

GOD'S SUPERVISION OF HIS SAINTS

"The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord, and he delighteth in his way. Though he stumble, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand."—Psalm 37:23, 24.

Calvinism has its good features as well as its bad ones. Its institutions meant the reaction of noble Christian minds against a false doctrine. The fact that these reactionists went to an extreme should not condemn them utterly, nor nullify the good features of their teachings. It is customary for the pendulum of thought to swing from one extreme to another, passing the central point of absolute truth. Indeed, we have every reason to believe that this is a part of the adversary's method in blinding the minds of those who are seeking truth. He would lead as far away from absolute truth as possible, either in one direction or the other in every reaction or reform; therefore, he seems to have taken an interest to the extent of helping the reformers to an opposite extreme.

During the "dark ages" the central thought of our text was lost sight of—the thought of God's care for each and for all of his consecrated people. The thought inculcated and generally held was to the contrary of this; viz., that the average man, even though a consecrated believer, is too insignificant for divine attention; that God had given over to the care of the Pope and the clergy the souls of his people. To so great an extent did this teaching prevail that the people subject thereto did not think of Jehovah as their shepherd; nor even of Jesus as his appointed representative shepherd; and did not think of approaching these in prayer, nor of having their divine oversight and direction in their affairs. On the contrary, if they had sins to be repented of, they were to go to the priest, make confession, and secure absolution. Had they requests to make, they were to ask the priest; or in prayer to approach some dead saint, requesting his mediation with some of the dead apostles or with Mary, the mother of Jesus, that they, in turn, might mediate with the Son Jesus, that he, in turn, might mediate with the Father, and that thus they might be brought to the attention of Jehovah and possibly get some fragmentary blessing as a crumb from the table.

The reaction of Reformation times was against all this sort of thing, and the central teaching of Calvinism was that God has a direct interest in all those who, through the merit of Jesus, become his children through faith and consecration. It is difficult to estimate how great has been the blessing that has come to the Lord's people through the revival of this doctrine of the primitive church. We must ever feel grateful to John Calvin and his coadjutors for the service they rendered to the household of faith in this particular,—even though we must, at the same time, thoroughly repudiate that feature of their teachings which passed to the extreme of declaring that as God had foreknown an elect church, the special and happy object of his care during this Gospel age, and to be exalted ultimately to the heavenly state, he had, on the other hand, predetermined the torture of all the remainder of the race, and had made ample provision therefor. God permitted (we may even say, used) Calvin and his associates in the presentation of an important truth, while at the same time he permitted them to attach to it this awful, blasphemous, God-dishonoring teaching respecting the non-elect. We thank God that, in his providence, we live in the time when it is due that his gracious purposes toward the non-elect should be clearly seen, and his character freed from the evil aspersions of such a theory.

Papacy's conception of the insignificance of man, even though a good man in the Lord's sight, is much nearer to the view of the natural, worldly man, than is the thought that all the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord. The natural man finds it difficult to believe in a God at all; as he looks about the universe his first thought of its immensity and intricacies, and of the greatness of the one who created all these things is speedily offset by the suggestion that possibly there is no God;—possibly there are "laws of nature" which form themselves and which operate themselves, and under which all things are and shall ever be. He is encouraged in this line of doubt by the views of some, known as Scientists, Evolutionists and Higher Critics. Though none of these have the temerity to declare point-blank that there is no God but nature, they, almost without exception, show that this is the leaning of their minds, the tendency of their thought. They have not yet discovered any form of life which has not in some sense or degree been transmitted from some other living thing. They are looking for this, however—earnestly looking for it and expecting it, and quite ready, if they can find it, to claim that all life, all being, is the result of a law of evolution, and needed no interference by a Creator, even at the beginning. From this standpoint, and especially backed up by the high authorities of our day, scientific and religious, the natural man feels skeptical about a God at all, and concludes

that if there is a God he is so concerned and occupied in his own personal affairs and in the affairs of other beings in other worlds, that the hundreds of millions upon this planet are in his sight and estimation but as so many mites would be in man's estimation. These are little inclined to think that all the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord.

As Calvin's day was a time of reaction from a wrong thought toward a right one in this particular, so, today marks another crisis. We are living in the time of reaction against the right thought on this subject, and in favor of the wrong thought. In early times in all the theological seminaries, as well as in the great colleges and universities of Christendom, the teachings were distinctly adverse to the sentiment of our text, and at very most allow that mankind as a whole is possibly under some kind of divine supervision and care; though the sentiment seems to be that God knows and cares much less for the poor groaning creation than did its theologians, publicists and reformers.

There is a reason for all this, to be sure. The wheels in the divine plan are so large, and the hands on the divine clock move so slowly that the natural man perceives no movement—fails to realize that God is working all things according to the counsel of his own will. Lacking the instruction of the divine Word; worldly wisdom sees not the purpose of the permission of "the present evil world;" nor how the lessons and experiences which it is giving to all mankind will eventually work out a great blessing, as part of man's needed instruction; to be followed by his instruction in righteousness in the Millennial age, soon to be ushered in. Wordly wisdom sees not the object for which the church is now called out from amongst the world and shaped and fitted and polished, by trials and difficulties and contact with evil, for the glorious work of the future,—of blessing all the families of the earth. And not seeing these things,—not seeing the object of the permission of evil, not seeing why God has delayed the binding of Satan, the overthrow of his power and the release of the bonds of superstition and blindness with which he has enslaved the masses, it concludes that God is indifferent, and that all the provisions and arrangements for social uplift depend upon the wisdom and the benevolence of men.

How thankful should be our hearts, as we realize the divine favor which has rescued us from this blindness which is upon the world, and particularly upon the great and worldly-wise of Christendom! The knowledge granted us of the plan of the ages saves us, not only from the bondage of priestcraft and superstition of the "dark ages," but it saves us also from the evolutionary unbelief which is now sweeping over Christendom, and robbing all who have not the light of the present truth of their joy in the Lord, their peace, their confidence, their trust in him.

We thank God for the ability to grasp this blessed promise of our text (and scores of others of similar import) and to rejoice in them, strong in the Lord and in the power of his might; saying, "If God be for us who can be against us [to any avail]?" If God so loved us while we were yet sinners, much more does he love us now that we are his people. (Rom. 5:8, 9) He who has begun a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it unto the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:6) Since we are the Lord's, and have these various assurances of his Word, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called [ones] according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28.

