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REJOICING IN THE LORD.

“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Phil. 4:4). How many there are today who make an entirely wrong use of this Divine exhortation. Let any servant of God faithfully trace out the inward experiences of a Christian, let him describe the painful discoveries of “the plague of his own heart” (1 Kings 8:38), and his daily conflict with his corruptions and the corresponding effect this produces in the dampening of his spirits. Let him point out how well-suited to his case is the humiliating lament of Romans 7:24, and the light-hearted and empty-headed religionists of the day will promptly (we do not say “quote,” but) *hurl* at his head these words—“rejoice in the Lord always.” Those who thus misuse our text suppose that its happy strains condemn all gloominess in a Christian, and that it goes to show that one who is groaning is living far below his privileges.

There is a large percentage of people in Christendom today who imagine the interests of Christ and His Cause on earth require that the somber side of things should be steadily kept out of sight—that only the joyousness of Christianity should be exhibited. They think that it is the pressing duty of saints to attract the unregenerate and not repel them by their heaviness. But that is a most mischievous misconception, a serious error, for it would be but a *one-sided* and therefore a *false* representation of vital godliness. It is an essential part of piety to make conscience of sin and to grieve over it. Christ never rebuked the penitent but declared, “Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh; Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep” (Luke 6:21, 25). Surely we are not to hide that aspect of piety which God specially delights in: “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word” (Isa. 66:2).

It is true that those of a *naturally* bright temperament and happy disposition may find it easy to present an attractive face to the world, but will it be to themselves or to Christ that they will draw the ungodly? Let that question be seriously pondered by those who insist that a smiling countenance is highly desirable. “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” What does the repetition of this exhortation argue? Does it denote that the Christian is always happy? No indeed; the very reverse. Is it not because the saint is so often cast down, because he finds so much both in himself and what is going on around to sadden him, that he is directed to look above to and rejoice in the Lord?

Study carefully the picture of the “Blessed” man which Christ has drawn for us in Matthew 5:1-11, and it will be seen that each feature in that portrait depicts the Christian as sorrowful so long as he is upon earth. Is he “poor in spirit”? then assuredly will he feel pain from a pressing sense of want. Does he “mourn”? then it would be downright hypocrisy to pretend he is joyful. Is he “meek”? but such a spiritual grace is only evidenced by his submitting to the test of grievous afflictions. Does he “hunger and thirst after righteousness”? then he can be no stranger to an experience of feeling weak and unworthy. “Merciful”: such a disposition cannot remain unmoved amid abounding misery in the world. “Pure in heart” necessarily entails grief over impurity. “Peacemakers” cannot but be saddened as they behold millions of their fellows striving against their Maker.

On the other hand, there are not a few among the Lord’s people whose tendency is to go to an opposite extreme, being afraid to rejoice in the Lord lest they be guilty of presumption. They who are most painfully conscious of the sea of iniquity surging within, feel it would be hypocrisy to joy in God and sing His praises. But let it be carefully borne

in mind that the same human instrument who cried, "O wretched man that I am," penned this very exhortation. However low the true believer may sink in his feelings, however cold and barren his heart, there is still abundant cause for him to heed this injunction. He is not bidden to rejoice in his own experiences or attainments, but "in the Lord." It is a call to the exercise of faith, of hope, of love.

Though poor in this world's goods, though grieving the loss of loved ones, though suffering pain of body, though harassed by sin and Satan, though hated and persecuted by worldlings, whatever be the case and lot of the Christian, it is both his privilege and duty to rejoice in the Lord. He has given us abundant cause so to do: His favour, love, faithfulness, longsuffering, granting us access to the Throne of Grace, the privilege of communion with Himself (in our sorrows and trials!), the promise of an eternity of bliss in His presence—all call for gladness and praise. This exhortation to rejoice in the Lord does not mean we are bidden to cast all sorrow out of our hearts, nor are we acting contrary to its terms when we grieve over sin. Godly sorrow and holy joy are coinciding and not conflicting emotions: there is no enjoying the sweetness of the Lamb apart from the "bitter herbs" (Exo. 12:8).

To rejoice in the Lord is an act of *faith*, and therefore it lies not within the power of the creature to put it forth whenever *he* is so inclined. Do not despair, then, fellow-saint, because you are not able to reach this sphere of joy as and when you please. We are entirely dependent upon the Holy Spirit, here as everywhere—none but He can draw us to Christ and enable us to rejoice in Him. Very far are we from being competent to master ourselves and overcome all the oppositions of sin. We are not the lords of our joy. We can no more make ourselves rejoice in God than we can make ourselves well when suffering from a dangerous and painful disease. Like all other exhortations, this one must be turned into earnest prayer for Divine enablement. Finally, note the very next words are, "Let your *moderation* (not hilarity) be known unto all men"!—A.W.P.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

7. *Christ and the Law: Matthew 5:17, 18.*

The manifestation of Christ in Israel's midst was sudden and startling. The first 30 years of His life on earth had been lived in private, and outside His own immediate circle He seems to have attracted little attention. But as soon as He appeared on the stage of public action this was altered: the eyes of all were fixed upon Him and the leaders of the Nation were compelled to take notice of Him. His meekness and lowliness at once distinguished Him from those who sought the praise of men. His miracles of healing soon became heralded far and wide. His call to repentance and proclamation of the Gospel (Mark 1:15) made people wonder what was the real character and design of His mission. Was He a revolutionary? Was it His purpose to overthrow the existing order of things? What was His attitude towards the Scriptures, and particularly to the law of Moses? Did He disavow their Divine authority? These were questions agitating the minds of men, and called for clear answers.

Christ's preaching was so entirely different from that of the Pharisees and Sadducees (which was supposed to be based on the Old Testament), that the people were inclined to suppose His intention was to subvert the authority of God's Word and substitute His own in its place. Because Christ despised the "traditions of the elders," the religious leaders supposed Him to be a deceiver, going about to destroy the very foundations of piety. Because He threw far more emphasis upon great moral principles than upon ceremonial institutions, many were ready to imagine that He repudiated the entire Levitical system. Because He was the Proclaimer of grace and the Dispenser of mercy, the "Friend of publicans and sinners," the idea became current that He was opposed to the Law. The balance of Truth had been lost, and because the Lord Jesus did not echo the prevailing theology of the day, He was regarded as a heretic. Christ had refused to identify Himself with any of the sects of His time, and because He was outside them all, people wondered what was His real attitude to the Law and the Prophets.

For a long time past the view had more or less obtained that when the Messiah appeared He would introduce radical changes and entirely overthrow the ancient order of religion. Therefore did Christ here assure the people that so far from being antagonistic to the Old Testament Scriptures, He had come to fulfil them. He strongly disavowed any hostile design in regard to the Word of God, and proceeded to confirm its authority. The verses we are now to ponder begin the third and longest section of the Sermon on the Mount: from verse 17 to the end of chapter 5, Christ treats of the most important subject of *the moral Law*, showing its true meaning, which had been much corrupted by the Jewish teachers. First, our Lord refuted the erroneous ideas which the people had formed of Him by three emphatic declarations, the force of which we shall now endeavour to bring out.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, *or* the Prophets" (Matt. 5:17). The Old Testament Scriptures were comprehensively summarized under this title, "The Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 7:12; Luke 16:16): thus the first and widest meaning of our Lord's words is, Suppose not that My mission is to repudiate the authority of Holy Writ; rather is it to establish and enforce the same. This will be the more evident when we examine the verses which immediately follow. The entire record of His ministry furnished clear proof of what He asserted on this occasion. Christ venerated the Sacred Scriptures, was regulated by them in all His actions, and definitely set His imprimatur upon their Divine

inspiration. No fouler calumny could be laid to His charge than to accuse Him of any antagonism to or disrespect for the Divine Oracles.

