

strange land?

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

"If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

"Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

"O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happily shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

"Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."

In the beginning of my message I wish to give you a quotation from Adam Clarke: "When this Psalm was composed, the Jews were in captivity in Babylon, far from their own country, the Temple, and the public exercises of religion; and they contrast what they were with what they are."

In our study of the history of the Israelites, we remember that they were carried away captives from Jerusalem, and their native land, into Babylonish slavery because of their disobedience to God. Time and again, God had warned them of impending doom unless they should turn from their wicked ways, seek Him, and obey His laws and statutes. This they failed to do. We should realize that disobedience to God always has a penalty that must be paid, whether by an individual or a nation.

The Psalmist says: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof." This is the lamentation of one who has seen better days. No doubt the Psalmist was voicing the deep and solemn feeling of his people as they remembered their beloved Zion, the city of Jerusalem, the beautiful Temple, their opportunities of worshipping God who loved them and desired their love and faithful obedience. They now look back, and see what they had missed when they refused to hear the warning messages of the prophets, and what their wickedness and ungodliness had brought them to. No doubt quite a number of those who were carried off into Babylonian captivity were good, obedient, faithful servants and sincere worshippers of God; but they, too, were carried far from their beloved city and country along with the disobedient and sinful. Often in this world the righteous must suffer on account of the sins of the wicked. However, it shall not be so, when they reach heaven. Hallelujah!

No doubt to the Israelites there were sad and bitter memories that filled their hearts as they meditated upon what their wickedness had at last brought them to. They thought of what they used to be in their native country when they obeyed God and were the recipients of His wonderful love and blessings, and what they were now oppressed with. They sat down by the rivers of Babylon, sighed, wept, and lamented their sad plight. Instead of feeling the jubilation of the songs they used to sing in their beloved Zion, their hearts were gloomy, and there was no joy to make their harps sound forth the notes of happiness and praise; therefore they hanged them upon the willows. Oh, such bitter memories! Is this not true of multitudes of people today? Many can say in the language of the poet:

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,  
The saddest are these: It might have  
been!"

However, in weeping over one's past sins and seeking the Lord in forgiveness, remembering the goodness of God and His great blessings, there is a way back into fellowship with Him, and back to His blessings. We realize that the Israelites were permitted to return to Jerusalem and their beloved country after they had suffered for seventy years. Perhaps, dear soul, you have been disobedient to God, have lost His love and grace out of your heart and soul, and today are suffering for it in body, mind, soul and spirit. Maybe you can look back to better, brighter, lovelier, happier and more wonderful days in your life. Perhaps, as you view your past life, you have very sad and bitter things to remember. You can think of your disobedience to God; of how you left Him and went astray with bad company; of how you took to strong drink; of how you started using bad language; of how you began reading bad literature; of how you became unkind to your loved ones; of how you neglected reading the blessed old Bible; of how you began staying away from church and Sunday school, prayer meeting and the public worship of God; of how you began to neglect the secret place of prayer and the worship of God in spirit and in truth; of how you started withholding your means from God and His cause; how you drifted away from family prayer; of how you failed in your own heart to live as God revealed to you; and how you failed to lead your loved ones and neighbors to Christ. You can remember when you had a good Christian experience; the time when you enjoyed God's love and grace in your heart and soul; when you had wonderful fellowship with God's people—but today that is all in the past. You are now again enslaved by the devil. Perhaps your health is gone; your salvation is gone; your peace and joy are gone. You must look back, and look up, to see where you once stood before God and man. This is a sad remembrance. Oh, come back to the Lord Jesus! Let Him gather you again into His fold.—The Church Herald.

#### REPORT OF THE 83rd ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL HOLINESS ASSOCIATION

The 83rd Annual Convention of the National Holiness Association met at Flint, Michigan, April 4—8. The first service was held in the Central Methodist Church, Dr. Lloyd Nixon, pastor. Thursday through Sunday afternoon, the program was carried on in the Industrial Mutual Association Auditorium which has a seating capacity of 6,500.

The 83rd Convention was in many ways one of the greatest held in the history of the National Holiness Association. Almost every state of the nation was represented, also several foreign countries. People from twenty-four denominations were in attendance, and a wide representation of preachers from the various denominations served on the program. Each speaker seemed to recognize the need of the hour and preached with a passion and the anointing of the Holy Ghost. The volunteer choir of 200 voices under the direction of J. Byron Crouse and assisted by three a capella choirs, Owosso Bible College, Spring Arbor Junior College, and Bethel College of Mishawaka, Indiana, was enjoyed by all.

1,000 to 1,500 attended the day services and 3,000 to 5,000 attended at night. In spite of a constant down pour of rain, approximately 6,000 attended the Sunday afternoon mass meeting. Over 200 responded to the altar calls

and prayed through.

New auxiliaries were received into the Association. One entire denomination, Brethren in Christ Church, was in this group. The International Holiness Tabernacle Association, one Wesleyan Methodist Conference, ten camp meetings, and six county associations completed the auxiliaries.

The local committee, under the leadership of Rev. Paul Coleman, served well and made no small contribution to the success of this great convention. The prayer meetings were well attended and the power of these seasons of prevailing prayer permeated the entire convention.

The business sessions, under the leadership of Rev. Paul Elliott, were seasons of serious thought and prayerful action. The presence of God was real in each session and there was a peculiar reliance upon the Holy Ghost for His constant direction.

A committee was set up to launch a spiritual crusade and plan a series of indoor camps. Some of the outstanding preachers and singers in the holiness movement have offered their service. Plans are under way for a series of these union meetings. Please join the many who are praying for a national revival of Wesleyan Holiness and if you are interested in a meeting in your city, write either Rev. Paul F. Elliott, 230 East Ohio Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, or Dr. H. M. Couchenour, Box 533, Boynton, Pennsylvania.

Rev. Paul Elliott was unanimously elected to serve as president for another year. His leadership during the past year has made no small contribution to the program of the Association and we earnestly solicit your prayers for him as he leads us forward during another year.

#### A SERIES ON THE BEATITUDES OF JESUS

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(3) The "poor in spirit" are blessed because they have seen themselves in the light of God. Isaiah's vision is a good illustration of this fact. He saw God, and this vision of God's holiness reflected his own heart condition. He saw himself. The whiteness of God showed the blackness of Isaiah's heart. He cried out, "Woe is me." Then came the cleansing; then he heard a voice calling, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The prophet answered, "Here am I; send me." He saw God—he saw himself—he saw the field—he became a missionary!

(4) The "poor in spirit" are blessed because they realize their dependence on God and their trusteeship of any mercies received from the Lord. They are no longer their own; they have been bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ Jesus. They live with that in mind.

(5) The "poor in spirit" are blessed because the Kingdom received is the greatest Kingdom known to man. It is a Kingdom of satisfaction. It is a Kingdom of rest, a Kingdom of plenty; the poverty of need is met by a Kingdom of provision; powerlessness met by power; fruitlessness met by the fullness of fruit; lagging faith met by an adjusted faith (1 Thess. 3:10); the sense of uncleanness met by cleanness (1 Thess. 4:7). It is a permanent Kingdom, an unmoveable Kingdom. It is a Kingdom of peace and pardon, a Kingdom of sanctification and satisfaction, a Kingdom of joy unspeakable and very full of glory, a Kingdom of power and progress. Praise the Lord!