Let us not, however, apply our text carelessly; let us note carefully that it does not apply to all mankind, but to the "good." The thought here is evidently in harmony with the statements elsewhere, to the effect that God's care is over the *righteous*, as when we read, "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish." (Psa. 1:6) "The Lord knoweth them that are his." (2 Tim. 2:19) Looking about us in the world we inquire: Who, then, are the righteous? who are so good as to be properly called God's people? Harkening for direction from the Word of the Lord we hear the answer, "There is none good, save one, that is God;" and, "There is none righteous, no, not one." These testimonies of the Word fully correspond to our own findings; for in ourselves, as well as in others, we find imperfection,—unrighteousness. But how can these testimonies of the Scripture be reconciled?—that there are none righteous, none good of all the Adamic race, and yet that God declares that all the steps of a good man, all the ways of the righteous, are under his supervision? We answer that the Scriptures explain how these statements are in full accord; that there is a class of

people in the world who, at one time, were children of wrath even as others, but who have been reconciled to God through the death of his Son, their ransom. These have come into accord with God in the spirit of their minds, in their hearts;—their wills are in accord with the divine will. Their deficiencies, which are still known to themselves, and some of them sadly apparent to their neighbors also, are not deficiencies of the will, of the heart, of the intention; and the terms of the New Covenant being applied to these in advance of the world, their blemishes are reckoned as covered in and by the merit of their Redeemer's sacrifice. Thus God declares that he can be just, and yet be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus—of him who trusts in Jesus, and through Jesus, accepts forgiveness of sins and full reconciliation to God's will, so that he desires to sin no longer. These are the "righteous"; these are "his"; these are the "good" of our text. Oh, blessed class! Oh, happy people! A peculiar people, prospectively a royal priesthood unto God—the "elect" church.

If we call attention to the fact that none others than these righteous, good people are under the divine supervision, and guaranteed that all things shall work for their good, our object is not to discourage others; but to rightly inform them of their position, and to remove from their minds any false hopes and delusions they may have been entertaining—to the intent that by proper acceptance of God's favor in the ransom, and a full consecration to him, they may at once attain to this position of reconciliation, and relationship of sonship, and become heirs of this and all similar promises.

Who has not noticed that people who would not admit that they are God's children, who are not believers in the redemption, and not consecrated to the Lord, will in times of trouble go to the Lord in prayer, and take from his Word and apply to themselves such promises as this of our text? Yet this is all wrong if they are still "children of wrath." And if they have seen the open doorway by which they might approach God and attain to membership in his family, and if they have disdained these and neglected them, what effrontery it is on their part to approach the Lord in time of trouble! and how great is their credulity when they delude themselves into thinking that any of these promises would be applicable to them! We are not seeking to hinder any from coming to the Lord in a proper manner in their seasons of distress; but we are wishing to be understood that sorrow, even sorrow for sins, is not repentance; and that sorrow and trouble do not constitute doors of access to divine favor, and that then, as ever, no man cometh unto the Father but by the Son—"through faith in his blood." We would encourage any, who, passing through trying experiences, and feeling the need of a Savior and a great one, come to God in faith and in consecration, and thus put themselves under his protecting care; but even then we would advise them that it had been better had they come to the Lord before the trouble;—better had they calmly, deliberately, dispassionately, thought over his goodness and greatness, and their own insufficiency and need, and the reasonableness of their consecration and the privileges of accepting God's favor in Christ, and coming thus under his exceeding great and precious promises to them that love him.

Some may here inquire: What constitutes justifying faith? We answer: It is a faith in God, based upon and in harmony with all that he has revealed. Abraham believed God and was justified by his faith; yet his faith was far less comprehensive than the faith which justifies God's people today; because, in the meantime, God has unfolded and expanded his revelation. Abraham's faith took in all that God had promised; viz., the blessing of the whole world of mankind through his posterity; and his faith evidently grasped the thought that this implied a resurrection of the dead, not one which would concern his posterity only, but which would embrace also the families of the earth which had already passed into death. He could not do more than believe this, and in some respects it was a severer test of faith than is our larger faith of today. For he could not see how God could be just and yet be the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus; while we, standing on this side of the great ransom sacrifice, can see the *modus operandi*. Justifying faith today, however, must believe the record which God has given us of his Son. It is not sufficient that we recognize Jesus as one of the noble men of our race, nor even that we should recognize him as the chiefest member of it. God's revelation is more than this, and, hence, our faith must be more. We must grasp by faith that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate" from the sinner race;—that he left the glory which he had with the Father, and took the place and condition of the first perfect man, in order that he might redeem him and all of his race which had come under his condemnation to death. We must believe further, that our Lord Jesus gave himself a ransom for all.

We must believe, further, that this was a satisfactory ransom, or purchase price for the world—that it sufficed as an offset for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world. We must believe that the Father evidenced or testified to this perfect obedience, in that he raised him from the dead; that he ascended up on high, appearing in the presence of God on our behalf, making mediation for our iniquities, through the merit of his sacrifice; and that we are accepted in the Beloved, whom God has highly exalted, and given a name, authority and power above every name; and that he is Lord of all; we must accept him as our Lord, our Master, and must, to the extent of our ability, seek to walk in his ways—not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

But after we have attained this position, and after the promise of our text, and all like promises, are ours, it requires time and a continual application of faith, in order to rightly appreciate God's promises, and to appropriate them to ourselves! and this is Scripturally called "growing in grace and knowledge." We grow in knowledge as we take note of the promises of God, and by faith apply them to ourselves, and seek to discern in our lives the fulfillment of those promises; we grow in grace simultaneously, for unless each item of knowledge be received into a good and honest heart, and bring forth its measure of obedience and righteousness (grace) we will not be prepared for the next step of knowledge, and would be thus stopped, or possibly turned back. And as a loss of knowledge would mean a measurable loss of grace, so also a loss of grace would mean a corresponding loss of knowledge;—going into darkness, the promises of the Lord's Word becoming more and more dim and obscured, in proportion as our goodness or grace would be lost in worldliness or sin.

