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Jude, pt. 5

Joel Portman

The Prophet, Enoch (v. 14)

Jude has described the empty, deceitful deeds of the false, heretical persons in verses 4-8, 10, and now he continues his dire condemnation of them by citing the earliest prophet of our Bible. "Enoch prophesied", although he was never identified as a prophet in the Old Testament. God bore record of his prophetic utterances as he looked upon the scene of increasing evil and violence in the earth leading up to the days of Noah. Some have taught that Jude derived his information from the apocryphal book of Enoch, but there is some doubt just when that book was written, and even if it was available, it is a poor critic of scripture who cannot receive the principle of Divine inspiration that revealed this to Jude! Men seek to rationalize the sources of the Biblical writers and minimize the element of the Spirit to inform and guide them in what they would write. Jude recognized that Enoch was speaking of these men, even at that early stage of man's history.

His Prophecy, v. 14-15

No doubt Enoch learned from God, with whom he daily walked, that the coming water flood of divine judgment was only a precursor to the future, eventual judgment that would take place when the Lord comes. A flood that destroyed the lives of the ungodly was not sufficient to cleanse the unclean and defiled earth; it would require the Lord Himself coming with His myriad of holy ones (likely saints and holy angels), to execute judgment on this ungodly, defiled world.

This coming of the Lord is not the event for which we wait expectantly, the rapture of the church. Nor is it referring to His first coming in humiliation and lowliness to suffer on the cross. It is referring to His coming in glory, manifested in His power to judge the living nations (Matthew 25:30) and to execute judgment on every ungodly element in the earth. Only His presence, which Malachi describes as a "refiner's fire"

(Malachi 3:1-3), will cleanse away the ungodly element from this world. And He will come!

Notice that Jude emphasizes four vital truths in this short verse:

1. The Lord's coming is **Certain**. "The Lord cometh." Jude wasn't in any doubt about this event. In 2 Peter 3 we read about those who scoffed at the coming of the Lord in this way. "Where is the promise of His coming?" The longsuffering of God induces them to reject the coming as if it will never happen. But Peter also asserts the certainty of that coming: "But the day of the Lord WILL COME. . ." (2 Peter 3:10). That coming is certain, for His righteousness demands it, His holiness necessitates it, and His faithfulness requires it, so that His Word will be made sure and His authority asserted in the earth.

2. The Lord's coming was **Prophesied**. Enoch, in his early day, saw down the corridors of time and human history and realized that this coming of the Lord in judgment was inevitable and necessary. What he saw from his early day was what John saw in vision, as he wrote the Revelation. Those who prophesied in the Old Testament all seemed to recognize and speak of this coming in judgment as they warned the people of their day.

3. The Lord will be **Accompanied** by His Holy Ones, a myriad of them. These likely are the saints who will return with the Lord when He appears in His power and majestic glory as well as the holy, elect angels who will come with Him. John writes in Revelation 1:7 "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, . ." The clouds likely represent the myriad hosts of heaven who will come with Him in that day of His appearing in glory. We will come with Him; the saints shall judge the world is what we read in 1 Corinthians 6:2.

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3. What is the **Purpose** of the Lord's coming: it is to judge the Ungodly. "All" indicates that there will be none excluded of this category. All the "earth-dwellers" will come under this judgment and will experience the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6:16-17).

4. What the Lord will **Judge**: DEEDS and WORDS will all come under His scrutiny. The deeds are ungodly as well as the words, and thus all must be judged. So that the judgment of the Lord on this ungodly, wicked world will include the Men, their Deeds, and their Attitudes.

Their Practices, v. 16

Jude describes these in five ways: they are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own desires, speaking great, swelling words, and showing partiality for persons. Some of these words are only found here in our New Testament, but similar forms are used elsewhere. He first calls them murmurers, a term which seems to indicate their attitude toward God. This is likely placed first, since the end of the previous verse refers to what these men have spoken against God (v. 15). They are speaking inwardly, privately, and publicly against God, His will, His works, and His actions toward them. It's evident in our world that men are quick to blame God when something doesn't suit them, but slow to recognize the providence of God. This reflects the attitude of the heart; no appreciation or proper response to God and His ways.

They are complainers, again a word only found here. It indicates their attitude toward their circumstances of life, dissatisfaction with everything and wanting more. We read that a characteristic of the world is that men are not thankful (Romans 1:21), and this is true in every age. The opposite should characterize the believer, "be ye thankful". Paul could say in Philippians 4:11, ". . . I have learned (by experience) in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," and therefore he could exhort the believers to do the same, "having food and raiment, let us be therewith content," (1 Timothy 6:8), and we read in Hebrews 13:8, "be content with such things as ye have." Certainly, in contrast to the complaining world, we have all things in Christ and abound, regardless of our state in life.

