

before the Millennium, properly belong to God's people today, and we have a right to claim them. No matter how much cause circumstances give us for mourning or for the spirit of heaviness, God has commanded us to "rejoice evermore" (1 Thess. 5:16), and to "rejoice in the Lord alway; again I say, rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). In Christ we are entitled to find complete happiness no matter what earthly privation or loss we may have to undergo. He is willing to give us "beauty for ashes, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" right here and now; even in this age it is His will that we should be partakers of this blessing.

One of the means which God has often used to cause unbelievers to see that Christians have something well worth desiring has been to let them see that a Christian can smile and be happy in the midst of such adversity as would drive a non-Christian to despair. Would that Christians today would avail themselves fully of this blessing which Christ wants each of us to possess!

This is equally true of the last third of verse 3, "that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." In the glorious time ahead this figure is properly applied to all of God's people. They are trees of righteousness, drawing their sustenance from the water of life which He provides (Rev. 22:2). Yet the figure can also be applied to the believer in this age. The First Psalm describes the true believer as a tree planted by the rivers of water whose "leaf shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." God desires Christians in this age, born again of His Spirit, to glorify Him by carrying out in full the analogy of the trees of righteousness which He has planted, which give their fruit in their season and provide leaves for the healing of the nations. In Revelation 22:2 this latter phrase describes the blessings of a time yet to come, but the analogy of Psalm 1 warrants us in believing that it also has a present application.

In these days when unbelieving nations, living in forgetfulness of God and in defiance of His righteous law, are headed for destruction, there is but one element that preserves them and temporarily improves the relationship between them. That element is the influence of true Christians. Modernists talk a great deal about social improvement