The Christian, as a disciple of the Lord, as a pupil in the school of Christ, is being fitted for a place in the Millennial kingdom—for a share in its glory, honor and immortality. It is required of such pupils that they shall give diligence to learn to appropriate the instructions of their teacher, else they will not be prepared for the glorious things to which they are called—they will fail to make their calling and their election sure. Hence, we see the necessity for the frequent admonitions of the Scripture, that the Lord's people shall be awake; not of those who slumber; not of those who are idle; not of those who are overcharged with the cares of this life; but that they be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Their service toward the Lord is primarily the bringing of themselves into as close harmony with the Lord's will, and into as close likeness to the divine pattern as possible; and secondly, it is that by precept and example they may help others of the called ones in the same narrow way.

There is danger that some may misunderstand the meaning of our text, and suppose it to teach that every incident in the life of God's people is what and as he intended it to be;—that God arbitrarily interferes in the affairs of his people, sets aside their free agency, and forces them to take this step or the other as mere machines. This is a serious mistake. No such thought is contained in the words. God has shown us his good pleasure in such matters; for although he could have made us like wagons or wheelbarrows, to be pulled or pushed regardless of any ambition of our own, he did not so make us, and seeketh not such to be his children—the recipients of his favors. On the contrary, he made man a free moral agent—in this respect a copy of his Creator, free to will as he may please. Although we are not always free to do as we may please, we are always free to will as we may please, and, as already seen, in the present time the Lord is dealing with his people according to their wills. And if God respects the will of the natural man, much more would he respect the will of the new creature in Christ Jesus, begotten of the holy Spirit.

Our text presupposes that in the class described the human will has been transformed;—that the divine will has been accepted as instead of the human; and that the child of God is seeking to walk in the ways of righteousness, in which he has already started; and the proper thought to be gathered is that thus seeking to walk in the Lord's ways, God will not permit his imperfections of judgment to work him any injury, but will supervise his affairs; will overrule so that every step he may take, although it be taken of his own will, his own volition—his consecrated will, however—shall be overruled for his good; for his development as a new creature in Christ. If he shall err in judgment, and bring upon himself the consequences of his error, the Lord's wisdom and power are such that he can fulfil all the provisions of this promise, and make even his blunders and weaknesses to so react as to strengthen his character and establish him in righteousness, developing in him by these and other experiences the fruits and graces of the spirit, which will eventu-

ally fit and prepare him for joint-heirship in the kingdom.

Another Scripture gives us a suggestion respecting our part in the ordering of our steps. It represents the Lord's people as praying, in harmony with the Lord's provision, saying, "Order my steps in thy Word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." (Psa. 119:133) This is the proper course for the Lord's people; to seek to walk carefully, circumspectly; to take heed to the instructions of the Lord's Word, so that thus their mistakes, their blunders, may be fewer and fewer, as they grow in grace and grow in knowledge of the Lord. But meantime, in connection with all of the weaknesses and imperfections incident to our imperfect bodies, we all have need of special comfort and consolation which the Lord has provided us in our text. It is the source of weakness in many of the Lord's people that they do not properly grasp by faith this and similar promises; for only in proportion as they have this faith and grasp these promises can they be buoyed up by this, and be encouraged to press along the line for the mark. This means faith toward God, and we readily admit that the "babes" in Christ cannot exercise as much faith in respect to these promises and experiences as can those who are further advanced; and yet we see continually that it is not years alone that tell in Christian development; that the growth of the Christian in grace and knowledge depends chiefly upon his faith, his love, his zeal.

"According to thy Word,"—should not be misunderstood to mean that God orders the affairs of his people, only in the way of commands and advice given them in his Word. Ah! had this been true, how many now rejoicing in the light of the Lord's favor might have become outcasts long ago! How many have failed to take heed to the directions of the Word, whose steps, nevertheless, the Lord has ordered or directed;—according to his Word;—according to his promise! When the wrong path was taken, and the Word neglected, and the privileges of Christian brotherhood neglected, and thus the way made ready for a complete separation from the Lord and the truth,—then, perhaps, the Lord ordered the way, according to his Word, in sending disappointments, financial or social, or sickness of body corresponding to the sickness of the heart;—and thus, perhaps, he brought back his wandering sheep, "according to his Word," making experiences and trials work out for his highest good.

Thus, in his Word the Lord promises the crown of life to the zealous soldiers of the cross, and assures us that the careless shall under divine providence have their steps so ordered that they shall receive "stripes," chastisements, to awaken and rescue them;—so that they may be "saved so as by fire," and come up through great tribulation,—even after they have failed to gain the "abundant entrance" of the kingdom class. Let us rejoice in thus having our way committed to the Lord; but let us take earnest heed to our own steps also, that we may walk in the footsteps of our Master in the narrow way, and thus also inherit with him the glories promised.

Likewise we should expect the Lord's guidance of our temporal affairs and particularly in respect to our service of the truth. We should not only give heed to the Word and its spirit, but additionally we should keep watch for the leadings of divine grace;—opening or closing doors of opportunity, and thus leading us, if faithful and obedient, not only into

all truth, but also into fuller liberties and opportunities for serving it to others.

We must not overlook the latter part of our text—the assurance that though the child of God may stumble at times in the way, these will never mean to him an utter fall, because his hand is still held by the Lord! What a comforting thought is here! How well calculated it is to deliver the Lord's people from utter despondency in respect to themselves and each other! The all-important thoughts to be kept in mind are, Am I still the Lord's? Am I still trusting in the precious blood? Am I still consecrated to the Lord and his righteous way? If these can be answered in the affirmative we can still realize that we are God's children, and that our hands are still in his; that the spirit of begetting and adoption, which began in us the new life, has not perished; and that it is God's will that we should recover ourselves as quickly as possible from any stumbling, and looking well at the difficulties and trials which led us into it, we should fortify our characters against those difficulties as respects the future, and thus go on really stronger, because of our difficulties, and yet all the while realizing that our recovery from the difficulty was not of our own strength, but because of our trust in the arm of the Lord, to which we are still holding.

The Scriptures which speak of the natural branches of the olive tree, and also the ingrafted branches of the wild olive, continuing to be branches only so long as they continue in the relationship of faith (Rom. 11:17-21), are not to be ignored; neither should we forget our Lord's words, when likening his followers to the branches in a vine; saying, "I am the vine; ye are the branches;" he, nevertheless, pointed out that "every branch in me" that bears not fruit, the Father, the husbandman, taketh it away—it becomes refuse, never to be re-ingrafted but destroyed.

