

# The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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## DISCERNING THE WILL OF THE LORD

### AN INTERESTING LETTER CONSIDERED

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord, is."--Eph. 5:17.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings and love in the Lord.

I have written you to-day a business letter but desire to let this represent in some measure at least the deep appreciation I have for your labors of love as represented in the HERALD articles. I am grateful to the Heavenly Father for the fresh inspiration, renewed courage and added zeal in my heart, which these articles have produced from time to time.

I like to think of you all as a company of godly men endeavoring under the Lord's guidance and providence to add your quota to the presentations of Divine Truth, to which we owe such abundant blessings, and I am convinced that the Lord has used your ministry over and over again to the encouragement of many of His people here.

The contents of Aug. 15th issue of the HERALD are just fine, and day by day the Lord's recent dealings with His people become clearer and clearer. How evident it is that our personal relationship to the Lord our Head is the all-important thing! I am more and more convinced that all the light of Divine Truth with which we have been favored is to the end that we might "know Him," whom to know is life eternal.

As I read the first article in Aug. 15th issue, I was reminded of a query which has been uppermost in some of the dear brethren's minds here of late and I am just wondering how I can best convey it to your minds.

I believe the advent of the HERALD and its method of presentation, viz., the frequent quotations from other writers than BROTHER RUSSELL, has caused many of us to read considerably more of these "other writers" than we formerly did. There was a day when our reading was almost exclusive to the STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, but now it is not so.

Of course, this was probably the result of certain misconceptions and unconscious prejudices which we had in our minds; but the question to which I have referred as being in some minds, might perhaps be put like this:

Is there a danger of becoming *too broad* along these lines; and would not a neglect of the reading of the STUDIES Most likely be detrimental to one's spiritual growth?

You will recall BROTHER RUSSELL'S "twelve-page-a-day" suggestion and also his reference to the volumes as being indispensable to remaining in the light. He

even said that to neglect them and to read the Bible alone, might eventuate in one's going into darkness.

The reason that I am desirous of having a proper perspective on the point is that if one has a responsibility to ever keep before the brethren what is for their best spiritual interests, one would not only like to be doing it, but doing it also in the best possible way, and by example also.

The danger on the other side is in allowing the STUDIES to become our creed and of not walking in the light, but do you not think there is a danger also on the other side?

Perhaps in asking the questions, I have partially answered them too, but I have endeavored to put before you what has been passing through many of our minds on this side.

If you consider the matter worthy of 'a word or two' by letter or by any other means, I am sure there are other brethren here who would join with me in being grateful for any assistance the Lord would give us through you.

We often wish that as an INSTITUTE (and, of course only *as such*) you did not exist, although we have a great love for you all in the Lord, and especially because your ministry has His evident approval and blessing. We are convinced that as ever the Lord is using certain intelligent instrumentalities as mediums for conveying His mind to His people and are sure that at the present time, He is making no exception to this rule.

With much fervent love in the Lord,

Your brother in His grace and service,

F. H. G., JR.--Eng.

### **PUBLISHER'S REPLY**

Dear Brother:

Your letter of August 25th is before us, and we assure you that we have been afforded much pleasure in reading it. We note with genuine encouragement your words giving assurance that rich blessings have been derived by those of the Lord's children who have read with hearing ears the expositions and admonitions of the Word of God as found periodically in the columns of the HERALD. We are indeed filled with joy in the answer to our prayer, that the INSTITUTE might not be permitted to execute its trust in any manner contrary to the ministry and service of the Divine family; and we continue as always to pray that individually our faith, love, and hope may always be such as to bring forth much, fruit.

While of course you know that it is not the commendation or praise of fellow-men that we desire and seek, but the approval of our Heavenly Master, yet the consciousness that our humble ministry is appreciated and is productive of spiritual blessings to the brethren is a 'source of much encouragement and comfort to us.

It is observed that your reading of our journal has given occasion for some questions to be raised in your mind, as well as in the minds of others with whom you are affiliated. The spirit in which you express your difficulties is indeed much appreciated, as is also your object in bringing these matters to our attention and

requesting further advice from the brethren here regarding them. We are pleased to say that the points you mention have had our very careful consideration, and we now submit the results of our deliberation.

You state that the advent of our journal has caused many to read considerably more of "other writers" than they formerly did, etc. We quite freely acknowledge that this is doubtless true, especially in connection with the study of the Revelation series; and yet it is our conviction that in presenting before the brethren what we believe to be the best thoughts and expositions on the visions of St. John, there is no better method than that of carefully investigating the writings and findings of godly and deeply consecrated men of the past who have given the book of Revelation their most serious consideration. In studying the subject of the Revelation, we know of no reason why the brethren should not investigate other expositions and have before their minds, more or less, the views that others have entertained. We believe it will be to the point that we here mention that BROTHER RUSSELL himself possessed a large library, and he liberally consulted and made use of the expositions and writings of other godly men in his study and ministry of the Truth. None need think for a moment that the knowledge and truth given us through BROTHER RUSSELL'S ministry were communicated to him miraculously, or apart from deep personal investigation and study of the Bible in connection, with various commentaries, concordances, histories, etc. All of these were considered by him as very valuable helps in giving to the household of faith that which is represented in the six volumes of SCRIPTURE STUDIES, as well as the many valuable expositions contained in the Watch Tower up to the time of his death. It is well recognized that BROTHER RUSSELL encouraged the brethren to make use of every means that they considered would be of help and assistance to them in developing and growing in spiritual knowledge.

In the light of this viewpoint, it has been regarded as entirely reasonable that in undertaking to offer some profitable and helpful suggestions to the brethren on the book of Revelation, we should make use of such helps and expositions as would assist in clarifying and bringing to light the Truth so far as possible; and we have no doubt that had our dear Pastor been spared to write a specific volume on the Revelation, as he had contemplated, he would have consulted and made use of the writings and expositions of other consecrated men, just the same as he did, more or less, in the preparation of the matter contained in the writings that he did give us.

You ask if there is not a "danger of becoming too broad along these lines," etc. Replying to this, We would say that the danger of becoming either too broad or too narrow, it seems to us, depends very largely upon the motive and condition of the heart before the Lord. If, out of full *consecration to the Lord* and submission to His will, we carry forward our study of the Word, we do not see how we could become too broad; because one with fully consecrated heart and submissive will, on finding himself reading or investigating the writings of a man who did not seem to have the Lord's spirit or the spirit of the Truth, such an one, we believe, would not persevere in such investigation, but would turn aside at once and seek that which was more fully in line with the Lord's will and spirit. But if consecration be lacking, and the will of God is not the first object, in the course of a short time such person might be found to be rambling through and accepting a

great deal that was not spiritual nor profitable. Moreover, the person who was not fully appreciative, and possessed of the spirit of full consecration, might also become too narrow; and, on account of self-will and lack of humility, the spirit of bigotry and intolerance might creep in and prevent such from exercising a proper breadth of vision and hinder him from making use of all the advantages and helps at hand in the study of God's Word. We know that this has often been the case;--that really the spirit of bigotry and narrow--mindedness is back of nearly all of the sectarianism and partisan spirit that has existed amongst the professed people of God during the past centuries, and still abounds to a large extent amongst many who name the name of Christ.

So we see how much depends upon the proper attitude of the heart before the Lord. So long as our eyes are fixed solely upon the great Head and Teacher of the Church, and our hearts and affections are fully given to Him, we believe there will be no danger of becoming too broad or too narrow; but the moment we get our eyes off our Heavenly Master and His Divinely inspired messages through the Apostles and get them fixed upon earthly teachers (even though they be true teachers and instruments in the Church, but not infallibly inspired), we are subjecting ourselves at once to serious danger: and this was exactly BROTHER RUSSELL'S own view of the matter. Note his statement made along this line in August, 1899:

"We exhort all God's true Church -- the one Church, which includes all consecrated believers -- to awake to the principles of the Reformation, to a recognition of the right of individual judgment upon religious questions. Demand Scriptural proofs for all you are asked to believe; take neither the decisions of Rome, nor those of Westminster, nor those of any smaller councils or synods, as final settlements of the question, 'What is Truth?' And be sure that you believe and confess nothing that you do not understand fully and clearly. To subscribe to, or confess, what you do not understand, and therefore cannot truly believe, is solemn lying in the presence of God and witnesses, no matter if it be true that others, by the hundred, have done the same before you. . . . Require of all who shall attempt to teach in the name of the Lord, the exact words of the Lord or the Apostle which they claim support their teachings. Get the chapter and verse and look the matter up for yourselves, critically, examining the text and the context. Weigh and test every item of teaching which you receive as your faith, regardless of how much you esteem the person who, presents it. We know that no fellow-mortal is infallible, and that His Word is the only standard by which God wishes us to square and measure and build up our faith. . . . Let God be true, if it should make every man a liar."

Again, in 1896, he wrote:

"And we still urge, as in the past, that each reader study the subjects we present in the light of the Scriptures, proving all things by the Scriptures--accepting what they see to be thus approved and rejecting all else."

In quoting, as we have done, in the columns of the HERALD, from various expositors, it was not our thought to discredit to any extent the writings and expositions of our beloved Pastor; nor was it our thought to direct the attention and thoughts of the brethren away from the SCRIPTURE STUDIES; nor did we wish or intend to discourage the brethren in using the Volumes in connection with

their Bible study Classes. Rather, it was our thought that inasmuch as we have quoted our Pastor's words and published so freely of his writings, the confidence of the brethren in him as a great Bible expounder would not become less, but would become stronger and more firmly established. From what we can gather from various communications received from the brethren through out the world, we are convinced that the presentations of the HERALD have had this desired effect-that of confirming and establishing their faith more solidly, if possible, in the great and essential truths respecting the Divine Plan. of the Ages as presented in BROTHER RUSSELL'S writings; while at the same time, it seems to us, it is becoming more and more the conviction of the brethren that it is their privilege to make progress in the path of light, to continue to study the Divine Word, and to make use of whatever advantages or helps the Lord in His providence may put within their reach, that thus they may advance in the knowledge of Divine truth and grace.

Our attention is arrested particularly on the words in the last paragraph of your letter, which are:

"We often wish that as an INSTITUTE (and, of course, only as such) you did not exist, although we have a great love for you all in the Lord, and especially because your ministry has His evident approval and blessing."

As already stated, we sincerely appreciate the words, of commendation, and assurance that a blessing has gone forth from this ministry to the hearts of the Lord's people, but we are wondering to what extent there may be a little misapprehension in expressing the wish that we "did not exist as an INSTITUTE," etc. We are led, therefore, to make some further observations in this connection that we trust may prove unto edification.

We believe you will have gathered from various messages in the HERALD from time to time that the sole object of our arrangement known as the PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE has been to comfort and assist the brethren spiritually. We have not, however, claimed perfection for our arrangement; nor have we insisted that any particular method, such as our INSTITUTE, must be used to serve our Father in Heaven and our glorious Savior and to glorify them. We desire Him to teach us His way.

At the commencement of this movement in 1918, a mere committee was appointed by the brethren, which was not of itself particularly -effective, as then constituted; nor did the fact that it was a committee make it more useful than an other body--in fact, the situation pointed rather to the contrary. We also found difficulty in effectively conducting our business affairs by means of it. This was so clearly apparent that the suggestion was made to place the affairs in the control of one brother; but the one brother who was requested to act, declined, on the ground that because he was then acceptable to the Committee was no guarantee that he would continue to be so, and even if he should continue, to be satisfactory for the purpose, his successor might not be; and we finally came to the conclusion that we did not consider it wise or safe to place so much authority in one person, or rely so much upon his wisdom, or the exercise of his executive powers. Our experience since that time has confirmed us in that conclusion. Since the starting of this ministry, there has never been a time when any one of us, or any one we have come in contact with, has been as uniformly wise or as uniformly effective

in any particular as have our Committee or Board of Directors and our Editorial Board. We have on more than one occasion had the opportunity to give thanks that matters have not been-left to the exclusive control of one person, either as to his acts in important matters or in the wisdom displayed, even though assuming that such a one would always walk in straight paths made for his feet.

Moreover, if it be suggested that some one Church be authorized to act and have charge of the ministry over all the other Churches, there is serious objection to this also, for there is no one ecclesia or congregation in a position, as far as we know, able to undertake and carry on the work now done by the INSTITUTE; and it has become very manifest that it was needful, therefore, that those interested in this ministry must be of several' congregations and from the isolated ones-indeed, from over the whole habitable globe. We thought furthermore, and still think that it is, and will be, better that these interested ones should have an opportunity to exercise a supervision and control' over the Directors and, through them, over the Editors, such as would measure up to their individual and collective responsibilities, rather than that this particular service should be in the control of a single ecclesia or congregation, even should one ultimately come to such a position of influence as to be able to undertake such a work. It would require a framework and organization in some one Church, not originally contemplated. and, not found in the apostolic body, and would very likely tend to make some metropolitan Church self-controlled, without possible interference by others interested, and, put it in a position not conducive to the welfare of the Body of Christ.

It must be borne in mind that the apostolic church as the visible church did not maintain its original purity and humility . but degenerated into a condition of subservience' to a metropolitan church or churches; and so the first danger to a be guarded against now, is, the control of inter-church activities by any one congregation, rather than that the INSTITUTE would dominate any one ecclesia. It would be more possible for the INSTITUTE to become over-sensitive to close-at-hand criticism, and become correspondingly subservient to it, then that the converse situation might exist.

We felt in 1918, and still feel, that the words of encouragement and admonition given to "feed the Lord's sheep and His lambs" devolves especially upon those in a position to act. It appeared that that privilege devolved more largely, in the United States, upon ourselves, as we were then constituted, to act for the benefit of those who found themselves in a wilderness condition. And, supplicating at the throne of Heavenly Grace for the blessings of the Father, we went forward in full assurance of faith, and yet withal, in humility, which last we trust still abides with us, in charity, abundantly. Your own words indicate that you yourself rejoice with us in this -that in some measure, at least, there has resulted, by the grace of God, a general blessing to His "little ones."

Since the commencement of our work, we have looked about -us, and we think that we have not seen any especial benefit accruing to the Lord's children -by reason of the ministration of individuals who, though of the best of motives, have felt themselves called, and in a measure self-constituted, to witness to ideas of their own, or at least riot deeply enough founded upon the Holy Scriptures; and therefore we are satisfied that a one-man institution or control is inadvisable.

A committee of brethren has its good features, and, in fact, from the viewpoint of our brethren here, that is just what our Directors and Editors are;--nothing less. The seven Directors or Trustees are elected by the members of the INSTITUTE. They in turn elect the Editorial Committee of five brethren--three of these from among the Board of Directors, the other two from outside the Board;--the Directors alone being the brethren directly responsible to the interested friends at large.

A committee not duly incorporated by law has, as far as we can see, no advantage over a duly incorporated body. It is not such a body as can effectively deal in business matters, as can a corporation; yet, on the other hand, the corporate body is a more effective instrument in the hands of the brethren than a committee. The work must be done, if done at all, by either a committee or a corporation, as We see it; and yet committees can degenerate'. If the early Church, as visible to the world, could, by the working of the mystery of iniquity, become apostate, no one could guarantee the conduct of a committee. A committee is a *body of Persons* delegated to do a certain thing or things, and a corporation (Latin for "body") is no different. Both are subject in business dealings to the law of the land. The regular so-called "corporation" is more effectually workable in more varied situations and much safer to use in making contracts and in the ownership of necessary property.

The Committee of Public Safety of the French Revolution ultimately came to execute a dictatorship under Robespierre, who used it to further his- own ends. The church nominal, prior to that time, became subject to the uses and ambitions of scheming bishops and their supporters.' We therefore see no advantage in merely a simple committee without the safeguards thrown around a corporate body, whose duties and privileges as' to its working facilities are more readily adapted to our uses.

Our experience has been that many of the friends, however well meaning they may be, are somewhat lacking, in the human wisdom born of the experiences of the ages and are therefore, in demanding one thing or another to be done, inclined, without realizing it sometimes, not to be entirely fair \*to, one another. As children of light we are not as wise in human affairs as, the children of this world, but this seems to us to be no reason why we. should refuse to make use of such experience of our fellowman Is will best serve our ends, such as best effectuate the proper equities.

The early Church was one of Christian unity. The Reformation was a movement toward Christian unity, founded upon the essentials of faith. To follow the injunction, "Go, teach all nations," there must. be something in common.. All Christian societies which were -formed in the period which began with the foundation of the London, Missionary Society have acted conformably to this principle of the social activity of Christianity. The American Tract Society included Christians of various congregations and denominations. This Society has never usurped ecclesiastical functions, has never lorded it over God's heritage, nor been ruled by any one congregation or denomination. D'Aubigne, the author of the History of the Reformation, who most of us, will agree gave every indication of being a saint -of God, in 1848, said of it:

"I respect, in the American Tract Society, not only its direct labor's for the conversion and edification of souls, but also the influence of union which it must necessarily exert on the Christian community. I love to recognize in it primarily the spiritual unity which must be the basis of the union, but also the two great manifestations which I have pointed out, that of word and that of action. The American Tract Society confesses the same Christian doctrine by the writings which it publishes; and it acts in accordance by its efficient labors, which carry light and life, not only to the shores of the Atlantic, but to the Great Valley, to the coasts of the Pacific Ocean, and to the most distant corners of the earth. I hope that this Society will daily increase its labors, and thus more and more exhibit the unity of the body of Christ and the glory of its adorable Head, I feel happy, therefore, in co-operating with it by preparing for it a new edition of my History."

The PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE should never be regarded or used in a denominational sense, any more than was the American Tract Society. That Society could not rise above the average thought of the best of its members, and no more so can the PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE do that thing. We must keep our eyes on, our perfect Copy, our Savior, who is to us "God manifest in the flesh"--the copy of the Father--and endeavor to be used acceptably through heavenly favor to His honor and glory.

We are not unalterably committed to an institute as a corporation or, a name, and do not advocate or attempt to make it in any way. a supervisory body--either here or elsewhere but our brethren would, we feel sure, be entirely willing to adopt. a better method of service if one could be certainly indicated for the purpose. The brethren immediately responsible feel its weight, more often and. oppressively than either the friends or critics of the INSTITUTE realize., The Directors have not, in the Father's providence, taken these responsibilities and greater judgments upon themselves, but realize that they were called to undertake them, otherwise they would fail in courage and enthusiasm as without Divine favor.

We close our reply by quoting with our Brother D'Aubigne the words of the Apostle James: "For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." Amen.

Very truly your brethren and servants in, Christ,

PASTORAL B1BLE INSTITUTE.

## **BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION**

STUDY XCI--NOVEMBER 27.

### **GOD'S SAINTS, COMING OUT OF THE TEMPLE (Cont.)**

**-- Rev. 15:6, 7.**

(551)What is represented by the seven angels coming out of the Temple? Give Scriptures that would seem to have a bearing on the. interpretation of this symbol. H '20-166.



(552) How are we to harmonize the Scripture, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," with the fact that the class represented by the seven angels, are to pour out the Vials of Wrath? H '20-166.

(553) What should be the attitude of the Lord's people who accomplish this, work, and what Scriptures have we describing their conditions? H '20-166.

(554) Is the Symbol of the Bowl or "Cup of Wrath" used elsewhere in the Scriptures? If so, cite texts, with brief explanation. H '20-167.

(555) What is the origin of the symbol, as suggested by some expositors, such as Mr. Barnes? H '20-167.

#### STUDY XCII--DECEMBER 4.

#### **SEVEN BOWLS FULL OF WRATH-Rev. 15:7, 8.**

(556) What is the reasonable interpretation 'of the seven symbolic Vials or "Bowls full of Wrath"? H '20-167

(557) What. is represented by the "'Living One" of verse 7? 'H '20-168.

(558) What reasonable conclusion may be drawn from the use of the number seven in connection with the angels and .bowls? H '20-168.

(559) What is the significance of the Temple being filled with smoke, and what causes this condition? At what time would we properly look for the fulfillment of this portion of the vision? H '20-168.

(560) In what Sense was the smoke "from the glory of God and from His power"? H '20-168.

#### STUDY XCIII--DECEMBER 11.

#### **THE POURING OUT OF THE FIRST VIAL-Rev. 16:1, 2.**

(561) What is the difference if any in the significance of the Temple as here used and its mention in Chapter 15? Who is represented by the "Voice"? H '20-168, 169.

(562) What class is affected by the first Plague? In what connection have we had the symbols, "Mark of the Beast" and "Image of the Beast" used in previous studies; and what is their significance? Rev. 13 -14-17; H '20-169; '19-53-59.

(563) What is the interpretation of the first Plague as given by expositors in general; and how may we account for their erroneous application of the symbol? H '20-169.

(564). What is the significance of this Plague being in the form of an ",evil and malignant Ulcer": Describe a literal ulcer, its cause and result, and show how it applies symbolically.

(565) At what time did this Plague begin-to have fulfillment? Give evidences and facts of, history proving this. H '20-169, 170.

## **GENERAL CONVENTION FOR EUROPEAN BRETHREN**

We have received from the BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE of London an announcement of a General Convention, which we are pleased to publish below, specially for the benefit of the brethren abroad who may find it possible to be in attendance at the proposed assembly. The notice follows:

"The friends, particularly those in Great Britain and Ireland, will be interested to know that the brethren in Finland are arranging for a Convention to be held in Helsingfors on January 5, 6, 7, 8th, 1922, and have sent a pressing invitation to the Bible Students Committee to arrange for a brother to go from Britain to, meet the friends, and bring them some message from the Lord. The invitation came quite unexpectedly as no correspondence with friends in Finland had taken place previously. It would seem that a separation has taken place in that country of late and the friends feel desirous of getting in touch with those in other lands whom they know, to have passed through similar experiences to, their own.

"On receipt of the invitation the Committee met and considered at length. the proposal: It was felt to be somewhat of -an undertaking and they wondered whether it was possible for them to comply with the request, which they felt to be of the Lord's prompting. A decision had to be -arrived -at without an opportunity being afforded them of consulting with the friends in Britain as time was pressing. Naturally the hearts of the brethren went 'out in love to those dear ones who desired fellowship, and brotherly comfort, and they could not refrain, but just determined that they would put their entire trust in the Lord and arrange to. send a brother.

"It is quite possible that a Convention will be arranged in Stockholm for the New Year so that our brother Will probably meet the Swedish, friends as, well--a suggestion to this effect has come from Sweden, and the matter will be arranged, for if found possible.

"The Committee feel that the friends in Britain will approve their decision, 'and will desire to assist in making the trip just what the Lord would have it to be. The Committee will be glad to have their assistance, and ask for the prayers and loving thoughts of God's people, and they will be glad to convey to the friends visited in other lands any messages of love that may be received for transmission.

"It is not finally decided who will take this trip, but some brother will (D.V.) be leaving England soon after Christmas upon this errand of love."

In this connection we acknowledge with much appreciation the invitations that have come from both the BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE and the brethren in Finland to our INSTITUTE to send a representative from America to their Convention in January. We would be very glad indeed to be represented at this gathering, for we could anticipate nothing else but that this occasion will be one fraught with much spiritual blessing. However, the circumstances at this time do not permit of our undertaking to send a representative to Finland. Then, too, the winter-time would not seem to be the most propitious season for doing general pilgrim work, as, of course, if a brother was sent from America at this time it

would be expected that he would make some general tours in the interests of \*the ministry,. perhaps in several of the European countries.

The PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE extends to all the brethren across the sea, as they assemble in convention, our heartiest Christian greetings and love, and we trust and pray that their coming together may have the rich benediction of the Lord; that His presence will be felt in their midst, resulting in a closer union in Him and a strengthening of the bonds of love Divine-preparing each and all to renew their Christian warfare with fresh hope, courage and faith.

## **THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST**

### **SERIES X-A**

#### **CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO SARDIS**

*"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." – Rev. 3:1, 2*

"I know thy works," said the Savior, addressing the church of Sardis and its star or messenger. No particular evil is mentioned as existing in her midst, but if we were correct in applying the message prophetically to the period just prior to the great Reformation epoch, we may be sure that there was a combination of all those evils that we have found, according to the messages, to exist in the others. The unequal yoking up with the world; the purely worldly spirit controlling in her councils so prevalent in the age represented by the Church of Pergamos; the wicked, corrupt teaching of that "woman Jezebel," together with her persecuting spirit, pictured by Thyatira had reached its climax; and the condition called by the Savior "the depths of Satan" was reached. The professing Church on earth had become wholly corrupt – indeed, "dead"; and this was the state in the visible Church in the period just prior to the great Reformation of the sixteenth century.

The fact that the Savior mentions the seven stars held His right hand, seems to teach that he had entire control of the ministers in His Church and could keep and remove them at his pleasure.

The word, "Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain," seemed to be addressed to then exceptionally few disheartened ministers, and secret disciples of those times. The expression, "the things which remain," seems to have reference to the true piety that still lived and lingered in this period. "Whatever there was of true religion among them, it was of importance to strengthen it, that the love of the Savior might not become wholly extinct. An important duty in a low and languishing state of religion, indeed, is to strengthen the things that still survive. It is to cultivate all the graces which do exist – to nourish all the love of truth which may linger in the Church; and to confirm by warm exhortation, and by a reference to the gracious promises of God's Word, the few who may be endeavoring to do their duty, and who amidst many discouragements, are aiming to be faithful to the Savior. In the lowest state of religion in a Church, there may be a few, perhaps quite obscure and of a humble rank, who are mourning over the desolations of Zion, and who are sighing for better times. All such, it is the duty of the ministers

of religion to comfort and encourage; for it is in their hearts that piety may be kept alive in the Church – it is through them it may be hoped religion may be revived. In the apparent hopelessness or doing much good for others, good may always be done to the cause itself by preserving and, strengthening what there may be of life among those few, amidst the general, desolation of death."\*

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\*Barnes, *Notes on Revelation--111, 112*

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### **SPIRITUAL SICKNESS AND DEATH**

The Master further exhorts them to "strengthen the things . . . that are ready to die." There were doubtless so me in. the primitive Church of Sardis, as well, as in the period represented by it, to. whom these words would apply. It quite often is the case in individual experience as. well as in a Church, that spiritual life has almost ceased, and, there seems to be only a spark remaining. The spiritually minded would always be expected to use their best endeavors to kindle again the flame of spiritual life. How frequently is it the case, however, that the messengers are not of this kind! The saying is generally true: "like people, like priest." (Hosea 4:9.) A Church generally has pastors of the character it chooses.

"For I have not found thy works perfect before God." Another, a better translation of this passage, is: "For I have not found thy works fully performed before God." Evidently these words, like those preceding, and indeed those that follow, are addressed to the messenger, minister, and the "few names left." It is true that Christ expects of all His ministering servants that they perform certain works, and sometimes those of a special nature. It is also, true that none could claim perfection in the performance of these works. The words as rendered above would therefore seem to indicate that a: certain feature, or features, of that work were left undone; and this was true, not only of the minister and Church of primitive Sardis, but also of those represented by these in the period of history featured, i. e., the closing years of the same. *There is always something lacking, some duties neglected or left unperformed by even a true minister and the spiritually minded of the Lord's people, when spiritual decline or deadness begins to find a place in the Church.* May it not have been in this case that individual or collective witnessing, which secret discipleship fails always to perform, may be referred to in the words: "For I have not found thy works fully performed"?

The Savior next exhorts His few faithful ones in the words: "Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard." We may surely learn from these words that it is always profitable for the Lord's followers to call to remembrance the days when they first came to know Christ as their Savior and Lord, especially in times of spiritual' drought, to call to mind how it was that they were introduced into God's favor--how it was communicated to them; how it was that they obtained assurance and acceptance; and the various instrumentalities employed to bring these blessings to them. As to the particular things -that the Master would have them call to remembrance, we may not be quite sure. It may be that He desired to remind them that it was through the oral testimonies of others that they were brought *to* embrace Christ;--it may have been that it was through their own personal public confession of Christ before men that brought to them the full

assurance of their acceptance of God. It is quite evident that in the period of Church, history just prior to the Reformation, these, qualities and characteristics were lacking, not complete, deficient. MR. BARNES, referring to primitive Sardis, has supposed that it may refer to some peculiar manner in which the Gospel was first preached to. them, as, *by the* labors of the Apostles and by the remarkable effusions of the Holy Spirit; or to the ardor and love with which, they embraced it; and we may add, to the ardor and labor of those 'who were instrumental in giving the Gospel to: them; or it, might be to the favors and privileges conferred on them; or to their own understanding of what the Gospel required of them when they embraced it. These surely are necessary things to call to mind when spirituality is declining.

### **IF THEREFORE THOU SHALT NOT WATCH**

"And hold fast and repent [reform]," the Savior further exhorts them. The meaning of these words evidently is that they hold fast the truths that they had learned, and the measure of piety that remained among them; and to exercise godly sorrow for whatever measure they might discover that they had departed from their former activities, and had lost the spiritual joys experienced by them when they first heard and received the Gospel of the grace of God. The exhortation teaches also that they were to turn again, and lay hold upon His Word and promises, that they engage again in active service and thus experience the joys that these promises and services would bring to them.

Continuing to address Himself to that class referred to as not in the attitude of watching, and as ready to die, and deeming it possible that they would not give heed to His exhortation, the Savior. gives warning of what. in such a case would be the result, in the words: "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt. not know what hour I will come upon thee." The warnings and threatenings contained in these messages apply more to individuals than to Churches. The words, "I will come on thee as a thief," seem to imply that the ones referred to, those whose spiritual decline had reached such a critical state as would be described as unwatchful and in the words " ready to die," would be surprised suddenly, and find it then too late to reform, to regain their former standing and state. Considering the words from the standpoint that the Sardis *conditions* prevail to a considerable extent down to the time of the Second Advent, the words of PASTOR RUSSELL are very pertinent and applicable:

"Many today have the Sardis characteristics. To, such there is a fatal warning in Rev. 3:3. Seven times our Lord's Second Coming is described as being, thieflife, stealthy. Only to those who are watching is the approach of a thief known. Those who are asleep will be awakened only after he has taken full possession after his work of destruction has progressed. Although they may then arouse themselves, it is too late. They have been overtaken. Thus our Lord will be present, but invisible and unknown-except to the watchers-for some years after His arrival; and His Presence will be recognized by the sleepers only as the noise of spoiling the Strong Man's House gradually increases. Then slowly will they realize what it is and what the outcome will be."\*

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\*Z '16-347.

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The Savior next addresses the Sardis Church and its messenger, referring specially, however, to the overcoming class: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled, their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." The "few names . . . which had not defiled their garments," refer to the faithful few, *who* had kept themselves free from the corruption that prevailed in the Sardis Church and the period. in, history represented by it. The words plainly teach that. there were but a, few persons who: had not been contaminated to a greater or less extent with world affiliation and the false claim of Jezebel to be an inspired teacher, and her corrupt teaching. These few, were like persons clothed in white garments, and were able to keep their garments from being soiled in the midst of those whose garments were defiled.

### **IN ROBES OF WHITE**

The words, "And they shall walk with me in white," also refer to a reward realized in the future life. This is evident from the words that follow: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." White is the emblem of purity and innocence, and very appropriately represents the state or condition of the saints in light. Whoever overcomes the world, the flesh land the Adversary-overcomes sin and resists the temptations of this world--will be given this glorious reward. This hope is that of being with the Savior in His Kingdom, clad, figuratively speaking, in robes of actual righteousness, expressive of holiness and joy.

The assurance given to such overcomers is that their names shall never be erased from "the book of life." "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels."

"In this text, as throughout the Bible, the thought is maintained that the elect class who will receive the highest glory, honor and blessing from the Lord, must demonstrate their loyalty by overcoming. It is not sufficient that there shall be an overcoming of the will at the beginning of the Christian career, but subsequently there must be trials and, testings endured, and these must be met in. an overcoming manner. The consecration having been made, and the trials and testings having begun, the individual yielding under those temptations and testings, and continuing to be overcome by them, would prove that he is not sufficiently loyal; for the Lord has promised, that His grace shall be sufficient. . . .

"This overcoming is a gradual work, progressing throughout our Christian course, from the moment of consecration down to the conclusion of life, But the text apparently takes hold of the conclusion rather than the beginning or the 'middle of the work, and implies that the individual has at the *end* of the trial, the *end* of his race course, this overcoming degree of righteousness, so that he may be classed as an overcomer. Such. an overcomer will be clothed in white raiment."\*

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\*Z '15-118.

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A most remarkably clear and Scriptural presentation of what is represented, by the "white raiment" as applied to a believer's standing in the present life, is given by the writer of the words quoted above. The matter is treated under the title:

"WHITE RAIMENT LOANED TO US"

"The Scriptures give us to understand that at the very beginning of our Christian experience, we figuratively are clothed in white raiment. This white raiment represents justification--we are justified freely from all things. It is a robe without a spot. It is sometimes spoken of as Christ's robe of righteousness, because it comes to us through Christ. It is to be had only through Him. He is able to impute to us, to, loan, to us, grant to us temporarily this robe. It is spoken of as the wedding garment. At an oriental wedding, a wedding garment of white linen- was used to cover over the clothing. Worn, by each guest. It was loaned to the guest at the wedding by the, host, when he appeared at the wedding feast.

"White linen signifies purity. So when Christ gives

us the use of His merit, it is as a white garment to cover our imperfections. It is an imputation of His righteousness, which is to us justification. We are exhorted to keep, our garments unspotted from the world. The imputation of righteousness given us, we are to preserve, to maintain. But we cannot fully maintain it of ourselves. Our tongues may sometimes say things that we wish they had not said, and our hands may sometimes do things we would not desire. Hence, God has provided a way by which our blemishes or transgressions may be eradicated those. not willful. This way is our daily application for the cleansing of these unwilling transgressions, through the precious blood. Thus we keep our garments unspotted from the world. Thus our justification, our white robe, is maintained--should be maintained. \*

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\*Z 115-119.