They move in a direction that is dictated by their own selfish desires. This is similar to Paul's words in Ephesians 2:1-3, where we "walked according to the course of this world (age) . . . fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." This expression indicates clearly that they are, despite their claims, unbelievers and ungodly in His sight. They move contrary to the will of God and according to their own will. From the beginning of man's course of sin, we read that they desired not the knowledge of God's ways, (Job 21:14).

He shows that their words indicate the condition of their hearts, for the Lord said that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh," (Matthew 12:34). They use

great, impressive words that tend to lead their listeners astray (2 Peter 2:18). Since they are murmurers against God, they don't hesitate to speak directly to seek to lead others away from God as well. They will be judged by their words, "by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words, thou shalt be condemned," (Matthew 12:37). Watch your words! They reveal what lies resident in the heart, so may our speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, (Colossians 4:6).

Lastly, he tells us that they are men who show partiality for persons who can help them gain an advantage. Albert Barnes says in his notes, "Showing great respect to certain persons, particularly the rich and the great. The idea is, that they were not "just" in the esteem which they had for others, or that they did not appreciate them according to their real worth, but paid special attention to one class in order to promote their selfish ends." Beware of those who cater to the important, the rich, or influential! The Lord said to beware of such and we do well to regard with care all who use their words to gain an advantage for their own benefit. The pattern of the Lord is that He spoke against such people and moved in the company of the lowly, and we should emulate His example.

Jude will next move from exposing the evil and negative to reminding the saints of the positive, which will be more encouraging for us in the next article on this book.

(to be continued)

Philadelphia had "a little strength," but Laodicea had no heart for Christ. The problem was not a lack of power, but a lack of fervent affection for Christ.

The Rival Altar

Alcímides Velasco

(translated from "La Sana Doctrina,"

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A rivalry is established when someone competes with another person, striving to obtain the same rights as they have. In the Bible the term "rival" is encountered twice, always in relation to the marital environment, (Leviticus 18:18, 1 Samuel 1:6). In that which occupies us in the present article, we want to look at the rivalry in the spiritual realm, Satan's ancient fight to take away from us the adoration that pertains only to God. God is Strong and Zealous of His people, and doesn't allow a third party to interfere with the sincere fidelity that we owe to Him. Because of this, God established barriers of separation. He commanded

Israel expressly to tear down all the Canaanitish altars. He ordered Gideon to destroy the altar of Baal that was in his father, Joash's, house. King Josiah determined ahead of time to avoid every spiritual object that was related to the worship of false gods.

We see at least three reasons that cause God to refuse all that He considers traitorous to His love in every believer.

1. The Existence of a Spiritual Link

As respects the nation of Israel, God used the figure of a husband to illustrate His relation to them. This same symbolism is also used in the New Testament to illustrate the spiritual connection between Christ and His Church.

References to this are abundant: Psalm 45 is a nuptial song. The opening anticipates that its content is a "song of loves." The Song of Solomon has the same background. The Jews have always considered this book as a spiritual allegory intended to show the love of God toward His people. The bridegroom represents Jehovah. The bride is Israel. Four times in this book, the Shulamite is called the bride (4:9, 10, 11, 12).

In the prophetic books, the same analogy is established: "Because thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His Name," (Isaiah 54:5). "Turn, ye backsliding children, for I am married unto you," (Jeremiah 3:14).

John the Baptist said, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom. . ." (John 3:29). In the parable of the ten virgins, we find the expression, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh . . ." (Matthew 25:6). The apostle Paul says, ". . . I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ," (2 Corinthians 11:2). The apostle John tells us of the marriage of the Lamb, and also to him was said, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," (Revelation 19:7-9, 21:9).

Marriage is a contract where two persons promise mutual fidelity to each other. Intimate relationships are prohibited outside of the conjugal bond. God always remains faithful to His covenant. He exhorted Israel to show themselves faithful to the clauses of the statutes in order to enter the land of the Canaanites. He told them, "But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire," (Deuteronomy 7:5).

2. By Causing a Natural Reaction

It's normal when a marriage partner is provoked to jealousy when the other freely flirts with a third person. The same sentiment is awakened in God in a spiritual sense. The two first commandments of the law given in Sinai contain prohibitions against idolatry. God gives two reasons: a) Because he brought them out of Egypt with power; and b) because He is strong, jealous. It is written, "then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his

salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger." (Deuteronomy 32:15-17). The apostle says, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" (1 Corinthians 10:21-22).

King Ahaz was smitten with the altar that he saw in Damascus. He "sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus" (2 Kings 16:9-18). Later, when the king returned, he came near the altar and offered sacrifices on it. The altar of burnt offering was put off to one side. This foolish king not only provoked the Lord to jealousy with a strange altar, but he provoked the anger of the Lord, the God of his fathers.

The prophet Ezekiel was carried in visions to Jerusalem, and he saw the sin of the nation summarized in four visions. The first vision had to do with the image of jealousy at the entrance of the temple, which provoked the Lord to jealousy. That jealousy was like the first that was stirred when the relation between married couples starts to disintegrate. It is in this context that the vision is interpreted. The other three visions are of the same tenor.

