
Shield of Faith

A Primitive Baptist Publication

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Wilt thou not revive us again?

Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation. I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. (Psalms 85:5-12)

In recent days I have observed what I believe are signs that the Lord is beginning to revive His people. Admittedly, the signs are not like a mighty movement that all can observe, but a series of seemingly small occurrences that taken together point to the beginning of what could be a great work of the Lord.

I am reminded of Elijah when he had told Ahab of the coming rain and had begun to pray that the Lord would send rain. "So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, {43} And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. {44} And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. {45} And it came to pass in the mean

while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel" (1 Kings 18:42-45). As Elijah sought the evidence of God's answer to his prayer, nothing was seen until the seventh time that the servant looked. Then the evidence was not obvious: "a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." That little cloud, however, was sufficient evidence that God had answered Elijah's prayer.

Not long after that Elijah experienced a time of discouragement and wished to die, perhaps because he had not immediately seen the revival he had hoped for. As Elijah was in this despondent condition, the Lord appeared to him. "And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? {10} And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. {11} And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: {12} And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. {13} And it was so, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9-13). One lesson Elijah learned was that God's works are not always very

evident in the beginning. He often speaks, not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in "a still small voice."

In the past months, I have observed some growth, though small, in places where no growth has been observed in years. I have seen people, though few in number, attend church services after a long period of absence and apparent indifference. I have seen some become *active* in the church after having been mere *spectators* in the past. I have also seen some of the man-made "walls" that separated "them that have obtained like precious faith" (2 Peter 1:1) fall away and brethren worshipped together without regard to the labels we have placed on ourselves. I have experienced this not in one place only, but several.

As I have already stated, these are small signs but they are enough to convince me that one of the "times of refreshing" which "come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19) has begun.

If my belief is correct, how should the people of God react to the work of the Lord? I believe there have been times when the Lord has begun times of refreshing and His people failed to see His work or was indifferent to it and the special blessing of the Lord ceased. The Eighty-fifth Psalm gives valuable instruction in this matter.

Charles Spurgeon believed this psalm to be one composed by David:

Our own belief is that David penned this national hymn when the land was oppressed by the Philistines, and in the spirit of prophecy he foretold the peaceful years of his own reign and the repose of the rule of Solomon, the psalm having all along an inner sense of which Jesus and his salvation *are the key*.

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Wilt thou not revive us again?

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The psalmist recognized in the beginning that the "captivity of Jacob" and the fierce anger of the Lord was because of "iniquity of thy people" and prays for mercy. In the book of Joshua (17:13) and in the book of Judges we are told "And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out" (Judges 1:28). The Canaanites and particularly the Philistines became instruments God would use to chasten His people when they turned from Him.

In like manner the church in our day has failed to drive out all the "Canaanites" from our land. Our "Canaanites" are not people, but our own attitudes and actions. When we think and act like the ungodly world, we have "Canaanites" in our land that are "as thorns" in our sides, and their gods are a "snare" unto us (Judges 2:3). These "Canaanites" are not those things we would necessarily consider obvious or gross sins, but such things as men insisting upon having their own way and men lording over God's heritage. Introduction of doctrines and practices that excite the flesh is the work of "Canaanites." Putting the church on the level of a fraternal or social organization is an attitude born among the "Canaanites." We could name many more such actions and attitudes that are thorns in our sides that must be driven out.

Please notice what the psalmist said that God had *already* done: "thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger," yet he still pleads, "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease." He prays "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" The Lord had shown favor and brought back the captivity of Jacob, but the relationship between the Lord and His people was still not what it should be; there was still need of revival. The psalmist further prays, "Show us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salva-

tion" (Psalms 85:7).

The psalmist then makes a vow to "hear what God the LORD will speak" (Psalms 85:8). His expression "God the LORD" is a powerful reminder of who we serve and who we are to hear. The Lord speaks to us today as the Holy Spirit opens to us both the written word and the preached word, but so often we fail to hear. Too many times we can think of so many other who need to hear a particular message when we haven't really heard it ourselves. We must each determine to "hear what God the LORD will speak" and apply His word to our own life.

