experience that we are able to enjoy greater peace and calm by reason of increased faith in Him with whom we have to do. God has protected us marvellously and the truth shines brighter and means more to us, as we see the signs of the times fulfilled. It is in the days of "these Kings" that the God of heaven is to set up His Kingdom; as appointees of that new kingdom, we may rejoice and lift up our heads in the knowledge that our deliverance draws nearer and nearer, day by day.

The Gospel Hope for Young and Old

(CONVENTION ADDRESS)

Young and old alike are to share the blessings of God's kingdom - these are promised to all. Youth in good health and in vigour of life may still find some satisfaction in the present unsatisfactory world social and ruling conditions, though it still leaves a vacuum, acknowledges or not, in the hearts and minds of those who have no belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. But when we grow older it is different.

Those who read God's word and exercise any faith in it at all know that God has promised a kingdom upon earth wherein all its subjects will find complete happiness, with good health and provision of all needs without stress or strain. The prophet Isaiah mentions this in many places; a verse or two will give us a glimpse of this wonderful time to come.

Isaiah 25:8 - "He will swallow up death in victory (i.e. death will not be allowed to deny the privilege and opportunity to enjoy this time) and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

Isaiah 35:1, 2 - "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, it shall blossom abundantly..." then in *Verse 5* - "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, then shall the lame man leap as a hart and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. In the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert." These verses are telling us that there will be no more droughts or famines, and all the afflictive diseases and infirmities of mankind will be healed. *Isaiah 33* has much to say about conditions leading up to this wonderful time and declares in the last verse - "and the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick..." Can we imagine a world inhabited by people who will never be sick? According to the last book of the Bible, this is going to come about.

We read in *Revelation 21* from verse 3 onwards that, when this time comes, it can be said that the tabernacle of God will be with men (i.e. all His favours be poured out upon them), that He will wipe away all tears from their eyes, there will be no more sorrow or crying or pain and NO MORE DEATH.

The majority of people nevertheless still would turn away in total disbelief that such a time could ever come upon this earth. But some, although the prospect seems to them to be too good to be true, still have hope that it MIGHT be true. Many say - "it will be wonderful if such a time does come and they will be blessed indeed who live to see it; but what of us older ones, on the brink of the grave as it were - it means little to us."

This is just where countless numbers make a great mistake. The scriptures we have been referring to are not picturing events and conditions which will take place during the present world order; they refer to a new day that is to come. The present life will surely end in death and we will be laid in the grave. God's word looks beyond this.

Though many still recite, parrot-like mostly, creeds which include "I believe in the resurrection of the dead", how many really BELIEVE what they affirm? The joys of the Kingdom of God which has been promised and which will be made available to all, do not occur now, for it is Satan's deceptive and evil reign that we presently live under. Not that there are not present joys for believers in Christ, but they are experienced amid the tribulations of the present time, and they are related to the hope set before us in DAYS TO COME.

Paul's words in *1 Cor. 15:19* declare - "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." The blessings which God has promised to mankind, because of the sacrifice of His Son, come through a resurrection from the dead.

Every person who has ever lived has a right to resurrection, by virtue of Christ's ransom for all, but it is still the same today as it was in the apostle's day. People will listen to a hope or remedy for human ills which can become operational now through human efforts, but when the resurrection of the dead is mentioned, they turn away and lose interest, as did some in the past who were grieved at the preaching of the resurrection. (*Acts 4:2*) Some mocked at the teaching, a few did not reject it outrightly but it did not influence their current thinking - "we will hear thee again of this matter." (*Acts 17:32*)

In view of the fact that the Bible so fully substantiates a resurrection from the dead, we might well echo Paul's words in *Acts 26:8* - "why do you think it incredible that God should raise the dead?" Did not Jesus Himself say - "Marvel not at this for the time is coming in which all that are in their graves will hear my voice and will come forth." (*John 5:28*) Everyone will share in the benefits accruing from the resurrection. It does not matter whether one died thousands of years ago or will go into the grave tomorrow, all will live again and in vastly different circumstances from those they were acquainted with in the former life.

So now we come to the hypothetical question posed by Paul in *1 Cor. 15:35* - "how then are the dead raised up and with what body do they come?" Exact detail as to how the dead will be brought back to new life on earth is not given us, but there are enough assurances in God's word to give us faith that it will occur. Most certainly the literal graves will not be opened to return men and women to earth with bodies of disability. The old worn-out bodies return to the dust - for from the dust they were first formed. (*Gen. 2:7*) God will give to each a new body as it pleases Him. (*1 Cor. 15:37, 38*)

However, there will be one sense in which the dead will return as they were before; they will be brought back to life with the same CHARACTER they had before. If in this life they endeavoured to live justly and righteously, they will come back and will retain that character in resurrection. If they lived selfishly, were hard-hearted and unmindful of good, they will come back with similar character disposition.

