

TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

(Discourse by R. H. Hirsh, Columbus, Ohio convention, June 27-July 7, 1914, from 1914 Convention Report, pages 85 to 88.)

It was out of the shepherd life of the hills and dales and desert land of Palestine that there came, long ago, that sweetest of all religious songs, the Twenty-third Psalm. It was the song of David, the shepherd boy. It was the song of the boy who slew the bear, and the lion in the defense of his sheep. It was the song of the man who is spoken of in Scripture as “One after God’s own heart.” It was the song of the man who sat upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord. It was the song of the man whose name signifies “beloved”—the Christ.

Never was song sung that brought so much joy to so many hearts as this simple, inspiring song of the Twenty-third Psalm. No song ever sung has had drunk from its inspiring depths so much of the refreshment that cometh down from Above. No song that was ever sung by man came laden with so many assurances that it was from above—from the Giver of every perfect gift. No song ever written has brought so much comfort to weary pilgrims on the pathway of life. While the Psalm has been applicable to all of the Lord’s sheep from the time of David, it has been specially applicable to the sheep of the present Gospel age—since the Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep.

Our Lord said, “What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing, and when he cometh home he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.” (Luke 15:4-6) The “ninety and nine” represent all of God’s intelligent creatures who have not gone astray, while the one that was lost represents Father Adam.

We are, in this connection, reminded of our Lord’s statement to the effect that “He came to seek and to save that which was lost.” Adam was expelled from the Edenic sheep fold sixty centuries ago. The pastures of Eden were sufficiently nutritious to sustain the human sheep forever. He was a wayward sheep—was Adam. Never had shepherd prepared a fold with greater care than Eden. “Out of the ground the Lord had made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.” (Gen. 2:9) There was only one section of the green pastures that was forbidden ground. The rest, and all that was therein, was Adam’s to be enjoyed eternally. His was a happy lot indeed.

Among beasts few are regarded as being so dangerous to the life of sheep as is the serpent. In Palestine, in the burrows of animals, there frequently lurks the serpent, waiting for his prey. The fangs of the reptile frequently find lodgment in the nose of the

unsuspecting sheep. The virus is injected; the life of that sheep is in danger.

Eden was not without its serpent. The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the garden. It lured the unsuspecting sheep, until finally it had administered the deadly poison—"The sting of sin is death." From Mount Eden's beautiful crest, over the precipitous sides, went "the sheep that was lost;" down, down, it went. No sheep ever after that entered Eden fair. It took nine hundred and thirty years for "the sheep that was lost" to reach the depths of the valley beneath. Away up on top of yonder mountain the descent began. It was a little short of a thousand years before the journey ended.

It was the shepherd boy, David, who, not complainingly, said, "Though I walk through the valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil." It was the Prophet Isaiah who said, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray" (Isa. 53:6); and our Lord who exclaimed, "There is none righteous, no, not one!" Deprived of the peculiarly sustaining properties of the food of Eden, the sheep lost much of his sheep-like qualities. The lambs were beautiful, but not so snowy white nor yet so prime were they, deprived of "the tender Shepherd's care." For ages many sought to climb the sides which reached up to the dizzy heights of Eden. There was no shepherd to point the way. There was no Shepherd to lay down His life for the sheep. Many attempts were made to rescue the lost. The Lord called all such "thieves and robbers," who were endeavoring to "climb up some other way" than the appointed way.—John 10:1.

The Heavenly Father erected, in the "Valley of the Shadow of Death," a sheep-fold, through which the way to "fields new, and pastures green" were pointed out. It wasn't by refraining from eating an apple that life insurance would be granted, but it was to whosoever would keep God's Law.

Moses, as the great law-giver, served for a time as a type of the Good Shepherd, who would some time come to save the sheep which were lost. For forty years Moses led them over the wilderness sheep-paths. It was not until many, many years after that, that the "Good Shepherd" of the sheep came upon the scene. He entered by the temporary fold which the Great Shepherd of the sheep had prepared. To Him the Porter opened, and the sheep heard His voice. Do we not remember His saying "He called His own sheep by name and leadeth them out; and when He putteth them forth, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice"?—John 16:2-4.