David (if he was indeed the writer) adds this prayer: "but let them not turn again to folly." One of the sad characteristics of God's people is that they seldom learn from their mistakes and too often repeat them. Israel's history is full of examples of the people turning from God. A pattern was repeated many times. The people would stray from God and he would correct them by giving them into the hands of their enemies. In their afflictions they would plead for mercy. The Lord would be gracious to them and deliver them. When the peace and prosperity of God's restoration came, Israel soon forgot their God who was the source of their blessings and before long would again stray from Him. Spiritual Israel has been little different. We must learn from the Lord's instruction and be careful not to return to our folly.

God's salvation is "nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land" (Psalms 85:9). If we are to experience the joys of His salvation, we must develop a proper fear of God.

The Bible uses the term "fear of God" in two distinct ways: that of anxious dread, and that of veneration, reverence, and awe. Fear as anxious dread is produced by the realization of God's impending judgment upon sin. David saw God's judgment on the improper handling of the Ark of the Covenant and was "afraid of the LORD that day" (2 Samuel 6:9)."

Believers have been delivered from fear of the wrath of God. But we have not been delivered from the *discipline* of God against our sinful conduct, and in this sense should be afraid of God.

For the believer, however, the primary meaning of the fear of God is veneration and honor, reverence and awe. It is the attitude that elicits from our hearts adoration and love, reverence and honor. It focuses not upon the wrath of God but upon the majesty, holiness, and transcendent glory of God. The truly reverent child of God sees the Lord first in His transcendent glory, majesty, and holiness before he sees Him in His love, mercy, and grace.

When we lose the proper fear of God it becomes easy to put Him in second place (or lower) in our lives. Salvation of God is "nigh them that fear him."

The result of the nearness of God's salvation is "that glory may dwell in our land" (Psalms 85:9). What does it mean for God's glory to dwell in the land? When Moses prayed to God to "show me thy glory," God's answer was, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Exodus 33:18-19). God's glory is revealed in His Goodness, graciousness and mercy. For God's glory to "dwell in our land" is for His people to experience His goodness, grace and mercy. In other psalm, the writer described the effect of God's dwelling in the land. "When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD" (Psalms 102:16-18). What comfort it is to know that God "will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."

If there is to be revival, it must come from God. However, He requires something of believers also. His words to Solomon still apply to His children today. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Bible Quiz

Using a concordance, find the prophecy that was fulfilled.

- _____1. Paul wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus would be born of the "seed" of "woman," Galatians 4:4.
- _____2. Luke wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus was to be from Abraham, Acts 3:25.
- _____3. Matthew wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of the flight into Egypt, Matthew 2:14-15.
- _____4. John wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy about the rejection of Jesus, John 1:11.
- _____5. Matthew wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus suffering for us, Matthew 8:17.
- _____6. John wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus' bones not being broken, John 19:33.
- _____7. The writer of Hebrews wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of a new covenant, Hebrews 8:8-12.
- _____8. Paul wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of those God called "not my people" becoming children of God, Romans 9:26.
- _____9. Matthew wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of the "stone rejected by the builders," Matthew 21:42.
- _____10. Luke wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy about kings and rulers gathering against Christ, Acts 4:25-26.

Answers on Page 4

Spring Meeting

Grace Primitive Baptist Church of Loudon, Tennessee invites you to worship with them during their Spring Meeting, May 21-23, 2004. Services will be at 7:00 PM Friday and Saturday evenings and concluding with Sunday morning service. Visiting Minister will be Elder David Tolle from Brownsburg, Indiana. The pastor, Elder Bill Taylor and the congregation of Grace Church welcome all to join them.

"Before and After" the Cross

"Before my conversion I worked toward the Cross, but since then I have worked from the Cross; then I worked to be saved; now I work, because I am saved."

-Dwight L. Moody.

Discipleship and the Cross

The CROSS is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death--we give over our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow him, or it may be a death like Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time--death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call. Jesus' summons to the rich

young man was calling him to die, because only the man who is dead to his own will can follow Christ. In fact every command of Jesus is a call to die, with all our affections and lusts. But we do not want to die, and therefore Jesus Christ and his call are necessarily our death as well as our life. The call to discipleship, the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ means both death and life. The call of Christ, his baptism, sets the Christian in the middle of the daily arena against sin and the devil. Every day he encounters new temptations, and every day he must suffer anew for Jesus Christ's sake. The wounds and scars he receives in the fray are living tokens of this participation in the cross of his Lord.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)
[Bonhoeffer was a German theologian executed by the Nazi because of his participation in a plot to assassinate Hitler]*

THE AMERICAN CITIZEN

Years ago, in the midst of a Latin American revolution, an American citizen was sentenced to death by the authorities who had seized power. As the victim was about to face the firing squad, an American officer took a large American flag and draped it around his compatriot. "If you shoot this man," he cried out, "you will fire through the American flag and incur the wrath of a whole nation." In those days America "spoke softly, but carried a big stick," and the revolutionary in charge knew the force with which he had collided. The prisoner was released and went on his way with the officer who had come to his rescue.

