

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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HOLDING FAST TO THE LORD AND THE TRUTH

HOW READEST THOU?

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." -- 2 Thess. 2:15.

THE light of the truth upon the Christian pathway has gradually increased throughout the Christian era as foretold in the Scriptures. The testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy, has richly illuminated the Divine Message as was promised, so that none of those walking by faith need falter, nor be dismayed. Such may realize with some of old the force of the Master's words, "Blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear." "The path of the just [the righteous] is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," until now in the end of the Age, and in the dawning of the new day of the Lord, the perfect day, the household of faith is illuminated with the knowledge of the entire Plan of God.

Every doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, we believe, has been clearly made known so as to be generally understood by the Lord's saintly ones. The Holy Spirit has guided the devout followers of Christ "into all truth." (John 16:13.) To a considerable extent this has meant a revelation of "things to come," as the Lord promised.

In all the history of the Church there has not been such a bountiful feast of spiritual good things as in these last times. Oh, the blessedness of these times when the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven have been laid bare! Through the faithful ministrations of various chosen instrumentalities who have shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God, we are permitted to behold what holy men of old, prophets, patriarchs, and many righteous and devout servants of the Lord endeavored to look into, and were not able ; yea, and which even the angels from on high desired to understand, but were not granted the privilege. -- 1 Pet. 1:12.

No wonder we are exhorted to guard the Truth with jealous care, for so great and marvelous is the Lord's Message, and so highly valued by Him that He places it on a parity with Himself, saying, "He that is ashamed of Me and My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed." We are warned that it is an easy matter to let go. of the Truth, and that we should with great care endeavor to hold fast to it, as the .Apostle says, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip [escape from these leaky vessels]." (Heb. 2:1 -- See margin.) The

warning of our Master should never be forgotten : "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness !"Matt 6:23.

"Who May Abide?"

Every consecrated disciple of Christ faithfully walking in His steps and in the light of the Divine Lamp realizes that without doubt we are living in the "last days" of this dispensation -- near the time when it shall be said "His Wife hath made herself ready." Every faithful student of Holy Writ knows that our Lord and the Apostles and Prophets focused their attention upon this particular time,, and uttered many messages that were fraught with the deepest and most solemn significance-messages that warn the Christian to be vigilant, watchful, and constantly on guard lest he let slip his hold upon the heavenly treasures and. all the exceeding great and precious hopes involved in his heavenly calling.

Down the corridors of time there comes the echo of the Prophet's voice, "Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" The intimation is that not many will abide, not many will stand -- the majority will fall. The reason is given. He will require such purity, such holiness, that few will come up to His requirements. The tests He will impose will be like fullers' soap, which is the foe of every spot upon a garment white. His requirements will be like those of a refiner of silver -- all the dross must be eliminated, in a furnace hot enough to insure its separation. The test will last a considerable time; for He will sit as a refiner sits, giving close inspection, that the heat be neither too great nor too little, the time neither too long nor too short.

In the Midst of Fiery Trials Today

While from the days of the Reformation onward,, the sanctuary of the Lord has been undergoing cleansing, it is to be noted that particularly during the last century a considerable number of godly men have been used of the Lord to help many to find their way out of darkness into light, and to take a stand firmly on the side of righteousness, truth and honesty-the side of the Lord. Faithful under-shepherds of the Lord have, by their example and precept and in the most forceful manner, ceased not to warn their brethren in Christ night and day -- yea, and we doubt not that it was often with tears, as they have looked forward to the closing hours of the Church's history. In consideration of the prophetic testimony they have seemed to sense the great trials and tests of faith in the Church's pathway. Alas, the Lord's people throughout the world now find themselves in the midst of those very fiery ordeals to which the warning messages of the past have so often pointed forward. The strongest and most subtle tests .of the Age are upon the brethren.

Why the Pastoral Bible Institute Exists

The fiery experiences above referred to, the painful and distressing circumstances that have developed amongst the brethren in these recent years, have become the occasion for the forming of this association of brethren known as the "Pastoral Bible Institute." The passing of Brother Russell in 1916, as is well known, resulted in a general crisis in the work in which we were all engaged. The change in the management and controllership of the institution conducting the work, meant a complete change in the spirit, policy, and methods of administration; and in that same connection brethren who had served long years in association with Brother Russell and who had occupied important positions of trust and responsibility, were summarily dismissed from their offices and posts of duty for no reason whatever other than that of their stand in defense of the principles of the Truth, and the lifework and ministry of Brother Russell, with whom they had co-operated. As a result of this general sad situation -- departures, changes, and innovations -- many problems, questions, and issues of the most vital importance, involving the Truth and the liberty of the people of God, came before the brethren the world over. Out of this crisis and upheaval that immediately followed, in which many brethren everywhere were deeply affected, there came into existence this association designated the "Pastoral Bible Institute"; friends everywhere meeting with practically the same tests of faith and being called upon to face substantially the same issues and problems, involving their loyalty to Christ the Head, saw the special advantages of uniting together and forming this association, and authorizing the publication of a semi-monthly journal and such other forms and statements of the Truth, as would be within their power. This gathering together in this arrangement represents an honest endeavor of earnest and sober brethren to preserve the purity and simplicity of the teaching of Christ and the Apostles, and the upholding of the Truth in general. More than this, the object of this united effort has been to mutually encourage and assist the brethren to hold fast to the Truth and to maintain a proper poise and balance spiritually amidst all the perplexities and confusion of the present hour; and further that the brethren might, in this manner, more effectually bear testimony to the Truth, and carry on a work of the ministry to whatever extent it might please the Lord in the remaining days while we sojourn in the flesh.

For Mutual Assistance

Nor have the brethren who have been exercising the stewardship of this ministry, taken on themselves these offices, privileges, responsibilities, or to any extent sought to act on their own initiative. It was only after they were appealed to by hundreds of brethren in all parts of the world that this plan for mutual encouragement and for carrying on a ministry was formed; one of the provisions being that those whom the friends desired to thus serve and discharge this responsibility should be elected annually by brethren at large.

As is known by many, the chief and principal features of this ministry relate to the issuing of a semi-monthly journal, "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom," and otherwise sending forth the Divine Message in printed form by means of books, leaflets, etc.; additionally, that of assisting brethren of ability to travel from place to place and minister the Word of Grace to larger or smaller groups of friends who desire and request such service. The Lord has very graciously blessed what has been done up to the present time.

If any are inclined to ask, by what authority is such a ministry undertaken, or, have we the ordination of any human system or arrangement, our reply is that as Bible students we have learned that all consecrated believers are ordained to the ministry -- anointed of the Lord to preach; and we are instructed that such need look to no human anointing or authorization to bear the Message. All who have the spirit of the Lord God, upon them as members of the Christ are anointed to preach; no brother, therefore, or group of brethren, could be said to have a monopoly over the ministry of the Word.

Known by Their Fruits

But how will others know that a brother's ministry is of the Lord, and such as they would be safe in accepting as having the Lord's approval? Our reply is that we believe that **faithful** ministers of the Lord will not need to make any announcement or proclamation regarding themselves, that they are being used of the Lord. We believe that they will need to go into no system of argument to establish their identity as the Lord's servants or as His instruments of bearing His Truth to others; neither will it be necessary for them to issue any commands or threats to others to coerce them into recognizing their authority as the Lord's mouthpiece. To the contrary, all who have been anointed *of* the Spirit of the Lord, and who are properly ordained to bear the Message, will, so display the same in their conduct and in the **kind of message** they give out that others will understand that they are truly representing **the Master and His spirit**. Thus, as it was said concerning the Apostles that the people perceived that they had been with Jesus and learned of Him, so this is still true of the representatives of the Lord. We are to recognize those who would assist the Church by their example, their fruits, and by the spirit and message they proclaim.

Since the starting of this journal, more than seven years ago, we have been brought into communication with brethren in all parts of the world; many tell of their pain and heartaches during the past nine years, and of the grace of the Lord that has so marvelously sustained and kept them through all of their experiences. These also write of how they appreciate more than ever the Truth, the knowledge of the Lord, the knowledge of the principles of truth and righteousness, received mainly through the ministration of our Pastor while he was with us, and that this knowledge is truly their shield and buckler at the present time. Others there are who, finding themselves passing through the mists and shadows of these latter days, and confronted with many

perplexities, ask us to point them to some human channel or instrumentality on which they can lean and trust, and in fact, inquire if the "Pastoral Bible Institute" or the "Herald" claims to be a special channel on which they may rely. Our reply to these is, that we have entertained no thought whatever of this kind. To the contrary, we should regard any such claims, whether made by us or others, as **presumptuous and entirely unscriptural**. We can do no better than remind all of the Savior's instructions on this point: "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." The Master thus taught His followers to recognize no supremacy amongst themselves in the sense, that any of their number would have authority and predominance over the others, except that the Apostles themselves were divinely ordained to be the twelve foundation stones, and the mouthpieces for the entire Age. Thus, as we read over the record of the experiences of the early Church, we cannot but be impressed with the purity and great simplicity of the arrangements by which all were recognized together as brethren of the one Master. This very fact should teach us that any device or arrangement that we might set up in the way of a human headship would be contrary to the Lord's Word on the subject, and would be sure to work injury sooner or later.

The Divinely Appointed Channels

Notwithstanding the fact that all the warnings of Holy Writ are against anything in the nature of human headship -- leadership amongst God's people, the history of the Gospel Church shows that her greatest failures have been along this very line. Let us, therefore, dear brethren, note well the lessons of the past and profit by them. Do not the Scriptures teach that the Great Head of the Church Himself, is our only source of help? and .He has promised to guide and be with His people even unto the end of the Age. Concerning the Lord's arrangement for the guidance of His Church, Brother Russell said"

"Divine truth is never found except in the divinely appointed channels; and those channels are the Lord and the Apostles and Prophets. To continue in the doctrine set forth in their inspired writings, to study and meditate upon them, to trust implicitly in them, and faithfully to conform our characters to them, is what is implied in continuing in the Word of the Lord." -- Z. '03-61.

Some dear brethren have written us indicating that they are inclined to grow tired and impatient, as well as doubtful to some extent, because all of the various features and developments that we were expecting have not come about as rapidly as we had supposed they would some years ago. We desire to encourage all such to lift up the head, that they grow not weary in well doing. All the signs about us indicate that the Kingdom of the Lord is even at the door. If it has pleased our Father to permit us to sojourn here for a little longer time than we had supposed, let us rather be glad and rejoice in the further opportunity of bearing testimony to the Truth, and of proving our love for Him by serving Him and the brethren. Let us consider that if but of gratitude and

thankfulness to God we have consecrated our lives to Him, this consecration is not unto a certain date to which we may look forward, but until our sacrifice is consumed in death -- "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." -- Rev. 2:10.

Some have appealed to us to open the columns of the "Herald" to all who wish to present their views, no matter how contradictory they may be, or how visionary and far-fetched. Again we must express our regret to disappoint some along this line. We are living at a time when there is much confusion existing everywhere. Many voices are appealing to the Lord's people from various directions. We do not believe that it would be pleasing to the Lord to encourage this confusion by helping to sound these conflicting voices and printing in these columns all the personal notions and speculations of various brethren, however well meaning they may be. To the contrary, we believe that the Lord's leading rather is that we should exercise great care in whatever is presented before the Lord's sheep. The Spirit of the Lord itself would so dictate. We cannot imagine our Lord or the Apostles taking part in furthering any line of teaching that they did not regard as truth.

Still there are brethren who write us, advising that we should now repudiate many of the precious truths that have been made clear during the past century or so. We are sorry to disappoint any in this respect, but must plainly state that we have no thought whatever of repudiating any truth.

Our Message the Old, Old Story

Some have wondered why we do not undertake to publish some new light on the Bible -- why we do not bring forth something fresh and startling that no one else ever thought or heard of. We would say on this point, that we are presenting the truth of the Lord's Word as fast as we see it. We do not believe that the Lord wishes us to be looking for and craving something new and startling. The story of heavenly love is not new; it is many centuries old. It is the same truth announced by the angels and taught by Jesus and the Apostles and Prophets.

Nothing in these remarks, however, is intended to discourage the Lord's people from walking in the light, which they are exhorted to do -- of seeing more and more clearly the various details of the Divine Plan for the establishing of their faith, and for the assisting of character building. Far be it from us to put the slightest hindrance in the way of the Lord's people, as they journey in the path of light that is promised to grow brighter all the way. However, looking at the example and teaching of our Lord and the Apostles we recognize that the advancement in the light was to be a gradual matter, as promised by the Master Himself: "He [the Holy Spirit] will guide you into all truth and show you things to come."

As for the special revelation of truth in these last times -- this is in keeping with the foregoing, and with our Lord's promise to gird

Himself and to come forth at His Second Advent to serve the household of faith with things. new and old. And have we not 'had most convincing evidence that the Lord has been fulfilling this promise?

Finally, it is well for all to remember that while the Scriptures admonish that we seek for the Truth and .seek to make progress in the same, the Word, of the Lord just as truly **disapproves of our striving to be wise above what is written.** Let us not forget the solemn warning in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." This warning would seem to be against everything in the nature of unsound doctrine -- of that which is visionary, speculative, or fabulous. Nor are the Lord's people to give heed to those teachers who are unsound in the faith: We believe that the Apostle Peter tells us what sound doctrine is when he states that **"We have not followed cunningly devised fables,** when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; but were eye-witnesses of His majesty." (2 Pet. 1:16-18.) Neither our Lord nor St. Peter nor any of the Apostles proclaimed their .own guesses or fancies. They gave only what they were sure was the Divine Message, and such as they were authorized to bear to others, as they well knew that it was only the truth that would sanctify and set apart for the Divine service. Therefore all the brethren are admonished to "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." "Try the spirits [doctrines, teachings]." (1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 4:1.) No saint should allow another to do his thinking for him, but each should seek to be such a developed Christian, and to so exercise the spirit of discernment, that he will be able to detect the difference between good and evil, and discern between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

The Lord Shall Judge His People

In the first article of the initial issue of this journal, December 1, 1918, we stated that the spirit and policy of the "Herald" would be strictly in accordance with the principles and precepts of the Great Founder of Christianity, who gave us the one universal rule of action, viz.: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another." (John 13:34.) We have no thought or intention of departing from this standard. Accordingly, as stated in that issue of this journal, we will not enter into any quarrel or controversy with those who may choose to view matters differently from us; neither shall we in the columns of the "Herald" undertake to warn others against such. We believe that we need not be troubled about any one who may be striving against us, that we should warn others respecting them. If we have a proper focus on the precepts of our Father's Word we should see that the prerogative of judging others is not one that is given to any of the Lord's people at the present time. If others, therefore, differ with us in their methods of teaching and service, we shall not judge them into the Great Company class, nor into the Second Death, .nor into .any

condition of disfavor. We shall not judge them at all! We are sure the Lord is abundantly able to judge His people; and He assures us that in due time He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest those of whom He approves. Hence it is not for us to even attempt to say what the standing or condition of any one is before the Lord. He is the one who is dealing with His people, and His Word assures us that He knoweth them that are His. On this point Brother Russell wisely said:

"It is not for us at the present time to pass judgment upon, any one. It is **not for us to say that this one or that one belongs to the Little Flock or to the Great Company.** According to the Scriptural instructions, we know that the Lord will not make public His decision of this matter until the end of this Age. Then He will make a decision as to those who will receive the higher nature and those who will receive the subordinate nature. We are all 'called in the one hope of Our calling' (Eph. 4:4), and it is for each of us to make our calling and election sure. Our trials, our difficulties, our weaknesses, are so different that **only the Lord will know or can determine who are worthy.** The Apostle declares that He would not even judge himself, let alone others. There is one that judgeth, even Christ." -- Z. '14-38.