It was our glorious Lord who left the "ninety and nine" and went after the one that was lost. He it was who left the glory and the riches which He had with the Father before the world was and for our sakes, as the "Good Shepherd," became so poor that He had nowhere to lay His head. As He said, "The foxes have their holes, the birds of the air their nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He counted not His life dear unto Himself. Hear Him: "I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd giveth His

life for the sheep.” Again, “Greater love than this hath no man, in that He giveth His life for His friends.”

While the temporary sheep-fold pointed to the Good Shepherd as “the Way, the Truth and the Life,” the life was not obtainable except by Him. And so our Lord, as He Himself declared, became “the Door.” “By Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pastures. I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly.”—John 10:9, 10.

Applying now, the song of the shepherd boy, David, to the one for whom it was really intended, the Psalm commences, “*Jehovah is My Shepherd*”. And Jehovah, the Great Shepherd, exclaims “This is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”—“This is My beloved, in whom I am well pleased!” The Great Shepherd immediately accepts the proffered services of His Son and places Him as the Under-Shepherd. Speaking of the sheep, over whom He had been given charge, our Lord’s words are, “Thine they were and Thou gavest them Me.” So faithfully did the Good Under-Shepherd lead the sheep and guard their best interests that He “lost none save the Son of Perdition.” This Good Under-Shepherd was so faithful to His Father’s best interests that He always delighted to carry out His Father’s will—“I delight to do Thy will, O My God.” “He counted not His life dear unto Himself.”

For forty days He secreted Himself in the wilderness in loving communion with the One whose sheep He had come to rescue. Forty days were spent in receiving instructions respecting the leading of the sheep into more nourishing pastures and beside still waters. When fully informed of the secrets entrusted to Him by the Great Shepherd, He emerged from His seclusion to undertake the rescue of the sheep that were lost. His was the greatest undertaking. Upon no journey did so much ever hinge. It was a delicate undertaking. “A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.”—Isa. 42:3.

While enroute with His sheep to the Golden City, His everlasting Home, He would fear no evil. He was the Good Shepherd. His Father was rich in gold and silver and in cattle upon a thousand hills. The Good Shepherd knew His Father’s tender care and felt secure against the intrusion of foes. Hear Him say, “No man taketh My life from Me.” Shepherd was never guarded by a more watchful eye nor with such tender care. Many were the difficulties to be overcome, but many were the assurances of aid. Many were the foes to be encountered along the way. Many were the times that the life of the Shepherd was sought and the scattering of the sheep.

For three and a half years He led “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Nearing the journey’s end He said, “If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” “In My Father’s House are many mansions; I go to

prepare a place for you.” No shepherd ever discharged his duties so faithfully as did the Good Shepherd. The Great Shepherd, whom He served with such unvarying steadfastness, rewarded Him beyond measure. Besides the office of the Good Shepherd, He gave Him glory, honor and immortality. He gave Him a Kingly position. He made Him King of kings and Lord of lords.

The temporary absence of the Good Shepherd from the sheep caused the flock to scatter. Wolves had entered and although the Shepherd was abundantly able to protect His own life and that of His sheep, and to call for legions of angels, nevertheless, His devotion to His Father’s business, His constancy in doing the Father’s will provoked Him to give up His life, that He might receive one more abundant—“As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.”

*“God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm;
His purposes will ripen fast, Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste, But sweet will be the flower.”*

Although the Good Shepherd had said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” and “I will be with you always, even to the end of the age,” His was the course of wisdom. He had been pursuing the wisdom which cometh from above. It was His to trust to Wisdom still. It was His to follow in the paths of righteousness. He loved righteousness with all His heart and hated iniquity. Since He was faithful to the Father unto death, even the ignominious death of the cross, it has been written of Him, “In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” And concerning the Great Over-Shepherd it has been written “Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out.”