If we are surrounded with the Lord Jesus Christ, then nothing can touch us unless it passes through Him. If Satan is to reach us with one of his fiery darts, he must first of all pierce the Lord Jesus Christ who protects us. Nothing in the world can ever touch us until it has passed through our Lord. As we reckon ourselves to be in Christ, and therefore immune from defeat as long as we have hold of Him, joined to Him in His death, so do we learn to reckon ourselves to be alive unto God.

Donald Grey Barnhouse in *Let Me Illustrate*

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. (John 10:27-30)

DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

FOURTH STUDY

Romans 12: 18-21. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Verse 18. It is not presumed that we can live peaceably with all men. Even Jesus had persecutors, and they put him to death, but there was no ground for their evil treatment of him. When he was reviled, he reviled not again. He taught, Love your enemies and pray for them that despitefully use you. Were all men minded as he was there would be universal peace.

The meaning of this verse seems to be that we should so demean ourselves toward all men that we shall not be the cause of trouble. "As much as lieth in you." We cannot govern the conduct of others, but even when they are not disposed to do right by us, if it be possible for us to placate them and get them in better frame of mind and disposition, we are to do it. We are to do all that lieth in us, that is, use our utmost endeavor, to keep peace.

It is all right to plead our rights, but we are to do this in such manner that it will show a Christian character, and not give way to anger and a fighting disposition. Paul used his rights as a Roman citizen, and appealed to Caesar. Some seem to think this would justify going to law against a brother. But not so. Paul appealed from the lowest Roman courts to the highest. This was a civil privilege.

While Jerusalem was being rebuilt, Nehemiah defended those who worked on the walls against those who attacked them. These rights are not abridged by the exhortation to live peaceably with all men so far as we are able to do so. We are not to become common brawlers and trouble makers, not to keep the company of such.

I once knew a member of a church who had many lawsuits with his neighbors, and was always in trouble with some one. A brother who was a member of the same church said to me, "I do not see any use of having so much trouble. Where differences come up with me and any one, I try to get them to see as I do, but if I cannot, then I let them have their way that time and I try not to have any more business with them, and so can get along with them peaceably." This brother was doing all he could to live peaceably with all men, and he succeeded to a good degree.

It gives you, your church, and your profession a bad reputation if you are of a "fussy" disposition, and contrariwise, it is to your credit, and adds to the good name of your church, and people are much more likely to have confidence in your profession if you live in peace with all men as far as IN YOU LIES. The religion of Jesus is peace and goodwill toward men, and was so heralded when he came into the world.

Some persons who have an experience of grace should not be allowed membership in a church because they let their natural disposition to make trouble, rule them. One such person can keep up trouble in a church, and two of them have often brought about divisions. There is usually a way to adjust matters peaceably if we seek it in a Christ-like spirit. When once

the flesh takes a hand then peace is soon broken. Some of our churches are now having trouble because some of the members are not trying honestly and prayerfully to maintain peace. I will notice this more in the study on the next verse. It would be well for individuals when they have been drawn into trouble to ask themselves if they have exhausted all effort to maintain the peace and keep the matter from spreading into the church and being known in the world. The more publicity the matter has the more it will be exaggerated, for talkers will talk, and they may not either understand or try to hold to the truth.

Verse 19. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Avenging an injury, which is a natural, fleshly course, instead of exercising forbearance and Christian judgment, has made much trouble for individuals and for the churches. The spirit for revenge banishes the desire for peace and stops effort in that direction, and soon spreads the matter like a plague. One member in a church may have suffered some injustice at the hands of another in word or deed, and the flesh at once gets on fire to make him suffer for it. This fire spreads and soon there is a conflagration in the church and many hearts and minds are beyond the reach of reason. The life of some one is demanded to satisfy the avenging spirit.

Passing by the critical opinions on the expression, "but rather give place to wrath," it is safe to take the impressions one would get from the verse as a whole, which seems to be, Avenge not yourselves, for vengeance belongs to God; he will repay. He who cannot do any wrong, and who knows all hearts, will either bring to repentance him who has given the injury, or cause him to suffer an adequate chastisement. To question that the Lord will do this, is to question the righteousness of the great Judge who shall judge all hearts.