These and other Scriptures most emphatically teach the possibility, not of our stumbling as of accident, and being separated from the Lord, but of the possibility of our being separated from him through wilful disobedience and neglect of his Word and of the opportunities he has afforded us. He will not let us go so long as we are striving to walk in his way; but will order our steps so that they shall bring to us the best blessing possible, and will recover us and help us in our stumblings, because we are seeking and delighting to walk in his way. But if we lose this spirit, and become of a contrary one, if we fight against God,—if we resist the leading and guidance which he has provided in his Word and by his spirit, and if we seek to walk contrary to him, he will also walk contrary to us, and he will let go our hand; our stumbling then would mean our fall—we would be utterly cast down, and that beyond recovery, in the second death.

We do not, however, address those who are wilfully resisting the Lord and seeking to walk after the flesh and not after the spirit. We address those who are seeking the old paths; seeking to walk in the footsteps of Jesus; seeking to know and to do the Father's will, and whose discouragements are the result, not of wilful wrong, but of the weaknesses of the flesh against which they are continually striving. These the Lord would have us encourage, and draw to their attention the precious promises of his Word, and his assurances that "as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence him."

REFORMATION COSTING SACRIFICE

ACTS 19:11-20.—MARCH 8.

"The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

Ephesus was in many respects the scene of the Apostle Paul's most successful work. He spent about three years there altogether, accompanied by Timothy, Erastus, Titus and, possibly, others. The influence of his work, either directly or indirectly, extended to other cities round about. It is supposed that it was during this stay at Ephesus that congregations were started in the nearby places, mentioned in Revelation as "the seven churches of Asia" (Minor). Our last lesson showed the Apostle beginning his work at Ephesus in the synagogue. He continued to present the truth until opposition to it became quite marked, and certain of the Jewish adherents began to speak evil of the teachings and of the believers. Then the Apostle and those who believed, unwilling to continue a condition of strife, discontinued their attendance at the synagogue, and began a separate meeting, apparently in a rented public hall, called "The School of Tyrannus," because, according to the custom of that time, it was used by him for this purpose in the forenoons.

The Apostle probably labored at his trade during the forenoon, and daily, during the afternoon, preached the message

to such as had hearing ears, not only in the public hall, but also by visiting those whom he had reason to expect would be amenable to the gospel. We are supposing a continuance of his usual manner of life, describing in his first letter to the Thessalonians (2:9), "Ye remember our labor and toil, working day and night." The Apostle did not belong to a paid ministry. He had a message to deliver, which he appreciated so highly that he was glad of an opportunity to spend his life in its promulgation—using for other purposes only so much of time and energy as were necessary to procure life's necessities,—waiting for the great reward which the Lord has promised to all faithful servants of his cause. The Lord's ambassadors today can take no better pattern than his, if seeking with him divine favor now, and glory, honor and immortality by and by.

Satan's arts, employed in all parts of the world from the earliest dawn of history, have seen in the nature of wonder-workings, magic, etc. The Scriptures call our attention particularly to the magicians of Egypt, to the soothsayers of Babylon, and in this lesson show us that the same practises,

the same wily arts of the adversary, were general throughout the Roman Empire, and especially in the wealthy city of Ephesus. The Lord performed through the Apostle Paul, while at Ephesus, many marvelous healings of the sick, and other miracles, as well as the casting out of the evil spirits referred to in vs. 11 and 12,—doubtless as an offset to the blinding influence of witchcraft, magic, black art, etc. We may reason that the manifestation of divine power here was necessary to the establishment of the church, and to the general influence of the Gospel in that region—as an offset to the blinding influences of Satan's agents and power. The Ephesians were evidently so bound by these arts of the adversary that an exhibition of him as the real father of them was almost indispensable. Besides, the miracles wrought by Paul served as an endorsement of him as an apostle; an endorsement of his message of Jesus, the Redeemer; of a resurrection as a means of rescue from death, the wages of sin; of a Millennial kingdom as the means, or channel through which that rescue would come; and of the calling out of the church as the body of Christ, to constitute that kingdom, when, in due time, complete and glorified.

Perceiving the Apostle's power to be greater than their own, certain of the magicians essayed to use the name of Jesus as a charm or magic word, just as they were in the habit of using other magic words in their incantations. The effort of some of these, sons of one of the principal priests, resulted disastrously to them, and beneficially to many others. Addressing the one possessed of an evil spirit, they demanded that the evil spirit leave the vexed one, "in the name of Jesus whom Paul preacheth," as distinguished from others of the same name, for the name was at that time a common one. The demon not only did not obey the command, but using the possessed one, and exercising through him demoniacal strength, the seven men were wounded and put to flight, losing, at least, their outer garments.

This matter becoming widely known, was a convincing argument to those who had long had confidence in such wonder-workers, and proved to them that the Apostle's teachings were correct—that the black arts were of Satan, while the Apostle's miracles were of divine power. The resulting increase of interest in the truth shows us clearly that the people were previously duped and unable to discern the true message of God from the spurious teachings of Satan. This reminds us of the Apostle's words, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:4) We may safely conclude that the same general principle prevails throughout the whole heathen world today, and to a considerable extent, also, amongst Christian people—that the alienation of many, and their opposition to God and his message through the truth are probably to be accredited more to ignorance than to evil preferences. How blessed is the assurance that ere long the Lord's power shall be exercised not only a little, as in the case under consideration at Ephesus, but universally, to the complete binding of Satan that he may deceive the nations no more until the thousand years of Christ's reign have accomplished their designed work of opening all the blind eyes, and permitting all who will to come back into full fellowship with God.—Rev. 20:2, 3.

The statement of vs. 18 is capable of two constructions: we might consider it as referring to those who practised magic, and understand it to signify that they confessed certain deceptions connected with their practises, and showed their deeds,—how certain tricks had been performed; or, (and we think preferably) the words may be understood to mean that many believers confessed the truth, and publicly showed it in the reform of their conduct. The latter view is supported by the statement of vs. 19, which seemingly refers to the whole number of believers, declaring that "not a few of them that practised curious arts brought their books together, and burned them in the sight of all."—R. V.

Satan's method of enslaving mankind seems to have been, from the first, largely through superstition. Gross superstition and darkness still dominate the great mass of mankind, and even where the blessed light of the Gospel lamp has gone, reproving the darkness, and setting forth the true way of life and blessing, the adversary has been enabled to follow, and more or less to attach superstitious rites and ceremonies, to the gross delusion of many known as civilized. We cannot doubt that the adversary is connected with many performances done in the name of Christian religion and with many of the miracles wrought by "holy nails," "bones," etc., etc., and is generally effective in holding the deluded ones back from the study of the Lord's Word, and an understanding of the great plan of salvation therein so clearly set forth.