May the Lord guard us from offering on the altar any other thing that isn't the expression of our love for Him. An idol is whatever displaces God's place in the heart of a believer. The apostle John says, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," (1 John 5:11).

3. By Unloosing a Harmful Action

It is a tragedy when a marriage is undermined because of persistent infidelity on the part of one of the partners. One should try to save the marriage at all costs. It is traumatic when the ship of marriage cannot maintain itself afloat and is brought into a lamentable shipwreck.

In the spiritual sense, this is what happened first in the northern kingdom of Israel. Jeroboam, the first king, having taken counsel, made two calves of gold and put one in Bethel and the other in Dan. And this was the cause of sin and provocation of God. Afterward, they spiritually prostituted themselves through this means, so that it is written, "Ephraim hath made many altars to sin," (Hosea 8:10). It was that infidelity that brought God to the point of sending Israel away as a rejected wife. God said, "Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: Let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts." (Hosea 2:2).

The same thing happened in the southern kingdom; they fell into abominable idolatries. And thus the Lord said in the days of king Josiah, "The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which

backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.” (Jeremiah 3:6-8).

These things were written for our admonition, so that we should not covet evil things as they did. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” (James 4:4).

Thanks be to the Lord that there is restoration for those who repent and return to the Lord. He says, “Behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her,” (Hosea 2:14). “For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.” (Isaiah 54:5-6).

We are called to return to the love of betrothal, the first love, to produce those first fruits, and that our heart might be His altar, from where rises the incense of a new devotion. Oh, that it might be so!

(concluded)

Build solidly. Prepare thoroughly. Never be satisfied with superficial answers. God's Word can stand the most thorough investigation. Do not shirk the difficult problems but seek to bring the facts to light, for God's Word and God's world will never contradict one another.

The Gospel According to David, Psalm 22, pt. 3

Robert Surgenor

His Cry for Help – vs. 11

“Be not far from Me; for trouble is near;
for there is none to help.”

How often in His sojourn was the Lord ministered to by godly women, but they are now removed. Angels ministered unto Him after His encounter with Satan in the wilderness, and after His agony in the garden, but in His work at Calvary there was none to help, but neither could they. Scripture states; When He had by Himself purged our sins” (Hebrews 1:3).

“Alone He bore the cross.
Alone its grief sustained.
His was the shame and loss,
Though He the victory gained.
The wondrous work was all His own,
Yet we shall share His glorious throne.”

Trouble was near. The powers of darkness were marshaling all their satanic forces. Judas was approaching with a band of men to bind Him and take Him to Pilate's judgment hall for a mock trial. Fully aware of the fast approaching trouble, He rose from off the ground and presented Himself to them as the “I AM.” He allowed Himself to be taken by wicked hands to be crucified and slain. He was fully aware that He was “being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23).

Description of His Fierce Enemies - vs. 12–13

“Many bulls have compassed Me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset Me round. They gaped upon Me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.”

According to Levitical law, the bull was a clean animal, thus the strong bulls of Bashan who were nourished by the lush vegetation of the region of Bashan, typify the Jewish leaders who were living off the fat of the land. The priests, Pharisees, scribes, elders, and rulers, employed all their power and policy to take Him and bring Him to death. Our Lord was like a helpless man thrown into the midst of a herd of infuriated wild bulls.

Description of His Sufferings – vs. 14–15

“I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death.”

The Bible is its own dictionary, and to find the meaning of a statement all one has to do is search elsewhere in the scriptures to see how it is used. So what does “I am poured out like water” mean?” Well, just read the following verses for the answer. “And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water” (Josh. 7:5). “All hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water” (Ezekiel 7:17) “For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again” (2 Samuel 14:14).

Thus we see that the Savior is giving expression to His extreme weakness as the end nears. He, who in His sovereign power over nature, walked on the surface of the waters of the Sea of Galilee, is now, abandoned of God, and

in total weakness, “poured out like water.” He was like a libation poured out before the Lord. Oh, the mystery of it all!

He then cries, “All My bones are out of joint.” Many doctors claim that the greatest and most intolerable pain that the body can endure, is that arising from a bone out of place, or dislocated joint. In the dark ages this type of pain was inflicted upon victims bound to the rack, where slowly their bones were pulled out of their joints. The dislocated bones of a person can be more painful than a broken bone.

When David confessed his sin with Bathsheba, he cried; “Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.” Not that God literally broke David’s bones, but rather God inflicted mental, and perhaps physical pain upon David equal in severity to a broken bone. I believe that is what is employed here in the Lord speaking of all His bones being out of joint. This was a far greater mental and physical experience than David ever experienced, or could experience, for no suffering of any mortal could compare with the vicarious sufferings of our Lord on the cross.

The Lord then describes His heart as being as wax melted in the midst of His bowels. As fire melts wax, so the fires of God’s wrath came down upon His Son. Again we turn to the Bible as a dictionary. Notice the following explanations regarding melting wax.