In consideration of all the circumstances, dear brethren, and standing at the threshold of the Kingdom, what manner of persons indeed ought we to be in all manner of conversation and godliness! In view of these things, shall we not admonish one another, yea, all the brethren, to diligence, carefulness, and to patient endeavor to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. Above all, we exhort to great loyalty to the Word of God, and loyalty to sound doctrine, and to the great and holy principles of truth and righteousness therein laid down; .not forgetting that humility and meekness and patience and love are most important essentials, and only as we have these largely developed as the controlling factors of our lives, will we be judged more than overcomers and be given an entrance abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

HAS THE WORLD OF SIN AND DEATH ENDED? HAS THE KINGDOM OF GOD BEEN ESTABLISHED? WILL MULTITUDES OF THE PRESENT LIVING GENERATIONS ESCAPE THE TOMB?

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." -- 2 Pet. 3:10. "And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts." -- Hag. 2 :7.

THUS do the Scriptures explicitly declare that the second great dispensation of man's history, termed by Jesus "this world," and by St. Paul "this present world," is to be of temporary duration, that its bounds and limitations have been pre-determined; and the Divine decree has gone forth that it is to end in disaster and will be succeeded by an altogether different dispensation or world. Believers in the Bible, and particularly devout prophetic students, have for centuries and especially in these latter days, devoted much time and patient labor in searching the sacred Scriptures and the history of human events to ascertain if possible a clearer vision of the Divine purpose concerning the changes that will usher in the last great dispensation.

Changes Foretold

As the ancient Prophets have written profusely respecting these great changes to come in the transition period between the second and third worlds, it is not to be wondered at that present unparalleled conditions and developments amongst men, involving general social disorder and confusion and unheard of changes, are regarded by the thoughtful, as most ominous, if not indeed the very fulfillment of the inspired messages uttered many centuries ago. Certain of the Apocalyptic visions also clearly depict the concluding scenes of this Age, and carry us over the stormy era of the transition into the "new heavens and new earth" epoch, designated "the world to come wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

* See "Revelation of Jesus Christ," Vols. I and II.

The question before us is, Can it **now** be said that the old world has passed away, and that we are **already** living in the new dispensation, or "world to come wherein dwelleth righteousness"? Has the Kingdom of God come and **been** established on the earth? Following up this thought, Is it **now** due time to proclaim to all men that the world of sin and death **has** ended, and that therefore vast multitudes, even millions of humanity of the present living generations, will never enter the tomb? **What do the facts of life teach?**

Devout and reverent students of the Divine Word, possessed of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of sobriety and humility, will of course adopt the Divine viewpoint and earnestly seek to reach conclusions that are well supported by clear and positive statements from the inspired Word. The spirit of presumption, the spirit of worldly wisdom that seeks to be wise above what is written, is not approved by the Lord, and should be avoided by all those who desire to be in harmony with God.

Still in the World of Sin and Death

As pointed out on the Chart of the Ages, the working out of the Divine Plan spans three great periods or epochs, known as "the world that was," "this present evil world," and "the world to come"; the word "world," as we have seen, being used to designate the dispensation, the state or general order of things existing among men. All agree with St. Peter's testimony: the first world, the character of which was evil, ended at the flood -- a period of 1656 years, and there commenced what the same Apostle terms "the world that now is" -- "the heavens and earth which are now." The second epoch; like the first, represents an evil order of things, and therefore is to have an end. Its time of duration is from the flood to the establishment of God's Kingdom at Christ's Second Coming. The testimony of the Scriptures agrees with the facts of history that the second great dispensation of human history has been evil throughout and sacred prophecy points out that it will continue to be so to its very end. In other words, this second world represents the continuation of the reign of sin and death. As Satan, the one who rules throughout the second epoch, is himself possessed of evil and is in opposition to the Divine government; so the world or order of things, human governments, etc., over which he presides is a sinful one. The following facts therefore concerning the present dispensation should be carefully noted and borne in mind

(1) The second epoch or world is presided over by Satan, the Adversary of God and man. -- John 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4.

(2) During the second dispensation under Satan, who has usurped the controllership of the world, man is permitted to endeavor to govern himself and to rule the earth. -- Dan. 2:31-43 ; Rom. 13:1; Dan. 5:17.

(3) During the second dispensation the arrangement of things on earth, human government; order of society, etc., under Satan's influence is described as being unrighteous, evil, out of harmony with God, and therefore ordained to come to ruin. -- Dan. 2:44; Mal. 3:15 ; 4:1; 2 Pet. 3:12.

(4) The second dispensation represents a world of pain, sickness, sorrow, weeping, sin and death. -- Psa. 30:5 ; Rom. 8:19, 22 ; Job 14:1-12.

Satan Still Prince of This World

Now with these facts before our minds, we inquire:

First, Is Satan, as the adversary of God and man, still presiding over the affairs of men? What do the outward evidences show along this line? We reply that all the signs and evidences indicate most clearly that Satan is still, as Jesus termed him, "the prince of this world," or as St. Paul represented him, "the god of this world." Are there not still great and gigantic forms and systems of superstition deeply entrenched in the earth, and are not the masses of our race still held in bondage to one or another of the forms of idolatry and heathen worship? Even in those portions of the earth that have come under the civilizing influences of Christianity, what do we find? General ignorance of God

arid the Divine Plan; and instead of the Truth, various shades of misbelief and superstition prevail; thus making most applicable the prophetic picture: "Darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people." (Isa. 60:2.) May we not, therefore, regard the proof as conclusive in this first proposition alone, that we are still living in the old dispensation. But we will pass on to the next point:

Second, Is it not still true that mankind are permitted to try various forms of government in the endeavor to rule themselves and the earth? Our answer without hesitancy must be in the affirmative. The governments of the earth, or what the Scriptures call "the kingdoms of this . world," are still intact, many of them still in well organized form, still exercising general control of the affairs of the people. It is indeed true, the World-war constituted a very severe shaking, so that several of the European powers were compelled to change their form from that of kingdoms or monarchies to one or another of the socialistic or democratic forms of government; but they still are organized governments, and represent human attempts to rule the earth after much the same manner that has prevailed all along in the past. Not only so, but the words of the Prophet are not yet fulfilled -- "the desire of all nations" has not yet come. The nations are not yet in a state of mind to desire the new government; not until the whole symbolic earth has been devoured with the fire of His jealousy will the pride of man be sufficiently humbled; then He will turn to the people a pure language and they shall call - upon Him with one consent. Then the desire of all nations shall come. Thus we have in the second consideration strong evidence that we live in the old dispensation. But let us note further:

Overthrow of Satan's Empire Not Yet but Soon

Third -- the proposition set forth in the Scriptures that the arrangement of the affairs, governments, etc., upon the earth during the second epoch are of an unrighteous character, and though ordained or permitted of God, are doomed to destruction and ruin. Surely, no one of right mind would assume the responsibility of proving that the "powers that be" have been transformed and have become Godlike and righteous. All the evidence is to the contrary -- the spirit of greed, avarice, and selfishness continues to rule the nations and peoples of the earth. The spirit of strife and bloodshed is still abroad everywhere, and the Daily Press overflows with evidences convincing us beyond the shadow of a doubt of the wickedness and unrighteousness of the present order of things, and proves beyond any question that though the Divine counsels have passed the solemn asseveration that the order of things in the second epoch shall end in ruin and be utterly removed, and though everything about us speaks of the close proximity of that time, **it has not yet come to pass** leaving us to believe that we are living under the reign of evil, and therefore in "this present evil world."

Fourth, Are we not still living in a world of pain, sickness, sorrow, weeping, sin, and death? Surely in the frightful sights of wretchedness, misery, sorrow, and death that confront us on every hand we have the most incontrovertible proof that we are dwelling in the same epoch in which our forefathers have lived and died, and the poet has well said the truth

"Now the world is full of suffering,
Sounds of woe fall on my ears,
Sights of wretchedness and sorrow
Fill my eyes with pitying tears."

Yea, verily, it is the same world that dates back to the antediluvian period, the world in which faithful Abraham and other ancients of his class sojourned as pilgrims and strangers, labored and struggled, trusting in the promises of God and hence looked forward to a "better country" (the new order of things on earth), a city (kingdom) whose builder and maker is God; the same world in which sorrow and death reigned when Jesus lived, suffered and died nineteen centuries ago; the same evil dispensation in which faithful followers of Christ have borne the cross from the days of the tragedy on Calvary even until this day. Moreover, the same crimes, the same wickedness, the same sins that blackened and cursed the earth in the days of the Pharaohs, in the days of the Caesars, and throughout the long and weary centuries in which the Apocalyptic woman sat enthroned upon the scarlet colored beast-the same horrible sights and sounds still darken and curse the ways of the sons of men, leaving therefore no room for doubt that we are still living in the second great epoch of human history-the world of sin and death.

The World of Righteousness and Life Future

But let us turn our attention for a moment to another viewpoint, and consider the nature of the third world or dispensation:

(1) The Scriptures unequivocally teach that third world or epoch is to be presided over by the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. -- Zech. 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:25, 26; Isa. 9:6.

(2) During the third dispensation, under Christ and His Bride; the human race will not be permitted to make any attempt at self-government, for the Kingdom of God will then hold sway even unto the uttermost parts of the earth. -- Psalms 72:7, 8; Isaiah 9:7; 2:2; Revelation 19:15.

(3) During the third dispensation, the arrangement of things on the earth, the organization of society under Christ's influence, is represented as being just and righteous, in full harmony with God and therefore ordained to abide forever. -- Isaiah 11:1-5 ; 28 :17 ; Psalm 98:9 ; 2 Peter 3:13.

(4) The third dispensation is represented as a world of life, joy, peace to all who will be permitted to abide; and pain, sickness, sorrow, weeping, sin, and death will flee away. -- Revelation 21:1-4; 22:17; Acts 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:55.

In the light of the Bible description of the "world to come" surely no one who is at all established in the Truth would for an instant claim that any of the above four propositions are fulfilled or are even to any degree in process of fulfillment at the present time. It would be folly to claim that Christ is now reigning on earth in the sense of His Kingdom being established here, governing in the affairs of men.

Again the fact that fallen humanity are still permitted to attempt to govern and rule themselves is proof that Christ's Kingdom is not yet established.

Moreover, none can claim with proof that the present order of things is righteous, any more than it has been in the past centuries of the world of evil.

Now the fourth proposition: In the face of decay, ruin and death, surely no sane mind will claim that we have entered a world of life and that pain, sorrow, and death are even to any extent in process of passing away.

Nothing in any of the statements foregoing is intended to disclaim or deny that we are living in very close proximity to the third dispensation or world to come. As repeatedly pointed out heretofore, we freely and fully believe that the voice of prophecy is rapidly fulfilling in our midst. The prophetic testimony without exception assures us that the present dispensation is to close amidst much confusion and disorder in human affairs, that this is the Divine method of rebuking the pride and selfishness of humanity and preparing men to see the

need of Divine interposition in the establishment of the long-promised Kingdom in the third world. Indeed, faithful Watchers who in accordance with the Master's advice are observing the signs of the times and noting the developments amongst the nations, cannot avoid the conviction that in the great chain of chronological events we have come close up to the Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty; that for some time past we have been living in the Day of His Preparation; that many of the blessings of our day may properly be regarded foregleams of the New Day that is about to dawn but **has not yet been ushered in**, for a "dark night" must precede. Even some great minds of the world, not influenced by the "more sure word of prophecy," are describing in language similar to that used in the Scriptures, what the present trend of events may lead to.

Earth's Millions Still on Road to Tomb

Coming to the third division of our subject -- Will vast throngs of humanity now living not die? It will be recognized that the items reviewed foregoing, together with the facts and Scriptures presented, have a most important bearing upon this question and lead to the unavoidable conclusion that such a message to the world at the present time is entirely out of order. We cannot announce to men that the Kingdom is established when such is not the case. Though it be indeed true that there are signs of the approaching Morning, that the day of Christ's reign cannot be far distant, yet none can definitely forecast the exact time when it will take place. That Adamic death will cease in the Millennial Age, we most firmly believe, for it will be the Age of life, but as to how **early** in the Age it will stop, we believe that none can know. There is nothing in the Divine testimony to indicate how soon Adamic death will cease after the Kingdom is established, whether one year, ten years, or a hundred. years. We may indeed draw certain inferences that might be considered reasonably reliable, and we might derive a certain amount of comfort from those reasonable inferences, but as for forming those inferences into a positive message, and announcing our guesses as conclusive facts, this, we believe, would be displeasing to the Lord.

The words of the Master have been quoted as authority for this message of the present generation escaping the tomb: "He that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." Let it be remembered that Jesus spoke these words nearly nineteen centuries ago, and applied them then, but that did not signify that the dying process stopped in any of our race. The words fulfilled in this Gospel Age have meant that all obedient believers in Christ have escaped the condemnation of death. (Rom. 5:1:) Such have passed from death unto life. (1 John 3:14.) As justified believers, new creatures, such are never counted of God as going into death -extinction and annihilation. They live unto Him, and in this sense, therefore, never die. Again the words "He that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die," may be also applied to humanity in the Millennial Age, after the Kingdom is established, when the new

order has come in, with its life-giving and healing forces and influences. But as we have not yet entered the Age of Life, we cannot promise the world immunity from death while it is still reigning.