If the teaching of Jesus prompted the development of character to any degree, this will provide a great start to the new life; if His teachings were ridiculed and His name perhaps used only in blasphemy, they will come back to the sterner "judgment" of *John 5:29*. (The word "damnation" -AV- is incorrect.)

In such scriptures as *Matt. 11:20-24*, we see a clear intimation that rejection of any light given in this life for the formation of good character will bring greater judgement than will come to those not so enlightened. It will be more tolerable for some than others and easier for them to come into line in the new world where only God's standard of righteousness will be acceptable. God is no respecter of persons and He will not be mocked; as a persons sows, so shall they reap.

In the new world of the resurrection, in the day of TRUE judgment, the wicked will no longer "prosper as the green bay tree" (*Psa, 37:35*), as they can now under the rule of Satan. Instead people everywhere will be obliged to AMEND WRONG CHARACTER and come into line with the precepts taught by Jesus, so that all can prosper and be at peace. (*Micah 4:3, 4*) - no wars, each having their own vine and fig tree (ample food provision pictured), nothing to make them afraid.

God is all-powerful and absolutely just. He is merciful, kind and good; none will be denied because of

ignorance, for His requirements for enjoyment of His beneficence will be made clear to all. Every person who has ever lived will receive an opportunity to enjoy the “times of restitution” which all the holy prophets have foretold from the beginning. (*Acts 3:21*). Here is the wisest counsel that can be given to young and old - “Fear God” (i.e. reverence Him), seek to understand His requirements, and rest assured that He will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly. (*Eccl. 12:13, Psa. 84:11*)

At present, there is another very important feature of God’s purpose in the call and preparation of His true church, to become associates of Christ in the establishing of the “times of restitution” already referred to. This work seems nearly complete and it involves only a comparatively small portion of mankind. The message of Good News for Young and Old is therefore sent out to arrest the attention of any who will heed out of the countless millions of those who will soon, we believe, receive an opportunity to enjoy resurrection conditions and the fulfilment of the prayer - “THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN!”

(WAS:1993)

Rejoicing in the Lord

(CONVENTION ADDRESS)

The children of God are called to be representatives of Christ, showing forth the goodness and mercy of the Lord. As Jesus has revealed to us the true character of the Father, so we are to reveal Christ to a world that does not know His tender love. “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so I have sent them into the world.” “I in them, and thou in me - that the world may know that thou hast sent me.” (John 17:18, 23)

The apostle Paul says to the disciples of Jesus, “Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.” (2 Cor. 3:2) In every one of His followers Jesus sends a letter to the world. If we are Christ’s He sends in us a message to the family, to the town, to the street where we live. Jesus, dwelling in us, desires to speak to the hearts of those who are not acquainted with Him. Perhaps they do not read the Bible or do not hear the voice that speaks to them in its pages; they do not see the love of God through His works. But if we are true representatives of Jesus, it may be that through us they will be led to understand something of His goodness, and be won to love and serve Him.

Christians are set as light-bearers in this world of darkness, they are to reflect to the world the light shining upon them from Christ. Their lives and characters should be such that through them others will get a right concept of Christ and of His service. If we do represent Christ, we shall make His service appear attractive, as it truly is. Christians who gather up gloom and sadness and who murmur and complain give others a false picture of God and the Christian life. They give the impression that God is not pleased to have His children happy, and in this way they bear false testimony to their Heavenly Father.

Satan is surely pleased when he can lead the children of God into unbelief and despondency; he delights to see us mistrusting God, doubting His willingness and power to save us. It is his work to represent the Lord as lacking in compassion and pity. Satan ever seeks to make the godly life out as one of gloom, to appear tiresome and difficult; and when Christians present in their own lives this view of Christianity they confirm the falsehood of Satan. Sadly, many walking along the path of life dwell upon their mistakes and failures and disappointments, and so their hearts are filled with grief and discouragement.

Amid the beautiful flowers and fragrances of the garden, do we sometimes see only the unsightly briars? Are not God’s promises like fragrant flowers growing beside our path on every side? Will we not let their beauty and sweetness fill our hearts with joy? The briars and thorns will only wound and grieve us, and if we gather all the unpleasant recollections of a past life, its inequities and disappointments, to talk and mourn over them until we are overwhelmed with discouragement.