We must next duly note Christ did not here speak of “the Law *and* the Prophets,” but “the Law *or* the Prophets,” a distinction we are required to weigh and understand, for it presents quite a different concept. The Law and the Prophets are not here associated in such a way as to comprise a unity, or as indicating the spirit of the Law by another word. No, the two terms are here put together by the disjunctive particle “or,” and therefore each of them must represent a distinct idea familiar to the Jews. Christ was here referring to the Prophets not so much as the commentators upon the Law, as those who had fore-announced His person, mission, and kingdom. His obvious design, then, was to intimate that the Old Testament in all its parts and elements—ethical or predictive—referred to Himself and was accomplished in Himself.

It is also to be observed that no further reference is made to the Prophets throughout this Sermon (let those who have such a penchant for prophecy take due note!), and that from verse 18 onwards it is the Law which Christ treats of. Before proceeding further we must next inquire, exactly what did Christ here signify by “the Law”? We answer unhesitatingly, the whole Jewish Law, which was threefold: ceremonial, judicial, and moral. The ceremonial described rules and ordinances to be observed in the worship of God; the judicial described ordinances for the government of the Jewish commonwealth and the punishment of offenders: the former was for the Jews only; the latter primarily for them, yet concerned all people in all times so far as it tended to establish the moral Law. The moral Law is contained in the Ten Commandments.

While the entire Jewish Law was comprehended by our Lord’s expression “The Law,” it is clear that He alluded principally to the moral Law, for the subsequent parts of the Sermon refer directly and mainly to it. But we must add that this term here also included the types, the law of sacrifice, and especially the sin-offering—for the question might well be asked, If there had been no real accomplishment of the sacrificial emblems, what then became of all the references in Moses to the propitiatory offerings and to the entire typical system? If Christ had not accomplished them by presenting to God the substance which they shadowed forth, then they would have been an unfulfilled prophecy or pledge, for they manifestly pointed to Him. Christ, then, came to present the reality of which they were the pledge.

“I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Matt. 5:17). We must now carefully inquire what our Lord here meant by “fulfil.” We understand Him to signify that so far from its being His purpose to annul the moral Law, He had come with the express design of meeting its holy demands, to offer unto God what it justly required—to magnify it by rendering to it a perfect obedience in thought and word and deed; and that so far from despising the Prophets, His mission was to make good their predictions, concerning Himself, by performing the very work they had announced He should do. In a word, we regard this statement of Christ’s as a definite declaration that He had entered this world with the object of bringing in a perfect righteousness, which should be imputed to all His believing people. But this vital and glorious truth is now blankly repudiated by some who pose as being orthodox, and therefore they viciously wrest this passage.

Unwilling to admit that Christ rendered to the Law any vicarious obedience on behalf of His people, Socinians contend that the word “fulfil” in this passage simply means to “fill out” or “fill full.” They imagine that in the remainder of the chapter Christ partly

cancels and partly adds to the Moral Law. Even Mr. Grant in his "Numerical Bible" rendered it "complete," and in his notes says, "What would the Old Testament be without the New? very much like a finger pointing into vacuity." As quite a number of our readers have more or less come under the influence of this error, we deem it necessary to expose such a sophistry and establish the true meaning of Christ's declaration. In essaying this we cannot do better than summarize the arguments used by George Smeaton.

First, "That usage of language is opposed to such an interpretation which here adopts the rendering 'to fill out' in preference to fulfil. No example of such a usage can be adduced when the verb is applied to a law or to an express demand contained in the spirit of the law; in which case it uniformly means 'to fulfil.' Thus it is said, 'He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law' (Rom. 13:8). The inflexible usage of language rules the sense in such a phrase, to the effect that Christ must be understood to say that He came not to fill out or to supplement the Law by additional elements, but to *fulfil* it, by obeying it or by being made under it."

Second, " 'fill out' is inadmissible as applied to the second term or object of the verb: Christ did not come to fill out or expound the Prophets, but simply to fulfil their predictions. Whenever the word here used is applied to anything prophetic, it is always found in such a connection that it can only mean, 'to fulfil,' and hence we must not deviate from its uniform significance. Third, the 18th verse must be regarded as giving a reason for the statement made in the 17th. But what sort of a reason would be given if we were to render the connected verses thus: 'I came to fill out or to supplement the Law, for verily, I say unto you till Heaven and earth pass not one jot or tittle shall in any wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled?' "

To these arguments we would add this forcible and (to us) conclusive consideration: the term "fulfil" was here placed by Christ in direct antithesis from "destroy," which surely fixes its scope and meaning. Now to "destroy" the Law is not to empty it of meaning, but is to rescind, dissolve or abrogate it. But to "fill out" or complete the Law obviously presents no proper contrast from "destroy" or render void. "To fulfil," then, is to be taken in its prime and natural sense, as meaning to perform what they (the Law and the Prophets) required, to substantiate them, to make good what they demanded and announced. Merely to rescue the Law from the corrupt glosses of the Jews and to explain its higher meaning was business which could have been done by the Apostles, but to bring in an "everlasting righteousness" no mere creature was capable of doing. Law can only be "fulfilled" by perfect obedience.

If we take "fulfil" here in its widest scope then we gladly avail ourselves of the compound definition of William Perkins. First, Christ fulfilled the Law by His *doctrine*: both by restoring to it its proper meaning and true use, and by revealing the right way in which the Law may be fulfilled. Second, in His *Person*: both by performing perfect and perpetual obedience unto its precepts, and by suffering its penalty, enduring death upon the Cross for His people. Third, *in men*: in the elect by imparting faith to their hearts, so that they lay hold of Christ who fulfilled it for them, and by giving them His own Spirit which imparts to them a love for the Law and sets them on endeavouring to obey it, and in the reprobate when He executes the curse of the Law upon them.

Taking our verses as a whole we may perceive how that though the Law and the Gospel vary in some respects very widely, yet there is a perfect consonance and agreement between them. Many now suppose that the one is the avowed enemy of the other. Not so.

There is a sweet consent between the Law and the Gospel, for Christ came to fulfil the former and is the substance of the latter, and therefore are we informed through His chief Apostle that, by faith “we *establish* the Law” (Rom. 3:31), and that when Moses had given the Law unto the people of Israel he offered sacrifices and sprinkled the blood thereof upon the book and the people (Heb. 9:19, 20)—type of the shedding of Christ’s blood, and which thus did notify the perfect harmony of the Law and the Gospel.

What that blessed consonance is between the Law and the Gospel no regenerate soul should have any difficulty in perceiving. Let us briefly present it thus. The Law required perfect obedience and pronounced death on the least breach thereof, and does not propose any way of fulfilling the same in our own persons. But the Gospel directs us to Christ, who as the believer’s Surety, fulfilled the Law for him, for which reason Christ is called “The end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth” (Rom. 10:4). And through Christ it is that, “The righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:4).

“For verily I say unto you, Till Heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5:18). In these words our Lord advances a conclusive argument for clearing Himself from the false imputation that He had come to destroy the Law, as the opening “For” (following His statement in v. 17) clearly indicates. His argument is drawn from the very nature of the Law, which is immutable. Since the Law is unchangeable, it must be fulfilled—that its Author be vindicated and glorified. Since fallen man was incapable of rendering perfect obedience to it, it was essential that Christ Himself should perform and bring in that everlasting righteousness which God required. Christ’s argument, then, may be stated thus; If the Law be inviolable and for observance eternal, then I could not have come to destroy it. Because the Law is immutable and eternal it necessarily follows that He came not to annul but to *accomplish* it.

“Verily I say unto you” was a form of speech employed by the Saviour when He would solemnly avouch any weighty truth, propounding it in His own name. Herein He evidences Himself to be the grand “Amen,” the “faithful and true Witness,” the antitypical Prophet, the Divine Teacher of His Church, to whom we must hearken in all things, for He cannot lie. In saying, “till Heaven and earth pass away”—the most stable of all created objects—Christ affirmed the unchangeableness of the Law, and that this might be rendered the more emphatic, He made reference to the minutiae of the Hebrew alphabet, that not so much as its smallest part shall pass from the Law—the “jot” being the tiniest letter, and the “tittle” the smallest curve of a letter.