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It is, however, apparent from these words of the Savior, that to be clothed in white robes is also to- be understood, as we have noted, as a reward to be given to the overcomer who finishes successfully his trial. This trial is completed at death. The reward, to be clothed in white robes, will be given at Christ's appearing. The significance of this figure of the white robe in this sense is also most clearly unfolded by this same writer. In an article, "The White Raiment of The Kingdom," he writes:

**"WHITE RAIMENT OUR OWN"**

"But it is not sufficient that we have the imputation of our Savior's righteousness. This imputation is only a temporary arrangement. We need to come to the place where we shall have a righteousness of our own, Our flesh is imperfect. . . . In spite of our best endeavors, things are bound to go more or less wrong. But we are

to prove ourselves overcomers--'more than conquerors.' The Lord has arranged that at the conclusion, of our trial, at the end of the present life, all the overcomers shall receive the new body. This new body will be a body of actual purity. Thus, as the Apostle says, we shall 'be clothed upon, with our House which is from Heaven.' So our raiment will be changed from a garment of imputed perfection, our 'Justification by faith, to. that which represents actual perfection. At the resurrection we shall receive that body of inherent purity, without blemish, without spot, which is here pictured as 'white raiment.' \*\*\*

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\*\* Z '15-119

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The Savior next assures the overcomer, the one who keeps his "garment unspotted," and overcomes all the Sardis evils, that his name, shall not be blotted out of the book of life. The teaching is that the Lord takes account of each one who receives Christ as his Savior, and presents himself in' consecration to do His will, to follow in His footsteps unto and until death. Such are represented as having their names recorded in a book of life as candidates, as runners for the heavenly prize --7joint-heirship with the Redeemer, eternal. life, immortality. The expression, "I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life," evidently implies that some will fail at last of obtaining this prize and therefore will not be numbered among the, elect class. A similar thought is contained in the words of Christ, "Many are called, but few are chosen."

In the words of the Savior, "And I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels," we have the thought well expressed that "in the end these overcomers will be so grandly developed that the Lord will not be ashamed to confess any of them, and to say, Here is one of my followers. Here is another., They have walked in my footsteps, and have overcome."

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." It is well to keep in -mind that. individuals are addressed in these words. Indeed, as has been truthfully said:. "The Church of God., which is Christ's Body, is not composed of Churches, but of members, united together by that blessed Spirit which unites all to Christ the Head. Hence the 'Churches' or assemblies are only local gatherings, of so many Christians as find themselves in the providence of God actually together. Each of these is, according to Scripture, the Church in that place. The place adds nothing in this title (the -Church of God), nor is one gathering of its members superior or inferior to any other." We must not, forget, however, in this connection, the difference between profession and possession. A dead Sardis is not in reality of the Body -of Christ at all. The "few names left," being powerless. to control in its counsels, the Church, as such, is cast off, rejected.

## **ST. PAUL WRITE'S TO, A FRIEND**

--DECEMBER 11 -- PHILEMON --



*Golden Text--" Whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant."--Matt. 20:27.*

ST. PAUL'S letter to Philemon, is indeed in the nature of a personal letter to a brother in Christ'. The Apostle whose large and loving heart had won for him so many deeply-attached friends, must have often communicated with brethren by brief letters, but this Epistle to Philemon appears to be the only private letter of this correspondence which has been preserved for us the only private letter in the canon of the New Testament, with the exception of the brief letter of St. John to the well-beloved Gains.

After the greetings which open the letter, St. Paul as usual in his Epistles, strikes the note, of. thanksgiving. He praises God for the news that has come to him of Philemon's loving service of Christ and of Christ's followers, for the Christian faith that Philemon has shown, for the Christian hearts -that have been refreshed through Philemon's goodness. He prays for Philemon continually, that he may progress ever in Christian knowledge and experience. Thus inspiringly does St. Paul begin his letter.

It is claimed that Philemon was a wealthy man of Colossae in Asia Minor, about a hundred miles east of Ephesus. It is presumed that St. Paul had won him to Christianity during his long ministry in. Ephesus, and since then he had opened his house as a meeting-place for the Colossian Christians. Apphia, his wife, seems to have joined him in Christian devotion. Probably the Archippus named in the, introduction of this Epistle was his son, and Archippus must have been. both zealous and successful in Christian work to, win from the, Apostle, Paul the. noble. title of "fellow soldier."

### **THINGS WHICH ARE DESPISED HATH GOD CHOSEN**

Onesimus was Philemon's runaway slave. He had stolen from Philemon, and then made good his escape to Rome, where he could most easily hide from any pursuer. What it was that rescued him from the degradations which were the sole possible outcome of such an ill-begun career we cannot tell. He would soon exhaust what he had stolen from his master; and as Rome was full to overflowing of slaves and idlers--as the openings for an honest maintenance even in the barest poverty were few--it is hard to see what resource was left to him except a life of villainy. Perhaps in this condition he was met by his fellow-Colossian, Epaphras, who as a Presbyter of Colossae would be well known to Philemon. The Apostle received him kindly, sympathetically, even tenderly; for while it may be truly said that Christianity is esoteric, exclusive, *in this Age*, in that it is intended to affect comparatively a small number--a little flock for the Kingdom; yet it is sufficiently broad that all who really have "ears to hear" may hear all; all those -who earnestly desire to forsake sin and run the Christian race may have the opportunity to do so: but history shows, as does also our experience, that on account of the present blindness and hardness of heart, only a few have the truly hearing ear, and have sufficient faith to enable them to enter and run the race-course, of the Christian. Onesimus, though having been accustomed to evil practices, was of the class to be drawn to the Savior, for he became a Christian and furnished an illustration of the principle announced by St. Paul according to which God is making the selection of, this Age: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after

the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the, things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which- are not, to bring to nought things that are,: that no flesh should glory in His presence." (1 Cor. 1:26-29.) On this point BROTHER RUSSELL has given :a most fitting explanation:

"Whatever the tendency of our mental philosophy on the subject, the fact's of the case prove to us that proportionately a, larger number of the world's noble-minded children reject the Lord and His Gospel, and that a larger proportion of the world's ignoble children accept the Gospel of Christ, The still more interesting and perplexing question therefore is, how shall we account, for this very peculiar condition which seems contrary to all and every expectation..

"We account for it along the lines, of our Lord's statement, that He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. True, there is none righteous, no, not one; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; the fall of father Adam involved every member of his posterity; hence all are sinners and all need the grace of God in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins: but those who find themselves morally and intellectually less fallen than some of their neighbors are inclined to a self-righteous feeling, even though they would disclaim, perfection. They are therefore the less inclined to acknowledge themselves to be nothing, unworthy, of Divine favor, and to, bow themselves in the dust at the foot of the cross, and to receive, as an unmerited gift of God, the boon of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **MANY NOBLE UNBELIEVERS NOT CALLED**

"They feel that some of the more degraded of the race do need Divine pity and forgiveness, and they feel glad-that God has compassion for these, and will help them; but somehow they feel that they do not need the imputed robe of Christ's righteousness to cover them; they feel as though they are so respectable that if God accepts anyone to a future life He will surely not exclude them. They look about them and compare themselves with Christians, and often with a large degree of complacency assure themselves that their ideas of right and wrong and of moral responsibility, and of benevo lence, etc., are higher, nobler, better than those of professed Christians: and say to themselves, God is just, and while Iam not perfect I am a great deal better than the majority of Christians, and I am sure, therefore, that God in justice will take as much care of me as He will of others who I see are inferior to. me in some of the good qualities of heart and mind. Like the Pharisee of old, they thank God that they, are not as other men and neglect 'the only name given under heaven or among men whereby we must be saved.,

"The class we are describing 'is a numerous, class, more numerous than many persons would suppose until they reflect on the subject. And it includes many far from hypocritical who have never understood the Gospel. Several of the presidents of the United States have been men of this class,---reverent toward religion, moral in their course of life, just in their dealings-for instance, Lincoln and Grant; and we merely mention these as ensamples of a class. Besides, many properly of this class are either Church attendants or Church members. They

appreciate the fact that directly or indirectly the 'moral uplift of civilization is associated with Christianity and are pleased to take their stand on the moral and popular side, though they have never accepted at the hands of Divine grace the forgiveness of sins through faith in the precious blood of Christ.

"We see their difficulty: it is that they do not recognize that the Lord is dealing upon principles of strict, justice and law., Divine law and justice declare that all imperfection is contrary to God, that God's work was perfect originally in Adam, and that He never can accept to harmony with Himself anything that is imperfect. They fail to see that under this law, whoever is guilty in that which is least, is nevertheless *guilty*; and comes under the same death penalty with him who is guilty of many and more serious offences. Since, then, all men are imperfect-, none absolutely righteous-the one sentence of death grasps every member of the human family. And there is no door of escape from death, no door of entrance into life except the one which God has provided-Christ Jesus, the righteous, who became man's 'Redeemer by the sacrifice of Himself. He who fails to go through the door never attains to life, however much he may strive against sin, and however closely he may approach to the door. Only passage *through 'the door* can mean an entrance into eternal life. 'He that hath not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God [the sentence of death] abideth upon him.'--John 3:36.

'The same philosophy of the subject shows to us why it is that a l proportionately larger number of the world's ignoble than of its noble children come to Christ. Only those who feel that they are sinners, who feel that they need relief from sin, appreciate the offer of forgiveness. - Only the sick, who realize that they are sick, feel their need of the Great Physician. Many indeed seek the Lord's grace because they realize to some extent their own fallen, degraded condition, and that they are *meaner people than others*;--*only this* seems to awaken them to a realization of their position; only this leads them to cry out, 'Have *mercy* upon me, thou Son of David.' And this attitude of the realization of personal *unworthiness* of the Divine favor is necessary to all who would accept the grace of God on the only conditions upon, which it is offered."--Z '98-179, 180.

### **BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL**

We would not lightly pass over the fact that the Apostle Paul had gladly recognized and accepted Onesimus as a true fellow Christian. The heart which was hard as a diamond against Pharisaism and tyranny, was yet tender as a mother's towards sorrow and repentant sin . St. Paul had learned in the school of Him who suffered the penitent harlot to wash His feet with her tears and wipe them with the hair of her head; of Him who had said to the convicted adulteress, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." St. Paul in no wise shared the anti-Christian respect of persons which made some people in St. Jerome's days argue that it was beneath his dignity to trouble himself about a runaway slave. Here was one whose position was the lowest that could be conceived. He was a slave; a slave of the country whose slaves were regarded as the worst there were; a slave who had first robbed a kind master, and, then run away from him. But St. Paul converted him, and the slave became a Christian. a brother beloved and serviceable, an heir of immortality, a son of the Kingdom, one of a royal generation, of a holy priesthood.

The Apostle's letter to Philemon becomes the practical manifestation of Christianity against the horrors and iniquities of ancient and modern slavery. From the very nature of the Christian Church--from the fact that it was "a King not of this world"--it could not be revolutionary, according to the course of this world and its carnal methods. It was never meant to prevail by physical violence, or, to, be promulgated by the sword, -for, indeed, the Master said: "The Kingdom of Heaven now suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." By and by, when 'all the Church shall be perfected in glory by the power of the First Resurrection, then, as the Kingdom duly empowered, it shall rule and reign over the nations, exercising the authority of the iron rod-compelling at least outward obedience, so that every, knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the rightful Lord of all. Such kingly rule and government will be for the uplift of all the willing and obedient to Paradise; willful evil-doers being then destroyed in the Second Death. But those now walking the Narrow Way are not yet Kings and hence not authorized to interfere or attempt to interfere with the facts of the established order. Followers of Christ were therefore taught to be subject to the powers that be, and to raise no voice, and refuse no tribute even to a Gaius or a Nero.

Onesimus repaid the Apostle by gratitude, by affection, by active and cherished services to the aged prisoner, the inestimable boon of his deliverance from degradation. Gladly would St. Paul, with so much to try him, with so few to tend him, have retained this warm-hearted youth about his person,--one whose qualities, however much they may have been perverted and led astray, were so naturally sweet and amiable, that St. Paul feels for him all the affection of a father towards a son. And had he retained him, he felt sure that Philemon would not only have pardoned the liberty, but would even have rejoiced that one over whom he had some claim should discharge some of those kindly duties to the Apostle in his affliction which he himself was unable to render. But the Apostle, being 'a true Christian, would not presume on the kindness of even a beloved convert. And besides this, a fault had been committed, and had not yet been condoned. It was necessary to show by example that, where it was possible, restitution should follow repentance, and that he who had been guilty of a great wrong should not be irregularly' shielded from its legitimate consequences. Had Philemon been a heathen, to send Onesimus to him would have been to consign the poor slave to certain torture, to possible crucifixion. He would, to a certainty, have become henceforth a "branded runaway," a *stigmatias*, or have been turned, into the slave-prison to work in chains. But Philemon was a Christian, and the "Gospel of Christ, by Christianizing the master, emancipated the slave." St: Paul felt quite sure that he Was sending back the runaway--who had become his dear son, and from 'whom he could not part without a violent wrench -- to forgiveness, to considerate kindness, in all probability to future freedom; and at any rate right was right, and he felt that he ought not to shrink from the personal sacrifice of parting with him. He therefore sent him back under the kind care of Tychicus, and, happily for us, with a "commendatory Epistle." St.' Paul had no doubt about the future good conduct of Onesimus.

Thus is recorded in St. Paul's letter to Philemon another glimpse of a character worthy of the very noblest utterances which we find in his other Epistles. These few lines, at once so warm-hearted and so dignified, which theological bigotry

was once inclined to despise as insignificant, express principles of eternal applicability Which even down to the latest times have had no small influence! in the development of the world's 'history..

## ST. PAUL'S LAST WORDS

--DECEMBER 18-- 2 Tim. 4:6-18--

Golden Text.--"*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course'. I have kept the faith.*"--2 Tim. 4:7.

AFTER laying down the foundation of Timothy's established faith, and after thus urging him to abide, or continue, in those things which he had learned, the Apostle Paul proceeds to deliver his dying charge. He sets the matter forth in a most solemn form, according to the Greek--"I adjure thee [I most solemnly urge upon you, therefore] before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom." We may accept these urgent words from the Apostle as applicable to ourselves. We, also, stand before God; we, also, are trusting in His favor for\* eternal life; we, also, are adopted into His family, and as sons are hoping to have such experiences as will fit and prepare us for the glorious things the Father has promised to them that love Him. We, also, have respect to the Lord Jesus and His appearing and Kingdom-hoping to have a share with Him in those future glories and grand opportunities. We, also, remember that that Kingdom is to judge the world, and to judge the fallen angels-the latter, the quick, the living, who have never passed into death, but are restrained. by chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; the former, the race of mankind to which we belong by nature, children of wrath even as others, all of whom are dead, under sentence of death. Hoping for a share in all these glorious privileges, what manner of persons ought we to be!

As clinching this earnest appeal for faithfulness to the Word of the Lord, the Apostle refers to himself-that he must give up the fight; that the end of his life course was apparently in sight; the time of his departure from life was at hand. How we can rejoice that he could and did write the burning words of verses 7 and 8, "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith,*" etc. As we glance through the Apostle's history we concur with his judgment, and see that he was riot boasting; but was a faithful follower in the footsteps of Jesus; that he did make a good fight for right, for principle, for truth, for the Lord against sin and selfishness; that notwithstanding its narrowness and ruggedness, he did run faithfully over the course from the time that he started in it; that he did keep the faith to the close, at the cost of self-denial, of self-sacrifice, hardships and persecutions. And here we must remember that keeping the faith is not merely keeping it in us, but is in the sense of faithfully declaring it; for whoever does not declare the Good Tidings to others will soon lose the faith himself. Let us press along the line toward the same mark for the same prize of joint-heirship with the Lord; and if when we come to the close of life we can say, as did the Apostle, that we have fought well all along the course and kept the faith, the Lord will not say to us that we did not do as much as the Apostle Paul or as much as the Lord Jesus, but having done what we could, having been faithful in the few things and in the

small talents entrusted to us, we will hear the welcome words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

These joys of the Lord the Apostle refers to as a crown of righteousness. The Apostles James and John speak of the same crown and call it the crown of life, (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10), and the Apostle Peter speaking of the same calls it the crown of glory. (I Pet. 5:4.) The thought at the bottom of each of these expressions is evidently the, same.; namely, the. custom in olden times of running races and the giving of a crown to the successful runner at the end of the course. As it was not' sufficient to enter a race, or start to run, but it was required that the race be run faithfully and perseveringly to a conclusion-, so with this race which, we *are* running as followers of Jesus, it *is* essential' not only. that *we* shall make consecration to the Lord, but that we persevere to the end, and our reward will be the crown of life in the sense that we will get life on the highest plane, inherent life, immortality. It will be a crown of righteousness in the sense that only those who are approved of God as righteous will thus be rewarded and glorified; and our hope is, therefore, that we may be accepted in the Beloved; that the righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit; and that the rewards which God has promised to those who love Him and serve Him will be granted to us. The crown of glory is another name for the same grand reward-the glory of the Kingdom, the glory of immortality, the glory of the Father's favor, the glory of being joint-heirs with Christ in His' Kingdom.

### **A CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS LAID UP**

The Apostle declares that his crown is laid up for him; he did not claim to possess it at the time, except by faith, and he had never seen it except by the eye of faith. This laying up of crowns is an expressive figure. The Scriptural thought seems to be that when justified believers make a full consecration to the Lord and are accepted as members of the Body of Christ, their names are written in the Lamb's book of life, and crowns are set apart for them. If they are faithful their names will never be-blotted out and their crowns will never be given to others, but if unfaithful, others will be permitted to take their places upon the roll of honor and attain to their inheritance to the crown, their share in the Kingdom.-Rev. 3:5, 11.