If we attempt to avenge, or to bring what we consider righteous judgment, we are likely to take such a course as will drive away all likelihood of repentance, because hate and vengeful spirit beget their kind usually, and hearts are not softened. When Thomas was filled with unbelief, and Peter denied his Lord, Jesus did not use abusive terms, nor reproach in bitterness, but with tender words and loving looks broke their hearts and brought a proper disposition to make amends for their wrongs.

So, if we cannot approach those who have offended, or whom we imagine to have given injury, without doing so in a vengeful spirit it is better to endure in patience the moving of the divine hand which will always be on the side of right, and who will not suffer that wrong shall finally go unchastened. Finally, we ourselves may be able to have Christ so formed in us that we may go forth in the spirit of meekness

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Answers to Bible Quiz

1. Genesis 3:15; 2. Genesis 22:18; 3. Hosea 11:1; 4. Isaiah 53:5; 5. Isaiah 53:4 -5; 6. Psalm 34:20; 7. Jeremiah 31:31 -34; 8. Hosea 1:10; 9. Psalm 118:22 -23; 10. Psalm 2:1 -2

Devotions:

Psalms In Reflection

From the book of the same title by Elder Len Dalton

Hymns and Hymn Writers

Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. (Psalms 2:1-12)

The three principal matters discussed in this psalm are: Jehovah's King, the folly of rebellion against Him, and the wisdom of submission to Him. The heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah's Anointed. They are interested in breaking the bands of Jehovah and His Anointed, which may mean the bands that unite the Father and the Son, or it could refer to the bands by which the Father and His Son hold them. Their desire is to break them and cast them away from themselves.

At their foolish thinking, the God Who sits on His Throne will laugh and hold them in derision. He will also speak to them in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure. Jehovah says that He has set His King upon His Holy Hill of Zion. The psalm is interwoven with the thinking of the New Testament. The divisions of the psalm and the speakers in each must be understood. The psalmist opens with a description of the nations who are in opposition to Jehovah and His King. This is given in the form of a question as to why this attitude of the nations. Jehovah's contempt for them is declared. Jehovah is the Speaker in verse 6 and He announces that He has appointed His King notwithstanding their opposition.

Verses 7 to 9 give the words of the anointed King, Who declares the decree of His Kingship. The Son of Jehovah receives His dominion from His Father and exercises it to the subjection of the opposing forces. The order in which He proceeds is indicated by these words in this order: "inheritance," "possession," "administration." The kings and judges are admonished to manifest their wisdom by submitting themselves to Jehovah's King. This is a psalm concerning Jehovah's King.

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have under standing. Job 38:4

This hymn was written by Joachim Neander, born in 1650, whose father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather--all Joachim Neanders--had been preachers of the gospel. But as a student, Joachim was wild and rebellious. At 20, he joined a group of students who descended on St. Martin's Church in Bremen to ridicule and scoff the worshippers. But the sermon that day by Rev. Theodore Under-Eyck arrested him and led to his conversion. years later, he was the assistant preacher at that very church.

Joachim often took long walks near his home in Hochdal, Germany. They were worship walks, and he frequently composed hymns as he strolled, singing them to the Lord. He was the first hymnwriter from the Calvinist branch of Protestantism. When he was 30--the year he died--he wrote this while battling tuberculosis:

*Praise Ye The Lord, The Almighty, the King of Creation.
O my soul praise him, for He is Thy health and Salvation.*

One of Joachim's favorite walking spots was a beautiful gorge a few miles from Dusseldorf. The Dussel River flowed through the valley, and Joachim Neander so loved this spot that it eventually was named for him--Neander Valley. The Old German word for "valley" was "tal" or "thal" with a silent "h."

Two hundred years later Herr von Beckersdorf owned the valley, which was a source for limestone, used to manufacture cement. In 1856, miners discovered caves which contained human bones. Beckersdorf took the bones to a local science teacher who speculated they belonged to one who died in the Flood.

But when William King, an Irish professor of anatomy, saw the bones, he claimed they were proof of evolution's famous "missing link." Other Neanderthal fossils were found, and for many years they were used to "prove" Darwin's theory of evolution. Today we know the Neanderthal was fully human, an extinct people group of great strength. But, as one expert put it, "when Joachim Neander walked in his beautiful valley so many years ago, he could not know that hundreds of years later his name would become world famous, not for his hymns celebrating creation, but for a concept that he would have totally rejected: human evolution."