The ceremonial law has not been destroyed by Christ, but the substance now fills the place of its shadows. Nor has the judicial law been destroyed: though it has been abrogated unto us so far as it was peculiar to the Jews, yet, as it agrees with the requirements of civic justice and mercy, and as it serves to establish the precepts of the Moral Law, it is perpetual—herein we may see the blasphemous impiety of the popes of Rome, who in their “canons” have dared to dispense with some of the laws of consanguinity in Leviticus 18. The Moral Law remains forever as a rule of obedience to every child of God, as we have shown so often in these pages.

Let us learn from Christ’s declaration of the immutability of the Law that, first, the Scriptures are the very Word of God, and therefore a sure resting-place for our hearts. A Christian is subject to many doubts of the truth of God’s promises in times of trial and

temptation, but this should ever be remembered—not one jot or tittle can pass till all be accomplished. Second, that no part of the inspired Scriptures, still less any whole book of it, can be lost—neither man nor devil can destroy one jot of it. Third, this immutability of the Law contains a matter of great terror and woe unto all impenitent sinners, for no matter how much they may presume upon God's mercy, the curse of His Law shall stand against them forever. Fourth, Christ's setting His seal upon the inviolable authority of the Law intimates its perfections: every part of it is needed by us, every sentence evidences its Divine authorship, every precept calls for our loving obedience. —A.W.P.

THE LIFE OF DAVID.

86. *His Mighty Men.*

The last thirty-two verses of 2 Samuel 23 have received comparatively scant attention from those who are accustomed to read the Scriptures, and even most of the commentators are nearly silent upon them. Probably the average Christian finds it somewhat difficult to glean much from them which he feels is really profitable to his soul. A number of men are enumerated—some of them mentioned in earlier chapters, but the great majority otherwise quite unknown to us—and one or two of their deeds are described. The second half of our chapter is taken up with a long list of names, which most people are inclined to skip over. Nevertheless, these very verses are included in that Divine declaration, “Whatsoever things were written *aforetime* were written for *our learning*” (Rom. 15:4); and it is therefore to the dishonour of God and to our own real loss if we ignore this passage.

There is nothing meaningless in any section of Holy Writ: every part thereof is “profitable” for us (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). Let us therefore settle it at the outset that this passage contains valuable instruction for us today, important lessons which we do well to take to heart. Let us, then, humbly bow before God and beg Him to open our eyes, that we may behold “wondrous things” in this part of His Law. Let us gird up the loins of our minds, and seek to reverently ponder and spiritually meditate upon its contents. Let us bear in mind the law of the context, and endeavour to ascertain the relation of this passage to the verses immediately preceding. Let us duly take note of how these “mighty men of David” are classified, and try to discover what is suggested thereby. Let us look beyond the historical and trace out what is typical, at the same time setting bounds to our imagination and being regulated by the Analogy of Faith.

Before entering into detail, let us point out some of the general lessons inculcated—suggested, in part, by the brief notes of Matthew Henry. First, the catalogue which is here given us of the names, devotion and valour of the king’s soldiers is recorded for the honour of David himself, who trained them in their military arts and exercises, and who set before them an example of piety and courage. It enhances the reputation of, as well as being an advantage, when a prince is attended and served by such men as are here described. So it will be in the Day to come. When the books are opened before an assembled universe and the fidelity and courage of God’s ministers are proclaimed, it will be principally for the glory of their Captain, whom they served and whose fame they sought to spread, and by whose Spirit they were energized and enabled. Whatever crowns His servants and saints receive from God, they will be laid at the feet of the Lamb, who alone is worthy.

Second, this inspired record is made for the honour of those worthies themselves. They were instrumental in bringing David to the crown, of settling and protecting him in the throne, and of enlarging his conquests; and therefore the Spirit has not overlooked them. In like manner, the faithful ministers of God are instrumental in the establishing, safe-guarding, and extending the kingdom of Christ in the world, and therefore are they to be esteemed highly for their works’ sake, as the Word of God expressly enjoins. Not that they desire the praise of men, but “honour to whom honour is due” is a precept which God requires His people to ever observe. Not only are the valorous soldiers of Christ to be venerated by those of their own day and generation, but posterity is to hold

them in high regard: "The memory of the just is blessed." In the Day to come each of them shall "have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5).

Third, to excite those who come after them to a generous emulation. That which was praiseworthy in the sires should be practiced by their children. If God is pleased to hereby express His approbation of the loyalty and love shown unto David by his officers, we may be sure that He is pleased now with those who strengthen the hands of His ministers, be they in the civil or the ecclesiastical realm. Those alive today should be inspired and encouraged by the noble deeds of heroes of the past. But to raise the thought to a higher level: if those men held David in such great esteem that they hesitated not to hazard their lives for his sake, how infinitely more worthy is the antitypical David of the most self-denying sacrifices and devotion from His servants and followers. Alas, how sadly they put most of us to shame.

Fourth, to show how much genuine religion contributes to the inspiring men with true courage. David, both by his Psalms, and by his offerings for the service of the temple, greatly promoted piety among the officers of the kingdom (see 1 Chron. 29:6), and when they became famous for piety, they became famous for bravery. Yes, there is an inseparable connection between the two things, as Acts 4:13 so strikingly exemplifies: even the enemies of the Apostles, "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus," when they "saw their *boldness*." He who truly fears God, fears not man. It is written, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. 28:1). History, both sacred and secular, abounds in examples of how pious leaders imbued their men with courage: Abraham, Joshua, Cromwell, being cases in point. From the record of their exploits courage should be inspired *in us*.

Let us now inquire, What is the connection between our present portion and the one preceding it? This is a principle which should never be neglected, for the ascertaining of the relation of one passage to another often throws light upon its typical scope, as well as supplies a valuable key to its interpretation. Such is the case here. The next seven verses of 2 Samuel 23 are concerned with "the last words of David," and what follows is virtually an honour roll of those who achieved fame in his service. What a blessed foreshadowment of that which will occur when the earthly kingdom of the antitypical David comes to an end. Then shall His servants receive their rewards, for the righteous Judge will then distribute the crowns of "life" (Rev. 2:10), of "righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8) and of "glory" (1 Peter 5:4). Then shall He pronounce His, "well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Let therefore those now engaged in fighting the Lord's battles be faithful, diligent, and valorous, assured that in due course they will be richly compensated.

"These be the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Eznite: he lifted up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time" (2 Sam. 23:8). When God calls a man to perform some special service in the interests of His kingdom and people, He also graciously raises up for him those who support his cause and strengthen his hands by using their influence on his behalf. Some of those helpers obtain the eye of the public, while others of them are far more in the background; but at the end each shall receive due recognition and proportionate honour. It was so here. David could never have won the victories he did, unless a kind Providence had supplied him with loyal and courageous officers. Nor had men like Luther and Cromwell performed such exploits unless supported

by less conspicuous souls. Thus it has ever been, and still is. Even such a trivial work as the ministry of this magazine is only made possible by the co-operation of its readers.

The first one mentioned of David's mighty men is Adino the Eznite. He is described as "The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains," by which we understand that he presided over the counsels of war, being the king's chief military adviser. In addition to his wisdom he was also endowed with extraordinary strength and valour, for it is here stated that he, "lifted up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time." His case seems to have been one similar to that of Samson's—a man endued with supernatural strength. Typically, he reminds us of Paul, *the chief* of the Apostles, who was not only enriched with unusual spiritual wisdom, but was mightier than any other in the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan; but whereas the one was famous for the taking of life, the other was instrumental in the communicating of life.