The Lord, the righteous judge, will determine the matter of unworthiness for the crowns. The Apostle's language elsewhere in this letter seems to imply that some who did have confidence in him had lost their confidence, and in the heat of trial had deserted him. "At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their charge." (V. 16.) He here intimates that he cannot even accept the judgment of the brethren respecting his faithfulness, but that he has appealed his case in the fullest sense of the word to the great Lord and judge who shall finally determine these matters for him and for all. He is a righteous Judge and, therefore, will not condemn any who are seeking to the best of their ability to serve and praise Him. He will approve such, but being a righteous judge, none may venture to hope that He will approve that which is evil, unrighteous, unfaithful; hence, if our hearts condemn us not we may have peace with God.

The Apostle was not expecting his crown of righteousness, the crown of life, the crown of glory, at the moment of death; but pointed Timothy forward to the Second Coming of Christ, and the general giving of rewards, as the Lord has

promised, "at that day." We rejoice to believe that we are living "in that day," and hence that the Apostle is no longer waiting, but has received his crown during this Harvest time, and we expect that those who are now alive and remain need not wait, but that when the hour of death shall come to them there will be no need of sleeping to wait for a future time, but -the death change will mean the immediate entrance into the glorious, conditions referred to by the Apostle.

The Apostle distinctly points out that although he, with the other Apostles, occupied a high, position in the Church of Christ, this did' not Signify that only the Lord, and the Apostles were to be- crowned as victors; on the contrary, he includes all of the faithful' ones of this- Gospel- Age; saying that the crown of righteousness is not for him only, but "for all those' who love His appearing." Ali!' the loving of, His appearing is indeed a close test, whether applied now or in the Apostles' day! The Apostle himself could not' have looked forward with joy to the day of Christ's revelation in Kingdom power and glory, if he had not felt that he had fought a good fight and kept the faith courageously; and so it must be with all others who have named the name of Christ and started to run in this Gospel race for the heavenly prize. If they are overcharged with the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches in any sense, they will put far from them the thought of the Lord's presence and Kingdom; they will not be looking for it and longing for it; they will not be loving it. Those who love the Lord's appearing must of necessity love the Lord Himself, and this will mean that the love of Christ will constrain them to endeavor to serve Him and those who are His. John Calvin remarks, "Paul excludes from the number of the faithful those to whom Christ's coming is a source of terror."

Concerning St, Paul's last words, as also his closing days, we have a most excellent resume by CANON FARRAR. The thoughts presented are of such helpful character that we believe none can read them without realizing much profit; hence we are submitting as the remainder of this lesson, the following liberal quotation from *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, by FARRAR; the sub-headings are ours.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **MEMOIRS OF ST. PAUL**

"That is practically St. Paul's last word. The remainder of the letter is occupied with personal information, given in the natural, loose, accidental order of a letter, mingled with earnest entreaty to him that he would come at once. 'Do your best to come to me quickly.' Demas, Crescens, Titus, are all absent from him; Erastus did not come with him farther than Corinth; Trophimus was taken ill at Miletus; Luke only is .left. Mark is useful to him for service-perhaps because he knew Latin-and therefore Timothy is to take him up some-, where on the way, and bring him. Tychicus is already on the way to Ephesus, so that he can take Timothy's place when he arrives. Timothy is to be on his guard against the pronounced hostility of Alexander the coppersmith. Then follows the touching allusion to his first trial and deliverance, on which we have already dwelt. Greetings are sent to Prisca, Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus. Once more, 'Do your best to come before winter;'--if he comes after that time, he may be too late. Eubulus greets thee, and

Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, -and all the brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you.'

"In have purposely omitted the one simple, touching message, introduced so incidentally, and with such inimitable naturalness. 'When you come, bring with you the cloak that I left at Troas, at Carpus' house, and the books, especially the parchments.' The verse has been criticized as trivial, as unworthy the dignity of inspiration. But men must take their notions of inspiration from facts, and not try to square the facts to their own theories. Even on these grounds the verse has its own value for all who would not obscure Divine inspiration, nor obliterate the true meaning and sacredness of Scripture by substituting a dictated infallibility for the free play of human emotions in souls deeply stirred by the Holy Spirit of God. But even on other grounds how little could we spare this verse! What a light does it throw on the last sad days of the persecuted Apostle! The fact that these -necessary possessions-perhaps the whole that the Apostle could call his own in this world-had been left at the house of Carpus, may, as we have seen, indicate his sudden arrest, either at Troas or on his way to it. A prisoner who is being hurried from place to place by unsympathizing keepers is little able to look after his property. But now the Apostle is settled again, though his home is but a prison, and he feels that it will be his home for life. Winter is coming on, and winter in a Roman prison, as he knows by experience, may be very cold. He wants to get back his rough traveling cloak. It was one of those large, sleeveless garments which we should call an 'overall' or 'dreadnought.' Perhaps St. Paul had woven it himself of the black goat's hair of -his native province. And, doubtless--for he *was* a poor man--it was an old companion--wettered many a 'time in the water-torrents of Asia, whitened with the dust of Roman roads, stained with the brine of shipwreck when Euroquilo was driving the Adriatic into foam, He may have slept in its warm shelter on the chill Phrygian uplands, under the canopy of stars, or it may have covered his bruised and trembling limbs in the dungeon of Philippi. It is of little value; but now that the old man sits shivering in some gloomy cell under the palace or on the rocky floor of the Tullianum, and the winter nights are coming on, he bethinks him of the old cloak in the house of Carpus, and, asks Timothy to bring it with him. 'The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring with thee.'" "And the books, but especially the parchments," The *biblia*--the papyrus books--few we may be sure, but old friends. Perhaps he had bought them when he was a student in the school of Gamaliel at Jerusalem; or they may have been given him by his wealthier converts. The papyrus books, then, let Timothy bring, but especially the parchments--the vellum rolls. What were these? Perhaps among them was the *diploma* of his Roman franchise; or were they precious rolls of Isaiah and the Psalms, and the lesser Prophets, which father or mother had given him as a life-long treasure in the far-off happy days when, little dreaming of all that would befall him, he played, a happy boy, in the dear old Tarsian home? Dreary and long are the days--the evenings longer and drearier still in that Roman dungeon; and it will be a deep joy to read once more how David and Isaiah, in *their* deep troubles, learned, as *he* had learned, to stiffer and be strong. A simple message, then, about an old cloak and some books, but very touching.

'They may add a little comfort, a little relief, to the long-drawn tedium of these last dreary days. Perhaps he thinks that he would like to give them, as his parting



bequest, to Timothy himself, or to the modest and faithful Luke, that their true hearts may remember him, when the sea of life flows smooth once more over the nameless grave. It would be like that sheepskin cloak which centuries afterwards the hermit Anthony bequeathed to the Archbishop Athanasius-- small gift, but all he had. Poor inventory of a saint's possessions! not worth a hundredth part of what a buffoon would get for one jest in Caesar's palace, or an acrobat for a feat in the amphitheater; but would he have exchanged them for the jewels of the adventurer Agrippa, or the purple of the unspeakable Nero? No, he is much more than content. His soul is joyful in God. If he has the cloak to keep him warm, and the books and parchments to teach and encourage him, and Mark to help him in various ways, and if, above all, Timothy will come himself, then life will have shed on him its last rays of sunshine; and in lesser things, as well as in all greater, he will wait with thankfulness, even with exultation, the pouring out in libation of those last few drops of his heart's blood, of which the rich, full stream has for these long years been flowing forth upon God's altar in willing sacrifice.

### **CHARACTERISTIC OF WANING LIFE IS DIS ENCHANTMENT**

"But there are no complaints, no murmurs--there is nothing querulous or depressed in these last words of St. Paul. If the Pastoral Epistles, and above all this one, were not genuine, they must have been written by one who not only possessed the most perfect literary skill, but who had also entered with consummate insight into the character and heart of Paul; of Paul, but not of ordinary men, even of ordinary great men. The characteristic of waning life is disenchantment, a sense of inexorable weariness, a sense of inevitable disappointment. We trace it in Elijah and John the Baptist; we trace it in Marcus Aurelius; we trace it in Francis of Assisi; we trace it in Roger Bacon; we trace it in Luther. All is vain! We have lived, humanly speaking, to little or no purpose. 'We are not better than our fathers.' 'Art thou He that should come or do we look for another?' 'I shall die, and people will say, 'We are glad to get rid of this schoolmaster?' 'my order is more than I can manage.' 'Men are not worth the trouble I have taken for them.' 'We must take men as we find them, and cannot change their nature.' To some such effect have all these great men, and many others, spoken. They have been utterly disillusioned; they have been inclined rather to check the zeal, to curb the enthusiasm, to darken with the shadows of experience the radiant hopes of their younger followers. If in any man such a sense of disappointment--such a conviction that life is too hard for us; and that we cannot shake off the crushing weight of its destinies--could have ever been excusable, it would have been so in St. Paul. What visible success had he achieved?--the founding of a few Churches of which the majority we're already cold to him; in which he saw his efforts being slowly undermined by heretical teachers; which were being subjected to the fiery ordeal of terrible persecutions. To the faith of Christ he saw that the world was utterly hostile. It was arraying against the Cross all its intellect and all its power. The Christ returned not; and what could His doves do among serpents, His sheep among wolves? The very name 'Christian' had now come to be regarded as synonymous with criminal; and Jew and Pagan-like 'water' with fire in ruin reconciled, 'amid some great storm--were united in common hostility to the truths he preached. And what had he personally gained? Wealth?--He is absolutely dependent on the chance gifts of others. Power?--At his worst need there had not been one friend to stand by his side. Love? and learned by bitter

experience how few there were who were not ashamed even to own him in his misery. And now after all -- after all that he had suffered, after all that he had done -- what was his condition? He was a lonely prisoner, awaiting a malefactor's end. What, was the sum total of earthly goods that the long disease, and the long labor of his life, had brought him in? An old cloak and some books.

### ST. PAUL'S BATTLE IS OVER

"And yet in what spirit does he write to Timothy? Does he complain of his hardships ? Does he regret, his life? Does he damp the courage of his younger friend by telling him that almost every earthly hope is doomed to failure, and that to struggle against human wickedness is a fruitless fight? Not so. His last letter is far more of a *paean* than a *miserere*. For himself the battle is over., the race run, the treasure safely guarded. The day's work in the Master's vineyard is well nigh over now. When it is quite, finished, when he has entered the Master's presence, then and there-not here or now-shall he receive the crown of righteousness and the unspeakable reward. And so his letter to Timothy is all joy and encouragement, even in the midst of natural sadness. It is the young, man's heart, not the old man's, that has failed. It is Timotheus, not Paul, who is in danger of yielding to languor and timidity, and forgetting that the Spirit which God gave was one not of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound, mind. 'Bear, then, afflictions with me. Be strong in the grace of Jesus Christ. Fan up the flame in those whitening embers of zeal and courage. Be a good soldier, a true athlete, a diligent toiler. Do you think of my chains and of my hardships? They are nothing, not worth a word or a thought. Be brave. Be not ashamed. We are weak, and may be defeated; but nevertheless God's foundation-stone stands sure with the double legend upon it -- one of comfort, one of exhortation. Be thou strong and faithful, my son Timothy, even unto death. So does be hand to the dear but timid racer the torch of truth which in his own grasp, through the long torch-race of his life, no cowardice had hidden, no carelessness had dimmed, no storm had quenched. Glorious Apostle! would that every leader's voice could burst, as he falls, into such a trumpet-sound, thrilling the young hearts that pant in the good fight, and must never despair of final victory.' Yes, even so:

" 'Hopes have precarious life  
They are oft blighted, withered, snapped sheer off  
In vigorous youth, and turned to rottenness;  
*But faithfulness can feed on, suffering,*  
*And knows no disappointment.'*

"Did Paul ever get that cloak, and the papyri and the vellum rolls? Did Timothy ever reach him? None can tell us. With the last verse of the Second Epistle to Timothy we have heard Paul's last word. In some Roman basilica, perhaps before Helius, the Emperor's freedman, in the presence of some dense, curious, hostile crowd of Jews and Pagans, he must have been heard once -more, in his second defense., or on the second count of the indictment against him; and on this occasion the majority, of the assessors must have dropped the tablet C--the tablet of condemnation-into the voting urn, and the presiding judge must have pronounced sentence of decapitation on one who, though -condemned of holding a dangerous and illegal superstition., was still a Roman citizen. Was he alone at his second trial as at his first? Did the Gentiles again hear of Jesus and the

Resurrection? Did he to them, as to the Athenians, prove that the God whose Gospel he had been commissioned to proclaim was the same God after whom their fathers had ignorantly groped, if haply they might find Him, in the permitted ages of ignorance, before yet, in the dispensation of the times, the shadow on the dial-plate of eternity had marked that the appointed hour. had come? All such questions are asked in vain, Of this alone we, may feel convinced-that he heard the sentence pronounced upon him with a feeling akin to joy-

"For sure, no gladlier does the stranded wreck  
See, through the grey skirts of a lifting squall,  
The boat that bears the hope' of life approach  
To save the life despaired of, than he saw,  
Death dawning on him, and the end of all."

### **BEHEADED FOR THE WITNESS OF JESUS**

"But neither respecting his bearing nor his fate do we possess any particulars. If any timid, disheartened, secret Christians stood listening in the crowded court if through the ruined areas which marked the sites of what had once been shops and palaces before the conflagration had swept like a raging storm through the narrow ill-built streets-if from the poorest purlieu of the Trastevere or the gloomy haunts of the catacomb any converted slave or struggling Asiatic who believed in Jesus had ventured among the throng, no one has left a record, no one even told the story to his fellows so clearly as to leave behind him a floating tradition. We know nothing more. The last word had been spoken. The curtain has fallen on one of the noblest of human lives.

"They who will may follow him in imagination to the possible scene of his martyrdom, but every detail must be borrowed from imagination alone. It may be that the legendary is also the real scene of his death. If so, accompanied by the centurion, and the soldiers who were to see him executed, he left Rome by the gate now called by his name. Near that gate, 'close beside the English cemetery, stands the Pyramid of C. Cestius, and under its shadow lie buried the mortal remains of Keats and Shelley,' and of many who have left behind them beloved or famous names. Yet even amid those touching memorials the traveler will turn with deeper interest to the old pyramid, because it was one of the last objects on which 'rested the eyes of Paul. For nearly three miles the sad procession walked; and doubtless the dregs of the populace, who always delight in a scene of horror, gathered round them. About *three miles* from Rome, not far from the Ostian road, is a green and level spot, with low hills around it, known anciently as *Aquae Salviae*, and now as *Tre Fontane*. There the word of command to halt was given; the prisoner knelt down; the sword flashed, and the "fife of the greatest of the Apostles was shorn away.

"Earthly favor could hardly have seemed more absolute. No blaze of glory shone on his last hours. No, multitudes of admiring and almost adoring brethren surrounded his. last days with the halo of martyrdom. Near the spot where he was martyred it is probable that, they laid him in some nameless grave-in some spot remembered only by the one or two who knew and loved him. How little did they know, how little did even he understand, that the apparent earthly failure would in reality be the most infinite success!

## **GOD BURIES HIS WORKMEN, BUT CARRIES ON THEIR WORK**

"How little did men recognize his greatness! Here was one to whom no single man that has ever lived, before or since, can furnish a perfect parallel. If we look at him only as a writer, how immensely does he surpass, in his most casual Epistles, the greatest authors, whether Pagan or Christian, of his own and succeeding epochs. The younger Pliny was famous as a letter-writer, yet the younger Pliny never produced any letter so exquisite as that to Philemon. Seneca, as a moralist, stood almost unrivalled, yet not only is clay largely mixed with his gold, but even his finest moral aphorisms are inferior in breadth and intensity to the most casual-of St. Paul's; Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius furnish us with the purest and noblest specimens of Stoic loftiness of thought, yet St. Paul's chapter on charity is worth more than all they ever wrote. If we look at the Christian world, -the very greatest worker in each realm of Christian service does but present an inferior aspect of one phase only of St. Paul's many-sided pre-eminence. As a theologian, as one who formulated the doctrines of Christianity,' we may compare him with St. Augustine or St. Thomas of Aquinum; yet how should we be shocked to find in him the fanciful rhetoric and dogmatic bitterness of the one, or the scholastic aridity of the other! If we look at him as a moral reformer, we may compare him with Savonarola; but in his practical control of even the most thrilling spiritual impulses--in making the spirit of the prophet subject to the prophet-how grand an exemplar might he. not have furnished to the impassioned Florentine. If we consider him as a preacher we may compare him with St. Bernard; yet St. Paul would have been incapable of the unnatural. asceticism and heresy-hunting hardness of the great Abbot of Clairvaux. As a reformer who altered the entire course of human history, Luther alone resembles him; yet how incomparably is the Apostle superior to Luther in insight, in courtesy, in humility, in dignity, in self-control! As a missionary we might compare him to Xavier, as a practical organizer to, St. Gregory, as a fervent lover, of souls to Whitefield, and to many other saints of God in many other of his endowments; but no. saint of God lids ever attained the same heights in so many capacities, or received the gifts of the Spirit in so rich an outpouring, or borne in his mortal body such evident brand-marks of the Lord. In his lifetime he was no whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles, and he towers above the very greatest of all the saints who have since striven to follow the example of his devotion to his Lord.