“And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men” (2 Samuel 17:10). “As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God” (Psalm 68:2). “The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth” (Psalm 97:5).

Thus we see that melted wax is an expression of total weakness, the heart completely failing. Many people develop congestive heart failure and become very weak. Some are driven to total helplessness, and finally death claims their life. This plague on the human race is one of the results of sin entering this world.

Regarding our Lord, His “heart failure” was imposed upon Him, not for His sin, for He had none, but He experienced it because of our sins being borne in His own body on the tree. He experienced a broken heart and a melted heart.

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones” (Proverbs 17:22). Thus the Savior cries out; “My strength is dried up like a potsherd.” Like clay pottery baked in the fires of an oven, the fires of God’s wrath dried up His strength. Through loss of blood, the radical moisture of His body would have been literally dried up, accompanied by a burning fever. As the Paschal lamb was roasted in the fire, in like manner He endured the fire of divine vengeance for sin. The horrible dryness tor-

mented His mouth, and hardly able to speak He utters, “My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death.” Who can measure the inward sorrow and distress of His holy body soul, and spirit? None!

The Description of His Enemies & Their Activities - vs. 16–18

“For dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet. I may tell all My bones: they look and stare upon Me. They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture.”

The dog, according to ceremonial law, was an unclean animal. Our Lord spoke of the Gentiles as dogs (Matthew 7:6; 15:26; Mark 7:27). Even today, an Orthodox Jew will look upon you as a dog, if you are a Gentile. The dogs compassed our Lord, namely the Gentile powers, the Romans. They enclosed Him like a pack of wild dogs, snarling and ready to devour. Totally surrounded by vicious animals stood the “weak and helpless” Lamb. Picture the horrible scene my friend, and tell me, are you not able to weep?

“Behold God’s Lamb, in the midst
Of a wild and furious throng.
All for our sakes, that we might sing,
In heaven that new, eternal song.”

Considering the title of this Psalm, we could also say like Spurgeon; “Here we have the ‘Hind of the morning’ of whom the Psalm so plaintively sings, hunted by bloodhounds, all thirsting to devour Him.” Our Lord mentions “the assembly of the wicked.” During this dispensation of grace we have seen many so called “Christian churches,” and religious organizations being in reality the synagogues of Satan. In persecuting the saints of God, they were actually persecuting the Holy One and the Just.

David’s hands and feet were never pierced, yet he wrote, “They pierced my hands and my feet.” The piercing of our Lord’s body is referred to in Zechariah 12:10; John 20:25,27; and Revelation 1:7. The Person referred to in this Psalm can only be the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the reasons why this Psalm, along with Isaiah 53, are carefully avoided for public reading in Jewish synagogues today.

It is well to understand that the wounds inflicted on the cross, are the only visible wounds borne by the Saviour today. Those wounds were inflicted on His hands and feet by nails, and a wound in His side by a Roman spear. However, I’m sure that you have noticed that there is no mention of the spear wound in this graphic Psalm. Why? The answer is simple. The spear wound was never experienced by our Lord in His suffering for sin. He had already dismissed His spirit from His body when that wound was inflicted. He cried, “It is finished,” thus we gather that the

atonement work was entirely completed before the centurion plunged his spear into the Saviour's side. There is a hymn that goes like this: "The spear that pierced His side, drew forth the blood to save." This is utter nonsense! Since when did a Roman centurion play a part in our atonement? When Christ cried, "It is finished," what was finished? It was His work for our redemption, it was paid in full!

(Continued)

**We are not to fight against the flesh...
we are to count it dead; we are not to
fight with the world, but to separate from
it; but we are to resist the devil and he
will flee from us.**

W. Lincoln

David's Behavior

Wm. Rogers

In the 18th chapter of 1st Samuel, an expression which seldom occurs in the Scriptures, is used no less than four times of David—that he "behaved himself wisely." It would be well for God's people if this could be said of them always, but such is far from being the case, and as we shall see, it was not always true of David himself. Our unsaved friends and neighbors invariably attach more importance to our behavior than to our preaching, so it is more needful that we should behave wisely before them, than that we should preach wisely to them. If we do so, as 1st Peter 2, reminds us, our godly living will either win them (v. 12), or at least close their mouths (v. 15); while if we behave foolishly, that very fact should close our own.

It is interesting to notice how varied are the circumstances under which David's behavior is commended. In v. 5 it is when he has been receiving the highest honors as the result of his victory over Goliath. The people are praising him, Jonathan has stripped himself out of love for him, Saul has advanced him to be head over his men of war. It surely was enough to make a young man top-heavy, and many there are who have made fools of themselves through the pride engendered by similar circumstances. Popularity has always been a snare to saints, and perhaps never more generally and more manifestly so than today. If the world that despised and rejected our Lord turns to praise and patronizes us, we have need to be instantly on our guard. It means either that we have already left the path trodden by Him, or that Satan, by these insidious wiles, is seeking to allure us out of it. But amidst all his honors David, we are told in v. 5, "behaved himself wisely," and so maintained a good testimony "in the sight

of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants."