"Except Those Days Be Shortened"

The statement of our Lord given in this connection is frequently urged, "Except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved," implying that the days will be shortened and that there will be flesh saved, or pass through the time of trouble without dying: But even in this remark made by Jesus, we see nothing to warrant the startling proclamation to the world at the present time that many of them will not die, for none can know just when the time of trouble will end, and as already intimated, it cannot be determined with absolute certainty that some of the flesh that is saved or passes through the time of trouble might not thereafter pass into the tomb. We trust not to be misunderstood with regard to any of the statements we are now making. When pressed with the question, Should we not think it a reasonable inference that some who pass through the time of trouble to its end might not need to ever die, we would reply that we might regard this as a reasonable inference, that on account of the Kingdom then being established, it would be a reasonable supposition that those who were obedient **might** not need to pass into the tomb; but what we are endeavoring now to say is that there is a vast difference between a mere supposition or inference and that which is known to be positive fact and truth. We must therefore take the position that we are not to preach what we might think are reasonable inferences and give them to the world as facts or established truths.

Bible Silent on This Question

Another text urged upon us for consideration as bearing upon the above proposition is that found in Zeph. 3:8, 9: "After this will I turn to the people a pure language," etc. This text is urged as proving that vast numbers of humanity now walking the streets will never know what it is to die. The reply is that the language of the Prophet must be viewed in the light of what we have just said foregoing. None can know the end of the time of trouble, and even though we could locate that, there is no positive testimony as to how soon men will cease dying after the Kingdom is established. The inference would be that it would not be long, but in view of the fact that the Bible is silent on this question as to just how and when Adamic death will cease, surely it cannot be acceptable to the Lord that we proclaim to men that they will never die, when as a matter of fact all around us the race is dying. Fresh graves are to be found in every cemetery. The druggist, physician, hospital, undertaker, are all actively engaged, each in his own line. The headlines of the Public Press are constantly announcing the reign of death and lists are given of those who have suffered death through some dreadful calamity, storm, or accident. Whatever message we give to men must be **according to the facts as we know them**; and

the facts as they are apparent all around us are that the reign of sin and death continues on.

The Christian's Message Unchanged

We conclude, therefore, that there is nothing in the messages of our Lord and the Apostles or Prophets to warrant Christians today in supposing that they should inject some change into the Gospel Story. Our Lord instructed that the good word of the Kingdom was to be preached unto the end of the Age. He announced His theme and the Message that He was authorized to give, saying: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, to comfort all that mourn." These Gospel words in brief embody the entire kernel of the theme, from the days of Jesus down to the very end of the Age when the last members of the Church would be concluding their pilgrimage. We may include with this, the forecast of the, more sure word of prophecy which explains the meaning and the necessity for the general trouble in the end of this Age termed "the day of vengeance of our God." We may point to the signs of the times which, in the light of prophecy, make manifest the close proximity of the end of the long winter-time of the reign of sin and death. We may and should assure the world that the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," will signify that all the millions of the dead, as well as all the millions now dying, will come forth from the tomb-they will hear the voice of the Son of Man and will have opportunity to -be uplifted and blessed and to attain eternal life in Paradise on the terms of obedience then offered.

"Hold Fast the Form of Sound Words"

The Apostle urges the brethren in Christ to let their moderation be known unto all men. Surely, if ever there was a time when the Lord's people needed to be moderate, conservative, and reasonable, it is at the present time, when there seems to be such a tendency to indulge in that which is speculative and spectacular. It was to counteract this very tendency that the Apostle Paul admonished Titus, saying: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." (Titus 2:1.) Again, the same Apostle exhorted Timothy, saying: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 1:13.) Again, we have St. Paul's most timely admonition, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." (2 Tim. 3:14.) Surely all of these faithful admonitions bid us exercise great carefulness as we attempt to handle the holy things of the Lord's Word, and to realize the responsibility in connection therewith. Such careful concern for the Lord and for His Message, we believe, will lead all 'faithful brethren to see to it that all their conclusions, as well as all the messages they proclaim, no matter from whom they may

emanate, are squared by the Word of the Lord and proved to be positive and established truths before they are proclaimed.

PRESENT TRUTH AND OUR STUDY OF CHRONOLOGY

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these, things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth:" -- 2 Pet. 1:12.

PERHAPS none knew better than St. Peter the meaning of his own language with regard to being established in the present truth. His thought evidently was that of being grounded and fixed in the truth that was then due the Church; and of (course the inference is that there were truths then enjoyed by God's servants not proper to be revealed prior to that time; hence the term "present truth," as distinguished from whatever truths might have been possessed prior to that time.

Inasmuch as the followers of Christ have been admonished to continue to walk in the light and to continue to make progress in the pathway of truth, we observe in our study of the history of the Church's experience of the past nineteen centuries that the faithful have been kept, protected, and blessed with an increasing understanding of the Divine purposes, even though it has seemed at times that the surrounding powers of superstition and darkness would almost overwhelm the seemingly weak and insignificant vessels of light. The promise of the Master, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the Age," is seen today to have been verified, and His true followers have never been permitted at any time to be overcome by a deluge of darkness or by the triumph of the forces of evil.

"Brighter and Brighter Unto the Perfect Day"

Now that we find it our happy privilege to be borne down the stream of time to the end of this Age, where we witness the closing scenes of this dispensation, we have seemed to see a new and deeper meaning in the promise of the Savior, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God," in view of the fact that a fuller revelation of the Divine program is due to be made known to the Church, according to the promise of the Master Himself, as well as by the mouth of His inspired representatives. (Luke 12:37; 1 Thess. 5:4, 5, 6.) Therefore, the knowledge that has been committed to followers of Christ in modern times has become the occasion for them to make special application again of the language of the Apostle, "though ye know them, and be established in the present truth:" The assembling together of the various fragments of truth, by which we have been enabled to see the harmonious whole of the Divine Plan, has constituted the message for these days that has been most appropriately designated "Present Truth," as distinguished -- from the more or less hazy and

beclouded presentations of the Message of the darker past; and throughout the days of the Harvest of this Age, servants of God have realized it their privilege and mission to herald this further message concerning the Divine program, and call the attention of all truth seekers to the fact that this is the present truth, or the light for the last days, by which all the faithful might become so strengthened and fortified as to endure faithfully the render of their pilgrimage in the Narrow Way.

But the "perfect day" has not yet been reached in the final sense; and, as we find in these last times there. appears to .have been a general harvesting work going an, the path of the saints has been growing brighter with the rays of truth; so faithful servants of the Lord continue to realize it their privilege to press on in the pathway that continues to shine by reason of time axed events making manifestly more clear "the snore sure word of prophecy" that was promised to continue to shine in a dark place until the day dawn.

Recent Study of Chronology

Recently there has been presented in the columns of this journal* a general review and examination afresh of the subject of the times and seasons and chronological lines, the result of which has pointed to some different conclusions from what many of us held in farmer years. Asked if the change in some of our chronological deductions means to some extent a departure from and repudiation of present truth, our reply has been that there is no rejection whatever of present truth. The facts are that a number of events and developments that were expected to be in evidence by this time have not materialized. Reason and candor compel use to acknowledge that we have been to some extent in error. Most evident it is that the "times of the Gentiles" in some important respects have not yet run out. The governments of this world are still intact. The Kingdom of God has not been established, nor has the. resurrection of any taken, place, although these important events were earnestly looked for, some years ago. But the term "present truth" does not signify merely the believing in some particular day or year as being the end of the Church's career and the overthrow . of the present order of things. It will be recalled how various godly men and Christian leaders of the past, studying time prophecies and looking for light upon the times and seasons, have thought that they saw the culmination of matters in some particular ,yearn; and yet as these dates have passed, hopes and expectations have been left unfulfilled. But present truth has remained the same, and faith and confidence in the Lord have continued on. A definition once given by Brother Russell of what it signifies to be established in the present truth, is as follows:

* In a special double number of the "Herald" August 1-15, 1926, (32 pages) a general investigation and examination of prophetic testimony and chronology is presented. Copies of this can be had upon request.

"To be established in the truth signifies that we have carefully studied and thoroughly proved it by 'the law and the testimony' (Isa. 8:20), and that as a consequence we are convinced of its verity, so that our faith is steadfast and immovable: we know whom we have believed; we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; we have partaken of the sweets of fellowship with Him; we have partaken of His spirit of meekness, faith and godliness to such an extent as to be led into a joyful realization of the fullness of His grace as manifested in the wonderful Divine Plan of the Ages; and we have been permitted to see, not only the various features of that Plan, but also the necessity and reasonableness of all, its various measures in order to the full accomplishment of its glorious outcome in the fullness of the appointed times. This is what it is to be 'established in the present truth.' It is indeed a most blessed condition, bringing with it such peace and joy as the world can neither give nor take away." -- Z. '02-307.

In reviewing in the pages of this journal recently the subject of chronology, the thought was to discover if possible where we have probably been in error in the past and to harmonize the prophetic testimony with the present tunes and situation. We are convinced that the results of this investigation are serving to confirm and establish the faith of the brethren in preserve truth, rather than that of undermining it. It is a matter in these days of "trimming our lamps," that we may have all the advantage possible of the light of the Word, lay which to pursue the journey faithfully unto the end.

WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ON CHRISTIAN LIBERTY?

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." -- Gal. 5:1.

THERE have been times in the history of the Church of Christ, when because of certain departures from primitive simplicity of doctrine and life, it has become necessary for the Lord's people to retrace their steps and go back to the very foundation, itself. The great Reformation in the sixteenth century marked one of these periods. The doctrine of justification by faith in the sacrifice of Christ, which is the foundation of all true Christian life and experience, had been lost sight of except by a few; and the testimony of these few had been almost silenced. When God's desires to restore His truth to His people, He usually first causes it to be discovered and worked out in the experience of one or more individuals and then uses such person or persons to communicate it to others. The individuals used in the days of the Reformation were doubtless such as Luther, Zwingli, Knox, Calvin, Wesley, and others.

The great Protestant movement which began so well and was carried forward with such sweeping success, gradually merged into sectarianism, and instead of advancing in its work of restoring additional truths

to the Church, it culminated in another apostasy. It was the Divine intention, however, that in these latter days all the "holy vessels" (precious truths) must be restored to their place in the "temple"; and to this end God caused another "earthen vessel" to pass through experiences in search for truth, that qualified him to be the instrument for this great work-the Harvest work. The movement, under his wise supervision, prospered as had other reform movements to considerable proportions, and gathered around it many who were greatly blessed as they learned of God's great love for His creatures.

However, there was not the faintest intention in the mind of this servant of God that another sectarian organization should grow out of his life work; for the purport and spirit of all his messages clearly show that he was emphatically opposed to sectarianism. He taught that the only ties that should bind God's faithful people together were the simple bonds of love and common interest in the cause of the Redeemer, based upon the two fundamental propositions of faith in Christ's redeeming sacrifice and full consecration to do the will of God. The only object of the organization (a purely business one) which had been formed by God's servant when there were but few associated with him, was that of uniting the efforts and powers of all to bring the precious truths to the Lord's consecrated and declare the "good tidings" of the coming Kingdom. In fact the "machinery" worked so smoothly, that few realized what it was that was keeping it in motion. No thought of its being a religious sect ever entered the minds of any in those earlier days. The blessed truths had come through Gods servant who made no claim of being anything more than one of Christ's footstep followers whose privilege it was to be an index finger pointing the people of God back to "the old paths."

Living as we are in the closing days of the Church's history, of which time our Master said, God would gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, we can be assured that He would not long tolerate a wrong or sectarian spirit to exist among His faithful people. And therefore, should such condition exist, it would be proper to expect some providential intervention in connection with the interests of His people, to uncover and expose to view that which would not have His approval, and make clearly manifest to the faithful, to how great an extent the evil had taken root.

What Say the Scriptures

Changes, events, and circumstances in these days have caused many of God's faithful people to reexamine and search the Scriptures more diligently than ever, if possible, to discover what are the foundation principles of Christian liberty, fellowship and unity. Let us, beloved, ever come to the Scriptures, and from them learn the truth about this as well as every important matter of faith and practice. The final test of the Christian is that of love, and the spirit of sectarianism cannot be retained, if the Divine approval is to be secured.

Christian liberty is the first great blessing entered upon when becoming a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, the fetters of bondage are broken, and true liberty is begun—liberty from the bondage of the guilt and power of sin (Rom. 5 :1; 6:12-14) ; liberty of conscience, which requires freedom to examine both sides of a matter pertaining to our Christian life and service. Indeed, it is a Christian duty to do this so far as circumstances and ability permit. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame to him." (Prov. 18:13.) And finally, Christian liberty signifies freedom from sectarianism. The word sect means, a division, a part cut off, or a cutting off from. It is not sectarianism, however, to be separated from a sect, for such separation is necessary. Sectarianism is that spirit and disposition to divide and separate God's people by setting up creed fences, or by fixing certain bounds and limits, and by applying tests of fellowship and of church membership such as have no authorization in the Divine Word. Time after time God's faithful people, who are always lovers of liberty, have been forced apart by certain cliques or sects, which ingeniously apply tests, the effect of which is to rob the Lord's people of, their liberty in Christ. Thus sectarianism is a separation from the true Church, where alone there is true Christian liberty. On this Brother Russell wrote:

"The first danger against which St. Paul warned the Church was sectarianism; and he was evidently heeded at the time at least, for no great sects of Paulites or Apollosites developed. But, as usual, the great enemy, thwarted in one direction, moved to the opposite extreme, and attempted to insist upon a oneness very different from what our Lord or the Apostles ever taught. This attempt was to have every recognized member of the Church think exactly alike, on every minutia of Christian doctrine. This attempt finally developed into Papacy, where every matter of doctrine was decided by the popes and councils; and every man who desired to be considered a Church member was obliged to accept such decisions fully, and to profess that such decisions were his belief, his faith; Whereas they were not his in any sense but that of adoption. They were generally either blindly received or hypocritically professed with mental reservations. This was not at all the oneness urged by St. Paul. He urged a oneness of heart and mind, and not a thoughtless, heartless or hypocritical profession. He urged a oneness such as naturally results from the proper exercise of the liberty which we have in Christ—to search and believe the Scriptures, and to grow **in grace and in knowledge**, every man being thus fully persuaded in his own mind, and firmly rooted and grounded in the one faith as set forth in the Scriptures." -- Z. '08-116.

There are seven things associated with the attainment and enjoyment of Christian liberty, unity, and fellowship. Any additions to or subtractions from these will, proportionately, mar or destroy these priceless gifts.

We will mention, first, because it embodies all the others, that of believing in Christ and continuing in His Word. "Then said Jesus to

those Jews who believed on Him, if ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." -- John 8:31, 32.

The second is that of receiving the Spirit. The Galatian Christians were in danger of getting back into bondage, through certain teachers who had come among them and who were teaching them that some additional qualifications were necessary in order to the enjoyment of the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. To warn them against this false teaching and to recover them from this error, the Apostle wrote: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This Only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" -- Gal. 3 :1, 2.

The third important thing is that of receiving evidence of Divine Fatherhood. We quote: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received' the Spirit of adoption [sonship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father." -- Rom. 8:15.