"God buries His workmen, but carries on their work.' It is not for any earthly rewards that God's heroes have sought-not even for the reward of hoping in the posthumous success of the cause to which they have sacrificed their lives. All questions, of success or, failure they have been content to leave in the hands of God. Their one desire has been to be utterly true to the best that they have known; their prayers have all been simplified- to this alone--'Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my God; let Thy loving Spirit lead me into the land of righteousness.' That God has seemed to be careless of their individual happiness they would be the last to complain; though He slay them, yet do they trust in Him. Failure was to St. Paul ' a word unknown. He knew, that to, fail -- or seem to fail -- in the cause of God, was to succeed beyond the dreams of earthly ambition.

"His faith had never wavered amid life's severest trials, nor his hope grown dim amid its most bitter disappointments; and when he passed from the dungeon and

the martyrdom to his crown of righteousness, he left the life, which he had sown to be quickened by the power of God in the soil of the world's history, where it shall continue to bear fruit until the end of time, amid the ever-deepening gratitude of generations yet unborn. One who had lived with him, and knew his thoughts and hopes, and had himself preached the faith of Christ in the days when to be a Christian was to suffer as a Christian, has written of God's heroes in words which St. Paul would have endorsed, and in which he would have delighted, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country; land truly/ if they had been mindful of that country whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city.

## THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

--REVIEW -DECEMBER 25--

*Golden Text-" Wherefore, take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the -evil day, and, having done all, to stand."--Eph. 6:13.*

IT will undoubtedly be advantageous to us to glance back in review over the wonderful experiences covered by the Sunday School lessons of the ending quarter. They cover in some respects the most important period of the Apostle Paul's ministry. The dominating thought through these lessons is the earnestness of the early Church in the service of the Lord, that earnestness being based upon the strong conviction that Christ's death had been the redemption-price for mankind; that the Church was now being called, out to be members with Christ in His Kingdom; that the necessary experiences for participation in the Kingdom would be such loyalty to the Lord and to the Truth and to the brethren as, under 'Present conditions of sin, would lead to suffering and Self-sacrifice on the part of all the faithful; and that the kingdom to be especially for the blessing of all the families of the earth would bring to the faithful suffering ones of this present time, glory" honor and immortality, which would much more! than compensate them for every sacrifice, every trial and every sorrow.

Another of the important lessons of this quarter, repeatedly clinched in the various experiences of the Apostle Paul, is expressed in his words to Timothy; namely, the Lord's ability to deliver His people from all the machinations of the Adversary and his blind emissaries. He who was faithful in the Apostle's case is none the less so today in respect to our affairs. Furthermore, these words suggest to us the very happifying thought that our Lord is not only able to-deliver us from all these human enemies and from the Adversary, but that He is able also to preserve us from the last enemy death. The Apostle at the time of writing these words was in almost hourly expectation of martyrdom--that he would go down into the portals of the tomb-yet he had confidence in the Lord that He would not leave his soul in Hades; he had confidence in our glorious' hopes in respect to all the members of the Church, expressed in the words, "The gates of bell [*Hades-the state of death*] shall not prevail against it." The grave has prevailed against the Church, not only

against the great Head of the flock, but against all the members of His body, and the Adversary has seen to it that many of them came to death ignominiously, as malefactors, as deceivers, although true. But we have the Lord's assurance for it that this was not the end-that in due time, in the resurrection morning, all who have gone down into death will be delivered; that He, the Son of Man, would take unto Himself His great power, and open the prison doors and set at liberty the captives of death. His own loved ones being the first to participate in the First Resurrection of glory, honor and immortality, and then being used to Him as His colaborers in the great work of delivering all the captives of the tomb, bringing all to the knowledge of the Truth, and permitting as many as will to come back to life everlasting perfection.

In this way the Apostle expected the Lord to preserve him, to keep him unto His heavenly Kingdom: he had no thought of death being an utter extinguishment of life; he had full confidence in the resurrection promise, and that the Lord was able to keep that which he had committed unto Him against that day-that glorious Millennial Morning-that glorious resurrection morning when the Kingdom would be established, and when the blessings of the Lord would be conferred first upon His faithful, as shown in the parables, and that subsequently all the families of the earth should be blessed through that Kingdom-Matt. 25: 1-30; Luke 19:11-27.

### **LOVE OUT OF A PURE HEART, THE ONLY SAFE CONDITION**

Our Golden Text for this lesson is indeed of solemn import to all the faithful at the present time: "Take up the whole armor of God," etc. Were we to analyze the armor we would find it not merely an armor of knowledge but very largely indeed an armor of faith, an armor containing love as one of its chief elements, and surely in every part riveted together. with love. What would our breastplate be worth without this love element? Ah, we see that our dear Redeemer's death constitutes our breastplate, that His love provided the redemption which covers us and protects us, and that it is our appropriation of His love and our reciprocating love for Him and for the Father and for the Divine law that led us to a full' consecration of ourselves to His service. It is behind this breastplate of righteousness-of which the love of God and our love for God and for the Lord Jesus are the chief elements-that we are secure, justified through faith in the precious blood, counted righteous through the love and mercy of God.

And our helmet, does it signify an intellectual knowledge of the Lord? Yes! and yet it is a knowledge based not upon the things that are seen but upon the things that are unseen. Our helmet is a faith-knowledge, and the basis of this faith is an appreciation of the love of God which passeth all understanding, which has begun the good work, not only *in* our redemption, but in the sanctification of our hearts. The love of God for us and our love for Him are most intimately related to this helmet, and whoever would put it on, whoever would be protected by it, must surely recognize the -Divine law and be responsive- in love himself.

And what of our shield of faith? Is not the love of God, the mercy of God and of our Lord Jesus, the basis of our faith ? We are not trusting either to our works or our knowledge for salvation, for both of these prove to us that we are unworthy of Divine favor. We are trusting in, God's' love. and in the loving sacrifice of our Redeemer, 'and this shield can be appreciated and will be thoroughly used only by

those who have received of the love of God as well. as of a measure of knowledge.

The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is a part of this armament. But do we not see that many who have the Word of God are holding it by the blade and not by the hilt? Do we not see that a failure to appreciate the love of God has been their difficulty, so that the study of the Word and the knowledge gained respecting the Word have been comparatively valueless to them, misleading--injurious --because they received not the Truth in the love of it. Most evidently some have received the Truth *in* large, measure and some in lesser measure, in proportion as they had the right or the wrong kind. of, love. Pride and self-love have hindered many from taking the sword of the Spirit in the proper manner; pride and denominational love have hindered others, and we are safe to say that all who handle the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, are in great danger of doing injury to themselves thereby, except as they speak the Truth in love--"in the love of it--in appreciation of it as God's great revelation of Himself and of His purposes. If selfishness to any extent combines with this love, to that extent the sword is dangerous to the one who wields it. Love out of a pure heart is the only proper, the only safe condition.

The sandals of preparation for contact with the world and the ruggedness of the way are very necessary. Pride and ambition may enable us to pass over a considerable stretch of rough roadway without discouragement, but we may be sure that the Lord has so arranged the Narrow Way that selfish ambitions will never carry us to the end. On the contrary, the Divine order is that only love for the Lord and for His flock and for His Truth will so protect us that we can go onward and upward in the Narrow Way clear to the end of the journey without discouragement that would turn us aside.

We are assured that the above words represent the sentiments of a considerable proportion of the readers of this journal. We are claiming nothing for ourselves, but, freely admit that all the blessings are from the great Fountain of blessing, from the Lord Himself. We are glad to be recipients of these bounties in, common with all the brethren. And *we* have a deep concern that the Lord's grace be received not in vain by any of us--that we should all be profited, strengthened by the meat in due season which our present Lord has provided for the household of faith as never before. How else could we understand the light that is now shining upon the Divine Word? And is not this understanding of the matter in full accord with our Lord's precious promise that at His\* Second Coming, when He would make up His jewels, gather His very Elect, His Bride, He would first knock? and then to those servants who would open immediately and show their faithfulness, He would come in and sup with them? More than this,' He would become their servant and gird Himself and bring forth from the storehouse things new and old.-Matt. 13:52.

## **HYMNS OF DAWN FOR JANUARY**

As a part of the devotional exercises at the beginning of each day, brethren of the Truth find it a profitable feature to sing one of the Hymns of Dawn. Additionally, it is recognized that there is a strength of fellowship in the fact that the friends

realize that though scattered and separated, they are singing the same hymn during the morning worship. The following selections are suggested for the month of January:

(1) 34; (2) 291; (3) 323; (4) 102; (5) 168; (6) 186; (7) 145; (8) 130; (9) 177; (10) 322; (11) 116; (12) 267; (13) 103; (14) 200; (15) 114; (16) 298; (17) 45; (18) 109; (19) 22; (20) 67; (21) 134; (22) 57; (23) 12; (24) 198; (25) 121; (26) 19; (27) 166; (28) 82; (29) 83; (30) 274; (31) 95

## **The Herald of Christ's Kingdom**

VOL. IV. DECEMBER 15, 1921 No. 24

### **THE IMMOVABLE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

*"But none of these things move me."--Acts 20:24.*

LOOKING back over another year of pilgrimage in the Narrow Way and of service to our Heavenly King, we believe that we may with much profit at this time earnestly consider the theme placed at the head of this article. Indeed the immovable Christian life signifies the conquering life and will ultimately mean the victorious Christian life, for which the crown of glory is reserved.

The words of the text are a part of an address, indeed, a farewell message given by the Apostle Paul to the elders of the Church at Ephesus. The great Apostle believed that he would see them no more: "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. . . . And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all ' for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And' they accompanied him unto the ship."--Acts 20:25, 36-38.

St. Paul by some special discernment recognized that the Church at Ephesus was to experience severe trials and siftings, through certain professed teachers appearing among them whom, he calls grievous wolves, and through others in their ' midst, yea and of them selves, who would arise 'speaking perverse things. to draw away disciples after them. As if to guard the true sheep from these false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing, and from those in their midst who would pervert the Truth, he exhorts them to remember that he "had not shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of God." This would seem to imply that all the essential truths that would be required to guard the true sheep from danger are contained in the writings of St.. Paul A careful examination will veal that all that is embodied in the writings of the other, Apostles in the way of essentials, are referred to in St. Paul's epistles, and addresses. On this account he exhorts these elders to take, heed unto themselves; which would I mean, of course, that their teaching should be tested by what he had taught them, and ,that their own "lives should be an exemplification of their teaching, and that the self-sacrificing life that he lived among them, which was patterned After the Master's, should be remembered by them in their going in and out among the Lord's sheep. . He exhorts them to feed the flock of God, and reminds them of the solemn



responsibility resting upon them because of the fact that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers, guardians, bishops, pastors, over the Lord's flock, In connection with these things, he speaks of trials that had come to him, and of others that were yet to come: "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations (trials), which befell -me by the lying in wait of the Jew's. . . . And now I go bound unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me."--Vs. 19, 22, 23.

### **ST. PAUL IN MANY PERILS**

It is in connection with his reference to these trials that the Apostle utters the words of the text, "But none of these things move me." It is only when we become acquainted with the life and experiences of St. Paul, as related in the Acts, and brought to our attention here and there in his epistles to the Churches and to Timothy, Titus and Philemon, that we are enabled to grasp the profound significance of these words.. In writing to the Church at Corinth, the Apostle reviews and sums up these trials through which he had passed as a result of his devotion and his self-sacrificing efforts to carry out the commission, given to him by His Divine Master. Many in the Church at Corinth at this time were practically rejecting St. Paul and were being led astray by attractive speakers who were claiming, an authority of apostleship equal to his own. Writing to this Church, he said: "I am afraid of your thoughts getting seduced from a single devotion to Christ, just as the serpent beguiled Eve. You put up with it all right, when some interloper preaches a second Jesus (not the Jesus I preached), or when you are treated to a spirit different from the spirit you once . received, and to a different Gospel, from which I gave you! . . . (Since -many boast on the score of the flesh, I will do the same.) You put up with fools so readily, you who know, so much I - You put *tip* with a man who assumes control of your souls, with a man who spends your money, with a man who dupes. you, with a, man who gives himself airs, with a man who flies in your, face. I am quite ashamed to say I. was not equal to that sort of thing! But let them Vaunt as they please, I am equal to them (mind, this is the role of a fool!) Are they Hebrews?. So am' I. Israelites? So am I. Descended from Abraham? So am I. Ministers of Christ? Yes, perhaps, but not, as much as I am (I am mad to; talk like this), 'With .all my labors, with all, my, lashes.; with all my time in prison--a record longer far than theirs. I have I been often at the point, of, death; five times . have I got. forty lashes (all but one) from the Jews; three times I have been beaten by the Romans, once pelted with stones, three times shipwrecked; adrift at sea for a whole night and a day; I have been often on my travels, I have been in danger from rivers and robbers, in danger from Jews and Gentiles, through dangers of town and of desert, through dangers on the sea, through. dangers among false brothers through labor and hardship, through many a sleepless night, through hunger and thirst, starving many a time, cold and ill clad, and all the rest of it. And then there is the pressing business of each day, the care of all the Churches. Who is weak and\* I do not feel his weakness? Whose faith is hurt, and I Am not aglow with indignation? If there is to be any boasting, I will boast of what I am weak enough to suffer. The God and Father of, our Lord Jesus Christ, He who is blessed forever, He knows I am telling the truth." (2 Cor. 11--*Moffatt's Translation.*) These were some of the things that are referred to when he said, "None of these things move me."

The above words suggest what may be properly termed, an immovable Christian Life -- in other words a mature Christian life. We are not to understand that an, immovable Christian life is a life that does not move, but rather a life that cannot be moved from a laudable purpose or aim.. This quality was exemplified in the Apostle Paul; and we have the record of his example for our instruction and edification, as well as to teach us that as he was a man of like passions with ourselves, such a life is not only an example to pattern after, but a life which is possible, nay, necessary, to attain unto. In writing to the Church at Philippi, he gives utterance to an expression that illustrates this characteristic of a mature Christian life. He states what is the great aim and purpose of his life: "I would know Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, with my nature transformed to die as He died, to see. if I too can attain the -resurrection of the dead. Brothers, I for one do not consider myself to have appropriated this; my one thought is, by forgetting what lies behind me and straining to what lies before me, to press on to the goal for the prize of God's high call to Christ Jesus.' For all of those of our number who are mature, this must be the point of view; God will reveal that to any who may look at things differently. Only, we must let our steps be guided by such truth as we have attained."--Phil. 3:10-16.

### **ST. PAUL PRONOUNCED THE PARTISAN SPIRIT CARNAL**

We discover in a close examination of St. Paul's words, several characteristics or qualities of an im movable mature Christian life. It is to be noted first that an immovable life must rest upon an immovable foundation. The Apostle, in writing to this same Church, thus expresses himself: ."The foundation is laid, namely Jesus Christ, and no one can lay any other." There must be on the part of a mature Christian a full assurance that his sins are forgiven, never to be brought against him; that he has come into God's favor; that he has been accepted by God as a candidate, a runner in the race for the prize of joint heirship with Christ; and that this full assurance is' realized only by faith in the merits of the precious blood, the sacrificed life of Christ, applied in our behalf--in other words, an acceptance alone on the part of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, who gave. Himself as a ransom for all.

We notice that another characteristic of an immovable, mature Christian life is described by St. Paul as a spiritual one, or a life in which certain features of carnality or worldliness are eliminated. This is found in his letter addressed to this same Church, as we read: "But I could not discuss things with you, my brothers, as spiritual persons; I had to address you as worldlings, as mere babes in Christ. I fed you with milk; not with solid food. You were not able for solid food, and you are not able even now; you are still worldly. For with jealousy and quarrels in your midst, are you not worldly? Are, you not behaving like ordinary men? When one cries, 'I -belong to Paul,' and another, 'I belong to Apollos,' what are you but, men of the world? Who is Apollos? Who is Paul? They are simply used by God to give you faith, each as the Lord assigns his task. I did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but it was God that made the seed grow. So neither planter nor waterer counts,. but God alone makes the seed grow. Still, though planter and waterer are on the same level, each will get his own wage for the special work he hag done."--1 Cor. 3:1-8.

Another characteristic of an immovable, mature Christian life is that of a fixed, immovable purpose not to be influenced by others from the path of duty, the path which recognizes Christ and Christ alone as the one who leads. When St. Paul reached Caesarea, on his way to Jerusalem, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said: "Here is the word of the Holy Spirit. 'So shall the Jews bind the owner of this girdle at Jerusalem, and hand him over to the Gentiles.' Now, when we heard this, we and the local disciples, besought Paul not to go up to Jerusalem, Then Paul replied, 'What do you mean by weeping and disheartening me? I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the sake of the Lord Jesus.' As he would not be persuaded, we acquiesced, saying, 'the will of the Lord be done.'"--Acts 21: 11-14.

### **LEAVE THE FUTURE WITH GOD**

Another very important characteristic of an immovable life, is to have an unchangeable appreciation of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus and the call to serve Christ in this present evil world, particularly the serving of Christ's sheep. He tells us that he went to Jerusalem under the binding force of the Holy Spirit. His whole being had been laid upon the altar of his call to the service of Christ, and was bound by two firm cords: first, that of a Divine command-- "I have chosen thee." "Arise -and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." And second, a glad response that left no desire for evasion -- "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

An immovable Christian life must be fixed in its determination. to leave the future with God. "Not knowing the things that shall befall me there," are his words to the elders of Ephesus., At the time, he uttered these words St. Paul was going into the dimness of the uncertain future, but he did not ask to know it. As the Christian poet has expressed it: "One step I see before me; 'tis all I need to see."