But now a new factor is introduced into his history, that jealousy of Saul, which so relentlessly pursued him from this time onward. God had warned Saul in Ch. 13:14, and again in Ch. 15: 28, that He had taken the kingdom from him and given it to a neighbor of his. Ever since then. Saul doubtless had been on the lookout to discover who it was that was to supersede him: and now as he "eyed" David (v. 9), his suspicious mind got to work. Here was a man who might well be called his 'neighbor,' since he came from Bethlehem, only eight or nine miles distant from Saul's own home in Gibeah. Here was a man who quite evidently had the Lord with him (vss. 12, 28). Here was a man to whom even the common people were giving more honor than to himself; "What can he have more but the kingdom" (v. 8) ? At a still later stage, when his suspicions had become certainty, he said to Jonathan, "As long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom" (Ch. 20: 31). But first his jealousy takes the form of removing David from about his person, and degrading him from his position as head over the men of war (v. 5), to be merely "captain over a thousand" (v. 13).

Thus the man who, a short time previously, had been "tested by prosperity," is subjected to the opposite extreme; and the question must have arisen in the minds of those who looked on, "How will he now act? Will he stand up for his rights and rebel against the king? Or will he pout and sulk and leave the royal service?" But David did neither of these things, for it is again recorded of him that he "behaved himself wisely in all his ways" (v. 14), and yet again that Saul "saw that he behaved himself very wisely" (v. 15). As we read this let us do some questioning ourselves. How does adversity affect me? How have I acted when I got a set-back from my brethren, which in my own opinion I did not deserve? Did I fight and make trouble amongst God's people? Or did I sulk and give up my part in the various activities of the assembly, and perhaps even absent myself from the meetings for a time? Can I honestly say that when such circumstances have arisen, I have always behaved myself wisely? Many an assembly trouble would have been avoided, and many a division among the saints been averted, had this been oftener the case.

The last occurrence in the chapter of the expression we have been noticing is in its closing verse, where we read that "the princes of the Philistines went forth (i.e. to battle), and it came to pass, as often as (R.V.) they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was much set by." In this verse we have still another setting for it, that of actual conflict with the enemy, in which once more David's wise behavior shines forth preeminently. At a later time in his life, we read that "at the time when kings go forth to battle," David tarried behind. But not so here, although if he had,

he could have given a better reason for it than then. He had recently taken a wife, and according to Deut. 24 5, was exempt from war for a year. But these battles with the Philistines were not merely Saul's battles, or Israel's battles. They were the "battles of the Lord" (1 Sam. 25:28), and David would not be absent from them on any account. This clear view of the real issues of the conflict is still very necessary for God's people. It is not only that we should come to the help of our brethren, and share with them in the fight; but that we should come "to the help of the Lord" (Judg. 5:23). And though He can conquer without us, let us beware lest we bring on ourselves the curse of Meroz.

But there is another expression used of David, to which I wish to draw attention—one sad in itself, but all the sadder when contrasted with what is so often said of him in 1 Sam. 18. It occurs in Ch. 21:13, where having through fear of Saul gone down among the Philistines, and having while there become afraid of the Philistines themselves, it is said that he "changed his behavior," and acted the fool. What a grievous change it was, and how clearly did it show that something was wrong! These enemies of Israel had seen queer things before. They had seen a man whom God had made strong to do impossible things brought down so low as to do women's work in their prison, and to make sport for them. Now they see another might man of God scrabbling on the doors of the gate, and letting his spittle fall down upon his beard.

What did it mean, and why such a change from the wise behavior of ch. 18? The difference lay here, that in the former instances, each change of circumstances came to David while walking in the Lord's path, and was not of his own choosing. But now he has left that path, in leaving God's land through his fear of Saul. Then, he could count of God being with him; but now he is left for a time to his own devices, and what a poor figures he cuts. The story teaches a lesson much needed by saints today, when God's commandments are trifled with and His path for His people, whether collectively or individually, is departed from, and self-chosen paths substituted, as lightheartedly as if it were a matter of no consequence.

How David got deliverance we learn from Ps. 34, which as its title shows, has reference to this occasion. There he tells us how the Lord delivered him, first "from all his fears" (v. 4), and then "from all his troubles" (v. 6). And there we are taught that he who has the fear of the Lord in his soul (vss. 7, 9, 11) need have no other fear, and so has no occasion to leave God's path, nor to leave out any of God's commandments.

A Place for the Lord

W. Halstead

David was a man after God's own heart. His name David (beloved) speaks of what he was to God. Jehovah loved him; and this love known and believed, begat love to the Lord in David, and produced that desire in his heart to "Find a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob" (Psalm 132:5) where Jehovah and "The ark of His strength," could rest. This desire (as in every true desire and longing after God) was the fruit of the Holy Spirit's operation, bringing him into fellowship with the heart and mind of God, whose desire and purpose was to dwell among His redeemed people (Exodus 25:8).