A discouraged Christian is so filled with darkness as to shut out the light of God and to cast a shadow upon the pathway of others. We should and can thank God for the bright prospects which He has presented to us. Let us hold together the blessed assurances of His love, that we may look upon them continually - the Son of God leaving the presence of His Father, that He might rescue mankind from the power of Satan; and ultimately ourselves, if faithful unto death, clothed in the righteousness of Christ and seated with Him in His throne. These are the pictures on which God would have us meditate. When we seem to doubt His love and distrust His promises, we dishonour Him and grieve His Holy Spirit.

How, indeed, can our Heavenly Father regard us when we distrust His love, that love which led Him to give His only-begotten Son that we might have life? The apostle Paul writes in Rom. 8:32 - “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?” God is listening to hear what kind of report we are bearing to the world about our heavenly Master, so let our conversation be of Him who makes intercession for us before God. We all have trials hard to bear, and temptations difficult to resist; let us not tell our troubles to those whom we contact in the world, but carry everything to God in prayer.

If we make it a rule never to utter a word of doubt or discouragement, we can do much to brighten the lives of others and strengthen their efforts, by words of hope and godly cheer. There are many who have a false idea of the life and character of our Master. He was indeed a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, for He opened His heart to all the troubles of mankind, but though His life was self-denying and shadowed with pain and care, His spirit was not crushed. Wherever He went, He carried rest and peace, joy and gladness. Our Saviour was deeply serious and intensely earnest, but never gloomy.

The lives of those who seek to imitate Him will be full of earnest purpose; they will have a deep sense of personal responsibility. There will not be boisterous merriment or the like, for the religion of Jesus gives peace like a river - it does not quench the light of joy, it does not restrain cheerfulness, nor cloud the sunny, smiling face. For Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and when His love reigns in the heart, we shall follow His example.

If we keep uppermost in our minds the unkind and unjust acts of others, we shall find it impossible to love them as Christ loved us. But if our thoughts dwell upon the wondrous love and pity of Christ for us, the same spirit as His will flow out to others. We should love and respect one another, notwithstanding the faults and imperfections that we cannot help seeing. Humility and a patient tenderness with the faults of others should be cultivated, and this will do away with selfishness and make us large-hearted and generous towards them.

It is not the will of God that His people be weighed down with care. He knows that there are trials and dangers, and He does not promise to take His people out of a world of sin and evil, but He points them to a never-failing refuge. Jesus' prayer for His disciples was, "I pray not that thou should take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from evil." In the world, He said, "ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) In His Sermon on the Mount, Christ taught His disciples precious lessons on the necessity of trusting in God. These were designed to encourage the children of God through the years, and they have come down to our time full of instruction and comfort.

The Saviour pointed His followers to the birds of the air, and said that they sow not, neither do they reap, yet the Heavenly Father provides for their needs. So the Saviour asks, "Are ye not much better than they?" Will not God indeed provide for our necessities if we but trust in Him? This lesson of Christ's is a rebuke to the anxious thought, the perplexity and doubt of the faithless heart. The Lord would have all His children at peace and obedient. Jesus says, "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Happiness that is sought from selfish motives soon passes away, leaving loneliness and sorrow, but there is abiding joy and satisfaction in the services of God.

Even here and now, Christians may have the joy of communion with Christ, they may have the light of His love and the comfort of His presence. Every step in life may bring us closer to Jesus, give us a deeper appreciation of His love, and bring us nearer to our blessed home of peace. As we look towards new perplexities in the world around us, we can confidently say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." The trials will not exceed the strength that will be given to us to bear them. Let us then go forward, believing that whatever may come we will not be left alone to carry our burden, remembering our Lord's words, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4)

Be Patient Until (James. 5:7, 8)

(CONVENTION ADDRESS SUMMARY)

The text verses show a simple truth - much as we may desire to hasten the products of our labour in material things, we have to abide the seasons. So also it is in spiritual things. Wanting - Waiting; two words spelt the same except for one letter, and closely related. All wants generally have to be waited for - the natural man often waits fretfully for the desires of his heart, only to find them vanity when they are attained. But the Christian waits in patience for the sure promises of God to be fulfilled.

God's way is best; that is the thing we must learn and remember. The kingdom of Christ is going to bring lasting peace and happiness to this earth, and while we all long for it, we know that it will not come until He assumes full power at His second advent. God will subdue all opposers when the proper time comes. Our eyes are open to the errors of Babylon and we are glad to be put out of her in response to the voice from heaven. (Rev. 18:4) We delight in the scriptural exhortation to assist others who are mourning also in Zion at this time, but it is not our prerogative to COMPEL others to come out, or to try and bring down Babylon ourselves.

All the nations of earth, based on greed and selfishness under Satan's domination, will ultimately be broken to pieces as a potter's vessel when it is the DUE TIME for this to happen, but this is not our task. Until God's