"And after him was Eleazer the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away" (v. 9). Here is the second of David's worthies, one who acquitted himself courageously in an hour of urgent need. Nothing is said of him elsewhere, save in what some term "the parallel passage" of 1 Chronicles 11. This son of Dodo was one of the heroic triumvirate that enabled their royal master to successfully defy the assembled Philistines, and that at a time when, for some reason or other, the king's army was "gone away." Eleazer refused to flee before the massed forces of the enemy, and he not only nobly stood his ground, but took the offensive, and with his confidence in the living God fell upon and slew hundreds of them.

The Spirit has placed special emphasis upon the noteworthiness of Eleazer's prowess by informing us it was exercised on an occasion when "the men of Israel had gone back." *That* is the time for true courage to be manifested. When through unbelief, lack of zeal, or the fear of man, the rank and file of professing Christians are giving way before the forces of evil, then is the opportunity for those who know and trust the Lord to be strong and do brave exploits. It does not require so much courage to engage the enemy when all our fellow-soldiers are enthusiastically advancing against them—but it takes considerable grit and boldness to attack an organized and powerful foe when almost all of our companions have lost heart and turned tail.

God esteems fidelity and holy zeal far more highly in a season of declension and apostasy than He does in a time of revival. A crisis not only tests: but reveals a man, as a heavy storm will make evident the trustworthiness or otherwise of a ship. What is here recorded to the lasting honour of Eleazer makes us think of the beloved Paul. Again and again he stood almost alone, yet he never made the defection of others an excuse for the abating of his own efforts. On one occasion he had to lament, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me" (2 Tim. 1:15). Later, in the same Epistle he wrote, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding, *the Lord* stood with me, and strengthened me" (4:16, 17). Let the servants of God today take heart from these blessed examples.

"He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword" (2 Sam. 23:10). Let it be duly noted that Eleazer did not stop when his work was half done, but went on prosecuting the same as long as he had any strength remaining. "Thus, in the service of God, we should keep up the willingness and resolution of the

spirit, notwithstanding the weakness and weariness of the flesh; faint, yet pursuing (Judg. 8:4); the hand weary, yet not quitting the sword" (Matthew Henry). Alas, in this age of ease and flabbiness, how readily we become discouraged and how quickly we give in to difficulties. O to heed that emphatic call, "Be not weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Such incidents as these are recorded not only for our information but also for our inspiration—that we should emulate their noble examples; otherwise they will put us to shame in the Day to come.

"And the LORD wrought a great victory that day" (2 Sam. 23:10). It is the *daring* of faith which He ever delights to honour, as He had so signally evidenced a few years previously, when David as a stripling had challenged and overcome the mighty Goliath. It is the *perseverance* of faith which the Lord always rewards, as was strikingly demonstrated after Israel had marched around the walls of Jericho 13 times. No doubt God struck this army of the Philistines with a terror as great as the courage with which He had endowed this hero. It is ever God's way to work at both ends of the line: if He raises up a sower He also prepares the soil; if He inspires a servant with courage He puts fear into the hearts of those who oppose him. Observe how the glory of the victory is again ascribed to the Lord, and carefully compare Acts 14:27 and 21:19. "And the people returned after him only to spoil" (v. 10). How like human nature was this: they *returned* when there was "spoil" to be had!

"And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines" (v. 11). This incident concerned an armed force of Israel's enemies who were out foraging, and who struck such terror into the hearts of the countryside that the peaceful locals fled. But there was one who refused to yield unto the marauders, determined to defend the food supply of his people, and under God, he completely routed them. Here is another courageous man of whom we know nothing save for this brief reference: what a hint it furnishes that in the Day to come many a one will then have honour from God who received scant notice among his fellows. No matter how obscure the individual, or how inconspicuous his sphere of labour, nothing that is done in faith, no service performed for the good of His people, is forgotten by God. Surely this is one of the lessons written plainly across this simple but striking narrative.

"But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the Lord wrought a great victory" (v. 12). How this reminds us of what is recorded in Acts 14:3: "Long time therefore abode they speaking *boldly* in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the Word of His grace, and granted signs and *wonders* to be done by their hands." Then let us heed that Divine injunction, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, put on the whole armour of God, that *ye* may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil" (Eph. 6:10, 11). Let us duly observe how, once more, the victory is ascribed to the *Lord*. No matter how great the ability and courage of the instruments, all praise for the achievement must be rendered alone unto God. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches" (Jer. 9:23), for what has he that he did not first receive from above! How needful is this exhortation in such a day as ours, when pride is so much in the saddle and men's persons are "had in admiration." God is jealous of His glory and will not share it with the creature, and His Spirit is quenched if we do so.—A.W.P.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

8. *Its Manifestation.*

The everlasting love and grace of the Triune God unto His chosen ones is made apparent to them in this world by means of the fruit or immediate effects of the same: that which was secret in the heart of Jehovah is gradually brought into open manifestation through His own wondrous works unto the Church. It cannot be expected that the world of the ungodly should take any interest in these transactions, but to the regenerate they must be a source of unfailing and ever-increasing delight. As we pointed out in the preceding section of this article (in the January issue), the electing love of God was evidenced, first, in the incarnation and mission of His own dear Son, who was ordained to accomplish the redemption of His people that had fallen in Adam. Second, the eternal purpose of God's grace is revealed in and through a Divine *call* which the elect receive while here on earth. We must now consider more definitely what this Divine call really is.

First of all we must distinguish carefully between this call which is received by the elect and that which comes to all who are under the sound of the Word: the one is particular, the other general. Whosoever comes under the sound of the Word, yea, all who have it in their hands in its written form, are called by God to forsake their sins and seek His mercy in Christ. This general call comes to the elect and non-elect alike: but alas, it is *refused* by all of them. It is described in such passages as, "Unto you, O men, I call; and My voice is to the sons of man" (Prov. 8:4), "many are called, but few chosen" (Matt. 20:16). Their rejection of the same is depicted thus: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded" (Prov. 1:24), "They all with one consent began to make excuse" (Luke 14:18). But it is with the special and particular call, of which the *elect alone* are the subjects, that we are now concerned.

Second, then, this calling of the elect is an individual and *inward one*, falling not upon the outward ear, but penetrating to their very hearts. It is the Word of God's power, reaching them in their natural state of spiritual death and quickening them into newness of life. It is the good Shepherd seeking and saving His lost sheep and restoring them to His Father: as it is written, "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice" (John 10:3, 4). From the legal side of things the salvation of God's elect became an accomplished fact when Christ died and rose again, but not until the Spirit of God's Son is sent into their hearts—"whereby they cry Abba, Father"—is it made good in their actual experience. It is by the Spirit alone that we are given a saving knowledge of the Truth, being led by Him into a right apprehension thereof: the Spirit so shines upon our understanding that we are enabled to take in the *spiritual* knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Third, then, it is an *effectual* call, being accomplished by the supernatural operations of the Spirit. It holds equally good of the new creation as of the old that, "God spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psa. 33:9). It is in such passages as, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Psa. 110:3), this effectual call is referred to their natural unwillingness to surrender themselves completely to the Lord's claims is sweetly melted down by the communication of an overwhelming sense of God's grace and love to them. Again—"All Thy children shall be taught of the LORD" (Isa. 54:13), *so* taught that He "hath given us an understanding that we may *know Him* that is

true” (1 John 5:20). Once more, this effectual call is God’s making good the promises of the new covenant: “I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people” (Heb. 8:10).

Theologians have wisely designated this the “effectual call” so as to distinguish it from the general and outward one which comes to all who hear the Gospel. This effectual call is not an invitation, but is the actual *bestowment* of life and light. It is the immediate fruit of God’s wondrous and infinite love to our persons when we are altogether unlovely, yea, the subjects of nothing but what renders us repulsive and hateful (see Ezek. 16:4-8)! It is then that the Holy Spirit is given to the elect—given to make good *in* them what Christ wrought out *for* them. Let it be clearly recognized and thankfully owned that the gift of the Spirit to us is as great and grand a gift as the gift of Christ for us. By the Spirit’s inhabiting us we are sanctified and sealed unto the Day of Redemption. By the Spirit’s indwelling of us we become the temples of the living God, His dwelling-place on earth.