An Immovable life must be immovable in its determination to surmount difficulties. What the Apostle knew of the future was dark and full of trial. In every place prophets and friends 'met him with "Do not go, Paul"; but he had counted the cost; he had looked into the face of the storm and tempest, and these difficulties did not deter him 'from following in the steps of his Master. "Bonds and afflictions," he said, the Holy Spirit witnessed would be encountered by him in every city; but he went on, knowing that he was treading in the footsteps of his Lord and Master.

## **VARIOUS FORMS OF THE SELF-LIFE**

Again, an immovable Christian life is a Christ-centered life. It was an unselfish life. "Neither count I my life dear unto myself," are his words. His life was not his own. He was Christ's bond-slave. His life was the property of his Master, and he was therefore delivered from any anxiety about it. God Was bound to take care of His own property. In considering the Christ-centered, the unselfish life, we note that there are various special forms of the self-life which the Christian should always recognize and avoid.

(1) Self-righteousness. The cure for this is the acceptance of the righteousness of God, which is the righteousness which is by faith in Christ Jesus. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. The righteousness which is by faith speaketh on this wise, . . . that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from' the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is' made unto salvation."--Rom. 10:4, 6, 9, 10.

(2) Another characteristic or form of the self-life is that of self-confidence. The way to avoid this is to trust not in one's own wisdom, strength, ability, etc., nor that of any fallible one; but rather, in the wisdom, power and strength of God.

(3) Self-will is another form of self-life. It can be eradicated only by a holy obedience to the will of God As expressed in the teachings of the Word of God. It can be realized only by standing firmly on the promise that all things work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to His purpose, and by recognizing always that the "good" referred to is that. of becoming conformed to the image of God's dear Son.

(4) Self-seeking is another form of self-life. It can be cured only by seeking to further that which will be for the best, the highest interests of others.

(5) Self-pleasing is closely associated with. the latter. The same Apostle tells us that "Christ 'pleased not Himself," and exhorts us in the words, "Let every one, of us please his neighbor for his good to edification."--Rom.. 15:2, 3.

(6) Self-defense, another form of self-life, is cured Only by an entrustment of our reputation to God.

(7) Self-glory is cured by realizing that we are nothing; that we are but frail earthen vessels; and that all we are and all We know, we are indebted to God for, through others. The opposite of self-glory involves the making of Jesus, Christ the supreme center of our life, our being.

## **ST. PAUL'S THREE-FOLD SUPREME PURPOSE**

An immovable life, as we have already intimated, must have a supreme object always before it. This is ,expressed in the Apostle's words: "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:24.) His life was dear unto himself only in that he might carry out this supreme purpose'. In the Apostle's case, this was threefold:

First, it was to "finish his *course* with joy." He uses here the figure drawn from the racer in the Corinthian Sports. The same figure-is employed in 1 Corinthians 2, and there he, enlarges upon it as illustrating the Christian's contending for the prize of the High Calling. Referring to the world racer, he, says: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. . . . I therefore so run, not as uncertainly." The Apostle is here enforcing the necessity of earnestness and zeal in order to attain the mark for the prize set before him. His words, "So run, that ye may obtain," are intended to mean not only that one should run in such a way that he may obtain, but also that he should run as *these racers run*. How was it that these racers in the Corinthian games ran? We reply: "All their nerves and sinews were strung up for the effort being made; and as the distance between their feet and the winning post diminished, they did not flag, but rather threw more exertion into their limbs." We have brought to view in these word's of St. Paul three lessons or admonitions to the Christian in the effort to at least attain the prize: First, the danger of failing at last of reaching the end of our faith through lack of persistent earnestness; second, the large numbers called and the few who will be at last chosen; and third, that mere running does not secure the prize, but the running *to the end*, and reaching the end in the time limit.

The second object that the Apostle ever kept before his mind was, to finish his ministry--to carry the Glad Tidings to all nations; and

Third, the great aim and purpose Of his I life was to reach the mark and receive the Divine approval., Did he accomplish all this? There can be no question that he did. We learn from the Scriptures alone that he carried the Message all over the Roman world before his death. While in prison, waiting the execution of the sentence of death because, of his faithfulness to his Divine mission, we hear him saying, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:, henceforth there is laid-up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day," etc. The great lesson that we are to learn. from these 'words is, that the mark 'Will never be reached, the prize will never be won, except by loyalty to Christ as His will is apprehended in His Word.

### **MORAL COURAGE THAT FEARS NOT THE FROWNS OF FELLOW-CHRISTIANS**

In all the Word of God, we will never find one single exhortation that Christians are to be loyal . to the teachings of human leaders, creeds, etc., except those of inspired men. We do, however, find over and over again, in symbols and plain statements, exhortations, warnings, not to do SOL; no matter if it be specially called teachers, it is the same. And the better we become acquainted with the eventful history of the Christian Church, the more we learn that it has been as a result of failure to give heed to these warning exhortations which forbid the worship of human leaders, that most of the dissensions and strife amongst the Lord's true people have come. Yea, this neglect of the infallibly inspired-messages and this persistent gathering around human leaders, has, when carried to its logical conclusion,, so 'frequently led to utter shipwreck of faith, to the destruction of usefulness in the service of the Divine Master. Furthermore, we find that it has been this which has tested the characters of the Lord's followers

and given them opportunity to reach the mark of character which alone will constitute one an overcomer and at last meet Christ's approval. The recognition and support of human leaders has, more than anything else, been forced by sincere but misguided men as an issue to test Christ's true followers; and in order to follow on. in the path of the just that shineth. more and more unto the perfect day, there is no other way for the true Christian but to hold steadfastly to Christ ' and to be loyal to His Word, as he has come to understand it at the feet' of Christ. It should ever be the fixed determination, the great desire and purpose of the true Christian, to take his position with those who have the moral courage to for their convictions and give solemn. testimony against this great evil--that of following fallible men; and to be. willing to do this at the risk of suffering the .consequences of persecution, of having their name cast out as evil, etc., at the hands of sincere but misguided brethren. *We should always rejoice to be associated with brethren who are cost out and evilly spoken against, purely because of their fidelity to the Word of God; for in so doing we are taking our position with a long line of faithful witnesses for Christ, many of whom have had to lay down their lives to preserve as a legacy to others. that liberty which is in Christ Jesus.*

### **LOYALTY TO GOD FINAL TEST**

In the message to the Church at Philadelphia we have Christ's words: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Hold fast to what? We answer, to the Word and patience of Jesus Christ. As one has said: "Not the word of even the leaders of God's raising up. The truth must ever commend the man, *-never the man the truth.* 'One great danger is, lest, having begun with the former principle, we slip into the latter. Even the truth they teach is not truth received *till it has been gotten at the Master's feet and in communion with Himself,--till you can hold it, not with the, eyes shut, but with the eyes open;* -till you can maintain it *against the very instrument used of God to give it, if need ' be.* 'If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.' Then, hold fast! When it is, no longer a question if it be the truth, but only of its consequences. Hold fast: though those who have held it with you, or before you, give it up; though it may separate you from all else; though it be worse dishonored by the evil of those who profess it; though it seem utterly-useless to hope of any good from it: in the face of 'the world, in the face of the devil, in the face of the saints,--'Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take' thy crown" For many a crown has been lost, and many a crown will be lost, if the Lord should tarry. Yet he who will, hold fast shall find Christ's arms underneath him, Christ's hands upon his hands. He shall not only keep, he shall be kept; in the might of Christ's victory he shall stand, and the crown given he shall cast before the Giver of it as a trophy of His own conquest and the . fruit of His grace.

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God; and he shall go no more out.' A fixed eternal place in. the sanctuary of God; identification with the display of God as revealed in Christ forever; identification with the abiding place of His affections, in which heaven and earth shall meet at last in' an eternal embrace."\*

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\*Grant.

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## **THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST**

SERIES XI-A

### **CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO PHILADELPHIA**

*"And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia write."--Rev. 3:7.*

IT is very generally conceded that of all the seven messages, with the one exception of Smyrna, that addressed to Philadelphia is of deepest interest and of the most vital importance to the faithful. This is true, we believe, for the reason that it describes a state and circumstances that receive only the sweet benediction of Divine approval. Surely the Lord's faithful followers cannot conceive of a more important, desirable and blessed condition to be in than one that meets the unqualified commendation of the One whom they have learned to love above all others--a condition that gives conscious assurance that they are showing forth His praises, by manifesting a oneness with the Father and the Son that causes the world to believe that the Father hath sent Him. (John 17:21.) There are warning words contained in the message to the angel and Church of Philadelphia, but no words of reproof or rebuke. The sincere, the conscientious believer will therefore desire to study carefully and prayer fully these, the Master's words, to discover what it is that receives such unqualified approval, and having discovered it, to seek Divine aid to practice it in his life and association with other ' of the Lord's people.

Viewing it from the prophetic standpoint, it is very evident that, the Philadelphian message does not represent a condition existing in the professing church *as a whole* in any period in history since Pentecostal days. The professed church's condition at the time the Philadelphian conditions are due to begin to be looked for is represented by Sardis, and is that of the darkest period of her apostasy. Neither does it represent any religious system or organization. It seems, rather, to describe a movement in the midst of professed, fallen Christianity, having for its object a revival or a restoration to primitive conditions. This movement, as we shall endeavor to show, seems to .continue even after the Laodicean period and conditions have come in. Let the reader recall that the derivation of the names of these Churches as we have thus far examined them, have been either descriptive of qualities possessed by faithful believers themselves or of favorable or unfavorable conditions existing in the professed church surrounding them; and as the true Church class has met and come in contact with both these favorable and unfavorable conditions, Divine providence has always overruled, to test these, and to give them opportunity to prove themselves overcomers.

### **THE CHURCH OF BROTHERLY LOVE**

The name Philadelphia means "brotherly love," and we may be sure that an assembly of the Lord's people that receives such commendation from the Master, could only represent a movement that would possess a large measure of this grace; indeed, that brotherly love would be that which in a very particular sense

distinguished it. That the manifestation of this Christian grace on the part of the Lord's people is considered by Him to be the most important thing (except the fundamental doctrines of Christ) connected with their witnessing and association together, is evidenced by the many references made by Him to it in the instructions given to His disciples, as well as in those references commending this grace found in the writings of the Apostles. Indeed, one of the most sacred bonds even in the human relationship, is that which should exist between brothers and sisters. So close and tender is this tie, that any success or honor coming to one, arouses pleasurable feelings and emotions in the breasts of all the others. Any injury, any loss coming to one, brings feelings and emotions of sympathy and regret to the others. Any disgrace brings sorrow and shame. God Himself is the author of this human tie, and so far as we know there is nothing like it in all His other creations. On account of the fall, we see today only a faint suggestion of what it would be in its perfection.'

God has been gathering out of this world of fallen ones a peculiar treasure. He is pleased to call them a holy brotherhood; His dear Son being the Firstborn of these many brethren. the Elder Brother, and all of them, children of the Father's own begetting. (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11, 12.) He has instituted ways and means whereby all the peculiarities which go to make up the earthly relationship of brothers shall be lifted to a higher plane and be manifested to the world through them. This relationship was so entirely new -- being described as a "new creation" -- and of such a peculiar character, that a new commandment was given unto them. Concerning this, the Master, who was the beginning of this New Creation, when about to leave His disciples, said: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34.) He further emphasized the importance of this New Commandment by stating that obedience to it was absolutely necessary in order to abide in His love'. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love. . . . This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."--John 15:10-13.

### **"YE ARE MY DISCIPLES IF YE HAVE LOVE"**

The importance of the Philadelphian spirit is further emphasized in the fact that its possession gives positive assurance, is a sure evidence ' that one has passed out from under the condemnation that is on the world and has entered upon the new, the heavenly, spiritual life--lifted upon the plane of this holy, heavenly brotherhood--and has become a child of God, a member of the- New Creation. The Apostle's words concerning this are: "We. know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." (1 John 3:14.) The measure or standard of this love is the same as that which Christ exhibited in His love for His disciples, as we read: "By this we have known love, because He laid down His life on our behalf; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3:16--Diaglott.) The manifestation of this love is stated by the Savior to be a distinctive mark, and the greatest possible evidence we can give to the world that we are His disciples indeed, to prove, demonstrate, the Divine authority of the Christian religion. His words to



this effect are: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."--John 13:35.

The most prominent, striking characteristic of the primitive, Apostolic Church at the time the promise of the Father was fulfilled-when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them-was this Philadelphian spirit (brotherly love). This spirit is described in the words: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said- any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great -power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was- there any among them that lacked,: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts 4:32-35.) This same spirit was manifest in connection with the Second Advent movement, which occurred toward the close of the Philadelphian period. Of course, we are not to understand that their undertaking the communistic Plan or the distributing of their possessions necessarily represented the Lord's good pleasure for them at that time (or for His followers since); nor that it was best for the furtherance of His cause; as was shown in His providential overruling in scattering them. .However, we certainly have in this a perfect picture of the spirit of brotherly love, and it is an exhibition of the chief, the most important and desirable of all the Christian graces; and most naturally would this be one of the most prominent characteristics in any true .reformation or revival, for every such revival represents simply an effort to restore or bring back normal, primitive conditions from which there has been a most deplorable departure.

### **A MOVEMENT TO RECOVER PRIMITIVE PURITY**

Applying this Philadelphian message in the prophetic sense and as naturally following the others in the order of succession, it would be looked for in the period in history immediately subsequent to that of Sardis. This period in its *beginning* features is, well represented by the great Protestant Reformation movement of the sixteenth century. It -will need to be kept in mind, however, that the Sardis conditions continued in the great nominal church system of Romanism, as -well as in the Protestant *nationalized* systems' that came into being soon after the Reformation.. The Philadelphian candlestand in the prophetic sense, therefore, as we have noted, does not seem to represent a particular organization or system, but rather a movement of the spirit of God, sometimes in, and sometimes outside of the professed Christian systems; the object of which has been to recover the true Church, lost amid the confusion and, apostasy of Thyatira and the deadness of Sardis; a movement accomplishing as one of its objects the unifying of the members of, Christ together in one, in the bonds of brotherly love. We are not to suppose, however, that this movement is successful in the sense of bringing into one human organization all the true members of Christ's Body. However, every true revival since the Reformation began has, in its beginning, been very largely marked by a new fervency of spirit, zeal and earnestness, and of necessity is always accompanied by the Philadelphian spirit of brotherly love. The Philadelphian message then would seem to represent, not only a movement connected with the Protestant Reformation, but also all the movements we call true revivals

that have had for their object the restoration of the true Church back to primitive conditions--those that have occurred during and *since* the Reformation. Such movements have' in a special, particular sense been continually operating since the great Protestant Reformation began. Each one, however, has generally ended, so far as organization is concerned, in sectarianism, only, however, to become the occasion for another movement to begin and end likewise. And these continue even after the Laodicean period begins, and will. continue until the end, because the Philadelphian spirit is that which all overcomers in every generation have possessed; and it is the possession of-this *spirit* that constitutes the most important characteristic of 'all overcomers. Such movements always cause the conscience to be purified by the opposition it necessarily has to endure, and *this invariably discovers and brings together the most spiritual*. Consciences are exercised by the preaching of the Word of God; the need of Christ's presence by 'His spirit becomes more and more felt, and more and more the real fellowship of saints is valued, sought for, and experienced. In other words, the general character of all these movements manifests itself as Philadelphian. *Every true spiritual revival has the tendency to break up the sectarian spirit*, and every effort to press the claims of sectarianism *causes the free-indeed Christian to be compelled to separate himself*, that he may continue to enjoy that true freedom found alone- in Christ.

Concerning the period in history covered by the Philadelphia message and this separating feature characterizing it, it has been appropriately remarked that: "This stage of the Church's history, evidently began at the Reformation; a ' nd there are many still living [in the present Laodicean period, 1916] who possess the characteristics described. There is considerable similarity between the work begun on Pentecost and that of Luther and his friends. The Reformation was, in a sense, the beginning of a new era, a dawning of light where all had been darkness, *the separation of the true from the false*, and a new start in the way of truth. . . . During the Philadelphian period, especially during the first and the last phases of it, the faithful have either been obliged *to come out of the nominal temple* [Church], or have *been cast out* for their straight testimony." \*

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\*Z '16-347.

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Sardis represents what might properly be termed a Christianized world, yet still continuing to be the "world lying in the wicked one," with here and there a Christian scattered through it. Philadelphia would seem to represent the operation of God's spirit in these comparatively few "working in living energy to deliver from that which is threatening to engulf the people of God in a flood of worldliness." A movement of such a character can but have the effect of bringing the spiritually minded ones together and uniting them in the bonds of love, which is the Philadelphian spirit. It has. always been true, however, and is no less true in the present Laodicean period, that many unite themselves to these movements who either do not possess, or fail to attain to, the Philadelphian spirit of brotherly love.

Such, because of being carnal and walking as natural men (1 Cor. 3:1-4), become ready subjects of the spirit of intolerance and bigotry, which always leads to dissensions and 'strife over *-non-essential matters*, thus occasioning further testings and siftings in order to make manifest who are exercising the Philadelphian spirit, the spirit of the overcoming class.