The fourth is that of experiencing the "one baptism." "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death ?" -- Rom. 6 :3.

The fifth is that of becoming members of the one Body -- the Church. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." -- 1 Cor. 12:12, 13.

The sixth is that of being begotten unto one hope. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." -- 1 Pet. 1:3, 4.

The seventh is that of entering into the enjoyment of a like precious faith. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and' our Savior Jesus Christ." -- 2 Pet. 1:1.

Christian liberty can be maintained only by holding fast to these seven vital matters, as we read: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so. walk ye in Him; rooted and built, up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. **Beware lest any man spoil you** through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Deity bodily." (Col. 2 :6-10.) And again: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels [human messengers] . . . and not holding the head." -- Col. 2:18, 19.

Those who have experienced the blessings associated with these seven lines of thought are bound together by the bonds of fellowship and

unity. This blessed liberty, fellowship, and unity can be maintained only by earnest endeavor. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:1-3.) It will require earnest endeavor because Satan has his counterfeit of these and is ever seeking to lead away from the true, to the false. This blessed unity, fellowship, and liberty will require the making use of all the gifts of the Spirit possible. "Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men . . . He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."-Eph. 4:8-13.

These seven foundation truths are all that are necessary to enjoy this blessed fellowship, unity, and liberty. The Apostle mentions them altogether. "One body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all."-Eph. 4:2-6.

We might say we have here mentioned:

- (1) The Author of unity -- "One God and Father."
- (2) The Center of unity -- "There is one Lord."
- (3) The door of unity -- "There is one baptism."
- (4) The kinship of unity -- "There is one Body."
- (5) The nature of unity -- "There is one Spirit."
- (6) The goal of unity -- "There is one hope of your calling."
- (7) The creed of unity -- "There is one faith."

Liberty of the Sons of God

It is very often along the line of the last item above, that Satan seeks to destroy the precious heritage of the Christian. How important then, that we should know what is the faith here referred to. Let us note the following from Brother Russell's pen:

"The one faith which all should hold, was a very simple one; one so simple that all, the learned and the unlearned alike, could grasp it and comprehend it, and be fully persuaded in their own minds concerning it. It was not a dose of incongruous mysteries, inconsistent with themselves and inharmonious with reason as well as with the Bible, to be swallowed by the ignorant with credulity, and by the learned with hypocritical mental reservations. But it was so simple; so clear, so reasonable, that any and every honest follower of Christ could be fully persuaded in his own mind regarding its truth.

"What is this one faith? The basis of it is stated by the Apostle Paul, thus: 'I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received [first

of all -- as a foundation truth or doctrine, upon and in harmony with which all other doctrines must be built], how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried ; and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.' (1 Cor. 15:3, 4.) 'There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.'-1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

"This, in a word confesses sin and utter helplessness; it acknowledges God's loving plan for our redemption; it owns that our Lord's death was our ransom price, and that forgiveness (justification) and reconciliation to God, and the restitution of believers, come as a result of faith in this Redeemer, when in due time it is made known to each and all.

"These brief statements contain the whole Gospel in the same sense that an acorn contains an oak tree. Without this Gospel kernel, the true Gospel can never be possessed; hence this must be insisted on as a test of Christian fellowship. This must be received, else the Gospel is not received. When it is received the Gospel is received This true Gospel, this simple faith, easily understood and confessed by the weakest babe in Christ, must also be, and always, and equally, the faith of the most developed sons of God. This one faith (and not the endless ramifications and details of faith which lead out from it) St. Paul placed as a standard or test of all claiming the name Christian. All the consecrated who agreed on this one standard, or foundation truth, St. Paul counted as in and of the one Church. While each member was to grow in grace, knowledge and love, there would always be harmony and oneness in the faith and fellowship of the Church, if all growth were kept in line and harmony with this foundation truth.

"Here was a perfect basis of union, which allowed for all the various stages of individual development in the truth, and which most effectually guarded against errors. For if this simple creed were a today made the standard by which all doctrines should be tested, it would speedily lead to the discarding of every error and to the true union of the Church in the 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.'

"The endeavor to compel all men to think alike on all subjects, culminated in the great apostasy and the development of the great Papal system ; and thereby the 'gospel,' the 'one faith,' which St. Paul and the other Apostles set forth, was lost-buried under the mass of uninspired decrees of popes and councils. The union of the early Church, based upon the- simple Gospel **and bound only by love,** gave place to the bondage of the Church of Rome -- a slavery of God's children, from the degradation of which multitudes are still weak and suffering.

"The Reformation movement of the sixteenth century came as an effort to regain liberty of conscience; but, deluded by the idea of an elaborate creed, insisted upon for so many centuries, the reformers and their followers formed other systems of bondage very similar to that of

Papacy, though slight modifications gave liberty to fuller ideas on some subjects. And so it has been ever 'since; each new reform movement has made the failure of attempting to make a creed just large enough for its prime movers." -- Z. '08-117, 118.

"The true teacher's place, and the true Bible student's place, is outside of all human bondage, free to examine and feed upon all portions of the good Word of God, and untrammelled to follow the Lamb whithersoever He leads." -- Vol. III, p. 145.

"Every one who comes to realize the liberty of the sons of God and full freedom from Babylon's bondage should expect to meet other attempts of the great Adversary to bring him into other bondages, or to stumble him. The Lord .permits these severe testings, that the class now sought may be manifested, and prepared." -- Vol. III, p: 188.

"The value of true liberty amongst the Lord's people cannot be overestimated. It becomes a part of their very life. It was because, under a wrong conception of union, this spirit of true liberty was crushed out of the Church shortly after the Apostles fell asleep in death that the Dark Ages resulted, with all their ignorance, superstition, blindness, persecution, etc. **The Reformation movement of the sixteenth century was but a re-awakening of the spirit of liberty, . . .** liberty to think inside the foundation lines of the doctrines of Christ; liberty to believe as much or as little more, in harmony with this, as the mental conditions and circumstances will permit, without being branded as a heretic or persecuted by brethren, either in word or deed . . . Let all who are the Lord's people, and who have tasted of the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, see to it that they stand fast in that liberty, and as soon as an attempt is made to restrain it, if not sooner, let them get out completely from all the bondages of human systems, that they may stand firmly and loyally with the Lord, our Redeemer, our Instructor, our King." -- Z. '02-170.

"We should remember our Lord's teaching, that those who are not against us are on our part, and that we should neither reprove as wolves nor disown as brethren those whose hearts, whose characters, give evidence that they belong to the Lord, even though they follow not with us in respect to His service, the promulgation of His message, etc. In other words, we **are to love all and wish God-speed to all loving the, Lord and manifesting His Spirit, whether they associate with us or not.** In a word, the Divine rule .is very broad and very narrow at the same time. It is narrow as respects discipleship and character: faith in the redeeming blood, consecration to the Master, and a manifestation of *His* Spirit are the lines of discipleship -- broad within themselves, but narrow as compared to the lines of the world. -- "Z. '06-93.

"Blest be the Tie That Binds"

The unity that should exist in the Body of Christ is especially designated by the Apostle as a unity of the Spirit: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3.) This spirit is seen in its perfection as we note the mind or disposition of Christ as He manifested it to the Father, to His disciples, and to the world. In this respect we note that it was a dependent, submissive, prayerful, and loyal spirit in its relation to His Father, and a gentle, self-sacrificing, and cross-bearing spirit in its relation to men.

Some characteristics of this unity are: Recognizing but one Head, Christ; making the Scriptures paramount, putting them in the first place, as the final settlement of all matters of interest to the Church; putting the very best of helps in a secondary place; making the seven basic truths mentioned in Ephesians 4:4-6, the only essentials of Christian fellowship; giving every one full liberty to study and increase in spiritual knowledge, and according to every one the privilege of expressing in a reasonable manner his belief.

The testing of Christian unity and fellowship will be along the lines of love-love for the brethren. Christian unity is not simply the holding together in loving union of those of one persuasion -of one belief in one place; not simply the holding together, of those who see eye to eye in all the minutia of doctrine and of particular kinds and methods of service; not the holding together simply of those who are co-operating with one human and necessarily imperfect channel for service; and, not necessarily the making' use of those gifts (teachers) who hold to one particular human channel. True Christian fellowship can never be withdrawn from any of those who recognize and experience the blessings associated with the seven basic principles laid down by St. Paul. **Those who are in fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus 'Christ, are our brethren, ours to love; ours to serve, and ours to lay down our lives for.** The fear of what man may do, or what of misunderstanding and ostracism may come because of obeying this law of love, this new commandment, will not deter the faithful from serving or laying down their lives for the brethren.

SHALL WE STUDY THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." -- Rev. 1 :3.

SOME have raised the question as to the wisdom and propriety of studying and discussing the writings of the book of Revelation. In fact, some have put the question in this form, Why should a special explanation of the Revelation' be undertaken and published by the

"Pastoral Bible Institute," when a large portion of the interpretation must necessarily be doubtful and when parts of the Revelation have not yet had fulfillment?

We have replied to these queries, stating that our purpose in examining, studying, and discussing the Revelation is that we believe it to be of profit and general encouragement to the brethren. Of course if we did not, believe the study to be of special advantage and help to the friends, or if we had reason for believing that the brethren themselves did not feel blessed and profited by the Revelation series, we would not have issued the exposition. Our correspondence from the friends from all parts of the world convinces us that by far the majority are deeply interested in the study, and they have given assurance of having received much blessing from the Revelation exposition. It is not a matter of imposing upon the friends something that they have not desired.

In the first place, we know of no statement in the last book of the Bible or in any other, forbidding the study of the Revelation, but to the contrary, we find various statements encouraging and urging investigation and study of every portion of God's Word; thus the Apostle instructs: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) It is remembered too that the class of Christians known as the Bereans were highly commended and were said to be more noble than some others because "they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." The Apostle Peter's testimony, likewise confirms this reasoning. He admonishes the early Christians that they do well to take heed to the "more sure word of prophecy." Surely all Bible students admit the prophetic character of the Revelation.

Hear What the Spirit Saith unto the Churches

Coming to the consideration of some of the messages of the Revelation itself, we note the following significant abate-ments: (1) That it is a Divine prophecy: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto, Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." (2) It is not for the world, nor even nominal Christians: "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done." "I Jesus have sent Mine angel **to testify unto you these things in the churches.**" "He that hath an ear, let him **hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**" (Rev. 22:6, 16; 2:7.) (3) A special blessing is pronounced upon those who read and hear: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this, prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." (Rev. 1:3) (4) The warning is given against any attempt to prevent an investigation and study of the Revelation: "**Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book:** for the time is at hand." -- Rev. 22:10.

The above points should be clearly borne in mind by all, as they distinctly teach that the Revelation messages are prophetic -- "things which must shortly come to pass," and that they are intended for the Church, and their purpose is to convey a special blessing to those who receive them.

Surely we could not hope for any stronger encouragement to examine and study the Revelation than that represented in the above arguments. We believe the facts will show that as God's people have given heed to this admonition all down through the Age, and have studied the wonderful, symbolic visions of the Revelator, they have realized a corresponding blessing, a strengthening of their faith and hope.

As many of the visions of the Revelation describe the faithful, passing through scenes of great suffering and persecution, the knowledge represented in the visions was doubtless intended to supply a special need; for the Church always has needed the help and blessing that accompanies a knowledge of the "more sure word of prophecy." We believe that it will be acknowledged by all Bible students that there is no portion of the Bible that to so great an extent as the Revelation reveals God's providential care and overruling of the events of history, both good and evil, for the Church's development in grace and knowledge. There is no doubt that the faithful, who down through the Age have studied the Revelation, have been helped to discern the Divine overruling in connection with the affairs of the Church. On this point the facts have been well expressed by Brother Russell:

"During the Christian Age, some of the saints sought to understand the Church's future by examining this symbolic book, and doubtless all who read and understood even a part of its teachings were blessed as promised. (Rev. 1:3.) The book kept opening up to such, and in the days of the Reformation was an important aid to Luther in deciding that the Papacy, of which he was a conscientious minister, was indeed the 'Antichrist' mentioned by the Apostle, the history of which we now see fills so large a part of that prophecy." -- Vol. I, pp. 27, 28.

If it is reasonable to suppose that Luther derived important aid in deciding issues of great magnitude in his day, it is equally reasonable to suppose that other Reformers derived equal benefit and help from the same source. Yea, verily, it is most evident that these wonderful prophecies were given for the counseling, assisting, and protection of the Church through the long dark centuries of her pilgrimage, and of her witnessing to the Truth. As we read the writings of God's consecrated ones of the past, we learn that the Revelation visions have proved to be a mighty power in the Church's history, and that they have served to preserve the faith of the Church in times of peril and general apostasy. We have found that the knowledge of some of them and the testimony thereto have given birth to great reformation movements; that they have inspired confessors, and supported martyrs to the cause of Christ, some of whom sealed their faithfulness at the stake, while others suffered dreadful death in other ways. A knowledge

of some of these marvelous, prophetic photographs has been largely instrumental in breaking the chains of priestcraft, superstition, and tyranny and has brought multitudes out of the bondage of the same.

Visions of Revelation Unfold Divine Plan

In the light of the foregoing we find ourselves unable to agree with the statement that a large part of the interpretation of the Revelation must be regarded as doubtful; nor is there any evidence to show that there was any uncertainty in the mind of Brother Russell as to the interpretation of the major portion of the book. The evidences clearly establish the fact that **he made an exhaustive study of the Revelation**, and that he understood almost all of it, and while he did not write and publish a specific volume* on the Revelation, nor leave any manuscripts, whatever on it at his death, yet we have the evidence showing that he wrote and published much on the last book of the Bible, and he stated himself in a manner, not doubtful, but positive. True, he did not expound several portions of the book, nevertheless, from what he did express we can be well assured that he followed the historical method of interpretation; that he believed that the Revelation was a history of God's people, and in fact of the entire Divine Plan, particularly from our Lord's First Advent forward to the end of the Millennium.

* It is true that Brother Russell had expected to write a volume on the Revelation, treating it in detail in systematic order. However, death came to him before he was permitted to realize his expectation, and he did not leave any manuscript bearing upon the Revelation that had not already been published in the six volumes of Studies or in his semi-monthly journal.