It is not sufficiently recognized that all covenant mercies are in the hand of the blessed Holy Spirit, whose office and work it is to bring home the elect (by effectual calling) to Christ, and to make known and apply to their souls the salvation which the Lord Jesus has fulfilled and wrought out for them. He comes from Heaven in consequence of Christ’s atonement and ascension, and proclaims salvation from the Lord for wretched sinners. He enters their hearts of sin and woe and makes known the salvation of God. He puts them, by believing on the Person and work of Christ, into possession of the things that accompany salvation, and then He becomes a Comforter to them. Such do not pray for the Spirit to come and regenerate them, for they have already received Him as a life-giving and sanctifying Spirit. What they must now do is pray for grace to receive Him as the Spirit of adoption, that He may witness with their spirit that they are the children of God.

Now this effectual call is a necessary and proper consequence and effect of God’s eternal election, for none are the recipients of this supernatural vocation but His chosen ones. Wherever predestination unto everlasting Glory goes before concerning any person, then effectual calling unto faith and holiness infallibly follows. “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth” (2 Thess. 2:13). The elect are chosen unto salvation by the free and sovereign grace of God; but how is that salvation actually obtained? How are His favoured ones brought into the personal possession of it? Through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth, and not otherwise. God’s decree of election is an ordination unto everlasting life and glory, and it is evident by holiness being effectually wrought in its objects by the regenerating and sanctifying operations of the Spirit. It is thereby that the Spirit communicates what Christ purchased for them.

“And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory. Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles” (Rom. 9:23, 24). In the verses immediately preceding the Apostle had treated of the unspeakably solemn subject of how God shows His wrath and makes known His power in connection with the non-elect, but here he takes up the blessed theme of how God discovers the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy. This is by the effectual call which is received individually by His people. That call is what serves to make manifest God’s everlasting grace toward us: as Romans 8:28 expresses it,

we are “the called according to His purpose”—in other words, the Spirit is given to us in order to the accomplishment of God’s decree, or to put it another way, through his effectual call the believer may look upward to the eternal love of God unto him, much as he might through a clink in his wall peer through to the shining of the sun in the heavens.

As the love of God the Father is chiefly spoken of under the act of election and expressed by Him giving His only begotten Son to be our Head and Mediator, and as the love of God the Son shines forth brightest in His incarnation, obedience, and laying down His life for us, so the love of God the Spirit is displayed in His *revealing* in the Word the eternal transactions between the Father and the Son and by *enlightening* our minds into a true, vital, and spiritual knowledge of the Father and the Son. It is at effectual calling that the Spirit is pleased to make an inward revelation and application of the salvation of Christ to the soul, which is indeed Heaven dawning upon us, for by it dead sinners are quickened, hard hearts softened, stubborn wills rendered pliable, great sins manifestatively forgiven, and infinite mercy displayed and magnified. It is then that the Holy Spirit, who is the Lord and Giver of all spiritual life, enables great sinners to know that God is love.

By His Spirit Christ is pleased to shed abroad the love of God in the heart, and through the Gospel He manifests the knowledge of the Father’s love to us. He gives the Spirit to make a revelation of this to our minds, and thus we are led to know and feel the love of God to be the foundation of all grace and of everlasting consolation. As the knowledge of our personal election (obtained through our effectual calling) makes it evident to us that we are near and dear to God, so it follows that we perceive we are dear to Christ. As the Spirit imparts to us a knowledge of the Father’s love unto us in His dear Son, we are led to search into and study this wondrous subject of election, and the more we know of it, the more we are astonished at it. Hereby, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, we are led to such views of the grace of the Lord Jesus as fills the heart with holy contentment and delight.

Third, the eternal purpose of God’s grace unto us is manifested *by a supernatural change in us*. Strictly speaking, this is not a distinct branch of our subject, for the new birth is one and the same as our effectual calling; nevertheless, for the sake of clarity and to resolve those doubts which the regenerate are the subjects of, we deem it well to give the same a separate consideration. When a sincere soul learns that there is both a general and external call, and a particular and inward one, he is deeply concerned to ascertain which of these he has received, or rather, whether he has been favoured with the *latter*, for it is only the supernatural call of the Spirit which is effectual unto salvation. It is on this point that many of God’s dear people are so deeply perplexed and exercised: to ascertain and make sure that they have passed from death unto life and been brought into a vital union with Christ.

In seeking to clarify this point, the writer has to guard against infringing too much upon the next branch of our subject, namely, the *knowledge* of our election. At present we are treating of the *manifestation* of it, particularly as it is seen in that supernatural change which is wrought in its subjects at the moment they receive God’s effectual call. We shall therefore content ourselves here with endeavouring to describe some of the principal features of this supernatural change. That supernatural change is described in general terms in, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17). Another passage treating of the same thing is, “According as His Divine power hath given unto us

all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us unto glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). It will at once appear that this verse is very much to the point, for it refers specifically to our effectual call and attributes the same to God's "Divine power."

This supernatural change consists, then, in our being made new creatures in Christ Jesus. That which is brought forth by the Spirit at the new birth, though but a feeble and tiny spiritual babe, is nevertheless "a new creature": a new life has been imparted, new principles communicated from which new actions proceed. It is then that "Of His (Christ's) fullness have we all received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16), that is, every spiritual grace in the Head is transmitted to His members; every grace from Christ in the Christian is now complete for parts: "grace for grace" as a child receives limb for limb from its parents. At our effectual calling Divine power gives to us "all things pertaining to life and godliness": what they comprise we must now briefly consider.

First, a spiritual *understanding*. The natural man can neither perceive nor receive spiritual things in a spiritual way (though he can ponder them in a natural and intellectual way), because he is devoid of spiritual discernment (1 Cor. 2:14). But when we are effectually called God gives us "an understanding that we may know Him that is true." Hence it is 2 Peter 1:3 declares that all things pertaining to life and godliness are given us "through the knowledge of Him that has called us." The first light which the soul receives when the Spirit enters his heart is a new view of God, and in that light we begin to see what sin is, as it is in itself against a holy God, and thus perceive what holiness is. It is this new and spiritual knowledge of God Himself which constitutes the very core and essence of the blessing and work of the new Covenant of Grace: "They shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother saying, Know the Lord: for all *shall know* Me, from the least to the greatest" (Heb. 8:11). This spiritual knowledge of God, then, is the germ and root of the spiritual change which accompanies the effectual call.

Second, a *principle of holiness* is wrought in the soul. God chose His people in Christ that they should be "holy" (Eph. 1:4), and therefore does He call them "with a holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9). Thereby we are "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12). Our title to Heaven rests upon what Christ did for us, but our *fitness for* Heaven consists of the image of Christ being wrought in us. This principle of holiness is planted in the heart by the Spirit, and is termed "the new nature" by some writers. It evidences itself by the mind's pondering again and again that God is a holy God, whose pure eyes can endure no iniquity, and by the heart's cleaving to Him under this apprehension of Him. Here, then, is the test by which we are to examine and measure ourselves: do I—notwithstanding so much in my heart and life which humbles me and causes me to mourn as contrary to Divine holiness—approve of all God's commands as holy and good, though opposite to my lusts? and is it my constant longing for God to make me, increasingly, a partaker of this holiness?