The absence of the Under-Shepherd during the three days of His imprisonment in the tomb attracted the attention of the Father. On the morning of the third day the Great Shepherd raised the Under-Shepherd from the dead. During forty days thereafter many were the visits of the Good Under-Shepherd to His sheep. The gathering of the scattered over, the Good Shepherd began at once to blaze the pathway of life. He ascended into the “Far Country” to receive for Himself the glories, the honors and the riches which had been promised. Still mindful of His sheep, He appeared in the presence of God for them. Soon the information came to them that there are now exceeding great and precious promises. They were reminded of the sacred words, “Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.” They were reminded that the Good Shepherd would first receive the Kingdom, and would return to reckon with them. Frequent have been the reminders, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us,” and “The Father himself loveth you.”

“I shall not want.” How could these sheep want? “Jehovah is in all their thoughts;” “in

all their ways they acknowledge Him” and He acknowledges them. The assurance is that “the Father himself loveth them.” He would not suffer them to want in any sense. He is the Owner of all the gold and silver and the cattle upon a thousand hills. In His House are many mansions; and the very finest made with gold, is to be their everlasting habitation—“They shall dwell with the Lord forever.”

“Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; there is no speech, there are no words, their voice is not heard, but their melody extendeth through all the earth and to the end of the world their words.” (Psa 19:2-4) Have you ever looked into the starry heavens on a cloudless and moonless night and beheld with amazement the star-lit canopy? Have you ever tried to count the numberless specks of light in that great expanse? If you have, you soon realized your efforts were vain. By means of photo-astronomy, however, with the aid of the wonderful modern telescope, man has thus far been able to number as many as a hundred and twenty-five millions of suns, each of which is more or less larger than the great sun around which this orbit travels.

Do you know who your Father is? The child of God answers, “Jehovah is my Shepherd.” Do you think He would let His children want? The answer of the Scriptures is, “No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.” The poet expressed it,
“No good thing will He withhold
From sheep which stray not from the fold.”

If earthly parents crave to give good gifts to their children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give good gifts to those who are His? Giving does not impoverish Him, nor withholding make Him rich.

“*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.*” This suggests nourishment and rest. The marginal reading says “pastures of tender grass,” which suggests the thought to my mind that the Lord’s sheep are not, in the beginning of their devotion to Him so capable of assimilating the strong meat. The milk of the Word is intended especially for their nourishment; the strong meat for those who have been longer in the Christian course. “To lie down in pastures of tender grass” suggests that the grass is in abundance; that there is no necessity for keeping “on the go” to find sufficient nourishment. It also suggests peace: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (John 14:27) It also suggests contentment:
“Content whatever lot I see,
Since ’tis God’s hand that leadeth me.”

“*He leadeth me beside the still waters.*” This suggests refreshment. All the day long in the country from whence this beautiful song has come, the shepherd keeps uppermost in his mind the thought that he must lead his flock “beside the still waters,” or as the marginal reading has it, “the waters of quietness.” In Palestine most of the streams are turbulent, and among those that are not so the banks are usually such as forbid sheep approaching too closely. Sheep are timid and fear a current of water, and well they may,

for they are easily carried down stream, because of their wool. “Poor things, how do they ever get a good drink”? some have said. Ah, the shepherd always sees to that. “Jehovah is My Shepherd, I shall not want... He leadeth me beside the still waters.” In the shepherd country in Palestine there are wells and cisterns. However, ‘the sheep’ like the ‘living (flowing)’ water best. This suggests that wells and cisterns frequently contain stagnant water—not so refreshing as the living water found in streams and springs. The creeds, represented by the wells and cisterns, are not so refreshing to those who are thirsting after righteousness as is the Truth, represented by the “river,” the streams of which shall make glad the city of God. Since the living (flowing) water is not so easy for the sheep to get, neither is it so easy for the Lord’s sheep to get the refreshing draughts from the Water of Life. But “He leadeth them beside the still waters.”

“*He restoreth my soul.*” In the Hebrew the word *soul* means life or being. The nourishment furnished by the tender grass and the rest there afforded for weary sheep and the leading of them beside the still waters complete the restoration of soul. It suggests that we are all, like sheep, gone astray; that He led us into the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. It suggests that we were all dead in trespasses and sins and that “He restoreth my soul.” “The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” We were begotten by the Word of Truth. We passed from death unto life. “He restoreth my soul.” We were justified freely from all things. We were made acquainted with the “Way,” “Way, the Truth and the Life.” So our Lord said, “I am the resurrection and the life;” and as the Apostle advised, “If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.” “Who hath hardened himself against Jehovah and hath prospered?”—Job 9:4.