Our contention therefore is that the Lord's people today may read so clearly the fulfillment of the symbols of the Revelation in the historical records, as that by far the interpretation of the greater portion of the book need not be doubtful but fully established. We do agree most heartily that there are portions of the Revelation that have not, yet been, fulfilled, particularly the last four chapters of the book, but with comparatively few exceptions, the fulfillment of the first eighteen chapters as in the past; and who of us would assume the responsibility of saying that we cannot understand any of the last four chapters because their fulfillment is still future? To the contrary, we believe that all will agree that in the light of other portions of the Bible, even though the fulfillment of the last four chapters is still future, it is easy to understand very much of their significance, which brings special joy and profit as they so clearly reveal to us the consummation of the Divine Plan in the deliverance and glorification of the Church, the resurrection of the dead, the restitution of all the willing and obedient to human perfection and life in paradise, with perfect harmony and peace reigning everywhere. Thus while the full significance of the last four chapters will be realized more fully when those symbols have

been fulfilled, it is surely to our profit to study them now in the light of history and other portions of God's Word.

In presenting our readers with an exposition of the Revelation, we have trusted to do it in the same spirit appropriate to one who would properly handle the holy things, namely that of not claiming Divine inspiration and infallibility, but as that of appealing to the brethren to exercise their own personal liberty in the acceptance or rejection of what is presented, and to use the spirit of a sound mind in receiving only that which appeals to them as being established by Structure and the facts of history. We merely say to all, that these expositions appeal to us as being sound and reasonable, and we invite the brethren to give them careful consideration.

"Try the Spirits Whether They Are of God",

In addition to the above lines of reasoning as to why we recommend the study of Revelation at the present time, we call attention to the general situation that prevails among the Truth people throughout the world since Brother Russell's death. Nearly ten years have passed since his departure. During that time various expositions, volumes, and treatises on the Revelation have appeared upon the scene, under various charming and attractive titles, written by various brethren who, to a more or less extent, claim to be special light-bearers and as being sent of God to deliver His message to the remainder of the Truth people. Desiring to have the advantage of all the light possible upon the Christian's pathway, we have carefully examined these various productions with the result that they are found to be sadly in disagreement and contradictory, and contain much that we believe is error. More than this, to our understanding, the spirit expressed by the authors of these different expositions does not seem to us generally to savor of the spirit of Christ, of humility and meekness, and many statements in these expositions are made so dogmatic as to imply that disagreement with them on any point would surely bring condemnation to the objector. This, we are unable to regard as the spirit of the Lord. Again, as we soberly and carefully examine these expositions of the Revelation by various brethren, we find much that we are compelled to acknowledge is highly imaginative, visionary and speculative, and entirely unworthy of credence. We find these expositions containing within themselves inconsistent and contradictory statements, and all of them in some important respects are very much out of harmony with the expositions that Brother Russell gave us of the book.

Finally, one of the most convincing proofs that, these various recent expositions of Revelation are unworthy of acceptance is the fact that they contain many applications of the symbolic visions and many predictions of events and occurrences that have failed or are sadly failing before our eyes. The Lord said to Israel centuries ago: "And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if

the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him." (Dent. 18:21, 22.) As we apply this searching test of the Divine Word today, the evidence is overwhelming that there is much in our midst that must be stamped as utterly and palpably false and must fall under the solemn condemnation of Jehovah's Message in ancient times.

"Take Heed Unto Yourselves and to All The Flock"

As a result of all of these published interpretations and expositions that are being given wide circulation, there has come to be much confusion among the Truth people, and many of the friends, far and near, have written us of their perplexity with regard to the situation and the true meaning of the Revelation. In view of all this confusion and unhappy situation, it would seem that if there was ever a time when light on the Revelation should be looked for, it would be at the present; and that brethren in positions of responsibility in spiritual matters would be sadly remiss in doing their duty if they sat idly by and sought no means; of comfort and assistance for those who have expressed need and earnestly asked it. Surely, brethren who are earnestly striving to fulfil a holy ministry toward the Lord's people should regard it as their solemn duty to humbly and soberly seek counsel from the Lord, and guidance, by Him by which there might be ascertained as far as possible that inspiration, that light, which the book of Revelation sheds upon the pathway of the Church, believing that the result must be a clarifying of the present situation, and the assisting of the Lord's true people to a large extent out of their present perplexity and confusion.

The preparation and publication of the exposition which we have issued, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," represents many years of the most painstaking effort and careful research; many of the Old Testament prophecies, especially that of Daniel, are exhaustively treated. Careful consideration and due weight have been given to the able, worthy, and scholarly expositions of the Apocalypse that have been put into the hands of the truth seeker by godly men throughout the Age, and particularly those that have been written during the past century -- men whose writings give evidence of soundness of mind, and of a large measure of the Lord's spirit, by which, to our understanding, they have discerned deeply of the Divine truth regarding the meaning of the Apocalyptic visions. Many of those who have studied the Revelation exposition that we have, sent forth, assure us that they have been very largely relieved of their confusion and perplex. and have been enabled to maintain a balance and poise of mind that has kept them free from the spirit of fanaticism, and of fanciful speculation so prevalent at this time.

Realizing, as all the faithful watchers must, that what remains of the Church of Christ in the flesh has been undergoing the severest trials and is perhaps passing in to the most crucial test of her earthly career perhaps her Gethsemane experiences -- we regard it as, most pleasing

to our Heavenly Master to avail ourselves of all His provisions in the way of truth and grace that are represented in His many messages. It is surely timely that the brethren everywhere make a careful and sober study of the book of Revelation. Living as we are in a period when some of the events predicted in the book are grandly fulfilling before our eyes on a most gigantic scale, events, too, of vast magnitude that mark the overthrow of Satan's empire and the ushering in of the long-promised reign of righteousness, the Kingdom of God, surely it is appropriate for us to inquire, and to be prepared to receive, what ever our Master may be pleased to say unto us at this time, especially as He has promised to be with His faithful people even unto the end, and has admonished, saying "Blessed -is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy."

IS THE DOOR INTO THE NARROW WAY CLOSED?

*"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." --
Matt. 25:10.*

THUS did Jesus cause His disciples to cast their mental eyes forward to the conclusion of this Age when the work He was then inaugurating would be concluded, and all the faithful enter into the joys of the Kingdom.

These words of the Master have become the occasion of strange and fanciful views regarding conditions and affairs pertaining to the Lord's people at the conclusion of this Age. The general prevailing conception has long been, however, that ever since Jesus' First Advent God has been dealing and working with the human family for the purpose of saving from eternal torment such as He has been able to influence; that the present life is supposed to furnish the **only** opportunity that any man will ever have; that therefore the door mentioned by Jesus refers to the opportunity that the faithful few, who will constitute the redeemed, will have at death of entering the portals of heaven.

The revelation of Truth that has come to God's people during the past fifty years has done much to dispel the mist and haze that has come down to us from the Dark Ages on this subject of human salvation. In the light of this clearer unfolding of the Lord's Word it is now clearly seen that while the great Divine purpose for human salvation has been progressing in grand order throughout the ages, yet everything thus far accomplished has been in the nature of preparation for that work; that the saving of mankind and reclaiming them from the tomb has never really yet commenced. We have seen that this Gospel Age has been a most important step in this preparatory process, namely the selection and development of the Royal Priesthood, composed of Christ the Head, and the Church His Body; these to constitute God's instrumen-

tality for the world's blessing. (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 20:6.) Moreover, with the completion of this Royal Priesthood, will commence the great work of human salvation, including the bringing into subordination and putting down of all the forces of evil, which work will be carried to a victorious conclusion, reclaiming whosoever wills of fallen humanity and bringing them back to the image And likeness of God where they may forever dwell on a perfect earth-paradise restored. These same Scriptures assure us that. all willful opposers will be destroyed in the Second Death. -- Acts 3:23 ; Rev. 20:12-15 ; 21:8.

Today, therefore, a considerable number of Bible students are agreed that the door mentioned by Jesus does not pertain to the opportunity that mankind will have of entering into life in the Millennial Age, but has specific reference to the opportunity or the opening of the way into the Kingdom; the way whereby the faithful few during this Gospel Age may make their calling and election sure to joint-heirship with Christ in the Kingdom. That Jesus opened this way is confirmed by a number of plain Bible statements. His own words are, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The Apostle's words likewise are, that Christ brought "life and immortality to light through the Gospel." He, Christ, opened up for us the "new and living way." And this way the Master again referred to when He said, "Strait is the Gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life" (immortality).

The Narrow Way of Self-Sacrifice

For nearly nineteen centuries justified believers have been invited to walk the Narrow Way by making a full consecration to God -- denying themselves, taking up the cross and walking in their Master's footsteps. Neither has God expressed any threats in connection with this heavenly calling, nor endeavored to coerce any to enter and walk the Narrow Way; rather it is set before such as have ears to hear, as a privilege and opportunity: "If any man will come after Me." All such are enjoined to so run as to obtain the heavenly prize, to be given to all who are faithful in the end of the Age. The entire life time of each individual is required in the process of making ready. At no particular time in advance of his departing this life, is he promised that the fight will, be over and that he can cease his efforts and struggles in the Narrow Way and consider that his calling and election have been made sure. The strongest proof of this is found in our Master's loving words, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." All Bible students who carefully discriminate and weigh all the messages of our Father's Word, well know that the faithful few who successfully walk the Narrow Way unto the end are promised the reward of the Kingdom at the end of the Age, and that such final entrance into the Kingdom in glory by the First Resurrection is undoubtedly the door referred to by Jesus which will be closed with the passing beyond the veil of the last member of the Church in the end of this Age. -- Matt. 25:1-13 ; Rev. 20:4, 6.

We cannot therefore avoid the conclusion that our Lord's Words, "And the door was shut," most explicitly assure us that a time comes when the full number designed of God to compose the Royal Priesthood of the coming dispensation, will pass in, and that then no more can enter because the door will immediately be shut. Moreover, this is the only door mentioned by our Lord or the Apostles as having to do with the conclusion of the work of this Age.

But we are asked at this time to consider if there is not, what might be properly called, the door into the Narrow Way? and inasmuch as a time comes when the door into the Kingdom, the glorified state, is shut, must we not believe that the door or entrance into the Narrow Way also closes, and that this is at least a brief space in advance of the closing of the door into the Kingdom?

Our reply is, that we regard this supposition as altogether a reasonable one -- that it is entirely proper to regard the entrance into the Narrow Way as closing in connection with the shutting of the door into the Kingdom; for surely God would not invite into the Narrow Way of self-sacrifice and self-denial any who could not enter into the Kingdom on account of the door being shut. It is therefore proper to speak of the privilege of entering the Narrow Way as the door of opportunity; and this is in full line with the view expressed by Brother Russell, as it is remembered that frequently in his writings he spoke of the "door of opportunity." Thus we read from his pen:

The Door of Opportunity

"An open 'door' symbolizes an opportunity of entrance to, certain conditions and privileges; a shut door represents the termination of such privilege or opportunity. The privilege, invitation or opportunity of the Gospel Age, granting, under restrictive conditions, to believers in Christ, entrance into joint-heirship with Him in the Heavenly Kingdom and to the Divine nature, is the 'door' by which we 'have access into this grace [favor] wherein we stand'; namely into the hope of sharing the glory of God. (Rom. 5:2.) This door, which has stood open throughout the entire Age, is sometime to be closed; and the door in the parable of the virgins marks this close -- the termination of all such opportunities and privileges. This parable of the virgins merely portrays the events in the close of this Age among those of the true Church living at that time." -- Vol. III, p. 206.

But still the question is urged, Is not the Harvest in the past? and in view of all the circumstances of our day, are we not to conclude that the door into the Narrow Way has already closed? -- that all who are in the Narrow Way must make their calling and election sure, and that therefore no more can fall out by the way? In reply we must express our emphatic disagreement with any such conclusion. We still regard the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the tares as a most reasonable one, namely that as our Lord said, "The Harvest is the end of the Age"; that all the circumstances indicate that we have

approached unto the Harvest period; that the "Harvest" is a general time, during which the members of the Church in its last stage, the Laodicean period, will be sealed in their foreheads and will be gathered as the wheat class into the Kingdom garner. There are strong and convincing evidences that this sealing and gathering work is still going on; nor are there any circumstances at this time that indicate or constitute any proof that the door or opportunity of entering this class has closed.

Relative to the sealing of the servants of the Lord as recorded in Rev. 7:1-3, we read that the four winds (of strife) are restrained from injuring the earth and sea (the social earth, society, representing the governments; and the "sea," the anarchistic masses of the people) until the elect are sealed in their foreheads. The "four winds" have not yet come together to form the whirlwind; the governments and the anarchistic masses of mankind have not thus far been injured or destroyed by the world's greatest war. Evidently the sealing of the servants of God is continuing on, and even if the full number had been sealed (given an intellectual appreciation of the Divine Truths due at this time) this would not prove that no more could enter into the Narrow Way for the reason that various Scriptures indicate that it is in every way possible for those who have experienced the sealing and who have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, to lose this precious gift and to lose the blessing of the sealing. (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29.) We believe that the words of our Brother again throw further light on this subject:

"In view of its glorious termination, the opportunity to walk in this Narrow Way of self-sacrifice for the Truth's sake is the grandest privilege that was ever offered to any creature. The privilege of suffering with Christ and in His cause, after first recognizing Him as our Redeemer, is therefore the door, and the only door of opportunity, by which the glory to follow, as the bride and joint-heir of Christ, can be reached." -- Vol. III, p. 206, 207.

Let us note carefully what is here called to our attention, namely that the door into the Narrow Way is represented in the privilege of "self-sacrifice in the interest of the Lord's Plan and work," and that "the privilege of suffering with Christ and in His cause . . . is therefore the door, and the only door of opportunity, by which the glory to follow, as the bride and joint-heir of Christ, can be reached." We quote again:

"Bible Does Not Give Exact Date"

"There are three ways in which the closing of this door might be indicated: first, by a definite Bible statement of the exact date; second, by such a reversal of public sentiment with reference to the Truth, that fidelity and zeal in its service would no longer meet with opposition, and when suffering with Christ for the Truth's sake (Rom. 8:17) would be no longer possible; or third, by such a condition of affairs obtaining

in the world that all opportunity for such service would be effectually obstructed, thus leaving no opportunities for candidates to enter into the work and to develop and prove their love and faithfulness by their activity and endurance." . . .

Concerning the first way above mentioned Brother Russell says

"The Bible does not give the exact date. . . . But we have a clear intimation that the door will be shut in the manner last named; for, before the Millennial day breaks, we are forewarned of a dark night wherein no man can labor -- 'The morning cometh, and also the night.'-Isa. 21:12.

"The Narrow Way opened to us is the privilege and opportunity of co-operating with our Lord now, when to manifest His spirit of meekness and zeal and loyalty to God and His Truth will be at the cost of earthly advantage; when to champion His cause and the truths which He advanced will make us, to say the least, very unpopular ; and when our endeavors to honor His name and bless our fellowmen with the Truth, by letting our light shine, bring upon us reproach, misrepresentation and persecution in some form. And if, as we have seen, the Narrow Gateway opened means the privilege of thus sacrificing, faithfully, unto death, at whatever cost, it follows that the closing of all such opportunity for such fellowship of service and suffering would be the closing of the door, the barring of the Narrow Way to the future glory and joint-heirship; our reign with Christ being conditioned on our faithfulness in His service, which now means suffering with Him. -- Rom. 8:17; 6:8." -- Vol. III, p. 208.