Third, a *love for spiritual objects and things*. Not only is a "new heart" communicated at our effectual calling, but there is such a Divine renewing of our will that it is now enabled to choose what is spiritually good—a power which the natural man has not in his fallen condition. It is the turning of the heart unto and longing after holy objects which carries the will along with it. When the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts we cannot but love Him and all that He loves. A true and sincere love to God is the fruit and effect of His effectual call—the two things are inseparable—"to them that love God, to

them who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). Alas, our natural lusts still crave that which is unholy—nevertheless, in the renewed heart there is a principle which delights in and seeks after that which is pure and holy: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren” (1 John 3:14). Do you not find (intermingled with other workings in you) true strains of love toward God Himself?

Fourth, a *spiritual principle of faith*. Natural faith suffices for natural objects, but spiritual and supernatural objects require a spiritual and supernatural faith. That spiritual faith is “the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8), wrought in the regenerate by “the operation of God” (Col. 2:12). This faith is the effect and accompaniment of our effectual call: “with loving kindness have I drawn thee” (Jer. 31:3) signifies, first, that the heart is drawn unto the Lord, so that it rests on His promises, reposes in His love, and responds to His voice. “By *faith* Abraham, when he was *called* to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed” (Heb. 11:8)—the two things are inseparable—faith responds to God’s call. Therefore do we read of, “the faith of God’s elect” (Titus 1:1), which differs radically from the “faith” of formal religionists and wild enthusiasts. First, because it is a Divine gift and not the working of a natural principle. Second, because it receives with child-like simplicity whatever is stated in the Word, quibbling not at “difficulties” therein. Third, because its possessor realizes that only God can sustain and maintain that faith in his soul, for it lies not in the power of the creature to either exercise or increase it.

In conclusion, let us point out that this supernatural change wrought in the elect at their effectual call, this working in them a spiritual understanding that they may know God, the imparting to them of a principle of holiness, of love and of faith, is *the foundation* of all the acts of grace which do follow. Every act of grace, to the end of the believer’s life, evidences this first work of effectual calling to be sound and saving. At regeneration God endows the soul with all the principles and seeds of all graces, and the future life of the Christian and his growth in grace (through the conflict between the “flesh” and “spirit”) is but a calling of them into operation and manifestation.—A.W.P.

THE HOLY SABBATH.

2. *Its Institution.*

“And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:2, 3). Before commenting upon these verses perhaps it is well to make a few preliminary remarks thereon. First, let us point out how emphatically they repudiate the error of those who declare that the Sabbath was an institution peculiar to the Jews. More than two thousand years before the Lord entered into covenant with them at Sinai, the weekly day of sacred rest was appointed and consecrated by the Creator. Instead of its origin dating only from the time when the Ten Commandments were written on the tables of stone, its inception carries us right back to the very beginning of history. As we shall see (D.V.) when we come to examine Exodus 20, the Lord Himself there declared the Sabbath was as old as the world itself.

Not only is it a glaring mistake to suppose the Sabbath was first instituted at Sinai, but it is equally wrong to insist that it is binding on Jews only. The reasons which Jehovah gave in Exodus 20:8-11 why the Sacred Day must be observed are just as pertinent to and incontestable for the Gentiles as they are for the Jews: the original occasion of its appointment and the design thereof hold good with equal respect for the entire human race. Nor is this any arbitrary assertion of ours. Nothing could be plainer than the words of our Redeemer: “the Sabbath was made for *man*” (Mark 2:27) and not merely for one small fraction of mankind. “The weekly day of rest is one of two things that were ordained in and have come from a sinless Eden. The Sabbath was before Moses, before Abraham—the only other relic of the primitive Paradise is marriage—ideal marriage. As well make marriage a matter of Mosaic legislation as the Sabbath law, since both of them were instituted and ordained for man in Eden” (A. T. Pierson).

But plain though the above considerations be to any unprejudiced and simple reader of the Scriptures, there are those who raise cavils against them. Unwilling, at any price, to admit the Sabbath is binding on us today, various subterfuges have been resorted to in an endeavour to set aside the obvious meaning of Genesis 2:2, 3. Some have argued, “it only *seems* to import that the Sabbath was then instituted,” making out that this passage is to be understood only as giving “the reason of that particular day being chosen, not that it was then actually appointed and set apart.” To say that these verses contain merely an anticipation of the Fourth Commandment is handling the Word of God deceitfully. Those verses are the continuation of a plain historical narrative. Having finished the account of the creation of the world in the first chapter of Genesis, and given a recapitulation of it in 2:1, Moses declared what immediately followed thereon, namely, the rest of God on the seventh day and His blessing and sanctifying of that day.

For the special benefit of those who have sadly misrepresented the teaching of Calvin on this subject, we give a brief quotation from the remarks of that renowned Reformer and expositor on this passage: “That blessing of the seventh day is nothing else than the solemn consecration of it; by virtue of which, God claims for Himself on that day the labours and occupations of men. It is, indeed, the proper study of their whole life to be exercised in considering the infinite goodness, justice, power, and wisdom of God, as displayed on the vast theater of Heaven and earth; but, lest men should apply less diligently to this than they ought, every seventh day was peculiarly set apart. God, therefore,

first rested; then He blessed that rest, that it might be sacred among men through all coming ages; He consecrated each seventh day to rest, that His own example might furnish the perpetual rule. Not that God simply enjoined men to take their leisure every seventh day, as if He delighted in idleness; but that, being released from all business, they might with more freedom employ their minds on the Creator of the world—His own example stimulating them to the duty, and engaging them to its performance.”

Others have sought to base an argument on the fact that the actual word “Sabbath” is not found in Genesis 2, 3, but how futile is such a cavil may at once be seen by a reference to Exodus 20. When it pleased the Lord God to assume the immediate government over the people of Israel at Sinai, He not only restored the Sabbath to its original place of honour, but did so by recognizing it as an existing ordinance, re-enforcing a creation-institution. In referring back to Genesis 2, Jehovah expressly termed that first seventh day the Sabbath: “For in six days the Lord made Heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the *seventh* day, wherefore the Lord blessed the *Sabbath* day and hallowed it.” We will not waste any further time and space by considering other objections which the perversity and unbelief of man have brought against this simple passage.

The 2nd chapter of Genesis opens with the words, “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.” And then the very next thing we read of is the institution of the Sabbath rest. Thus, to appoint and sanctify the Sabbath was God’s *first* act after the earth had been made fit for human habitation. Nothing could more emphatically press upon us the fundamental importance of this Divine ordinance, and the priority of its claims upon us—claims to which every consideration of selfish interests must be strictly subordinated. “The weekly Sabbath, therefore, is the first institution of God, and bears on its very origin the stamp of a *universal* and *perpetual* appointment: good for man even when surrounded by the glories of Paradise that is lost—and much more so now, when called to struggle and prepare for the higher glories of the Paradise that is to be won” (P. Fairbairn).

Four things call for special consideration in the passage now before us. 1. The primal Sabbath *was a rest day*. Emphasis is laid upon this feature by the repetition in thought which is found in the two parts of Genesis 2:2. First, on the seventh day, “God *ended His work* which He had made.” Second, “and He *rested* on the seventh day from all His work He had made.” Therefore the prime element and basic truth connected with the Sabbath is *rest*. Before raising the question as to why God “rested,” let us offer a few remarks on the *nature* of His rest.

It has been said repeatedly by a certain class of expositors that this rest of God consisted of His *satisfaction in* the work of His hands, that it was God looking out in complacency over His fair creation. But, we are told, that this “rest” of God did not last for long: it was rudely broken by the entrance of sin, and ever since man fell God has been “working”—John 5:17 being appealed to in proof. That such a definition of the “rest” of God in Genesis 2:2 should have been received by a large number of the Lord’s people, only goes to show how few of them ever do much thinking or studying for themselves. It also proves how the most puerile interpretations of Scripture are likely to be accepted, if they are made by reputable teachers, who on other matters are worthy of respect. Finally, it demonstrates what a real need there is for everyone of us to humbly, prayerfully, and

diligently bring everything we read and hear to a rigid examination in the light of Holy Scripture.