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (Colossians 1:16)

PREACHING CHRIST

By Adolph Saphir (1831-1891)

To preach Christ means to preach Christ *crucified*: that the death of Christ on the cross as an atoning sacrifice, is the very center and heart of preaching Christ.

It is necessary to dwell on this point, as it is so often impugned, obscured, and evaded in the present day. The instinct of the world, as well as the profound and vivid conviction of the church, have agreed on this one point, that the center of Christianity is Christ crucified. The world—with doubt, unbelief, aversion; the church in faith, love, adoring joy and triumph. When we say a man believes in Christ, we mean he trusts in Christ, Who died the Just for the unjust; when we say a man preaches Christ, we mean—he declares the redemption, the forgiveness of sins through faith in His Blood: when Christians take the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him, it is in remembrance of Him Who laid down His life as a ransom for the sins of many. The cross of Christ is the summary of all; the central point, from which radiates Justification, Sanctification, and the Future Glory.

It has been said that the message of the church is the resurrection of Christ; to declare that Jesus is living. Blessed be God, that Christ is risen and at the right hand of the Majesty on high. But Christ's resurrection is not, strictly speaking, the message of salvation to the world. We can have no doubt what the Gospel is, which God sends His messengers to preach. For the apostle Paul writes most clearly: that God "hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, and "hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation". "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ: as though God did beseech by us, we pray in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God". And that by this reconciliation on God's part nothing else is meant but the expiatory substitution—death of Christ on the cross is most evident by the verse immediately following: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

This is the gospel. This must be preached to the world. To the world our message is—Christ crucified: to the believer, the church, our message is—Christ is risen: He lives, He is your Righteousness and Strength, your Life and Hope. It is in analogy with this, that the death of Christ, the crucifixion, took place before the whole world, Jewish and heathen; all the people beheld Him; Christ was lifted

up. The resurrection of Christ took place in secret; no human eye witnessed the mysterious and glorious moment; and the risen Savior appeared only to the chosen ones, and not to the world. It is perfectly true that if Christ is not risen the gospel would neither be true nor a living and vitalizing Power, but the gospel itself is—Christ died for the ungodly.

But besides, and this is of equal significance, What is meant by the resurrection of Christ? And why is it of such cardinal and blessed importance? Not that Jesus as man was raised from the dead, nor that Jesus as all godly men, lives now and lives for ever, but that Jesus, the Christ, our Substitute, was raised, that He Who was offered up for our offences, rose again because of our justification; that Isaiah 53 was fulfilled in Him He was despised and rejected by Israel; He was honored and exalted by the Father: and why? Because He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities. He lives and sees His seed, because His soul was made an offering for sin. He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death. This is the significance of the resurrection; and thus all the apostles preached; and Jesus Himself said unto the beloved disciple: "Fear not, I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth and was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore.

As the atoning death of Christ not merely explains the true meaning of the resurrection and the foundation on which His exaltation rests (Phil. 2) so the glory of the risen Lord, as Prophet and royal Priest, can only be seen in the light of Golgotha. Because He died, God exalted Him to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (Not to prove to skeptics the supernatural and the life to come.) "By His Own Blood He entered into the holy place, the true sanctuary, having obtained eternal redemption for us": thus the epistle to the Hebrews teaches us. He is the Mediator of the New Testament and the High Priest over the house of God, because He was once offered to bear the sins of many. And only by faith in His Blood can we enter into the Holiest, and thus be partakers of the spiritual and eternal blessings of His Priesthood. Nor do the glorified saints around the Throne throughout eternity ever lose sight of the central and most blessed manifestation and act of Divine Love. "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy Blood"—this is the foundation on which rests the glory which the royal Priest gives

unto His saints—"and hast made us unto our God kings and priests".