We believe this language sets forth the only proper logical deduction to be drawn from the various Scriptures bearing upon the subject. We might delve deeply into the various types and symbols of both the Old and New Testaments and enter into various ramifications involving a labyrinth of fine spun thought and multiply texts of Scripture, and ultimately work out a theory, but it would be only a theory -- mere conjecture and speculation. But, dear brethren, would such a course be wise and bring to us happy results? We believe that all will agree that it would not. Let us remember that our Lord has not left us to do any guessing or theorizing upon this or any other subject. The Master, Himself, did not do any guessing, nor did any of His Apostles. What they gave out as Truth was set before the early Christians as being their positive knowledge upon the subject and they cautioned against everything in the nature of theorizing or speculation. (1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Pet. 1:16, 17.) We believe Brother Russell stated the truth when he said, "The Bible does not give the exact date."

Let us not fail to get the meaning of his words quoted above. Let us note the other two ways that he suggests by which the closing of the door into the Narrow Way might be indicated: "By such a reversal of public sentiment with reference to the Truth" that loyalty to it would no longer meet with opposition, "and suffering with Christ for the Truth's sake would no longer be possible" ; or, "by such a condition of

affairs obtaining in the world that all opportunity for such service would be effectually obstructed, thus leaving no opportunities for candidates to enter into the work." We believe that all will agree that neither one of these two conditions at the present time exist. There is yet no such reversal of public sentiment favorable to the Truth, but on the contrary all who are zealous in bearing the message continue to realize the promised consequences-the contempt, disesteem, and odium of the world. Neither can any claim that the condition has obtained that obstructs all opportunity for service. On the contrary, all about us there are wonderful opportunities yet of bearing the message orally and by the printed page, and such opportunities are now on the increase rather than on the wane; and yet Brother Russell stated as his view that the "door would be shut in the manner last named," that is by all opportunities being obstructed. Let us read again:

"Thus the door of opportunity to engage, with Christ our Lord, in the work of the Gospel Age, will be closed when 'the night cometh wherein no man can work.' . . .

"The closing in of this night will evidently put a stop to any further labor to disseminate the truth, which, misunderstood by the public generally, will probably be accused of being the cause of much of the anarchy and confusion then prevailing. . . . Nor should we expect that the coming of night and the closing of the door will be sudden, but rather that it will be a gradual obstruction and closing down of the Harvest work.

"Observe that, when this night cometh, when the reapers must cease their labors, it will prove that this final work of the Gospel Age is accomplished; that the elect number of the Bride of Christ have all been 'sealed' and 'gathered' into a condition of separateness from the worldly-into the barn condition (Matt. 13 :30) ; for God will not permit anything to put an end to His work until it is finished. Then, all the true and faithful servants of God will have been sealed in their foreheads; and, the work of the Gospel Age being finished, no more can enter into that work or reap its rich reward, foretold in the 'exceeding great and precious promises' as the reward of the faithful who enter while the 'door' is open. -- 2 Pet. 1:4." -- Vol. III, pp. 210, 211, 212.

If We Suffer With Him We Shall Reign With Him

The teaching of the above language very clearly is that the door into the Narrow Way should not be considered as closed as long as there are opportunities for service-sacrificing for Christ's sake, and of having fellowship in His suffering. The question is, Are there still opportunities of sacrificing for the Truth's sake and for Christ's sake, and of suffering as a result of walking in His footsteps? Are there still opportunities of bearing the cross after Him? Most assuredly there are abundant opportunities of entering into all the above experiences. Here, then, we have the strongest evidences that the door is still open,

as this is the logic both of the above argument and that of the Scriptures.

We do not think that the proof is at all sufficient to warrant us in taking the stand that the door into the Narrow Way was shut in April, 1916, nor in April, 1917, neither in March or April, 1918; nor do we think there is anything to prove that the door is even yet shut. Our position rather is that we believe it is not within the province of any to fix anything definite with regard to the shutting of the door into the Narrow Way: The Scriptures assure us that it is the Master Himself who will shut the door. For us to enter therefore into a system of speculation upon the subject and thus divert both the attention of ourselves and others away from the great matter of making our calling and election sure would certainly work injury to us as new creatures, and might ultimately result in the loss of our crowns completely.

Shall we not then be on guard against the wiles of the Adversary and not be lured into a sense or feeling of security in the settled belief that we, as God's people, have been sealed with the knowledge of the Truth, and that "the door is shut" and no more can come in upon the High Calling, and therefore, there is no possibility of our falling away and going into outer darkness.

Let us, then, not be ourselves alarmed, nor try to alarm others with regard to the door being closed, and thus have our attention diverted away from the great purpose to which we have dedicated our lives; let us not think to be "wise above what is written." In view of the fact that as our Pastor says, "the Bible does not give the exact date," we do well to leave the entire matter in the hands of the Lord; and whether the door is closed or not closed, let us, dear brethren, labor on in the work of the ministry to which the saints all down through the Age have consecrated their lives, namely that of bearing testimony to the Truth of gracious heavenly love, of proclaiming the message of the risen Savior, and of His presence now as earth's new King; let us not grow weary in the prosecution of this our Divine commission; and thus by pointing the hungry and thirsting to the better way, and by seeking to comfort all that mourn, we shall indeed prove true to the Divine vision which certainly applies to the last members of the Body of Christ: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" -- Isa. 52:7.

HAS THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS CEASED?

IN THE midst of much confusion and bewilderment of this "evil day" when strange and conflicting voices are appealing from various directions, it is no marvel that many discern but dimly, that many are

becoming confused respecting what is truth and respecting what the true message is that the faithful are commissioned to proclaim at this time.

Since we are living in the dawning of the new dispensation -- on the very threshold of the restitution of all things, it is asked, May we not now feel authorized to announce to men the call to restitution, to paradise and human perfection? Should not the knowledge of the times and seasons now given to faithful watchers constitute evidence and authority for us to turn from the preaching of the Cross and of the way of sacrifice and self-denial to that of announcing to men that they are already living in the new world, and that they may now confidently look forward to passing on into the age of life without ever going into the grave? We learn of some who, answering the above questions in the affirmative are preparing earthly homes to receive back departed relatives in the near future, under the Kingdom regime on the earth.

Our answer to the above questions, however, must be to the contrary. We see nothing in the present circumstances to indicate that we are commissioned to announce to the present living generations that they shall never see death. While all the signs and prophetic testimony show that we are living in the winding up of the present dispensation and on the verge of the new order of things, yet the old order has not yet ceased or passed away. The hard facts of life as all know them, beyond the shadow of a doubt establish the conclusion that this is still "the present evil world," presided over by the great Adversary. The reign of death continues relentlessly on. Nor has the Lord revealed to any, the details of just when the restitution agencies and processes will be put into operation so as to actually turn away the curse of disease and death from humanity.

Lessons From the Past

A brother recently writing us along these lines has made the following interesting observations:

"We have six thousand years of sacred history to draw on to enable us to ascertain the working of Providence in respect to God's people and the world generally, and being a house of sons it seems logical to conclude that our Heavenly Father expects us to take our cue from Him where He does not give us positive instructions on any particular point.

"Looking back into this history we find that when a change of dispensation was to occur, very definite signs were given. When God changed from dealing with individual patriarchs there were some wonderful happenings, beginning probably with Joseph's raising to be next to Pharaoh, and culminating with the inspired messages of Israel to his sons telling them definitely of the change.

"Again in changing from the dispensation of the Law to that of the Gospel a most wonderful manifestation of the Holy Spirit occurred. Before Jesus was taken up He instructed the disciples to preach to all

nations, but told them not to do anything until the Holy Spirit came down on them. This must have been quite a test to some; for had they not seen their risen Lord? Did they not know the message which was to be preached? He had just told them to preach the Gospel to all nations as a witness.

"Why then delay any longer? Why spend time meeting together to comfort one another? As it happened the early disciples actually knew very little about the message and how to get about promulgating it, as is evidenced by the marked contrast between the same disciples before and after the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There was no mistaking the Divine authority of the Gospel message after Pentecost! On the other hand, just imagine what would have happened if the work had been started right away. They would have all been so busy 'working' that there would have been no gathering 'with one accord into one place' where the Holy Spirit was poured out on them giving them power and authority, and the Church would have lost her greatest blessing. The work would have been a fiasco and would have come to nought, for the disciples would have been unable to show any authority for preaching the paradox of a dead Savior.

"Peter's mind was quickened so that he immediately saw in Pentecost a fulfillment of part of Joel's prophecy. However, even with this abundant evidence of Divine authority for the new message 'to all nations,' the Apostles would not think of going to the Gentiles until definite (further) Divine authority was given—the vision to Peter, and the second manifestation of the Holy Spirit on the house of Cornelius.

"Joel's prophecy speaks of a second outpouring of the Holy Spirit 'on all flesh,' the first outpouring being upon 'the servants and handmaids.' The second outpouring is in connection with this very work of restitution. Surely, therefore, in the absence of a specific direction on the matter we are justified in concluding that if the Gospel message was not allowed to go forth without a manifestation of Divine power as was given at Pentecost, then the change from this Gospel message to a restitution message must also be accompanied by an unmistakable manifestation of Divine power and authority. Hence before any one dare to proclaim a message of restitution, he must be satisfied that the second outpouring of the Holy Spirit has occurred, which outpouring will doubtless be on a far more impressive scale -- to outward appearances anyway -- than the first, which was to introduce a faith dispensation.

"So, then, do not let us be discouraged or perplexed when brethren who are busy with this new message reproach us with not doing any 'work.' Our Lord's rebuke to a certain class who set great store by works is sufficient for such. If we are fulfilling our Lord's last special command we shall be busy enough, and we shall know that we have His approval. Far better risk waiting too much on the Lord, if this is possible, than go on our own way and risk the rebuke made to Israel of

old: 'Ye have strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life. -- Ezek. 13:22.

Continue in Things Assured of

In the absence of any definite information regarding the exact time when men will cease to die, surely we can do nothing less than heed the Apostle's advice to Timothy, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." (2 Tim. 3:14.) To proclaim a message without positive authorization would be little short of presumption. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

And what are the things that we are to continue in, and of which we have been fully assured? Are they not the things contained in the great Message of reconciliation that Jesus and the Apostles proclaimed to men nearly nineteen centuries ago? Indeed that most interesting of all stories contained the signal announcement that in God's due time the rule or Kingdom of Heaven was to be established here on earth, and that as a result the twin-monster enemies of mankind -- sin and death -- would be thoroughly overpowered and vanquished; so that the end of the one thousand years of that Kingdom rule, would find the earth and its creature, man, purified, restored, perfected -- all the willfully disobedient, after a full and impartial trial being destroyed in the Second Death. Neither our Lord nor the Apostles announced the Kingdom to start at once, but rather taught us to look forward to its coming, to anticipate its establishment in the due time; and while watching and waiting, to pray earnestly "Thy Kingdom come: Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven."

This grand hope for humanity was based upon the work of the Cross as stated by Jesus, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost," and "to give His life a ransom for many"; and again by St. Paul, "that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man:"

Jesus and the Apostles with one voice proclaimed that all humanity would come forth from the tomb; but they gave special emphasis to the work, to that feature of the Divine Plan to be worked out before the resurrection could take place, namely the taking out of humanity "a people for His name," the joint-heirs with God's dear Son in the Kingdom honors and glory. The message was that a covenant of sacrifice with the Lord Jesus, a bearing of the Cross after Him, walking in His steps, faithfulness even unto death, would bring the crown of life. Hence this has been the order of the entire Age; and followers -- of Christ have been admonished to "make their calling and election sure."

Still the Way of the Cross

Consequently the preaching of the Cross has signified not only the announcement of Christ's death as a basis for the deliverance of the race, but it has also meant the calling of consecrated believers to present their bodies living sacrifices holy and acceptable to God, which is their reasonable service; and this Gospel Age was designated the acceptable year of the Lord, the time when He is accepting of joint-sacrificers with Jesus. The particular time when this special period of favor to this class ends is of course a matter of very keen interest, and one that has properly engaged the earnest attention of Bible students in these days. Looking at all the evidence before us today our firm conviction is that we have not yet reached the end of the Narrow Way; **we have not yet arrived at the time when the preaching of the Cross has ceased, and when we are authorized to turn to the world and offer a message of life and restitution instead of the Narrow Way.** Therefore, until we do have definite and positive testimony to the effect that the Church, the new creation, has been glorified, and the full number received, we cannot announce a new way of escape from the tomb, the Highway of Holiness, leading up to human perfection and life as already opened up.

However, it is appropriate at all times in the announcement of the Glad Tidings, the way of the Cross, etc., to point out to all who have ears to hear, the full meaning of the Gospel story, namely that the ransom sacrifice of our Lord Jesus has secured for every member of the race release from the tomb, and that in due time the new Age of life will be ushered in for the blessing and uplifting of all. Thus the anointing of the Christ has been "to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." -- Isa. 61:1, 2.

As there are still multitudes who are broken hearted, and still multitudes who are captives in sin and death, and still many more multitudes who mourn, who could conceive of a more blessed and comforting message than the one we are anointed to preach? And while pressing on in fulfilling the commission given to us, let us see to it that we preserve a very clear vision of our own calling, and in accordance with the example of Jesus and the Apostles, let us give special emphasis to and lay stress upon that which is God's will concerning us, namely that we day by day take up, the Cross and bear it faithfully after Him, and earnestly seek by diligent application of the Truth and by submission to Him, the development of that Christian character rich in the blessed and grand fruitage of the Holy Spirit. In the Lord's due time, He will authorize the announcement that the Age has fully closed, and He will doubtless have agencies apt hand to make known the full change of dispensation, and the new message of life then to go forth to all the world.

BY WHAT AUTHORITY

THE question of right and authority to interpret the Scriptures and place the truth before others, is one that has long been a subject of controversy. Some have developed the impression that those who would expound the Scriptures and be of assistance to the Church should be able to show that they have some extraordinary unction or anointing above others of the brethren, and should be able to locate themselves as represented in some Old Testament character; or if not, they should be able to find themselves referred to in certain figurative or parabolic statements of the Bible, or in the figure of some symbolic angel, messenger, or channel for the last days. Being questioned on the subject as to such impressions and claims, we can only reply that we emphatically believe them to be entirely without Scriptural basis and contrary to the teachings of the Word of the Lord.