That God's "rest" in Genesis 2:2 was *not* the complacency of the Creator prior to the entrance of sin, is unequivocally evidenced by the fact that Satan had fallen *before* the time contemplated in that verse. How could God look abroad upon creation with Divine contentment when the highest creature of all had become the blackest and basest of sinners? How could God find satisfaction in all the works of His hands when the anointed cherub had apostatised, and in his rebellion had dragged down with him "the third part" of the angels (Rev. 12:4)? No, this is manifestly untenable. Some other definition of God's "rest" must therefore be sought.

Now we need to pay very close attention to the exact wording here, as everywhere. Genesis 2:2 does not say (nor does Exo. 20:10) that God rested from *all* work, for that was not true. Genesis 2:2 is careful to say, "on the seventh day God ended His work which *He had made*," and, "He rested on the seventh day from all His work which *He had made*." And this brings out and calls attention to the basic feature and primal element in the Sabbath: it is a resting from the activities commonly pursued during the six working days. But the Sabbath day is not appointed as a day for the cessation of *all* activities—to remain in bed and sleep through that day would not be spending the Sabbath as God requires it to be spent. What particular works are required and are permissible, we shall (D.V.) show later; but what we would now press upon the reader is the fact that, according to Genesis 2:2 the Sabbath rest consists of ceasing from the labours of the working week.

Genesis 2:2 does not state that on the seventh day God did no work, for, as we have seen, that would not have been true. God *did* work on the seventh day, though His activities on that day were of a *different nature* from the ones in which He had been engaged during the preceding days. And herein we see not only the marvellous accuracy of Scripture, but the perfect *example* God set before His people, for as we shall yet show, there *are* works suited to the Sabbath. For God to have ceased from all works on that first seventh day in human history, would have meant the total destruction of all creation. God's *providential* workings could not cease, or no provision would be made for the supply of His creatures' wants. "All things" needed to be "upheld" or they would have passed into non-entity.

Let us fix it firmly in our minds that rest is not inertia. The Lord Jesus has entered into "rest" (Heb. 4:10), yet is He not inactive, for He ever lives to make intercession. And when the saints shall enter their eternal rest, they shall not be inactive, for it is written, "And His servants shall *serve* Him" (Rev. 22:3). So here with God. His rest on that first Sabbath day was not a rest of total inactivity. He rested from the work of creation and restoration, but He then began (and has never ceased) the work of Providence—the providing of supplies for His myriad creatures.

But now the question arises, *why* did God rest on the seventh day? Why did He so order it that all the works recorded in Genesis 1 were completed in six days, and that then He rested? Certainly it was not because the Creator needed rest, for, "the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isa. 40:28). Why, then, did He "rest," and why is it so recorded on the top of the second page of Holy Writ? Surely there can be only one answer: *as an example* for man! Nor is this answer merely a logical or plausible inference of ours. It rests on Divine authority. It is based directly upon the words of none

other than the Son of God, for He expressly declared, "The Sabbath was made *for man*" (Mark 2:27): made not for God, but for man. Nothing could be plainer, nothing simpler, nothing more unequivocal.

2. The next thing that we would carefully note in this initial reference to the Sabbath is that Genesis 2:3 tells us this day was blessed by God: "and God *blessed* the seventh day." The reason why God blessed the seventh day was not because it was the seventh, but because, "in it He had rested." Hence, when the Sabbath law was written upon the tables of stone, God did not say, "Remember the seventh to keep it holy," but "Remember the *Sabbath* day to keep it holy." And again, He did not say, "He blessed the seventh day and hallowed it," but, "He blessed the *Sabbath* day and hallowed it."

But why should He do so? Why single out the seventh day thus? Young's Concordance defines the Hebrew word for "blessed" here as "to declare blessed." But why should God have "declared" the seventh day blessed? for there is no hint that He pronounced any of the other days blessed. Surely it was not for the mere day's sake. Only one other alternative remains: God declared the seventh day blessed because it was the Sabbath day, and because He would have every reader of His Word know, right at the beginning, that special *Divine blessing* marks its observance. This at once refutes a modern heresy and removes an aspersion which many cast upon God. The Sabbath was not appointed to bring man into bondage. It was not designed to be a burden, but a blessing! And if history demonstrates anything, it demonstrates beyond all room for doubt that the family or nation which has kept the Sabbath day holy, has been markedly *blessed* of God; and contrariwise, that the family or nation which has desecrated the Sabbath, has been *cursed* of God. Explain it as we may, the fact remains.

3. Genesis 2:3 teaches us that the Sabbath was a day set apart *for sacred use*. This comes out plainly in the words, "And God blessed the seventh day and *sanctified* it," or as the R.V. has it, "God blessed the seventh day and *hallowed* it." The prime meaning (according to its Scriptural usage) of the Hebrew word rendered "sanctified" or "hallowed" is to set apart for sacred use. This shows plainly that here in Genesis 2:3 we have something more than an historical reference to the rest of God on the seventh day, and even something more than God setting an example before His creatures. The fact that we are told God "sanctified" it, proves conclusively that here we have the original *institution* of the Sabbath, the Divine appointment of it for man's use and observance. As exemplified by the Creator Himself, the Sabbath day is separated from the six preceding days of manual labour.

4. Let us call attention to a notable *omission* in Genesis 2:3. If the reader will turn to Genesis 1 he will find that at the close of each of the six working days the Holy Spirit says, "and the evening and the morning were," etc.: see Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31. But here in Genesis 2:2, 3 we do *not* read, "and the evening and the morning were the seventh day"; nor are we told what took place on the eighth day. In other words, the Holy Spirit has not mentioned the *ending* of the "seventh day." Why is this? There is a reason for every omission in Scripture, a Divine reason; and there is a reason why the Holy Spirit omitted the usual formula at the close of the seventh day. We suggest that this omission is a silent but most significant intimation that the observance of the Sabbath *never would end*—it was to be perpetuated as long as time should last!

In conclusion it should be pointed out that Genesis 2 contains nothing whatever which enables us to determine *which day* of our week this primal "seventh day" was. We

have absolutely no means of knowing whether that original seventh day fell on a Saturday, a Sunday, or any other day of the week—for the simple reason that we are quite unable to ascertain on which day that first week *began*. All we do know, and all which it is necessary for us to know is, that the seventh day was the day which followed six days of manual work. As to which day of the week is the Christian Sabbath we shall (D.V.) consider later.—A.W.P.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

14. *Cyrus.*

A way of return providentially opened to the Jews on the overthrow of the Babylonian empire by Cyrus. "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:1-3).

The Jews must return from Babylon at the end of 70 years. God has said it. Failure, delay, is impossible. But *how* shall they be delivered? If they could not defend themselves with all their resources in their own country, how shall they deliver themselves from captivity in the midst of a mighty empire? God delivered them, it is true, from the bondage of Egypt; but it was by mighty signs and wonders. From Babylon He delivers them without a single miracle. His Providence, by a long train of events, effected His purpose as fully as if all had been done by a display of power as manifest as that on Sinai.

What a wonderful train of preparation was put into operation to effect this purpose! The birth, genius, talents, education, and character of Cyrus, were all providentially adapted for the office that God designed him in this business. Follow him through his wars, and be astonished at his enterprise and success. Reflect on the office which the God of Providence assigned him, and let your wonder terminate in more exalted views of the power and government of God. Empire was given to Cyrus because he was the anointed of the Lord to deliver His people out of Babylon.

But when Cyrus is in Babylon, what secures the deliverance of the Jews? Had not the conqueror the same interest with the king of Babylon in keeping them in bondage? Was Cyrus a worshipper of the true God? No, he was a heathen. What, then, inclines his heart to deliver the people of Jehovah? Was he now made a convert? No, he continues a worshipper of his own gods. He dies a heathen. Why, then, does Cyrus, rather than the king of Babylon, deliver the people of God? Cyrus was the man appointed by the Lord, and the hour of fulfillment is now come. God has the hearts of all men in His hands, and He turns them as rivers of water. He makes His enemies, as easily as He does His friends, the instruments of effecting what He decrees. God put it into the heart of Cyrus to set the Jews free from captivity. This is clear from the book of Ezra.