“*He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.*” “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death.” In the shepherd country many paths lead to precipices, others to places where the sheep cannot find the way back. The shepherd must always go ahead, leading them in the right paths, proud of his good name as a shepherd. And so the Good Under-Shepherd says, “When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice” (John 10:4). “I will never leave *them*_nor forsake *them*.”

“*Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.*” Although this class present themselves “living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to Jehovah,” and pass from death unto life; and although He justifies them freely from all things and begets them of His holy Spirit to a new life, they for a time continue the journey through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. However, the ascent to their home beyond the skies commences. For eighteen centuries and more they have been approaching in the direction of Mt. Zion. Many have already reached there, and many there are still who have their hearts set upon that Golden City. Mt. Zion is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where dwells the Good Under-Shepherd, and an innumerable company of angels and where,

when all the sheep that were lost have reached their journey's end, there will be the General Assembly of the Church of the First-born.

"I will fear no evil." While climbing Zion's hill they have the assurance of the Great Shepherd that no evil shall befall them, and so, resting sweetly in His promise, the expression of their hearts is, "I will fear no evil." They know that the tender Shepherd is able to take care of all that has been committed to Him against that Day. They are fully aware that they are kept by power Divine. They know "all things are working together for good to those who love God, to the called ones according to His purpose." They know that they are not fit for such associations as those to which they aspire, and so
"Content whatever lot I see, Since tis God's hand that leadeth me."

In the shepherd country sometimes a wolf gets among the flock. The sheep are wild with fright. They run and leap and make it impossible to get at the foe in their midst, which at that very moment may be fastening his teeth into the throat of a helpless member of the flock: but the shepherd is with them. He knows what to do even at such a time. He leaps to a rock or hillock that he may be seen and heard. Then he lifts his voice in a long call something like a wolf cry. On hearing this the sheep remember the shepherd; they heed his voice, and, strange to tell, the poor, timid creatures, which were helpless with terror before, instantly rush with all their strength into a solid mass. The pressure is frequently irresistible; the wolf is overcome. Frequently he is crushed to death while the shepherd stands nearby. And so foes sometimes get among us. They are more dangerous than those in the shepherd country. They often come "in sheep's clothing," and are not detected at first. Sheep are innocent animals, and so the Lord's sheep. When the presence of the wolf is discovered the alarm is sounded. As the sheep, upon hearing the shepherd's voice, cling closely together, forming a solid mass, often crushing the wolf to death beneath their feet, so the Lord's human sheep cling to each other. They hear the voice of the Shepherd, "No evil shall befall thee;" "My peace I give unto you."

"Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." The shepherd's rod or club was of hard wood. With it the shepherd was prepared to defend the flock against every foe. This represents the fact that the Good Shepherd of the sheep to whom all power in Heaven and in earth has been given, is amply able to protect the sheep against all enemies. As David slew the lion and the bear, so our Lord is able to combat every foe that seeks the injury of the sheep. So watchful is He of their every interest, so mindful of their every want, that even the very hairs of their heads are numbered. He assures us that not even so small a thing as a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice, and that we are worth more than many sparrows.

The staff of the shepherd is lighter than the rod and more like a cane and longer, with a crook at the end. With its point the shepherd at times prodded the sheep that were careless, and with the hook he sometimes helped out one that had stumbled into a ditch

by putting the crook under its forelegs. We are glad our Shepherd also has a staff for prodding His sheep: “Whom the Father loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? If ye are without chastening, ye are not sons.” “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way.”

According to the figures of the vine, “The branch in Me that beareth fruit the Father purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit; and the branch in Me that doth not bring forth fruit He cutteth it off.” And again, according to another figure, “Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you;” “The Lord your God doth prove you to know whether you do love the Lord your God with all your heart or no.”