The instruction given by the great Head of the Church is that primarily His Church has but one teacher, and that is Himself: "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," and He distinctly announced that He was appointing twelve Apostles, to be special witnesses and under-teachers, whose messages and ministries were to play a very important part for the instruction of the Church throughout the entire Age. These twelve are referred to in the Book of Revelation as the "twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem." One of their number, St. Paul, who occupied a unique position amongst the others, declared that the Divine order for the Age, in his day and subsequent thereto, was that "He [Christ] gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and sonic pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, far the edifying of the Body of Christ." The history of the early Church shows that this was the order in the beginning of the Age: there were evangelists, pastors, elders, etc., selected by the different companies of the brethren to serve in spiritual things; and those who have maintained the simplicity and purity of the early Church down through the Ago have followed the order outlined in the instruction given by the Apostles. We do not find in their messages any word authorizing those who would be teachers in the Church throughout the Age to look for some symbolic angel or messenger, or to identify themselves as such, and to trust in this as an ordination to proclaim Divine Truth; and we cannot but add here that this disposition to seek for such identification in the Bible does not appear to us to be in keeping witch the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of meekness and humility. It would seem that the best evidence or credentials that any minister of the Truth can present is, his possession of the Holy Spirit and the exemplification of that Spirit in the illumination of his ministry.

Ambitious Teachers in the Church

Our Lord was asked by His disciples respecting important matters relating to His Second Advent, to which He replied: "Take heed that no man deceive you," and He went on to explain that there would be

false tear-hers who would arise and deceive many. _ In fulfillment of our Savior's prophecy there have been those who have, arisen from time to time throughout the Age and have announced themselves as specially anointed of the Lord to speak His Truth. The time a early in the Age, when the most popular bishop of that time, living in the city of Rome, was finally announced as the successor of St. Peter, and specially anointed of God to be the Head of the Church -- Vicar of Christ on earth. This man accepted the office and took to himself honors and dignity really belonging to the Lord, because he thought he saw himself in the Bible as appointed of God to take the place of Christ in the Church on earth. It is now a matter of history that one great evil after another was permitted to enter in, which resulted in a dreadful apostasy.

Others since then have arisen from time to time, even to this day, and have taken to themselves the position and honor of being especially anointed teachers sent from God and as having received an extraordinary anointing, because they have claimed to see themselves in some picture or symbol of the Bible -- and as Jesus predicted, have deceived many.

Ordination by the Holy Spirit

None should place confidence in the claims of any brother or brethren to see themselves in any portion of the Bible as an extraordinary, anointed channel to lead others into the Truth. We feel that it is indeed significant that Brother Russell, when he was assailed by his adversaries in nominal Christendom and was charged with not having been properly ordained, made no attempt to establish the fact of his ordination to preach the Word by referring to any particular symbol or statement in the Bible as referring to himself, but to the contrary, in simplicity and modesty, he referred to the anointing originally given to Jesus as the Head of the Church, the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He referred to how this anointing had extended to all consecrated believers in Christ from that day to this. He claimed for himself merely that as a consecrated follower of Christ he had come under this original anointing, and so taught that every one receiving the anointing of -the Spirit is a qualified ambassador of God to speak in His name. We are glad indeed that we have this, the only Scriptural ordination, explained and set before us ins the teachings and example of our Brother.

It is in accordance with the foregoing, therefore, that the readers of this journal will have observed that our brethren of this ministry claim for themselves only such ordination and privileges as the weakest and humblest follower of Christ is privileged to claim, namely that anointing of the Holy Spirit shared in by every member of the Church; which anointing qualifies them to study the Word of the Lord, and authorizes each and every one to make advancement in the path of light as rapidly as the Lord may be pleased to reveal the Truth. None are authorized to do more than this. Our brethren here lay no claim to

any special office and do not see themselves pointed out in the Scriptures in a figure of a channel or any symbolical servant, angel, or messenger. Nor is there any claim that the messages presented in this journal have any supernatural inspiration; for, as before stated, our professions and claims in the ministry of the Truth are such only as every fellow-member of Christ is permitted to entertain, namely an anointing of the Holy Spirit to preach the Word, to assist others to discern the mind of the Lord and to pursue successfully their course, in the Narrow Way. This much we believe to be the privilege and duty of all consecrated believers; as the Apostle Paul suggests the spirit of Christ in any and every member of His Body would lead such to make use of their talents and opportunities in doing' good unto all men as they have opportunity, especially unto the household of faith.

THE PORTRAIT OF THE MATURE CHRISTIAN

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." -- 1 Thess. 5:16-22.

ONE striking peculiarity of the Apostolic Epistles is that a large portion of them is devoted to an unfolding of the future high, exalted station that God sets before the consecrated ones of this Gospel Age; and the remainder of the epistles are given to a description of the effects that an acceptance of the call to run in the race for the great prize should produce in the lives of such. This we find to be true in this epistle of St. Paul to the Christian believers at Thessalonica. It is a fact well known that great truths may be taken into the head, may be intellectually discerned, and yet produce little or no effect in the life. In such cases it is not the truths that are at fault, but it is those who imperfectly receive them. It is therefore proper and reasonable to conclude that if these wonderful truths do not produce the effects that the inspired Apostles describe; if they do not effect a change in the everyday life of those professing to be the recipients of the same, then such have not yielded, or are not yielding up their wills, all their ransomed powers to the One who purchased them with the pouring out of His life. "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's," are the solemn words of Christ's chosen Apostle, St. Paul.

Description of One Closely United to God

In order to know whether we are truly consecrated or not, it is absolutely necessary to have instruction not only concerning the high and heavenly calling itself, but also concerning the effects that a Scriptural

reception of these blessed truths have when received into the heart and life.

This Thessalonian epistle, like all the others, has much to say about the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus," and the heavenly hope of the Christian. The words, "Rejoice evermore," are the first of seven exhortations which close the epistle. Examining closely these exhortations we discover that they describe those characterizing features that make up the life of the consecrated. In other words these seven characteristics may very appropriately be termed a portrait of the perfect or mature man in Christ Jesus. These seven qualities mentioned by the Apostle may be compared to a chain; if a single link be broken, the chain is rendered useless until it is repaired. There is no age or generation, no condition or circumstance in life where Christ is known, in which these Apostolic exhortations are not only practical but indispensable. . In sunshine and in gloom, in peace and in distress, in prosperity and in adversity, in life's bright scenes and in its dark experiences, when the heart is bounding and when it is mourning-at all times and in all conditions it is possible for the mature Christian to rejoice, to be unceasing in prayer, to quench not the Spirit, to abstain from every appearance of evil, and in every thing to give thanks. All these features combined describe one who is closely united to God, and is thoroughly in earnest in his efforts to please Him. These characteristics describe one who has a deep sense of his own unworthiness and deficiencies; but more than all this they describe a whole-hearted appreciation of the Divine arrangement in Christ to make him acceptable, and to cause him to have fellowship and communion with the infinite God as a loving and kind Father.

Rejoice Evermore

It will be the first striking feature of this Christian portrait that ,we will consider at this time, namely "Rejoice evermore." In these remarkable words we are reminded first of all that true Christianity is not a gloomy thing, not a depressed state of existence. It is true that pure Christianity does have the effect not only of separating one from the evils of the world, .but to a certain extent also of separating from what may be termed legitimate worldly pleasures, pursuits, and amusements. The thought of this, however, is not that the giving up of these things is depriving him of pleasure, rather, that he has come into the possession of higher enjoyments-pleasures that are eternal enjoyments that have only their beginning in the present life, and continue in a fuller and richer measure in the life beyond. In whatever the Christian gives up, he suffers no loss of real pleasure that he is not more than compensated for even in this life in the enjoyment and pleasures of a spiritual kind. The Christian is not exempt from the trials and tribulations the adversities and perplexities which flesh is heir to, but he has One who is with him in all these circumstances and conditions, and the great ambition and purpose of his heart ever is that he may evidence by his life that this One who is with him lifts him

above these trials and adversities, and enables him to bear them all with patience and, fortitude. He knows that these earthly experiences that seem from the natural standpoint to work against him are being overruled for his development into the likeness of his Master; he is enabled to see that these light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while he looks not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. He is enabled to see that these seemingly adverse things, are providential occasions for him to show what faith in his Lord can do for him, and thus to give a witness, a testimony to God's favor and power in Christ. One has truly said, that even "the saddest aspects of a Christian's daily life, are but the April showers of spring that usher in the bright and beautiful summer -- the everlasting and the heavenly sunshine."

To many, perhaps to the great majority of those who take the name of Christ, the Christian life seems more like a penance than a life of fellowship with God. The Word of God does not so describe it; but rather does it describe it as a blessed and exalted privilege. It is true, that if it were not for the "blessed hope" that looks beyond this vale of tears, the Christian would not be able to fulfil the exhortation of the text and "rejoice evermore." The Christian life, therefore, cannot be separated from the hope of the life beyond. The more firmly this hope is laid hold of, the more it becomes a living reality, and the more the Christian is enabled to rejoice in all conditions. The hope that expresses not only desire, but confident expectation that it will be realized in "due time," has the effect of causing the Christian to rejoice in tribulation, and even when experiencing bitter sorrow, to joy in God, knowing that all things are working together for his eternal good: Hope is an element that to a greater or less extent exists in all, although to the children of this world, because of not understanding God's love as revealed in His purposes for them, it does not reach beyond this vale of tears. It serves, however, to tide them over many of earth's sorrows and trials. The poet has expressed this in the words

"Soft as the voice of an angel
Breathing a message unheard
Hope with gentle persuasion,
Whispers the comforting word
Wait 'til the darkness is over,
Wait 'til the tempest is done,
Hope for the sunshine tomorrow,
After the showers are gone.
Whispering hope, O, how welcome Thy voice,
Making my heart in its sorrow, Rejoice."

That My Joy Might Remain in You

The Christian life "is not a reluctant sacrifice wrung from us, but a joyous free-will offering, gladly and gratefully rendered by us." The

Christian's joy is not in the trials, difficulties, tribulations, and sorrows that he encounters, but in spite of them all, and in the midst of them all, he has a deep and abiding joy. His joy is in God -- in the thought that he is in union with God through Christ; that he has been accepted by Him, His joy is enhanced as he remembers that he is a branch in that heavenly vine which the Heavenly Father is pruning that it might be fruitful. "These things [that is, that you are a branch in that vine] have I spoken unto you," said the Savior, "that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." "The Christian's secret of a happy life" is in knowing, and ever keeping in mind that he is a child of God; that Christ is his Elder Brother; that his standing and acceptance are in Him; that the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is his Father; and that it is not by works of righteousness that he has done, but by His own mercy He saves him "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit."

How true, how encouraging, how thrilling are the words concerning this from one long since departed, but who has left his footprints in the sands of time: "Unless our hearts are filled with the joy that the Gospel imparts," he says, "our life must become gloomier the longer it lasts. Unless a Christian feels the joy that this blessed Book makes known, his life will grow sadder the nearer it draws to a close, and the most aged man will necessarily be the saddest. I appeal to experience. Do we not feel that as we grow older we become less susceptible of impressions from the joys that once shone so brilliantly and struck us with such force before? You now look at the child playing with his bubbles and wonder how the little child can be so pleased, perhaps forgetting that kings are only playing with bubbles more splendid, but no less empty, as seen by angels and the inhabitants of the higher spheres. Do not those who have reached the middle of life, and look back on the march they have left behind, notice that the procession of those who are no more with us grows longer every day; and scenes that made the heart bound and set the feelings all on fire twenty years ago, now cease to produce the least effect when repeated and even radiant with more than their former brilliancy. Do we not find that, try as we like, we cannot recall the romance of childhood, or rekindle the dying embers of departed youth, or restore to the canvas the bright colors that have faded, and gone forever and ever.

Heavenly Joys Replace the Earthly

"But here lies the charm of Christianity -- here is the preciousness of the Gospel of Christ, that as natural joys ebb away and are spent, heavenly ones rush into their forsaken channels. As the past ceases to impress, the future and the heavenly begins to shower down new and better pleasures. As the old heart dies to the excitements that thrilled it, once, the new heart begins to come under the influence of those brighter and better joys that come from the future. As earth ceases to attract, heaven begins, if we are Christians, more powerfully to draw us. We cease to look backward to a world that cannot give us real

delight, and begin to look forward to a .brighter and a better world, that, like a distant star, grows lovelier the nearer we approach., it. Old age without-. religion loses two worlds at once; the world that is past is gone, and it has no future world to go to [while the world has a future hope, it knows not of it now]; but old age inspired by a living religion, only exchanges the old world that is ready to perish, for the new, the brighter and more glorious world that begins to burst upon it. Of all beings upon earth, we pity an old man without a living religion. We pity the young that have not that which can sanctify their joy; but still more we pity the old whose hearts are dry and empty channels of streams that have evaporated, and are not replenished with the living waters that flow from the fountain of God and of the Lamb. Thus we see how precious religion is, even. if for no other reason than that it takes the place of those joys that have withered, and cheers us as we, go down the other side of the hill towards the valley of the shadow of death; so that as the pleasures of memory fade, the pleasures of a sure hope shall *become* brighter every day."-John Cumming.

Why is it the privilege of the Christian to "rejoice evermore"? -- What is the foundation for his rejoicing? -- What has he in which to "rejoice evermore"? We answer -- So far as he personally is concerned, the Christian as such has much in which to rejoice: he has nothing that need make him sad and dejected. God has forgiven all his past sins; in Christ he has redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. We have a throne of grace to which we may approach that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. We are frail and weak, and cumbered with infirmities; but we have a great High Priest who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." We have received of God's own Spirit, which bears witness with ours that we are His children, His sons. We have the blessed privilege of knowing that the great God of all is dealing with us as His sons; and while He sees best at times to chasten us, we know that these chastenings are necessary and for our good, in order that we might become partakers of His holiness. We are made aware of the fact that there is a special providence over us-that all things work together for our good because we love God, and are the called according to His purpose. Jesus tells us that the Father loves us; and that He Himself will love us to the end.

Faith Lays Hold of the Promises

The inspired Apostle tells us that He that hath begun a good work in us will complete it unto the day of Jesus Christ. Another Apostle tells us that "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," are freely given to us of God. If persecution comes to us because of our identification with Christ, or for His sake, He tells us to rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is our reward in heaven. We not only have the Spirit witnessing with ours that we are the children of God, but witnessing also that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ if so be that we suffer with Him. We know that we are no longer under

condemnation, no longer subject to bondage, for we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption [sonship] whereby we cry, Abba, Father. We have the witness that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. We are enabled as our faith lays hold of these exceeding great and precious promises, to rejoice in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is given unto us.