Thus has it been through all ages with those whose hearts have been won by the love of God. They have desired His presence with them, that they might enjoy, and bask in the sunshine of His love. When the Lord had redeemed His chosen people Israel, by blood (Exodus 12:13), and by power (ch. 15:30) and they stood (in figure) on resurrection ground on the other side of the Red Sea, their hearts were filled with His goodness, and their mouths with His praise. Led by Moses, they sang the praises of their Redeemer, Who He was, and what He had done. He was their "strength and song," and had become their salvation. (Exodus 15:1, 2).

Having triumphed gloriously over all their enemies, and led them forth out of Egypt, in anticipation, they sang of His purpose to "Bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of His inheritance, in the place O Lord which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established" (v. 17). Before entering the land of promise, He, by His servant Moses, gave them very definite directions as to what they were to do in it. They were to "Utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods," and "Destroy the names of them out of that place." (Deuteronomy 12: 2, 3), because there was to be a place there in which the Lord would choose to put His name (v. 5). When Israel entered the land, the Lord first set up His name and Tabernacle at Shiloh (Jeremiah 7:12). But because of the people's idolatry, "He forsook the Tabernacle, the tent which He placed among men" (Psalm 78:60), and revealed the place of His choice to David. "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell: for I have desired it" (Psalm 132:13, 14). It was the place where judgment was stayed by sacrifice (1 Chronicles 21). Thus has it been always. God cannot rest and dwell among men, except on the ground of an accepted offering.

At that place in due time Solomon built “An house for the Name of the Lord God of Israel” (2 Chronicles 6:7) which was a center for the gathering and worship of His people. There only were they to bring their gifts and offerings; to eat and rejoice before Him (Deut. 12:11-12). There also, to “sacrifice, roast, and eat the passover,” and keep the great feasts of Jehovah (ch. 16.)

Of that place He said, “Now have I chosen and sanctified this house that My name may be there for ever; and Mine eyes, and Mine heart shall be there perpetually” (2 Chronicles 7:16). Such was His appreciation and love for the place He had chosen. Alas! once again, because of the sin and idolatry of the people, He had to forsake it, and Ezekiel in his “Visions of God,” saw “The glory of the Lord” gradually depart, as if loth to go, (Ezekiel 10:6, 18, 11, 22, 23).

It seemed as though the “gods many” of the nations, had defeated the purpose of the great Jehovah, the God. of Israel. But the purpose stands, and the prophet saw the House of the Lord again filled with His glory (ch. 43:2, 4, 5) which is a vision of a time yet to come. In the meanwhile, upon the solid foundation of the death and resurrection of Christ, God has chosen another place for His Name, (Matthew 18:20) comprising another people from among the nations for His Name (Acts 15:14). These are sinners from Jew and Gentile, saved by grace, purchased and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and “builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22). They are seen as “living stones, are built up a spiritual house” (1 Peter 2:5), and “An holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2:21). Gathered by the Spirit unto “The Name of the Lord Jesus Christ” they own and submit to His authority; they trust in the all-sufficiency of His Name to supply all their needs for worship and service. Being indwelt and led by the Spirit, they worship in the Spirit, and offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). God is pleased to dwell with them, and manifests His presence through the working of the Spirit; “As He will” (1 Corinthians 12:6, 11).

He “dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands” (Acts 17:24, 25). Everything now is spiritual, and to those who have found God’s center, Christ, and are professedly gathered unto His Name, being in submission to His lordship, and under the direct control and guidance of the Holy Spirit, is absolutely essential, if the testimony of the Lord is to be maintained. In the last state of the church on earth, He is outside that which professes to be His habitation (Revelation 3:20).

We are living in the last days, and need the utmost vigilance to guard the assemblies from the in-

roads of evil. Our three enemies, “the world, the flesh, and the Devil,” are very busy. Worldly amusements, and methods, mixed with spiritual things, are marring the worship of God, and the enjoyment of. the Father’s love (Exodus 32:6). The intrusion of “the first man,” seeking to guard, guide and control, instead of trusting “the second Man” to do so, by the Holy Spirit, is becoming more and more manifest (2 Samuel 6:6; Philippians 3:3).

Satan, as an “angel of light,” is stealthily introducing the leaven of evil doctrine, seeking to corrupt the pure doctrine of Christ (Matthew. 13:33). May the Lord raise up faithful watchmen to warn, and porters to guard, the assemblies of God, so that there may still be a “place for the Lord,” where His Name may be honored, and His Word kept (Rev. 3:8) until He comes.

GOD IS LOVE!

There is therefore a love which is infinite in its measure! There is a love which is everlasting in its duration; which is omnipotent in its power; which is unchangeable in its character; which is all pervading in its presence; which passes knowledge! There is a love which has creation for its theater, earth for its footstool, heaven for its chief abode, its everlasting home! Of all created love, it is the source; and of all blessings it is the giver! Its laws express it (“Thou shalt love”) Its ways declare it; but Christ alone is the full and glorious manifestation, its incarnation and embodiment; and Christ crucified is the opening of its very heart and bowels to mankind and to the universe!