David, the shepherd, said, “Before I was afflicted I went astray.” The Good Shepherd of the sheep is desirous that none of His flock shall go astray; so He sometimes afflicts them. But the Apostle tells us that “our afflictions are but for a moment,” and that while “no trial for the present is joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to all those who are properly exercised.” The Apostle tells us that “tribulation worketh patience and patience experience, and experience hope,” and thus “the love of the Lord is shed abroad in our hearts.” And so we look to the Lord and say, “Tribulation, Lord,” since tribulation worketh all of this exceeding and eternal weight of good: “No good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly.”

“No good thing will He withhold from sheep which stray not from the fold.”

Since it is stated of the Good Shepherd himself, that He was made perfect through sufferings, so we recognize the impossibility of our being made perfect without suffering. And since the Apostle tells us that “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us,” we want to look over and above the sufferings to the glory that shall be revealed in us—to the glorious nature that we shall possess; to the great honor we shall have. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne.”

“*They comfort me.*” Ah, yes; “they comfort me!” “Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings.” “Rejoice, and again I say rejoice!” “I rejoice exceedingly in tribulation.” “He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” He learned what it meant to be obedient in this world of adversity. It means the loss of all things; yea, “I count not my life dear unto myself.” As He “loved righteousness,” so we learn to love righteousness. As He “hated iniquity,” so we hate iniquity. “I hate thine enemies, O God, with a perfect hatred,” so we learn to hate Satan and all those in intelligent rebellion against the Divine Government.

“*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.*” Here the scene changes from shepherd life to the banquet room. In the Valley of the Shadow of Death the hosts of evil are around about. It seems almost incredible to say that the good things

upon this table cannot be seen by the enemies in whose presence they have been spread: "Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people;" therefore, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath in reservation for those that love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." The things upon the table are spiritual things; hence "the natural man cannot know of them, neither can he understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." And yet how bountifully has this table been spread! Today it fairly groans beneath the weight upon it. There is upon it, among a great variety of things, the Bread which came down from Heaven, of which if a man eat, he shall never die.

Our Lord said, "I am the Bread which came down from Heaven." Think of that wonderful provision made for our sustenance! "Those who have the Son have life; those who have not the Son shall not see life." And then to think that in this Bread, provided for our nourishment, "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!" And while the Bread of Life has been occupying the most conspicuous place upon the table for nineteen hundred years, we are not to lose sight of the fact that our eating of this Bread in no wise impoverishes Him, for there is a sufficiency, not only for us, but also for the whole world. Rather, as we have fared sumptuously at this banquet table, the Bread has been on the increase, rather than on the decrease. In this respect it differs from any other bread. Although it has been in process of consumption for nearly a score of centuries, the supply has been constantly on the increase. Let us, with St. Paul exclaim, "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"

Let us take the memorial supper, which our Lord instituted immediately before His death, as a symbol. St. Paul, speaking about it, said, "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ? For we being many are One Loaf."—1 Cor. 10:16, 17. The symbolic Bread has a greater depth of meaning than many of our Christian friends realize. The breaking of the bread by our Lord Jesus Christ symbolized the breaking of His Body, the giving up of His life for that of the Church and the world. There was a sufficiency of nutriment in it for both the sustenance of the Church and the world; but, glorious provision! we have the privilege of communion, or association with Him in this wonderful Feast.

You remember that after He had broken the bread and partaken of it He passed it to His disciples. The breaking of it by them "showed forth, or memorialized the Lord's death till He come."—1 Cor. 11:26. Anything else in this? O yes! Remember, that there are "hidden in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3) And again remember, "O, the depth of riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out."—Rom. 11:33. As the disciples of Jesus partook of the bread, it symbolized the breaking of their bodies also—"For we, being many are One Loaf." Again, "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." And so the addition to this loaf has proceeded throughout the centuries of the Gospel

proclamation. The adding to the Loaf is now almost completed. Whoever wishes, therefore, to become part of it must make haste.