### **"THESE THINGS SAITH HE THAT IS HOLY"**

Coming now to consider the message itself in its details, the first thing we see as seemingly in itself sufficient to locate the beginning of the Philadelphian period in history is, as observed in the preceding messages, that of the names and titles assumed by Christ in addressing this Church and its messenger. We cannot but notice that, these very names and titles are those blasphemously assumed by the Popes, who had been claiming to rule, in Christ's stead. The exercise of these false claims on the part of this great hierarchy, flooding as it did the world with its soul-defiling errors, until the pure Gospel had become almost entirely hidden from sight, was that which necessitated a new beginning, or what might be termed a *second* commission to preach the Gospel, as it were. This new beginning started by a recovery of the Bible and a diligent and independent study of the same by the Reformers, Luther and others. The titles and names assumed by Christ in this epistle to Philadelphia would seem to suggest that one special work of the Reformers of the sixteenth century, the beginning of the Philadelphian period, would be that of exposing the false and blasphemous claims of the Papacy. The words of Christ, "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true," are in the original more an expression of title than of qualities possessed by Christ; indeed, they are expressive of both. A very striking rendering of these words, which emphasizes this, is: "These are the words of the True Holy One."\* When we consider that Christ is the only One, except\* the Father, who can rightly assume this title, there is immediately suggested to the mind the similar title assumed by and accorded to the Pope, that of "His Holiness." Students of history are well aware that one of the features of the Reformation work, and a necessary one at that time, was to show the falsity and blasphemous character of Rome's claim. While there were a few all through the long period during which Rome's idolatrous counterfeits of Christianity and blasphemous claims were quite generally believed and acknowledged, who saw in this system the fulfillment of the predictions of Daniel (7:8, 20-26) and St. Paul (2 Thess. 2:3, 4) concerning anti-Christ, it was not until Luther's day that this false claim was so fully exposed as to enable large numbers, even of the world, to see it, and thus cause a most remarkable weakening of its power and influence over the nations, as also the consciences of men. In October, 1520, Luther was first made aware of the Pope's bull of his excommunication. His words on its reception by him, as recorded by the historian, are: "I rejoice in having to bear such ills for the best of causes. Already I feel greater liberty in my heart; for at last I know that the Pope is anti-Christ, and that his throne is that of Satan himself."\*\*

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\*A translation by Joseph Moffatt.

\*\*D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation, Vol. II, p. '141.

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## THE SAVIOR REBUKES THE APOSTASY

The words, "He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth," are also a reminder of the false claims of Papacy. A reference seems to be made in this statement by the True Holy One to the claim that Papacy was making of fulfilling the prophecies concerning Christ's Millennial reign. David's throne, it is well known by students of the Bible, was a type of Christ's throne. Christ was born the heir to this throne. He is represented in this passage as possessing the key, authority, to occupy that throne. In a due time appointed He will take to Himself this authority and reign. The supporters of Papacy apply to the Popes, the prophecies which speak of that reign, and the power they exercised during the Dark Ages: "On thee, most blessed Leo, we have fixed our hopes as the Savior that was to come." These were the words of an adoring bishop to the Pope at the fifth Lateran Council, as quoted by A. J. GORDON.\* He continues: "In his sovereign vicar, Christ has already appeared, and is already ruling, says! Rome. 'in the person of .Pius IX, Jesus reigns on earth,' exclaims Cardinal Manning [in 1871] 'and He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet.'"

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\**Ecce Venit, p. 151*

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It is well known that the Papacy claims to have the power to consign to what they erroneously call the *torments* of hell, as well as to open the door of heaven; in other words, that the salvation and damnation (?) of the human race are in its power. A noted English expositor who visited America in 1860, has said:

"It is difficult in this nineteenth century to credit the records which reveal the unbounded power of the Pope during the Dark Ages, and the nature and extent of the claims he asserted to the reverence and subjection of mankind. If kings and emperors yielded him abject, homage, the common people regarded him as a deity. His dogmas were received as oracles, his bulls and sentences were to them the voice of God. The Sicilian ambassadors prostrated themselves before Pope Martin, with the thrice-repeated cry, 'Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.' 'The people think of the Pope as the one God that has power over all things, in earth and in heaven,' said Gerston. The fifth Lateran Council subscribed, just before the Reformation, a decree which declared, that 'as there was but one body, of the church, so there was but one head, viz., Christ's Vicar, and that it was essential to the salvation of every human being to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.' 'Every spiritual, as well as every ecclesiastical office of Christ, was arrogated unto himself by the "man of sin.'"

"If Christ was the universal Shepherd of souls, was not he, the Pope, the same? If Christ was the door of the sheep, was not he the door? If Christ was the truth, was not he the depositary, source, and oracular expounder of the truth, authoritative, infallible, independent of Scripture, and even *against* it? If Christ was the Holy One, was not he the same, and did not the title, His Holiness, distinctively and alone belong to him? If Christ was the husband of the Church, was not he the same? With the marriage ring in the ceremonial of his inauguration, he signified it; and with his great voice in his Canon law and Papal bulls he proclaimed it to

the world. The power of the keys of Christ's Church and Kingdom, given him, extended into the invisible world. He opened with them, and who might shut? He shut, and who might open? . . . . The souls in purgatory and the angels in heaven were subject to him; and it was even his prerogative to add to the celestial choir; by his canonizing edicts he elevated whom he pleased of the dead to form part -of heaven's hierarchy, and become objects of adoration to men."\*\*

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*\*Approaching End of the Age, pp. 196, 197.*

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Considering the blasphemous character of the Papacy's claims to these titles and powers, and the wide extent to which they were received in Christendom, it can hardly seem otherwise than that the reference to and application of them by Christ to Himself in this epistle can be but for the one purpose of *severely* rebuking those who made these preposterous claims, as well as calling the, attention of His own people to the same.

## **THE REVOLT OF JEROBOAM.**

--JANUARY 1-1 KINGS 12:1--13:6--

*Golden Text.--"Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them."--Ex. 20:4, 5.*

THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL lesson course changes again to the Old Testament. Today we consider the conditions which followed the death of the wise king. And, by the way, while crediting King Solomon with great wisdom, we should not ignore the fact that his life in many respects was a contradiction of his wise utterances. Under the Lord's blessing his rule brought great prosperity to the nation of Israel. Peace ruled within its borders during his lifetime, and those borders were extended so that they included adjoining nations.

The fact that discontent was rife throughout a considerable portion of Solomon's kingdom, so that it was all ready to break out in open rebellion at his death, does not necessarily prove that his subjects were badly governed--oppressed. We find today that many of the best governed and most prosperous peoples are discontented, while many of the badly governed and leis prosperous are contented. Thus in our own nation the blessings and privileges of liberty are not appreciated by all. There is perhaps more complaining under the wisest and best governments in the world today than under the more despotic ones. It may have been the same in respect to Israel. Indeed it would appear to have -been the same in some degree, because we find that Israel never prospered to the same extent subsequently. After their rebellion against what they considered tyranny and oppression, they seemed to be less prosperous than under that which they considered to be oppression.

Solomon's son who succeeded him in the kingdom was Rehoboam. The twelve tribes, while uniting under David and subsequently supporting Solomon,

nevertheless preserved tribal liberties and called a council of all the tribes except the one to which the royal family belonged (Judah-Benjamin being a small tribe attached to Judah). This gathering of the ten tribes, was in the capital city of the principal one, Ephraim, in the city of Shechem. The representatives of the ten tribes made no secret of the fact that they wished assurances from the new king that there would be an abatement of the royal demands in the nature of levies of men for public labor, of taxes, liberties, etc., and that their loyalty to him as their king was more or less in the balance. The king was invited to attend this meeting.

### **WHAT BETTER COULD BE EXPECTED?**

The king was really a better man in some respects than might have been expected when we call to mind that his mother was a heathen woman, and that to please her Solomon had erected a sanctuary to Moloch on Mount Olivet. With such a mother and a royal father whose time was necessarily largely occupied in other ways, it would have been a wonder if Rehoboam had been more godly than he was. The older councilors advised that he yield to the demands of the tribes as gracefully as possible, but the young men expressed the thought that to yield a little would mean a pressure to yield more and would show weakness. They advised that he speak out boldly and bully his subjects into loyalty. He followed their advice and sent as his reply, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions [whips with metal lumps on the strands]." The answer was a foolish one and precipitated the separation of the ten tribes from the two. That separation lasted for centuries; the only healing of it that ever took place was that, after the captivity in Babylon, so many as desired of all the tribes gathered back again into Canaan and were henceforth one little nation.

We are to view the affairs of nations and the affairs of individuals as separate and distinct, though the individuals make up the nations. Things may be working advantageously to the individuals, but disadvantageously as respects the nations, or vice versa. The Lord's people are to learn to trust Him in the guidance of the great affairs of life-that He is overruling in the affairs of nations in the interests of His loyal servants. This was so in respect to Israel's affairs. The split in that nation must have seemed to many of the people a woeful disaster, reducing them as a nation from a high place as one of the principal nations of earth to a much lower level. To some it may seem even to intimate a failure of the Divine purposes-that God never wished the nation to be divided, but wished the Jewish people to become great, mighty, powerful, so that He might accomplish through them the promise that in the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed. But those who took such a view erred. God wished the nation to be divided-He wished to humble them, to weaken them. This is distinctly stated in the lesson, as we read the cause was from the Lord, that He might establish His word through the Prophet Ahijah. Some time before the Lord had sent a message through this Prophet to Jeroboam to the effect that the latter should become king of the ten tribes, and now the answer of Rehoboam paved the way to the accomplishment of that prophecy.

## **PROPER VIEWS OF ISRAEL'S EXPERIENCES**

As in the lessons of the next six months we shall, study the history of Israel, let us view it from this standpoint. Let us not think of the matter as being wholly the result of un wisdom on the part of kings and rulers, but as being a matter entirely overruled by the Lord with a special object in view.

The object in view--indeed the entire object of the Jewish dispensation--was the purifying of Abraham's descendants, so that the Lord might find in that people the most holy, the most devoted, the most obedient, to the intent that when the time should come for the presentation of Messiah, the nation should be represented by its very best people under the most favorable conditions. This was attained. In the time of our Lord, notwithstanding the fact that many of that nation who heard Him were called hypocrites and many others were professedly publicans and sinners, nevertheless the moral and religious conditions of the nation were never better. This is evidenced, we think, by the fact that, in addition to the disciples and the five hundred brethren who received our Lord during His ministry, there were several thousand ready to receive Him on the day of Pentecost, and more thousands subsequently. It is doubtful if as many thousands of "Israelites indeed, in whom there was no guile," could have been found in any other period of Israel's history. The finding of them at that time was by no means accidental, but was the result of Divine providences in their national experience.

The Lord sifted the nation time after time to take out of it the classes possessing less faith and to bring more closely together those possessing more faith, until the best results were eventually found, as we have shown. The experiences narrated in our lesson were the beginnings of a sifting process. The nation of Israel was more or less honeycombed with idolatry, though still the religion of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was their national faith. The temple at Jerusalem was the center of this faith, and the tribe of Judah--through which the Lord had foretold Messiah should come, and in which, therefore, the kingly authority was vested--became on this account the most religious of all the tribes, because thus closely identified with this hope and its fulfillment, and because in their king Messiah's Kingdom was typified as in their sacrifices His sufferings were typified. Both the sufferings and the royal glories, therefore, were more vividly and specially impressed upon the people of Judah than upon those of the ten tribes, whose territory was more or less remote from the capital city, the Temple, etc.,--especially in (a time when there was no rapid means of communication.

During the period of the union of the tribes under David and Solomon, some of the most devoted people of all the tribes had removed to Jerusalem, partly through their religious convictions and for the privilege of prayer in the Temple, and for more frequent association in the religious festivities. With the political rupture came the tendency to cast off all faith in the promises made to the fathers to the effect that a deliverer should rise out of Zion and that this great king should be of the tribe of Judah. Patriotism on the part of the ten tribes would naturally tend to alienate them from these religious promises. They must have remembered that the Lord had said that His lawgiver would not depart from Judah until Shiloh should come--until the Messiah. In harmony with this we shall find, as we progress during this series of lessons, that idolatry began to come into the ten tribes more and more after their separation from Judah, and that likewise, those who respected the

Lord and His promises and were dissatisfied with, idolatry, were disposed to leave their own tribes and to emigrate to the land of Judah. This division of the tribes, therefore, tended to sift the Israelites indeed out of all the tribes into the land of Judah.

### **SIFTINGS OF SPIRITUAL ISRAEL**

Spiritual Israelites studying this lesson should take special note of this feature-should notice that the Lord overruled in all the affairs of the typical people for the welfare of the true-hearted. Applying this lesson to spiritual Israel, we learn not to feel disappointed at what to others might appear to be unfavorable turns in national or temporal affairs, realizing that the Lord is wisely directing, not according to man's wisdom but according to His own plan and in the interest, of His own cause, which means also in the interests of his own people. From this standpoint the Lord's consecrated people may seem less patriotic than others, but they may continually have joy and peace in all the vicissitudes of life, knowing that all things are co-operating for good to them that love the Lord.

Verse 16 briefly tells that the ten tribes revolted from Rehoboam. in 'a quiet and, peaceful manner, advising the king that he must look to his own tribe for support. Verse 17 refers to the Israelites from all these tribes which dwelt in the cities of Judah, and who from religious or other considerations were not moved to join with their tribes in rebellion, but preferred affiliation with the tribe of Judah, in which God, through the Prophet, had declared that His blessing should come, and the worship Divinely instituted at the Temple, built under Divine direction.

The king, uncertain to what extent the dissatisfied ones would carry their threat, sent to them Adoram, the Secretary of the Treasury, the one having charge over the assessments, etc., the same mentioned in 1 Kings 4:6, called Adoniram, who presided over the forced labor. He was probably commissioned to do as previously, call for levies of laborers to serve the king as troops and for general national services, The people promptly resented it, and after the manner of their time the king's messenger was stoned. At this, the king realized that the people were not only sullen but angry and determined, that a rebellion was not only threatened but accomplished, and that, his own life would probably be in danger unless he got back into the boundaries of Judah. The ten tribes chose Jeroboam for their king and supported a separate government. King Rehoboam, loath to lose so large a part of his empire, at first thought to compel the union by putting down the rebellion, but the Lord warned him to the contrary-this also being in accordance with what we have heretofore seen, that it was part of the Divine Plan that the nations should be divided, and that, as we have seen, for the greater blessing of the Israelites indeed.

### **SELFISH EXPEDIENCY MISLED THEM**

Jeroboam, by Divine arrangement the king of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, trusted not in the Lord. To some extent he must have recognized that God had given him the kingdom; nevertheless he proceeded to establish himself in it, leaving the will and power of God out of his consideration. He was a worldly-wise man; expediency was the law which governed his course. He concluded that to make the separation between the ten, tribes and the two tribes lasting, and thus to insure his own throne, the religious arrangements of the people must be changed.,



By Divine order Jerusalem was the center of religious service, and all the people, individually or representatively, were expected to be at Jerusalem three times a year-at the feast of Passover in April, feast of Pentecost in June, and the feast of Tabernacles in October. Jeroboam feared that this recognition of Jerusalem as the center of the religious interests might ultimately lead the ten tribes to long for union with Judah; hence one of his first arrangements was to break the religious tie.

This was done by the establishment of two religious centers favorably located in the ten-tribe kingdom -- one at Dan, in the most northern part, where an altar had long been maintained contrary to Divine arrangement, where certain descendants of Moses had long officiated and continued to officiate under Jeroboam's arrangement. The other sacred place established was Bethel, the place where Jacob had his dream and saw the ladder with angels ascending and descending. This place on this account, had always been somewhat sacred in the minds of the children of Israel. Jeroboam thus showed worldly wisdom in selecting places for the new religious movement, that were already sacred to his people.

### **EVIL GARBS ITSELF AS ANGEL OF LIGHT**

Thus error and everything pertaining to it is always crafty, insidious. Temptations to wrong doing are rarely presented in an open, blunt manner-usually they come clothed in the garments of light and associating themselves with something sacred, claiming to be for spiritual advancement. So Jeroboam claimed that the ten tribes had long enough gone to the farther part of the country; to Jerusalem, to worship; that it was time that Israelites should 'recognize that their God was accessible from other quarters as welt. It was time that they should feel a kind of national pride and patriotism in connection with their religion. Craftily he did not tell them his real reason, that he feared ultimately his own rejection and was merely strengthening his power over them and feathering his own nest.

The two bulls or calves *of* gold were, probably made of wood, overlaid with gold: as we would say, they were golden calves. One was located at-each of the sacred cities appointed, and at each a house was built dedicated to the worship of God, and the golden bull installed as God's representative -- as representative of Him who brought Israel out of Egypt. We are not to think that Jeroboam and the people turned quickly to worship the bull as a god; they surely would have indignantly denied anything of the sort, just as today the Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics deny that they worship images, pictures, crucifixes, etc., and for the same reason, The claim is that these things represent spiritual truths and help the mind, We find to the contrary, however, that the Scriptural declaration alone should be followed, and that any other course is sure to lead to idolatry; and so in this, lesson it is stated that, "This thing became a sin" unto the people. It was not only a sin in that it was contrary to the Divine arrangement to have any other place for a general convocation for worship except at Jerusalem, but it became a sin in that it led them gradually into idolatry. - God was forgotten, and the worship attached more and more to the image.