The readiness of the adversary to use now any and every

means available to hinder the light of truth, or to turn aside those who have already discerned it, is very manifest. Almost without exception, all the various persons and systems performing the "many wonderful works" (Matt. 7:22) of today, directly or indirectly antagonize the truth;—the ransom itself, the substitution of the life of our Redeemer for the life of the world, is generally ignored, if not totally denied by them. We are inclined to think that much of the mind-healing and hypnotism, coming rapidly into popularity, are merely adaptations of our old enemy to the new conditions of our day.

We have every reason to believe that the adversary would be willing to use the black arts today, as in times past, in proportion as conditions would be favorable; and incantation, by repeating certain seemingly meaningless words, is still practised by some; also the making of peculiar stews and broths, which are supposed to have magical powers, affecting love, hatred, etc., and the wearing of charms, the making of the sign of the cross in the presence of danger, etc., to protect from evil.

Such mispractises and misbeliefs assuredly have the effect of holding their victims in the bonds of superstition, hindering them from the proper exercise of the true faith in the almighty power of God, by filling their minds with errors and superstitions. Even brethren who have received present truth are not exempt from the adversary's besetments along this line. A number have written us regarding their deliverance from the snares of spiritism, and one came very nearly being entangled in the black art. He wrote us in substance, thus:—

"Dear Brother Russell:—You will rejoice with me, I am sure, that our heavenly Father has been pleased to give me a special and remarkable gift of healing in connection with one disease—every case that I have treated since I received the gift has resulted in a cure. It requires but a few moments in each case, the repeating of a few words. I make no charge for the service, as I am glad of the privilege of doing good in any manner to my fellow-creatures."

We responded to this, that we were glad to know of the Lord using any of his people in any manner; nevertheless, we felt curious to know what were the words used in this simple and effectual operation, and, hence, inquired for the formula. The reply came that the formula of words, etc., necessary to the performance of the cure could not be communicated from one man to another, but only from a woman to a man, and from a man to a woman—a peculiar restriction, to say the least, to apply to anything good. Upon giving the name of a lady to whom the formula could be sent, we received it, and found that it was simply magic,—the using of a few meaningless words in connection with a piece of string.

We wrote the brother at once, that we believed the cures he had been performing were not of the Lord, but of the evil one, and advised that he discontinue them. He responded, thanking us, and assuring us that it had never occurred to him that a work of healing could be accomplished by any other than divine power, but that in the light of our suggestions he saw to the contrary, and would use it no more. However, the fame of his cures already performed brought him many applications from others in the same distress, who were indignant when he refused to go to their relief for either love or money; and upon his explaining that he believed the power he had used was of Satan they declared that they did not care, so long as the relief could be had. To what lengths the adversary may carry his delusions in this day and by up to date methods, we cannot surely know; but our expectation certainly is that his delusions will be numerous, and of the kind that would "deceive, if it were possible, the very elect," as our Lord foretold.

The sincerity of some of the converts at Ephesus was manifested by the public burning of the books in which were recorded the various magic words, and receipts, by which incantations could be made, affecting and counteracting various of the ills of life. All locks at that time were precious, as they were made of skins instead of paper, and pen-printed instead of printed by type; but these books were specially high-priced because each possessor of a copy was interested in restricting the information and, hence, unwilling to permit the copying of his book. Viewed from this standpoint, the number of books would not necessarily be very great to amount to the considerable figure specified—50,000 pieces of silver—about \$8,500, a piece of silver representing about 17 cents of our money. But, if we remember that each piece of silver represented a day's wages, it might be considered equivalent to at least \$1, in our day, and thus the total value of the books would be \$50,000.

This considerable sum was freely sacrificed to the Lord and to the truth;—not that the Lord accepts as sacrifices

any evil thing, such as those books were, but that the destruction of the books, representing a considerable value, represented also a sacrificing condition of heart. The books had a commercial value, and could have been sent to some other city and sold for a large sum, but this would have been spreading the evil which they were recognized as representing, and we note with pleasure that they who gave up the books were unwilling to sell them, and thus risk injuring others, nor did the Apostle suggest that the books might be sold and the money turned into useful channels in the service of the Gospel. The Lord's people are never to do evil that good may follow. We are reminded of a liquor dealer, who pursued a different course;—concluding that his business was dishonoring to the Lord's cause and injurious to his fellowmen, he determined to abandon it; but instead of destroying the liquor by emptying it into the sewers, he sold it. We may be sure that he failed to get the great blessing which evidently came upon the more proper disposal of the evil things, narrated in this lesson.

The Lord is not poor; all the gold and silver are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. It is not necessary, therefore, to his cause that we shall put into it anything that in any sense or degree represents evil. In our opinion those who burned the books on "black art" were not only more blessed themselves, but they more honored the Lord and more

advanced his cause, by such heroic treatment, than if they had sold the books and put the money into the treasury of the Lord. Everything throughout the Scriptures seems to teach that the Lord specially loves and appreciates those who are thorough-going, not only in their zeal for righteousness and truth, but also in their opposition to that which is unrighteous and erroneous.

We believe that the same principle applies to the sale of books which inculcate Satan's lies, and we recommend that if the Lord's people have books of this kind, black with false doctrines, misrepresenting the divine character and plan, they would do far better to burn them, to put them where they will not endanger others, than to sell them and to give the proceeds to the Lord's work.

With such a spirit prevailing amongst the believers—such a willingness to give up things contrary to the Lord, and that at a cost to themselves, involving, no doubt, a change of occupation, we cannot wonder at the statement of the last verse of the lesson, that "so the word of the Lord Jesus grew mightily and prevailed" over the evil influences opposing it. So it will surely be with the Lord's people today; where the proper zeal for the Lord and for righteousness are in the hearts of his people, the effect will be telling upon all with whom they come in contact.

THE RIOT AT EPHEBUS

ACTS 19:29-40.—March 15.

"The Lord preserveth the faithful."—Psalm 21:23.