From the passage quoted above we see that it was the Lord who stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to make that proclamation. The prophecy concerning himself, it is evident from this document, had been laid before him; and the providential effect was the proclamation of liberty. Had it been the will of God that Cyrus should be hardened, the prophecy would have been neglected or mocked. How did Pharaoh resist amidst all the mighty works of Jehovah! The effects, then, that the knowledge of the prophecy, concerning himself had on Cyrus, is said to be a stirring up of his spirit by the Lord. Success depended on this, and not merely on the natural effect of the document submitted to the conqueror. God here effects through His Providence, by Cyrus, as mighty a deliverance to His people, as He had done by all the display of His power against Pharaoh in their deliverance from Egypt. God's people, then, have, in every age, a right to look to Him

with confidence *for deliverance* from the greatest dangers, and the most inextricable difficulties.

Surely the life of no sovereign, in the midst of his most faithful and attached guards, is so safe as the man who has his trust in the God of Israel. From this fact we may see that God can easily effect all that remains in His predictions and promises with respect to His ancient people. Without the supposition of a single miracle, He can remove every obstacle in the way of His purpose, and effect the greatest work of power. The prospect of the Jews ought to be determined by a fair exposition of the Word of God, by the laws of language, consistently with all that anywhere in Scripture bears on the subject. But no objection can be allowed from difficulty of accomplishment or opposition of the rulers of the world. God rules on earth as absolutely as He does in Heaven. No being can resist His will. Everything must fulfil it. The stars do not know their course more certainly than every event that takes place on earth fulfils the designs of Providence.

As God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to deliver His people, so He stirred up some of the people to return. At first view, we may be ready to think that all the Jews would have with avidity seized the opportunity to return to their native land, in which they had so high prospects. But it was not so. And, as a matter of fact, all did not return. Very many, induced by connections which they had formed in the land of their captivity, chose to remain. But God stirred up the spirit of a number to return on the proclamation of Cyrus. "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all those whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered" (Ezra 1:5, 6). Some were providentially excited to return, others to assist in persuading those who were inclined to remain.

15. *Sennacherib*

Sennacherib was sent by God against His people, yet was punished for going. "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand is Mine indignation. *I will send him* against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few" (Isa. 10:5-7).

The wisdom of the world can never understand this part of the ways of the Most High. If the Assyrian was without any command from God, or any constraint on his mind, how can he be said to be sent by God? If in any sense he was sent by God, how can he be guilty in going? How can he be justly punished for doing the very thing which God appointed him to do? Here is the very essence of the question that has forever agitated the wisdom of this world, the consistency of the decrees of God with the voluntary actions of men. Here the truth is practically exhibited. God appointed what His enemies act, yet the whole sin is theirs. How can this be? Foolish men, why ask the questions? Are you able to measure the conduct of the infinite and incomprehensible Jehovah? That the thing is true, every impartial mind must here see. How it is true is not revealed—therefore, can never be found out—should never be enquired after. What God reveals, let us know: what He conceals, let us *not* attempt to discover.

One thing we may here see plainly. Though Sennacherib was sent by God to punish His people for their sins, yet the instrument of wrath did not know that he was God's messenger, and did not act from obedience to God. He acted from selfish and wicked motives; and therefore was guilty in doing the very thing which God had appointed to be done by him. In a sovereign way utterly inscrutable to human wisdom, God sends the Assyrian to do His work, while he did his own work, and satisfied his own pride and passions. Instead of intending to execute the purposes of the Lord, the conqueror boasted of doing all by his own power, and turns all to his glory. The Lord, therefore, denounces: "wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the LORD hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will *punish* the pride of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (Isa. 10:12).

"Here we have an infallible commentary on the Providence of God with respect to the desolates of the earth in every age. God sends them as His scourge, yet they go to gratify themselves; and are, therefore, justly guilty of all the evils which they cause to mankind. Whether they are ultimately successful or unsuccessful, God will call them to account for all the blood which they have shed, and all the miseries which they have brought upon the earth. Cyrus and Alexander, Julius Caesar and Napoleon, all executed the purposes appointed by the Lord for them to perform; yet they are all guilty of every aggression on the happiness of mankind. They served God, but did not intend to serve Him. And what are all the wars that still spread desolation and misery among the nations? Their authors are commissioned by the Ruler of the world to the work of violence, but for every drop of the oceans of blood that have been shed since the murder of Abel men must give account. Princes and statesmen may think that the interests or aggrandisement of their nations is a just apology for their wars. But justice is the same thing among nations as among individuals. If the pirate is to be blamed by Alexander for disturbing the seas, Alexander is equally to be blamed by the pirate for disturbing the world."—Alexander Carson.

N.B. We have purposely placed in juxtaposition these two different pieces from Carson's work—separated by some pages in his book. We wished to present to the reader, as vividly as possible, both sides of this composite picture—so many today dwell only on the first, and thus obtain but a one-sided view of the subject. A greater contrast could scarcely be imagined. In the former we see God stirring up a powerful king in order to the emancipation of the Jews; in the latter we behold Him commissioning a military tyrant to desolate the Jews. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22)!

Now it is one thing to read, approve of, and enjoy the above, but it is quite another to make practical use of the same. It is one thing to believe abstractly that the Most High is Ruler of this world and Governor of the nations, but it is quite another thing for the mind to be regulated and the heart stabilized by this grand truth in times of turmoil and upheaval. It is one thing to recognize that a Sennacherib or a Caesar was but an instrument in the hands of the Lord of Hosts to execute His eternal decrees, but it is quite a different thing to realize that a present-day despot or dictator is equally accomplishing, by His providential guidance, the design of the Almighty. Alas, what a skeptical age we are living in. The vast majority of even professing Christians look no higher than *secondary causes*, and are occupied on the one hand with the unscrupulous avarice and oppression of a human instrument, and on the other hand with the dogged perseverance and diplo-

matic skill of another; and the One who controls both alike is lost to view. This ought not to be; nor is it where *faith* is in exercise, for faith ever fixes the eye upon the Lord Himself. Let the reader get a firm grasp of what has just been pointed out: faith not only rests upon the veracity of the Scriptures, but it also looks unto their living Author. Real faith sees the hand of God in nature, in history, in our circumstances and daily lot, as truly as it views Christ on the Cross suffering in our stead. Real faith beholds God regulating the weather as truly as He orders the effects of Gospel preaching. It is unbelief which shuts God out from the affairs of this world, which excludes Him from the realm of providence, and which imagines His activities are confined to Heaven. It is *unbelief* which is so entirely absorbed with secondary causes and human instruments, that the One who employs them is completely lost to view. If we test ourselves at this point, probably some will discover they have more faith than they supposed, while others may rightly fear they have none at all.

Let us not overlook another important practical lesson inculcated in the foregoing pieces by Carson. Though Sennacherib was a bloodthirsty, unscrupulous, and covetous man, who wrought fearful havoc upon those who wished to be at peace, yet he was a scourge in the hand of the Lord, used by Him to chasten His people for their sins. It has been thus all through history, and holds good today as much as in the times of Isaiah. The terrible sufferings to which Jews are still subjected, is God's present-day reminder that He has not forgotten their murder of His Son. But let us come nearer home: Great Britain and the U.S.A. desire to live at peace with the rest of the world, but if they continue to mock God, trample upon His laws and reject His Gospel, then they can assuredly expect some modern Sennacherib to be sent by Heaven against them. God is granting us further space for repentance, but if we repent not of our national wickedness then we shall be made to suffer the due reward of our iniquities. God has already loudly warned us, and if we heed not, His judgments will descend upon us.—A.W.P.