Discipline

Herbert E. Hume

“He openeth their ears to understanding.”

The word “Discipline” appears but once in the authorized version (Job 36:10). The same Hebrew word, however, is translated “chastening,” “correction,” “instruction”. Oh how much there is for a Christian in this significant word; how deep its meaning as one passes through affliction. What exercise of soul! Asaph said, “All the day long I have been plagued and chastened every morning.” Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous. It is one thing to talk about being under the chastening hand of God; but it is another thing altogether to have the experi-

ence of it day by day, and night by night. "So I am made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed unto me." When I lie down I say, "When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day." As to the world today, we know that God is not even seen openly acting in government. In this present time evil is allowed to go on; men are allowed to take their own ways; yet in the end it will be found that out of it all God has secured the fulfillment of His Divine purposes. So it was at the cross the Lord Jesus was taken and by wicked hands crucified and slain. But in the wisdom of God the death of Christ is made the basis and groundwork of our salvation. This is the glory of the invisible God, that thus holds in His own hand the control of all things, even while He seems to be drawn entirely from this scene, so far as government is concerned. But with His children God deals in a different way. The moment grace has saved me, that moment I come under the direct governmental hand of God as His child, His Son and what Son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? He does not chastise arbitrarily, without a motive or cause "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." He cloth not afflict willingly. Am I tempted to think that I am forgotten? Yes, sometimes; but it is not God who has forgotten. It is I! What have I forgotten?—Ye have forgotten the exhortation that speaks to you as Sons: "My Son despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when reprov'd by Him . . . Ye endure for chastening; God conducts himself toward you as Sons" (Darby translation).

The scripture above quoted (Hebrews 12:5) is based on the affectionate appeal in Proverbs 3:11, "My Son despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction; for him whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a Father the Son in whom he delighteth." My discipline, therefore, though it be sore, is a proof to my heart that I am beloved of the Father, and blest of Him (Psalm 94:12). From Hebrews 12:10 I learn the purpose God has in view. He is active in love to me, even in my sufferings. He has not only saved me and given me free access to Himself, but He is day by day occupied with the details of my life; He thinks unceasingly about me. To what end?—that I might be a partaker of His holiness. God is ever and always apart from all that is evil; and He would have me in spirit apart with Himself separated, as He is separated from evil; both that which is around me, and that which is within me. To be thus apart with God is to be where I can enjoy that intimate acquaintance with the mind of God, which is my right as a child, my privilege as an heir of glory, and my strength for the pilgrim way. By grace I have been made partaker of the Divine nature, but I have also within me a human nature which knows nothing of God's holiness. Now the purpose for which I was saved is the glory of God; and this purpose is accomplished by bringing me into the fullest possible measure of communion with God. For the practical realization of this, I have to put off the old man, and put on the new

(Ephesians 4:22-24) The new man is Christ. Christ was holy (not merely innocent). He was consecrated in all His will to God; He was separate from evil, and walked on earth in the energy of the Spirit. In any measure that I am conformed to Christ practically, I am being made partaker of the holiness of God. God comes in and helps me by permitting things to happen which tend to cripple the old nature. That which is from a Father's hand has purpose in it, and I must not treat it lightly. Because it is from a Father's hand, I need not faint under it. It is a great help to see from the Word God's ways of discipline with His beloved people of old. How He cared for Israel in the wilderness. Yet daily, there was discipline; they were humbled and suffered to hunger; they were fed with manna. In it all God had an object they must learn that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. Moses, in Deut. 8, reminds Israel of this, and calls upon them to consider in their hearts that "as a man chasteneth his Son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee."

In scanning the history of God's servants of old, it becomes clear that He had in every case, a definite object before Him; some blessing, some deliverance, some advancement, which could only be conferred through the medium of suffering. The Lord's dealings with His servant Job are very instructive. The adversary, as we know, obtained permission to afflict Job, and he availed himself to the full of that permission, until Job was stripped of all, in a most desolate condition. Was God negligent of His dear servant's welfare? On the contrary, all was permitted and overseen for a purpose, that Job might be led into self-knowledge and self-judgment (Job 42:5, 6). Speaking of the deep afflictions which Job endured, the Apostle says: "The Lord is pitiful and of tender mercy." To the natural eye it did not look like that. I must get God's viewpoint, otherwise I shall mistrust Him. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" I have been slow to see that my chastenings are a part of what God has given me.

It is only as I am transformed by the renewing of my mind (Romans 12:2), that I shall be able to receive each daily trial, great or small, as being for me "the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Daily, hourly, my prayer must be: "Father, save me from my natural mind, from my own thoughts."