Preaching Christ crucified is, lastly, the only way in which Christ's life and ministry can be truly understood. We are often accused of not bringing out with sufficient emphasis the example of Christ and the perfection of His character and life. We are told that to preach the sinlessness and purity, the love and self-denial, of Christ is the most important thing. But is this true? Men say: Unfold to us the beauty, the grandeur, the love of Christ the perfect man, that we may imitate every feature of His noble character. This would be practical preaching. Just as the Jews at the foot of Mount Sinai promised that they would observe whatever God would command them, not knowing the true nature of sin and the real condition of sinful and fallen man, so do our twentieth century Europeans imagine that all they need is to have a high and attractive ideal of humanity set before them. This is one aspect of the fallacy. But another aspect is—that men fail to see what the example of Christ really is. What is the glory of Christ's earthly life?—wherein consists its incomparable character whereby it was to the Father an infinite delight, and is to the believer the great model and sustaining strength? As the apostle explains in the epistle to Philippians, the mind which was in Christ Jesus, which is also to be in us, is—that for the glory of the Father and the salvation of sinners He became man, and having become man went in the path of humility; always looking forward to, and at last enduring, the death of the cross. This was the will of God, which He came to do. This was the obedience. In this light alone we truly behold the Lamb without spot or blemish, the love and obedience which He manifested during all the days of His flesh. Thus we preach Christ crucified: not to the exclusion of His life, but to the inclusion and true possession, of all that is in Christ.

[Adolph Saphir was a Jewish Christian preacher who came to the Lord along with others, e.g. Alfred Edersheim, in response to the mission of five Scottish clergymen (including Andrew Bonar and Robert Murray McCheyne) who traveled across Europe in the first part of the 19th century, sharing Jesus with the Jewish communities they passed through.]

A Safe Rule to Follow

"Talk to God about your neighbors, and talk to your neighbors about God."

—Selected

DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

(Continued from page 4)

even as our dear Lord would do. Then, we are ready to take to ourselves the exhortation in the next verse.

Verse 20. "Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." The basis for this exhortation is to be found in the preceding verse. We are not to avenge ourselves, but to put off this spirit, trusting that the Lord shall sustain the right and deal justly with those who seek to injure us, and take the opposite course which we are assured will be successful. It is to follow the course which Jesus taught and which has been noticed in a preceding verse. "Bless them that curse you; bless and curse not." Jesus said we should do good for evil and pray for them which use us despitefully.

In this verse we are told this course will bring conviction to those who are evilly inclined toward us—it will heap coals of fire on their heads. Any one can treat his friends well, but it is a Christ-like spirit to be gracious to one's enemies, leaving them to settle for their course with him who has all power on high.

You cannot feed him when he is not hungry, nor give him drink when he is not thirsty, but the opportunity will come if your patience and faith will have brought you a willingness to use it. When the time does come, the deed must be done in the spirit of kindness if it is to do good, and not in the hateful show of stooping for a victory. That would ruin it all for it would be avenging with a vengeance.

Verse 21. "Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good." This is, as it were, uncovering the principle which lies beneath all these exhortations. In whatever direction we look—within ourselves or about us—there is the evil influence whose tendency is to lead us away from the Christ character in heart or in deed. Life is one constant struggle against this stream which will carry us down and away from what we should be if Christ is to be formed in us.

One great warning sounds from all the scriptures: Be not overcome of evil.

Adam had warning of the consequences of not standing against it, but he yielded

to it, and so sin came and death by sin. Principles have not changed. Evil leads to sin, and sin to death. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." This is a warning in the gospel day. The devil tried to overcome Jesus, but he could not. So Paul travailed in spirit that the brethren to whom he wrote might have the Christ character formed in them that they might overcome the evil that is in the world. Yielding to the evil will destroy their joy and happiness here and defeat the purposes of the church. Churches sometimes fail to yield happiness to the members because they have been overcome with evil. Heresies and all forms of unrighteousness which destroy the peace of saints are evil.

Is there any hope of resistance against the floods of evil? It is written, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." If through faith in God and strength through him we can resist the devil, as the word of God assures us, then certainly there is encouragement to accept this exhortation as suitable for our banner and rally to it, trusting in the Lord that it is not a hollow delusion.

Paul encourages to believe that the shield of faith is capable of quenching all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and assures us that he can do all things through him who strengthens him. With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

The life of the saints of God is not all a battle of defense; there is an aggressive movement—"But overcome evil with good." Of course all evil can never be overcome during this life journey. Jesus will destroy the works of the devil. How far reaching this will be we can never know in this world, but these exhortations have to do with God's people here in this life. As before said, keeping from being overcome with evil is a great struggle. This last clause gives us the best weapon we can put into use in fighting evil, and that is by doing good.