When Paul had spent nearly three years at Ephesus he purposed going again to Jerusalem, but before doing so would visit the churches of Macedonia—Philippi, Berea, Thessalonica and Corinth. He sent two of his helpers, Erastus and Timothy, in advance. (2 Tim. 4:20; 1 Cor. 4:17-19) It was this visit to Corinth that he evidently referred to in his epistle to them. (1 Cor. 16:1-4) He proposed taking contributions from them to the poor in Jerusalem—not as seeking a gift, but as seeking evidence of their love for the Lord, in their desire to be helpful to the brethren at Jerusalem, who were chiefly poor, and greatly disadvantaged by their loyalty to the truth. Apparently also the Apostle was planning a later tour, which would include Rome—little suspecting that he would be sent to Rome as a prisoner.

About this time occurred the riot described in this lesson, which probably would have determined the Apostle to leave Ephesus, if he had not already purposed so doing. The Lord permitted persecutions to drive him out of every place—thus seemingly indicating the proper time for terminating his ministry at each point. The account says, "There arose no small stir about that way." Very evidently the "way" of the Lord's people differed decidedly from the ways of others, not as concerned their future hopes only, but also regarding their course in the present life. All things become new to those who receive the *new mind* of Christ; and although their "way" may seem to the unbelieving to be a narrow and troublesome one, to themselves it is the way of peace and joy and blessing and harmony with God, and, ultimately, the way of life eternal. And the way is the same to this day, as concerns those who are faithfully walking close to the Lord and to the teachings of his Word. The difficulty with many is that they have gotten out of the way—so that nominal church ways are, alas! too much like the ways of the world, with very similar hopes, aspirations and endeavors.

In Ephesus there were trades-unions or guilds, and Demetrius, the leader of the riot, belonged to the guild of the silversmiths—probably its president, or chief. There is a stone now in the British Museum which was found at Ephesus, on which is engraved an inscription concerning a certain Demetrius. It is said to belong to about the date of this lesson, between A. D. 50 and 60. The name occurs again in 3 John 12, where the Apostle mentions the person as a Christian of good report. Quite possibly the reference is to the person who led this riot, and who may afterwards have become an active Christian, as he was at this time an active opposer of Christianity, and a supporter of Diana;—even as Paul, the zealous persecutor of the church, became its zealous servant. The probability that this was the same Demetrius is strengthened by the tradition that the Apostle John with Mary the mother of Jesus afterward made Ephesus their home.

Demetrius called together not only the men of his own craft, but those also of allied crafts. The finest of the shrines, or miniature temples of Diana, were made in silver, but others were made of inferior metals and of marble, and the cheapest of terra cotta. These shrines were manufactured of various

sizes and in great quantities; not only for the people of Ephesus, but for export to various other cities and provinces where Diana was worshipped. The business was a profitable one, as Demetrius acknowledged; and it was upon the selfish instincts of the workmen engaged in this business that he based his strongest appeal,—that this Paul was turning away much people from the worship of Diana, not only in Ephesus but in the surrounding cities and provinces. His reasoning was that if the people lost their respect for Diana and her temple, they would no longer purchase the shrines, and that the falling off in demand would mean loss for all engaged in the shrine business.

The argument of Demetrius inflamed the selfish sentiments of the allied crafts of shrine-makers—they became full of wrath, increasingly as the argument went on, and as they seemed to realize the ultimate discredit of Diana and ruin of their own business interests. They began to shout in a frenzied manner, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" doubtless inflaming themselves and others more and more with every shout, until a large mob, collected, which they led toward the theater, or Coliseum, variously estimated to hold between twenty-five and fifty thousand people. As they went they seized two of Paul's companions, taking them along, as though intent upon bringing charges against them, and having them summarily dealt with. Paul, full of courage, would not have been willing to allow his companions to endure the brunt of this difficulty alone, but would have gone to them and endeavored to secure the attention of the mob and to reason with them; but leading men of the city, who were his friends, cautioned him, in the interests of peace, not to do this.

The uproar and excitement were intense, the majority not knowing certainly why they were there, but being in full sympathy with the cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" they surmised that some insult or opposition to their religion had occurred. It was for this reason that when Alexander, motioning to them for silence, endeavored to make a defense, the people, though they recognized him merely as a Jew, and not as a Christian, clamored so as to make it impossible for him to speak, realizing that all Jews were opposed to their goddess and her worship. The senselessness of their proceeding is clearly manifest in the fact that they kept up a meaningless shout for two hours! It is worthy of note here, that in proportion as people approach the proper conceptions of the divine character and plan and receive of the spirit of the Lord, in that same proportion they have greater soundness of mind. Consequently, we see that amongst Christians some who have made little growth in grace and knowledge are content to spend hours in shouting or talking about that which has comparatively little meaning; but in proportion as any grow in grace and knowledge they become partakers of the spirit of a sound mind, and correspondingly unwilling to waste either consecrated time or energy senselessly, unreasoningly. In other words, rejecting the wisdom of this world, and accepting the wisdom from above, they are as a result the more reasonable.

By this time the town clerk (or recorder or mayor, as we might term him) arrived, and quieted the people, and made them an address consisting of four arguments. First, he appealed to their patriotic sentiments; that they were citizens of a great city, and that people far and near recognized Ephesus as temple-keeper for Diana, and suggested that since this was so well established as a fact they ought to do nothing rashly, for there could be no necessity for haste. Whatever might happen to Diana and Ephesus there certainly was no immediate danger. That temple of Diana was indeed a wonderful structure. Respecting its history says: "The crowning glory of Ephesus was the great temple of Artemis, or Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world. It glittered in brilliant beauty at the head of the harbor, and it was said that the sun saw nothing in his course more magnificent than Diana's temple. Made of the purest marble, it was 425 feet long, 220 broad. Its columns of Parian marble were 60 feet high, and 36 of them were magnificently carved. The hall was adorned with the most wonderful statuary and paintings."

The town clerk's second argument was that the men whom they had brought with them by violence, and against whom they seemed incensed, were not bad men—they had not been trying to rob Diana's temple, nor had they blasphemed the goddess herself. Very evidently the prominent men of the city, without accepting the Gospel preached by the Apostle, had received favorable impressions of it, and realized that their teachings did not develop bad citizens, but that they were, on the contrary, amongst the most honorable, peaceable, law-abiding, of the city. His words gave us another thought; viz., that the Apostle, in his preaching, did not specially attack the errors of heathendom—idolatry, etc., but that merely denying all other gods, he preached the one true God and his message of mercy, the Gospel—the better "way." There is a lesson in this for the Lord's people to this day—"Go thou, and preach the Gospel." Let others, if they will, smash the images and attack the various vices in and out of the nominal church systems. In preaching the gospel we shall have quite a sufficiency to do, so long as this present age continues.