“Thou anointest my Head with oil,” or, as the marginal reading has it, “Thou makest fat my Head with oil”—that is, the “Head of the Church, which is His Body.” The philosophy of this matter is in the fact that we receive the anointing, or Spirit of the Lord by measure, whereas our Head received the Spirit of the Lord, without measure. And so, “Thou makest fat my Head with oil.” His capacity was great; ours is limited. This anointing of the Head with oil was beautifully symbolized in the anointing of the typical high priest. The oil was poured upon his head and ran down over his body, even to the hem of his garment. The anointing of the antitypical Head took place nineteen centuries ago, and as a little time was necessary in the picture to the running of the anointing oil down over the various members of the body to the feet, so time has been required for the antitypical anointing oil to proceed from the antitypical Head down over the antitypical Body to the Feet. As members of “the Feet of Him,” you are getting your anointing and I am getting my anointing: “The anointing which we have received of Him abideth in us.” “Ye have an unction, or an anointing, from the Holy One, and ye all know it.”

While we may have received our begetting, or our measure of the Spirit some time ago, the question arises as to the extent we may be cooperating to increase our measure of this Spirit. To the extent that we are “studying to show ourselves approved unto God,” to that extent are we assisting in the development of the holy Spirit in ourselves. To the extent that we are submitting ourselves to the teachings of our Lord, to that extent are we partaking of that Spirit with which our dear Head was anointed. To the extent that we are drinking of the inspiring “depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God” are we “showing forth the praise of Him who has called us from darkness into His marvelous light.”

“My cup runneth over.” “The cup which My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?” That cup was poured for our Lord at Jordan. It was running over, and it required all of the three and one-half years to drink it. On the cross He cried, “It is finished.” The cup symbolized the joy and the suffering. The joy was expressed in, “I *delight* to do Thy will.” The suffering was expressed in these words, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.”

As the bread symbolized the giving up of our Lord’s flesh for the life of the world, so the cup symbolized His suffering and death. After He Himself had drank of the wine He said, passing it to His followers, “This cup is the New Testament in My Blood.” Then if the cup of which He drank, and passed on to His followers, is the New Testament, the New Testament, or the New Covenant, cannot become operative in any sense of the word as long as that cup is in the possession of His followers. If it be true that the cup represents, primarily, “*His death,*” and that cup is still with us, as is here shown, it

represents that “*His death*” has greater significance than many of our Christian friends have been attaching to it. Are we not informed that we are “filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ for *His* body’s sake?” And again, “As many as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have been baptized into *His death*.” “*His death*,” therefore, began nineteen centuries ago and has been in process of accomplishment in all the centuries intervening.

As the various members of “the Church which is His Body” are baptized into “*His death*” as He accepts them as part of His sacrifice, thus constituting “the better sacrifices,” the communion of His blood becomes very apparent. No wonder the Apostle queried, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” As therefore, the blood which is to seal the New Covenant has not yet all been shed, it follows that the making of the New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah has not yet begun.

What a privilege it is, dear friends, to drink of this cup! What a privilege it is to suffer with Him, that we may reign with Him; what a privilege it is to be dead with Him that we may live with Him! What a privilege it is to have “fellowship in His sufferings!” What a privilege it is to be “made conformable unto His death!” As the Apostle expressed it, “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.”

“*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.*” This suggests the deepest repose and comfort. The author of this beautiful Psalm once put it in this way, “Thy gentleness, O Lord, hath made me great.” The goodness of the Lord, the kindness of the Lord, the gentleness of the Lord had elevated David the shepherd boy, from the sheep-folds of Palestine to the throne of Israel: “David sat upon the throne of the Kingdom of the Lord.” Before the Lord afflicted him he went astray. The chastisements imposed by the Lord for his instruction as one of the “princes in all the earth,” when the Throne of the Millennial Kingdom should be sending forth the Law—were for his highest good. And so goodness and mercy have been pursuing us all the days of our consecrated life, preparing us for our inheritance beyond the skies. David had good promises, but the antitypical David class have the “exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these they might become partakers of the Divine nature.”—2 Pet. 1:4.

“*And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*” I WILL, not shall, but WILL; for it is a decision, a settled purpose, a holy vow—“I WILL dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” There is no question about it.

“What then, shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits unto me? I will [decision again]—I will take the cup of salvation; I will [decision again], pay my vows unto the Lord.” Will we do it, dear friends? Is it worth while? It is.