In Jacob's life also, we see God working for the cancellation of self-confidence, human foresight, and subtlety. Not many attractive features about Jacob naturally, but then God is not looking at us naturally. He takes up the most unlikely material and fashions it according to, His own wise purpose. His chastening hand was upon Jacob all through his life: Laban's heartlessness, the wickedness of His own Sons, the death of Rachel, the loss of Joseph. "All these things are against me," he said in his despair. Yet God was not against him, but for him. At Peniel God held Jacob back,—strove

with him; made him conscious of utter helplessness. There was that night a complete breaking down of all the strength of the natural man; but as a result of this we see Jacob learning to cling to God in his weakness, and getting a blessing. We see Jacob halting upon his thigh as he passes over the brook, but he carries with him a new name conferred on him by the Mighty One Who had striven with him and blessed him. Henceforth it is to be no more Jacob the supplanter, but Israel. His vision now is to be forward and upward. It is this forward, upward look that helps the child of God. In the closing events of Jacob's life we see God's grace triumphing in the transformation of a life that seemed so uncomprising at the commencement. In Hebrews 11:21 we see the one time supplanter and deceiver, by sovereign grace become a worship-per. His chastenings have yielded fruit indeed unto God.

Joseph also passed through severe discipline. He was hated and misunderstood, even in his youth. He was sold for a slave, grossly slandered, and at last cast into prison, where he suffered torture. The Spirit records in Psalm 105, how they hurt his feet with fetters. But God was before him continually, as we may see from numerous passages in Genesis, such as 39:9-21; 40:8; 41:32; 42:8; 45:5; 50:20-25. This long-continued companionship with God in discipline, was Joseph's necessary preparation for the ruler's place. God's discipline produces wisdom surpassing that of the natural man (Psalm 105:22).

In the case of Moses we see meekness and intimacy with God as the product of life-long discipline. Forty years alone with God in the desert, then after that he bore the continuous wearing pressure of the unbelief of Israel. There was the rebellion of Korah, the evil speaking of his own brother and sister, and the murmurings of the whole assembly. But throughout all, Moses submitted himself to the hand of God; and he emerged from it, not only the meekest man on the face of the whole earth, but as one with whom Jehovah Himself spake mouth to mouth.

Coming to the life of David, we are impressed by the manifold nature of the chastenings crowded into his relatively short life. In his early days he experienced much suffering when he was relentlessly pursued by Saul, hunted "as a partridge upon the mountains," God used those dark and sorrowful experiences to fit David for the writing of the Psalms which have been to tried and persecuted saints in every generation, a source of Divine strength and consolation. His latter chastenings were in consequence of his sins. Dethroned by Absalom, exiled from Jerusalem, and from the sanctuary, David acknowledges the justness of his punishment, and submits himself to whatever might be the will of God for him (2 Samuel 15:24-26; see also chapter 16:5-14). David's sin itself, though its consequences were most painful, became the means of leading him into closer dealing with God. No one can read the 51st Psalm without seeing there the depth of David's exercise of soul before God. This is what we need for

ourselves—to view sin as in the presence of God, and to get into His mind about it.

Chastening does not always imply correction for sin. Paul received his thorn in the flesh, not because he had sinned, but to prevent his being exalted above measure. Peter speaks also of manifold temptations through which God's people pass; a trial of their faith which will bring a reward of praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Reproaches and afflictions also arise from faithfulness in confessing Christ (Hebrews 10:33-34).

Government is universal and implies control. Discipline is for the family of God and implies teaching, or discipline. It is sufficient for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the servant as his Lord. This is the end aim of discipleship,—of discipline—that we might be conformed to Christ; conformed in the spirit of discipleship to Him Who was here in the form of a servant (Matthew 10:24-25; Philip-pians 2:5).

That blessed One could not properly be said to have been under chastening, for there was nothing in Him that required it. Nevertheless, let us never forget that "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." This is the thought that bows our heart in worship, even when under trial. Upon Him was laid the heavy burden of our sins. Their penalty He bore for us: their consequences in this present life may, in part, be permitted to come upon us, but only in so far as they are needful (Psalm 103:10). Discipline is for a definite purpose, and it is also for a definite time. Soon the last lesson will be learned, the last tear shed: then the glad day when we shall stand in the Presence of Him Who died for us. Released then from every bond, from every weight, we shall understand the true inwardness of all of God's dealings with us. In the presence of Christ, with Him where He is, we shall behold His glory. We shall enter upon the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; we shall view and comprehend His unsearchable judgments; we shall discern His ways, which previously were past finding out.

"He openeth their ear to discipline." Personally, we would shrink from linking our name with those who are recorded in Hebrews 11, as being men of faith, but we rejoice to think that there is another list of highly favored ones in which our name appears—the list of the children who have known the Father's ways in discipline.

Have we been slow in discerning God's object in His discipline; to see that He seeks to bring me into a place, and into a condition, where I shall be able better to enjoy Himself, better able to have fellowship with the Father and the Son, better able to discern the scope of the eternal purpose which He (the Father) hath purposed in Christ Jesus the Lord?

"I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." Leviticus 26:40-45; Lamentations 3:22-40.