The town clerk's third argument was that this was a quar-

rel of Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen, and not a quarrel of the public in general; and that if any injustice had been perpetrated there was a proper channel of redress—the courts of law, attorneys, etc.

The fourth argument was that if this were not a dispute merely between Demetrius and his class and the propagators of Christianity—if the assembly had any other matter on which to charge them, they should bring them at the proper time, and in the lawful manner, when regular assemblages were had for the trying of cases. (Dr Hovy remarks, "An inscription found in this very theater in which the words were uttered, illustrated their technical sense of the word 'lawful'. It provides that a certain silver image of Athene shall be brought and set at every (regular) assemblage, above the bench.") The town clerk pursued this last argument, pointing out that the meeting was nothing short of a riot and that if it were reported to the Roman authorities and an inquiry made of him, it would reflect to the discredit of the city that such a turmoil had occurred without reason. His intimation was that there might be danger of the city losing a privilege which it had long enjoyed—of being a "free city." His speech shows clearly that even amongst the unbelievers of that time there were men of reasonably sound judgment.

Alas, that there are even today so many of the same disposition as Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen! The principal opponents of present truth are professed ministers of the gospel; and so far as we are able to discern, their opposition is inspired by the same selfish spirit which incited Demetrius and his associates—their craft is in danger—their salaries are endangered—respect for them and their teachings on the part of the people is endangered. It will not at all surprise us if ultimately their opposition to the truth shall lead to something analogous to this riot at Ephesus. Then we shall expect that they, like Demetrius, will not set forth the real secret of their opposition, but base it on the broader grounds of hostility of the truth to the great system of errors, misnamed "Orthodoxy," chiefly built by Antichrist, and known in the Scriptures as "Babylon."

THE ONENESS OF THE DIVINE FAMILY

"I pray for them . . . which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them."—Jno. 17:9, 10.

There is a touching pathos in this prayer of our Lord for his disciples as he was about to leave them, which draws us very near to his loving heart; especially when he adds, "Neither pray I for these alone [then present with him], but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one—I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."—Verses 20-23.

As we come to consider this beautiful expression of the Lord's sentiments with reference to the church, we catch a glimpse of the glory of the blessed oneness of the divine family. It is a oneness of purpose, a oneness of confidence, a oneness of sympathy, a oneness of love, a oneness of honor, and a oneness of mutual possession. This oneness our Lord described as already existing between himself and the Father, but so far as his disciples are concerned it was and still is only prospective; and its full accomplishment is the ideal goal toward which we are taught to aspire.

But let us study this exemplified oneness more closely that we may be enabled the more fully to enter into it. In the first place we notice that the one purpose which is common to both the Father and the Son is the Father's purpose, which was gradually revealed to the Son in due time and order, whose it also became by adoption. Since Jesus himself said, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" only (Mark 13:32), it is manifest that the revelation of that plan to him was a gradual one; and that he was led into the knowledge of its various features as they became due to be worked out through his instrumentality. Thus he was allowed to grow in knowledge; and thus, too, he was spared the sad spectacle of subsequent trouble which also lay along the pathway of the divine plan. Thus, while he joyfully worked out the grand plan of creation (John 1:3; Prov. 8:22-31), he probably knew nothing of God's purpose for the subsequent permission of evil and the necessity for the great work of redemption. Before he came to that test of faith in God his

confidence in his almighty power, wisdom and love had been firmly established by the experiences of the past. For centuries he had seen his mighty works, marked his wondrous wisdom and experienced his tender love. Could he doubt him, then, when another feature of his plan made manifest the great work of redemption and restitution, and gave to him the privilege of understanding this work also, for the joy that the Father set before him? No; doubtless he did not at first realize the depths of humiliation and sorrow through which he must pass; but step by step, along the painful way of humiliation and suffering, his faith in the Father, founded upon his previous experimental knowledge, sustained him, as it is written—"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many."—Isa. 53:11.

We next notice between the Father and the Son a beautiful oneness of confidence. The Son trusted the Father fully—at first, because it was easy and natural. Created in the likeness of God, trust in the Being who brought him into existence was spontaneous, and experience served but to develop and establish it. And the Father trusted the Son fully—first, because he recognized in him the inherent principles of righteousness and truth and filial loyalty which he himself had given him; and, as the course of time and experience developed and the more firmly established his Son in righteousness, his confidence in him became firmly established. And so strong was the Father's confidence in the subsequent fidelity of his beloved Son, that he did not hesitate to declare the results of his faithfulness thousands of years before he even began the work of redemption. He even declared all the special features of the work, by the mouth of his holy prophets at various intervals for four thousand years before he began the work. And still he declares that the work shall in due time be gloriously accomplished. How wonderful and how beautiful is this mutual confidence!

We further notice a oneness of sympathy between the Father and the Son. The Son glories in the Father's plan, saying, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." He delighted in it because he discovered therein the worthy features of his Father's glorious character; and though his faith may have been temporarily tested by the permission of evil, his knowledge of God's character and resources, and of the depth of his wisdom did not permit him to doubt, but held him still in

loving trust in his infinite goodness and grace, and, therefore, in readiness to acquiesce fully in the measures proposed for the final triumph of righteousness and truth.

And the Father was likewise in loving sympathy with the Son, not permitting him to be tried above what he was able to bear; and not leaving him to bear any trial alone, but always granting him the light of his countenance and a joyful sense of admiring approval (John 11:42; Matt. 3:17), except when, for our sakes, he permitted him for a moment to feel that he was forsaken; when, in the anguish of his soul, he cried out at this unusual experience, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Now, mark the oneness of love manifest. In every act we have already noted we have seen it expressed. It was mutual love that delighted to manifest and express mutual confidence, that gloried in the same loving and benevolent purposes, that sympathized fully with each other's thoughts and feelings, and that delighted in the close and blessed relationship of Father and Son. The Father did not treat the Son as a servant and hide his purposes from him; but delighted to take him into his confidence in so far as his wisdom and prudence dictated—i. e., as the truth became meat in due season to him. And, in turn, the Son did not serve the Father as a hireling, but as a son with a common interest. The Father declared, "This is my beloved Son;" and the Son said, "I *delight* to do thy will."