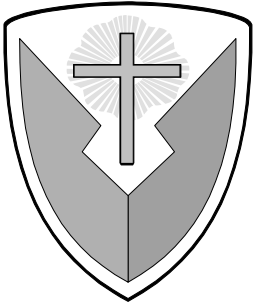
Doing good is doing anything that God approves. The things he tells us to do are what he approves, and in keeping his commandment there is great reward. We do not put away sin nor win heaven, but while engaged in the service of God we are overcoming evil. Even thinking upon his name keeps evil from working

in the mind during the time thus occupied. When engaged in prayer, if the heart is in the matter, we draw near to God—and near his feet is safety. Listening to the gospel preached, our minds are refreshed upon spiritual matters, and we think and see more clearly on the things of Christ's kingdom, and so are put on our guard concerning the evil that would rob us of the joys of the Lord's salvation. The love and fellowship of Lord's people help to strengthen the us against unbelief and disobedience, which are evils.

We are exhorted to "every good work," for all and each of these are resisting Satan, crucifying to the flesh, forming a character that will the better enable us to stand. Of course, the children of God can do none of these things of themselves. They are exhorted to work out their own salvation, for it is God that worketh in them to will and to do. So they do not have to walk alone, or to stand strength, but they are to work out in their own salvation,—manifest what the Lord has worked in them to do, that they may show devotion to him and his cause. The way they are to do this is to press toward the high mark of the character of Jesus. While it is true that it is so high that they can never reach it, yet every step in that direction brings its own great reward. To be nearer to Jesus brings a blessing that the world cannot give nor can it take it away. The nearer the child of God is to Jesus, the more fully is the world and evil beneath his feet, and the greater the peace and security felt in his strong promises to never leave nor forsake.

With this brief study of the verses I close this series of articles. I feel that it is a mere surface examination, but realize that this has been beneficial to me, and I hope the consideration of them has interested others who will go deeper into the meaning of having Christ formed in us. May the lifting up of its power, the sweet peace of its presence, and the joy that comes with all that love our Lord Jesus Christ. May we redouble our prayerful efforts not only to overcome evil in our own lives, but in the church and among our brethren and sisters.

Elder Walter Cash
1924



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And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, Hebrews 10:24

In Heavenly Places

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: (Ephesians 1:3)

We come now to a consideration of the phrase, "in heavenly places." The word "places" is in italics, showing that the word as such is not in the Greek text, and is supplied by the translators in an attempt to make plain to the English reader, the thought in the Greek text. The original has *en tois epouraniois*; a preposition (in), the definite article, and an adjective meaning "in or above heaven, existing in heaven, the heavenly regions, i.e., the abode of God and angels." Thayer applies the last meaning to Ephesians 1:3, 20, 2:6, 3:10, where the same expression is used. In 6:12, the expression applies to the lower heavens or the heaven of the clouds (Thayer). Vincent says, "another key-word; one of the dominant thoughts of the epistle being the work of the ascended Christ. *Places* is supplied, the Greek meaning, *in the heavenlies*. Some prefer to supply *things*, as more definitely characterizing *spiritual blessing*. But in the four passages where the phrase occurs, 1 :20, 2:6, 3:10, 6:12, the sense is local, and *epouranios, heavenly*, is local throughout Paul's epistles. The meaning is that spiritual blessings are found in heaven and brought thence to us." Expositors concurs with Vincent in

viewing the expression as referring to heaven as a locality, and says, "It is not merely that the blessings with which God blessed us are blessings having their origin in heaven . . . , but that they are blessings which have their seat where God Himself is and where Christ reigns." It is that we saints while still in the body on earth, are enjoying some of the blessings which we will enjoy in heaven.

Paul has already given us a two-fold description of these blessings. They are of such a character that they are Spirit-produced ones. They are blessings which have their natural abode in and come from heaven. He adds another. They are blessings that are "in Christ." Expositors comments, "Not merely *through* Christ. The phrase expresses the supreme idea that pervades the Epistle. Here it qualifies the whole statement of the *blessing* in its bestowal, its nature, and its seat. The divine blessing has its ground and reason in Christ, so that apart from Him it could have no relation to us. It is ours by reason of our being in Him as our Representative and Head, 'by virtue of our incorporation in, our union with, Christ' (Lightfoot). 'In Him lay the cause that God blessed us with every spiritual blessing, since His act of redemption is the meritorious cause of this divine bestowal of blessing' (Meyer)."

Kenneth S. Wuest in *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*

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