## **TO RESIST EVIL IS PROFITABLE**

Not content with changing the arrangement, the king changed the priesthood also. The priests and Levites lived in various countries of Palestine, yet had certain seasons of the year, at which they went to Jerusalem to take part in the services there, thus unifying the people and the religious sentiment and continually keeping it fresh. It is probable, though not so stated, that the Levites refused to join with the king, refused to co-operate in the establishment of these unauthorized religious services mixed with idolatry. If so, it was to their credit, But the king would have no difficulty in finding others willing to take the services, and quite probably to these would go the tithes, of the people, This in turn would mean temporal deprivation to the Levites as a reward for their fidelity to the Lord and the Truth. As a consequence many of them removed to the kingdom of Judah. Thug, as we suggested in our last lesson, the sifting of the noblest, truest and. best people from, the ten tribes was gathered into, the nation of Judah, and was evidently a part of the Divine program for preparing that people for the reception of Messiah in due time.

Jeroboam's scheme was far-reaching. In addition to changing the place of gathering and the priesthood, he changed also the date for one of the gatherings, which, instead of being held on the seventh month, he appointed for, the eighth. However, craftily he perceived that by taking the high priest's position to himself and being both priest and king he would attach to. his own person more of the reverence of the people. This was the 'very matter which God had stipulated for the Israelites as being more favorable to their liberties, as put ting less power into the hands of their rulers, as keeping their religion on a separate basis from their politics. But Jeroboam's plan evidently was to take the very step that would forward his personal ambitions. Similarly the emperors of Rome took to themselves the priestly office, in order that ;hey might the more effectually bind the people to them and appear to be not only great military heroes, but the representatives of the gods.

Let us apply to our own hearts the lessons that evil is insidious, and that every parting of the, ways, every leaving of the Divine path, signifies a separation from righteousness to a degree we are unable to estimate at the beginning. Let' us learn that the only safe course to pursue is to trust in the Lord and to be glad to have whatever His providences ,may mark out for us, and to refuse to have anything contrary to His will, however desirable it might be, however gratifying to human ambition.

## **MAMMON WORSHIP IS IDOLATRY**

Let us not too quickly suppose that we are not in danger -along the lines of Jeroboam's 1 fall. Let us note carefully the lesson applied by the Apostle, under Divine guidance, to the New. Creatures', Of this Gospel Dispensation, "Keep yourselves, from idols." On every hand policy suggests the setting up of idols-that we love or respect or serve some one or some thing or l some system in an, improper spirit or degree, and allowing such to take the place in our hearts which property belongs to, the Lord only. Some have their chief temptation from one quarter and others from another quarter. Some are disposed to idolize husband or wife or child, and really, in their affection and interest and devotion, give these a

place superior to that accorded to the, Lord. Others are inclined to idolize wealth and to devote themselves to it, continually serving it, seeking it as though it were the most important thing in the world. Others are disposed to worship fame, desiring to be thought some great one either in the Church or in the world, to attain a position, a pre-eminence; they hunger and thirst more after the pre-eminence than after righteousness--they worship it; it becomes their idol; in their hearts and time and affections it takes to a considerable extent the place belonging to God, whose will and service is correspondingly neglected. Others set up selfishness pure and simple as their idol; they serve self, minister to self, comfort self, please self, etc., instead of God. In many respects this idol of self is the most horrible one of all--the meanest looking. Others, disdain personal ambition and selfish consolations, take on in some respects a nobler thought, yet are deceived by the Adversary in worshipping a sect, a party, a faction. To it they will sacrifice, to it they will yield their lives, for it they would yield their reputations, and the while--like the Apostle, before his name was changed from Saul to Paul--they would verily think that they did God service. Let us, dear brethren and sisters, keep ourselves from all idols,' and, as the Apostle exhorts, sanctify the Lord God in our hearts. "The Lord your God will prove you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."--Deut. 13:3.

## **BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION\***

STUDY XCIV--DECEMBER 18

### **THE POURING OUT OF THE SECOND VIAL-REV. 16:3.**

(566) Describe the symbolism employed in the vision of the pouring out of the second Vial, and state in what other vision similar figures are used? Show wherein they differ. H '20-184.

(567) What class is represented by the Sea? What conclusion would we reasonably draw from the fact that all in the Sea died, whereas, in the symbol of the second Trumpet only one-third were affected? What does their death signify? H '20-184.

(568) What period of time is covered in the pouring out of the second Vial, and when will it be completed? H '20-184.

(569) What is the significance of the statement that the Sea became as the blood of a dead man? Give description of the blood after death and show how this applies in the symbol and what the result will be. Do the facts of history have a bearing on the interpretation of the pouring out of the second Vial? H '20-184, 185.

(570) To what have earlier expositors applied the second Vial, and how does their interpretation fail to meet the requirements of the vision? H '20-185.

## STUDY XCV--DECEMBER 25

### **THE POURING OUT OF THE THIRD VIAL--REV. 16:4-7.**

(571) What is the symbolism employed in the vision of the pouring out -of the third Vial, and explain in what way it differs from that of the third Trumpet vision? H '20-185.

(572) What is *represented* by the Fountains and Rivers, and what is signified by their turning into blood? H '20-185.

(573) Who are represented by -the "angel of the waters"? Give reason. H '20-186.

(574) In what sense has the blood of the saints and martyrs been "Poured out"? How may we expect; the fulfillment. of the latter portion of verse 6: "Thou gavest them also blood to drink"? H '20-186.

(575) From what is the altar symbol of verse 7 taken, and what does it here represent? What is the significance of the words coming from, the Altar? H'20-186.

## STUDY XCVI--JANUARY 1

### **THE POURING OUT OF THE FOURTH VIAL--REV. 16:8, 9.**

(576) Describe the symbolism employed in the vision of the pouring out of the fourth Vial. Where do we find similar symbols employed? H '20-136.

(577) What is the general significance of the Sun when -used as a 'symbol, and how does it apply in this vision? H '20-186, 187.

(578) At about what time should we look for the fulfillment of the fourth Vial symbol? Upon Whom is it poured, and how are they affected? What influence should these conditions have upon the consecrated? H '20-187.

(579) What is the significance of the words "they blasphemed the. name of God"? H '20-187.

(580) What is the claim of some other expositors regarding the fulfillment of these Vial symbols, and wherein do these fail of meeting the requirements? H '20-187, 188.

## **ELIJAH THE TISHBITE**

--JANUARY 8-1 KINGS 17:1-16--

*Golden Text.--"But seek ye first His Kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you," Matt. 6:33.*

IT was during the period of Ahab's prosperity in his wicked course, leading the people of Israel further than ever into idolatry, that the Lord sent him, and the whole nation a rebuke and chastisement'. through Elijah the Prophet. In order to thoroughly appreciate the Lord's interposition in the affairs of Israel-the sending of famines, etc. -we must remember that He entered into a special covenant -with that nation at Mount Sinai when the Law was given them. According to that covenant, the obedience of the nation to the Lord guaranteed it earthly blessing

and prosperity, while disobedience, idolatry, etc., insured it tribulation, chastisement, famine, etc. It is necessary to remember this special relationship of Israel to God, that we be not confused in supposing that every famine in the world's history, every pestilence, every war, etc., has been similarly of special Divine imposition in chastisement, etc. God's relationship to that one nation was peculiar, as expressed by the Prophet. "You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth."--Amos. 3:2.

The great Prophet Elijah appears mysteriously in the history, and with startling suddenness. We have nothing concerning his father and mother. or his family. He is not even called a prophet, but merely, Elijah the Tishbite; and this simplicity adds to his dignity., He came from Tishbe, a town in Gilead, the region east of the Jordan. It is said that Elijah was of the sojourners of Gilead, thus implying that he was not a native of this country. We are informed that Gilead was wild and rugged; that its hills were covered with shaggy forests; its valleys were the haunts of fierce *wild* beasts; its inhabitants dwelt in rude stone villages, and subsisted by keeping flocks of sheep. It is probable that Elijah in his earlier years would do the work of a shepherd on those wild hills.

Elijah appears upon the scene at a very critical period in Israel's history. A greater crisis than this in which he appears could not exist in the history of the Jewish people, and a more remarkable prophet does not claim out notice until we, come to the days of the advent of, the Savior. It was Elijah, and him alone, with no other assistance than that of the spirit of the Lord, who achieved no less a marvel than a Complete revolution of, the existing conditions of. the kingdom of the ten tribes.

### **THE DROUTH PROPHESED**

Elijah went to the capital city, Samaria, and presented himself in the presence of the king as the Lord's mouthpiece, as expressed in the first verse of our lesson by the words, "before whom I stand" -- or whose, representative I am. The announcement was respecting the dearth of rain, which, to people in that part of the world, meant famine and death; and this dearth of rain and dew was to last for years. The Lord might have withheld rain without using Elijah as His mouthpiece in the matter, but in that event the lesson would have been measurably lost upon the people. By sending the message in advance of the drouth it would be evident to Ahab and to all who should ever come to know of the circumstances that the drouth was a judgment from the Lord, a punishment for sin. The drouth and the consequent famine lasted three and a half years, and it is difficult to imagine how the people could have subsisted for that length of time had no rain whatever fallen, as would seem to be implied by the language of the Prophet. However, it is remarked that of the four Hebrew words used to represent rain, the one here used is the one which is generally understood and translated to mean the early rain, the principal rain, which usually came in the fall of the year.

After the delivery of His message the Lord directed His Prophet to go eastward beyond the river Jordan to a brook which cannot now be accurately located. The Prophet was to bide himself-to keep his identity secret, his whereabouts unknown to the king. This was probably for two reasons: (1) To preserve him from special persecution as the one who had brought the trouble, and the one who, if he would,

could remove it. (2) The inability of the king to find the Prophet, whose word alone could, under the Lord's arrangement, revoke the drouth and famine, should cause the king and the people to appreciate the matter as a judgment of the Lord and lead them' to look to the Lord for relief from their chastisements.

### **RAVENS GOD'S. MESSENGERS**

It is estimated that the Prophet spent about a year in the vicinity of the brook Cherith--miraculously supplied with food | by ravens and with water from the brook until it dried up. There have been various speculations respecting these "ravens"--whether or not the word raven is here used in a figurative sense -to represent various assistances, or whether ravens literally fed the, Prophet.. 'It is a matter of fact that the highland, country to the east of the Jordan is just such a place as the ravens usually inhabit, and that bird, is noted as "the most highly developed, of all birds, quick-sighted, sageclous, and bold. In defense of the thought that the Prophet was supplied by ravens, just as the account reads, the following, stories are told as illustrating not only the sagacity of this bird and its natural disposition, but also as illustrating the Lord's providences in respect to other persons than Elijah.

A missionary writes to the S. S. Times respecting ravens that they had frequently snatched food from his children while they were eating. He tells the following story: "Our 'nurse one day prepared a fowl to be grilled, and, standing in the doorway, plate in hand, called the cook to come for the fowl. When the man came the nurse discovered that her plate was empty. A kite or crow had carried away the fowl without her knowledge." The same journal relates a story of an English nobleman, imprisoned and nearly starved, fed by a cat which "appeared at the window grating every day with a pigeon from a neighboring dovecote, and dropped it there for his benefit; this act was repeated day by day during his imprisonment." Stanley's History of Birds tells of an injured Newfoundland dog which was visited at his kennel constantly by a pet raven that brought him bones.

The child of God will have no difficulty whatever in accepting the fact that our Heavenly Father was quite able to use the ravens in supplying the needs of His servant. The lesson to the Lord's people in this connection is expressed in the inspired words, "He careth for you." (1 Pet. 5:7.) "My God shall supply all your needs." (Phil. 4:19.) The Lord did not supply Elijah with luxuries, but with the absolute necessities. And so it may be at times with us. We may not have the superfluity and delicacies of the king upon our tables nor in our wardrobes, yet it may be well with us because of our relationship with the Lord, our realization that we are His servants and that He careth, for us, and is making trials and disciplines of present experiences to work out for us much advantage every way for the future, as well as rest and peace of heart for the present. Let us remember in this connection the words of the Apostle, "Be content with such things as ye have." (Heb. 13:5.) We would not be understood as meaning that we should not note and avail ourselves of any providential doors that the Lord might open before us for a betterment of our condition, but we would impress the thought that contentment with godliness is great gain, and should always be the portion of the Lord's faithful people, as expressed by the poet, "Content whatever lot I see, since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

## **HEATHEN FAITH HONORED**

Those who neglect thus to look for the Lord's leading and guidance in their affairs are not only missing a blessing to their hearts in the present time, but are failing to be prepared for the glorious things which the Lord has in reservation for His people in the- future. The Lord could have continued the miracle wrought in Elijah's case--supplying the water and food indefinitely had He so chosen-but in due time He permitted the drying up of the brook and sent His servant elsewhere, and the facts show and the words of our Lord Jesus prove that he was specially sent to the other location in the interest of a poor widow. This widow lived at Zarephath near the sea coast, in about the same locality as the Syrophenician woman whose daughter our Lord healed. Zarephath was outside the kingdom of Israel, and the widow was evidently not an Israelite, but a godly Gentile--like the Syrophenician woman,. of greater faith than many in Israel. Our Lord's miracle, giving some of the crumbs of Divine favor to the "dogs," Gentiles, indicates to us the Lord's appreciation of well-intentioned people outside of Israel, although under His covenant with that nation they were considered strangers, aliens, foreigners from God and not heirs of the promise made to the children of Abraham.

The Widow to whom Elijah was sent had a little sop, and the famine, which was heavy upon the land of Israel, naturally extended also to the land of Sidon, which lay along the Mediterranean seacoast. Doubtless the wealthy, both in the land of Israel and in the land of Sidon, could procure the necessities of life, and the burden doubtless, fell specially upon the very poor. The, widow in question was gathering some firewood when the Prophet ml and requested a little water. The streams, of that vicinity from the mountains of Lebanon, had evidently not completely dried up, as had the brook from, which the Prophet had just come, and the widow was able to supply him refreshment; but when he asked her for bread she was compelled to tell him the truth, that she was nearly as poor as himself-that the earthen pot in which she kept her store of meal (called in our text a barrel) was nearly empty, and that she was just preparing to cook the last of it, expecting thereafter that herself and her child would die of famine. The Prophet suggested that she first of all make a little cake for him, and that afterward he would guarantee as a Prophet of the Lord that her meal should not decrease nor her bottle of oil diminish until the Lord would send rain upon the earth, which would break the famine. It required great faith on the woman's part to accept this-statement and give to the Prophet of her little store of food. No wonder the Lord was pleased to bless *such* an one--pleased to send His servant to her, though in going to her He passed by many widows in Israel, as our Lord indicates. No wonder her faith is mentioned as a memorial of her.

## **THE LORD LOVETH THE CHEERFUL GIVER**

There are several lessons in this connection for the Lord's people: First, the spirit of generosity--readiness to, give to those who are worthy and are in need. We are not attempting to hold up the case as one having a parallel every day. We are to remember, on the contrary, the famine stress of the times, for, had it been otherwise, quite probably the woman would have been justified in asking the Prophet why he did not labor for his own food instead of asking to share her bite. It was, however, a time of distress, of general lack of employment, etc., and the

woman showed forth a noble sentiment of heart. Neither would we advise that the word of every stranger be taken so implicitly as this widow accepted the Prophet's word. Nevertheless, faith in humanity and faith in God and generosity of heart--willingness to divide our little all with those whom we believe to be the Lord's people and in need--will surely today as then bring a Divine blessing, and we hold that, it is better to err on the generous side than the reverse. Our Heavenly Father is generous, giving continually of His substance to us all, and we are exhorted to be like unto our Father in heaven--kind even to the unthankful -- generous to those who are not generous to us. Whoever cultivates this spirit cultivates the God-like quality, and thus is drawn nearer to the Lord and closely into fellowship with Him, and is prepared for greater blessings to come.

It is estimated that Elijah's stay at the home of the widow, and their mutual participation in her little store of meal and oil, lasted about two to two and a half years. The Lord continually worked a miracle for their sustenance, and He is equally able to work such a miracle today in our interest if in His judgment it were necessary. But such miracles are unnecessary today and under present conditions, and should not be expected. Rather the hearts of the Lord's people should look for Divine interposition in their interests as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. How often has the Lord used figurative ravens and wolves to, bring to His children needed spiritual nourishment! *How often have the trials and difficulties and persecutions of the evil one and his blinded followers been overruled of the Lord for good to those who trust in His name.* This thought is expressed by the Psalmist in that beautiful twenty-third Psalm, in which he represents the Lord's consecrated ones as His sheep, led by green pastures and still waters: then changing the figure he says:, "Thou preparest for me a table in the presence of mine enemies--my cup [of joy, spiritual refreshment] runneth over."

The Prophet's experience at Zarephath also represents spiritual experiences of the Lord's people today. Now often has the Lord provided His people with spiritual refreshments, encouragements, etc., through those who are not His children! As such experiences bring blessings to the Lord's people, they also bring blessings to those who are used to minister them, and thus the same lessons of experience today are continually ours as they were those of the Prophet twenty-five centuries ago. The lesson, for us is the Lord's care and the propriety of confidence in Him, and the realization- that He is able to use any means He may desire in sending us His favors.