How blessed the fellowship! It was a fellowship of joy and a fellowship of suffering—of joy in a common anticipation of the future glory; and of suffering in mutual participation of the preliminary trials to secure that end. The Son suffered in his humiliation and his dying agony; and the Father suffered in giving his only begotten Son—an intensity of suffering which the loving, yearning hearts of devoted parents can best imagine and appreciate.

There was further a recognized oneness of possessions clearly expressed by our Lord, who, declared, "All things that the Father hath are mine." (John 16:15) And the Apostle says, God hath appointed the Son the "heir of all things," and hath "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."—Heb. 1:1, 2; Eph. 1:20, 21.

And, lastly, we notice a oneness of honor. In honor each seems to prefer the other. The Father says: Let all men honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. (John 5:23) God has made him the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and exalted him to his own right hand, to the chief seat of power in his kingdom, giving him all power in heaven and in earth.—Heb. 1:2, 3; Matt. 28:18.

In the work of creation he has set him forth in great prominence and glory, saying, "Without him was not anything made that was made." In the work of redemption and restitution God has set him forth so prominently that his name is the theme on every tongue, almost to the eclipse of the Father's own glory, who of necessity is himself greater than the Son (1 Cor. 15:27), and to whom the glory preëminently belongs, as the Son also declares, saying, "My Father is greater than I;" and again, "I can of mine own self do nothing;" "the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."—John 5:30; 14:10, 28.

The Son's corresponding anxiety to glorify the Father is most marked in the instance when, realizing that he was approaching the dreadful hour of his dying agony he exclaimed, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name"—even at this cost to me. (John 12:27, 28) Again we hear him say, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." (John 17:1) And when the great work of redemption and restitution is accomplished, we see him delivering up the kingdom to God, the Father, and subjecting himself to his further direction, that Jehovah himself may be universally recognized as all in all. (1 Cor. 15:24, 28) And we, like him, may surely trust that his purposes for the ages to follow will but the further express and emphasize the same lines of his glorious character—his justice, his wisdom, his love and his power.

Glorious oneness! who could suggest an improvement to its wondrous beauty and completeness? But the wonder and joy increase when we learn that it is also *our* privilege to come into this same blessed oneness with God. What! we inquire—the very same oneness as above described? Yes; undoubtedly it is our privilege to enter into the very same relationship and privileges and blessings. To this end consider the exceeding great and precious promises and see that it is

ours to have the same oneness with God—of purpose, of confidence, of sympathy, of love, of honor and of possession.

The same plan of God is presented to and adopted by us, and we also are invited to become co-workers with God, in carrying it out (2 Cor. 6:1); and in so doing we are counted in with Christ Jesus as filling up the measure of the sufferings of the anointed body necessary to the accomplishment of that plan. Our heavenly Father also similarly manifests his confidence in us—in the loyalty of our hearts toward him and in the sincerity of our consecration to him—even though he recognizes our inherent weaknesses and our inability to carry out fully our own determinations. But, notwithstanding this, so great is his confidence in our sincerity and integrity of heart, that, on our profession of faith and consecration, he fully accepts us as his sons and heirs, supplementing our weaknesses and shortcomings with the all-sufficient merit of our Redeemer, in whom we humbly trust. And not only so, but as sons, honored and beloved, he makes known to us, also, his secret counsels, which others cannot know (Matt. 13:11), and invites us to confide in him as children, and to speak to him freely of all that concerns us, in full assurance of his loving interest, even in our smallest affairs. (Psa. 103:13, 14) And then he commits a portion of his great work to us. He gives us certain talents, certain portions of his goods, and tells us to invest them for him according to our best judgment as to the profitableness of the results, not dictating all the minutiae of the management as to hireling servants, but merely submitting to us the general principles which should govern us. Thus, for instance, he gives us his plan as to the work in hand, with such general directions as, not to cast our pearls before swine; to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves; to give meat *in due season*; to do good to all men as we have opportunity, but especially to the household of faith; and to observe the times and seasons, and the character of the work in each—seed-sowing in the spring, and reaping in the harvest time; etc., etc. Thus with general directions he sends us forth—not like machines, to do a monotonous treadmill service, but as intelligent beings, to use our brains as well as our hands and feet. So he counsels us to "*study*" to show ourselves workmen approved, and to *consider* and *think*, and not to be "as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle." (Psa. 32:9) Then, according to our zeal and faithfulness, not only in the use of our hands, but also of our brains, in the Lord's service, his confidence in us increases and we are entrusted with more and more of his goods and given a corresponding sense of our heavenly Father's approval. And the mutual confidence and fellowship of purpose and work, draw our hearts closer and closer to the heart of the Eternal, and the joyful realization of sonship and mutual interest and confidence and sympathy fills our hearts.

We are also assured of the same love from our heavenly Father which he exercises toward our Lord Jesus. The statement seems almost startling, but yet, hearken to our Lord's prayer—"I pray for them . . . that they may be one . . . that they may be made perfect in one . . . that the world may know that thou hast . . . loved them *as thou hast loved me*." (John 17:20-23) In amazement we inquire, How can this be? Our Lord Jesus was always in perfect harmony with the Father: a son who gloriously reflected his likeness; but it has not been so with us: we were sinners and had nothing in us worthy of love. Yes, but we have been washed and cleansed, and, however imperfect our earthen vessels may still be, our hearts are perfect in his sight who is able to read the heart. And, as he sees us with a perfect heart—a perfect purpose and intention—striving to overcome the weaknesses and disabilities of our imperfect flesh, and with painful, yet determined, effort to do his will, and humbly trusting in the provisions which he has made for our redemption from the fall, God recognizes in us that which is worthy of his love. And so our Lord Jesus gives us clearly to understand that the Father loves us, even as he loved the Son.

And not only is this equality of the Father's love for us as for Christ Jesus thus declared, but it is also manifested; for we are called to be *joint-heirs* with his Son, and partakers of his glory; and even as all things are his, they are also said to be ours.—Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 3:21-23.

While such is the oneness between the heavenly Father and all his anointed sons, it is blessed also to mark the same oneness between Christ Jesus and his anointed brethren. The Lord Jesus does not selfishly grasp all the glory and seek to retain it for himself, but the rather with admiration he contemplates their acquired worthiness and says, They "are mine and I am glorified in them" (John 17:10); and he would have them all bound together with himself in the Father's love. He would also have them with him, beholding and shar-