As for spiritual blessings, which are the greatest of all blessings, we are told that even now by faith we are raised up and privileged to sit with Christ in heavenly places. We have the blessed privilege of having made known to us of God the mystery of His will, according to the good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that it is His purpose in the dispensation of the fullness of times to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.

We have the promise of Christ that He will come again and receive us unto Himself that where He is there we may be also; that when He who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. Furthermore, we have had made known to us God's wonderful Plan of the Ages -- that all mankind are objects of His love, that He gave His Son to be a ransom for all to be testified in due time; that our loved ones, who in the present life are not able to see His love; will 'in a due time appointed be privileged to learn of it, and profit by it to the extent of being offered the privilege of attaining everlasting life; in other words that there is not only set before the Church an opportunity to obtain eternal glory, but there is a hope to be set before the world, that of obtaining restitution or earthly glory. And we are told that nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I Know in Whom I Have Believed

"What more can He do for me?" says one. "He has given me His Word to guide me, His Holy Spirit to teach and comfort me, and the bright promise of an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. And as if to make me sure of all, He has said, 'All things are yours Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, the world, things present, things to come; life or death -- all are yours, because ye are Christ's. In what sense are all yours? All the world's troubles and trials are mine, to keep me from presumption -- all the world's joys and blessings are mine, to keep me from despair or doubt -- all things that are in the world, work for good to them that love God, and who are called according to His purpose. I see nothing in the law that can harm me -- nothing in the Bible that can depress me -- but much in every page, more in every providential arrangement of heaven, to cheer me, and to make me respond with joyous utterance to the prescription of the Apostle, 'Rejoice evermore.'"

While the Bible does not teach that the full assurance of faith is an absolute duty, it does teach that it is a blessed possibility. Unquestionably, there are Christians who can say with unfeigned lips, "I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded, that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day"; and there are doubtless others who can say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee; and when heart and flesh fail, Thou wilt be the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." As one has said, "Faith believes in Christ for salvation; assurance, which is a step higher, believes that in Christ we already have salvation. Both are saving. The first is saving only, the second is saving and comforting too. And an Apostle writing says, 'These things I write unto you' -- wishing them to have full assurance -- 'that your joy may be full.'"

The Christian's joy may be increased even beyond that full assurance of joy that comes on account of his own acceptance and hope of the eternal inheritance in the future. A Christian has something to give to others. If we wish to retain and keep this full assurance of joy, we must give out liberally of that good we have received of God; we must remember and practice the words of the Lord Jesus -- "it is more blessed to give than to receive." In all we give to the needy, in all we give to those in distress, in all we lay on the altar of sacrifice, there is not the slightest ground for boasting, but there is much in it that will increase our joy ever-more. It is the great unchanging law of God, that the more we give out of a heart that is moved by the spirit of the Great Giver Himself, the richer the harvest of joy that will be reaped now and evermore. The one who gives most, enjoys most. This has been eloquently expressed by another:

The Blessedness of Giving

"Every cup of cold water that you give to the thirsty, every kind look that you reflect on the needy, every morsel of bread that you impart to the hungry, every helping hand you hold out to the down-trodden, every text of truth you whisper in the ear of the dying, every page of the Bible you send forth to the distant ignorant, comes back to yourself in waves of swelling joy, and by a beautiful reaction you reap whilst you sow, and taste the blessedness whilst you exercise the beneficence of giving to them that need your sympathy and your assistance. It is a grand and blessed law in God's holy providence, that if you try to increase your own joy by gratifying your desires and appetites, you find that you stimulate them by indulgence, and the more you give them, the more they necessarily crave. But, on the other hand, if you wish to increase your joy by denying your own desires and appetites, and giving as a ministry to the wants and necessities of others, you will find that though your desires and appetites are thus unstimulated, yet will your gratification increase, and the more you give the more you will swell the current of your "happiness, and multiply the joys of your heart. To rejoice always, therefore, give always. There is that that

scattereth that increaseth.' It is recorded of a man who had made an ample fortune and had retired to a country-seat to enjoy it, that when he had nothing to do he became absolutely wretched; so wretched that he formed the horrible idea of committing suicide. Going to drown himself he met a poor woman who had not tasted bread for four and twenty hours. Cold, ragged, wretched, starving, she implored aid. He gave her a shilling; and the grateful smile reflected from that starving woman's face arrested his career, and he returned a wiser and better man, saying to himself, 'If God makes me the instrument of giving happiness by the gift of a shilling, I think He must have more work for me to do in the world.'"

How different from the experiences of average Christians today does the Bible describe the experiences of some of God's saints who lived in the Law Age of lesser light and privilege. The tendency is to read the utterances of some of the old is to read the utterances of some of the old prophets and saints as though they were simply beautiful ideals that can never be realized, instead of real practical experiences -- expressions of faith and confidence in God. One of these old saints of God when brought under circumstances in which everything of earthly comfort was slipping from his grasp gives utterance to the beautiful words, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meet; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." (Hab. 3:17, 18.) The words describe a state of famine, desolation, and abject poverty. Under such circumstances what would the average man say? The stoic would say, I will render myself insensible to it; I will be like the granite rock. The mere man of the world would say, I will destroy myself. The mere philosopher would say, I will submit to it. But the mature Christian, who has come to know Him in whom he has believed, will triumphantly say, "I will," notwithstanding all this, "rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

We Sorrow Not as Others

But perhaps you may have suffered a more severe trial than is described in these words. It may be that the dearest object of your earthly affections has been taken away. There is no condition or circumstance that can come to some which so tends to crush the human heart, and open the flood gates of grief and sorrow, like that of the loss of a loved one--no condition that is more calculated to make one feel forlorn and alone, and cause earth to have no more attractions and charms. As we look down into the pallid face of the one we loved on earth better than all others, who was the companion of our life, the one above all others with whom we felt we could not part, the one on whom perhaps we depended and therefore could least of all spare, the one who seemed actually a part of ourself; as we gaze into the face of our beloved dead, can we then rejoice, when our hearts are crushed

with sorrow and our eyes are filled with tears; or when our grief is so great, when our sorrow is so deep, that even tears, which would bring some measure of relief, refuse to flow -- can we then rejoice? Yes, we reply, even then the Christian may rejoice -- he may realize an undertone of peace and joy even in his bitterest sorrow; for if the loved one was a Christian then there is no loss; he has only gone quietly to rest in the tomb which is only the inn, the resting place for a night of the weary traveler on the way to the New Jerusalem, the City of God. When we part from our friends, our loved ones here on earth but for a few months, we say Goodby, and may not be sure that we will meet them again; but when Christian parts with Christian, they know that it is only for a "little while," that they will meet again in the Morning which will usher in the bright day that will never end. If the loved one be not a Christian, yet there is hope. Such only sleep in Jesus, who purchased them he shall gloriously triumph over death and be with His own precious blood, and when God's "due time" shall come, they too shall awake in a better land, where they will be able to learn of God's great love; there they will be free from the distraction and confused teaching that hindered them from learning it in the present life.

But there is another hour that must come to us, to all, both young and old -- the hour when we ourselves must come face to face with the grim monster, the great enemy, death. In this dark hour Christians have rejoiced, and Christianity teaches us that we may rejoice. The one having been faithful will realize as he approaches this hour inspired by God, that the body that is being yielded up is but the worn out and broken temple in which Divine service is now ended; and such an one can rest confidently in the hope that in God's due time he shall gloriously triumph over death and be clothed with the immortal body from heaven. Consequently, death, while an enemy, comes to the Christian clad in no robes of terror, but with a bright and joyous welcome. And why should not a Christian rejoice at death, for he simply goes to rest with others, waiting to join the companionship of those with whom he took sweet counsel upon earth; and more than all else, to meet his Father and his beloved Lord and Master. It gives honor to the one who bought you, to rejoice. Then, if you are a Christian, rejoice. Indeed, you owe it to your God, to show the world that your Savior enables you to rejoice. It is this way that perchance you may draw some one to that spring from which you have received the life-giving medicine that makes even the present life one of joy and rejoicing.

LIBERTY AND THE MINISTRY OF THE DIVINE WORD

AMONG the most clear and forceful warnings of modern times on the subject of Christian liberty we believe that none could be more

profitable and to the point than that given by Brother Russell. We quote extensively from his faithful admonitions:

"It has been well said that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty: and truly it is the price of every principle of truth and righteousness which we desire to hold; because unceasing vigilance, art, cunning craft, unscrupulous hypocrisy and unblushing impudence are the characteristics of Satan, 'the prince of this world' (John 14:30; Eph. 2:2), who, unrecognized by men, is constantly manipulating human affairs, civil and religious, for the accomplishment of his own diabolical purposes in the enslavement of humanity to the dictum of ignoble tyranny.

"We certainly do not deny, but on the contrary affirm, that the Church should have living teachers; and that the Lord has raised up such teachers all through the Gospel Age, and will to its close, to instruct the Church in general by expounding the Word of God, pointing out and making clear its teachings and bringing forth from the storehouse things both new and old. But all are not teachers. Teaching, St. Paul declares, is a special gift. (1 Cor. 12:28-30.) A teacher is one who, being fully consecrated and brought into submission to the Divine will and enlightened concerning the Divine Plan, God can and is pleased to use in instructing His Church. And the basis of such selection maybe a keen, penetrating mind or other natural or supernaturally imparted endowment and qualification.

"But as for a clerical class, God does not recognize it as His elect teachers; nor has He chosen many of His teachers from its ranks. The mere claim of any man to be a teacher is no proof that he is one by Divine appointment. That false teachers would arise in the Church, who would pervert the truth was foretold. The Church, therefore, is not to blindly accept whatever any teacher may set forth, but should prove the teaching of those whom they have reason to believe to be God's messengers, by the one infallible standard -- the Word of God. 'If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' (Isa. 8:20.) Thus while the Church needs teachers, and cannot understand God's Word without them, yet the Church individually -- each by himself and for himself, and himself only -- must fill the important office of judge, to decide, according to the infallible standard, God's Word, whether the teacher be true or false, and whether the claimed teacher is a true teacher by Divine appointment.

"Thus seen, not many special teachers are necessary ('Helps,' 'Pastors,' etc., are more numerous -- 1 Cor. 12:28) -- and they only when old truths may need to be lifted out of the dust of error and human tradition; or when some new unfolding of God's Plan require presentation to the Church as 'meat in due season.' And then, such teacher must. offer proofs that he is a teacher, and that his teaching is true, by expounding and harmonizing the Scriptures.

"God has in the past raised up teachers who, though befogged by prejudices and errors, nevertheless brought forth parts of truth; for

instance, Wycliffe, Huss, Zwingli, Luther, Bunyan, Calvin, Wesley, and others; and God will continue to so raise up the needed teachers. As St. Paul declares, God Himself provides these teachers, they are His gifts to the Church. -- 1 Cor. 12 :28.

But, notice, that these teachers are not the only priests of the Royal Priesthood; rather, they are merely God's agents or mouthpieces by which He speaks to the general Priesthood, His consecrated Church; and the entire Church or Priesthood is blessed of God through such teachers.

"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. If you did this once, thoughtlessly, even though it were years ago, in joining a church, now that your attention is called to it, you are bound to procure a copy of the 'covenant,' or 'articles of faith,' the belief of which you confessed publicly, and after careful, prayerful study of it, if you find that you do not so believe, **you will be bound to deny it as publicly as you confessed it**, or else forfeit in God's sight all claim to honesty.

"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 teaching. 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.

"When you come to apply this rule you will be greatly surprised. You will find that many errors of doctrine, as well as of custom, have been carried over from Romanism into Protestantism. Many doctrines expressed in the catechisms and confessions of faith and in the hymn books and from the various pulpits, you will find no foundation for in the Bible; and many prominent in the Bible, you will find are ignored by one or another, and some of them by all the sects of Christendom. But hold fast to God's Word,. Let God be true, if it should make every man a liar. --Rom. 3:4." -- Z. Aug. '89.

Human Church Organization not Desirable

In view of the many lessons from the Scriptures, as well as from the history of the past, bearing upon the subject of Christian liberty, and in view also of our Pastor's clear elucidation as to the maintenance of our rights and liberties in Christ, none of the brethren today need be in ignorance on this important subject. It is encouraging in these days to find a goodly number of brethren in all parts of the world who have clearly defined perception with regard to this matter; and in accordance therewith are striving to the best of their ability to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. It is pleasing to note that the increasing tendency on the part of the brethren is to exercise great care that they remain free from all human entanglements and bondage. We commend this disposition most highly.

We, do not wonder, however, that some who have had sad experiences, in connection with one bondage or another in the past, are inclined to go to the other extreme; almost to the extent of refusing, to be considered as members of an Ecclesia. Some of these, out of loving concern for the highest interests of the Lord's people, we believe, have had more or less of a question in their mind as to this arrangement here, known as the "Pastoral Bible Institute," thinking that it might become the occasion for a further bondage to a human system to those who have a membership in the "Institute"; thus seeming to have the impression that this association is another religious sect. Several times we have endeavored in the columns of this journal, as well as in our correspondence with the brethren, to set forth the facts regarding this "Institute" and its service. We have repeatedly stated that this is not an attempt to organize the Church. None of those who become members are questioned as to their religious faith and practice. The "Pastoral Bible Institute" sets forth no Articles of Faith, and applies no tests of fellowship. It is purely an association composed of brethren of many Ecclesias who, earnestly desiring to be faithful to the Truth and the Lord have undertaken, in a united way, to carry on a general ministry of the Truth, believing that more could be accomplished by uniting their efforts than for each Ecclesia to attempt to work separately in an individual way. Accordingly, the brethren desired to have some arrangement whereby they could appoint or elect certain of their number to represent them in having charge of the work and in carrying it forward according to the wishes of those who appointed them.

In order that this purpose might be executed, it was deemed to be profitable and expedient to form a simple business membership company for transacting the necessary business, whereby the brethren at large could have a voice as to who would represent them in carrying on the service, and as to what activities and policies, etc., would be pursued. In this way everything in the nature of headship is avoided, and no opportunity left for ambitious brethren to usurp authority and lord it over God's heritage.

Asked as to the Scripturalness of a business arrangement for conducting a general service, our reply is that we know of not the slightest inference in the Scriptures unfavorable to having a business

concern such as described above. The Lord's people are exhorted to use the spirit of a sound mind in all things, and to do whatsoever they do unto the glory of God. The Apostle assures us that "the end of the commandment is love," and that "love worketh no ill to his neighbor." (1 Tim. 1 :5; Rom. 13:10.) ' The preaching of the Gospel is a ministry of love and any device that will encourage or facilitate such holy service .in harmony with the principles of justice and love is to be lauded and not condemned. True enough, we do not read of any business corporation being authorized in the early Church, nor for the Church subsequently; but neither do we read of the brethren of that time riding on railway, trains, and making use of such devices as we have in modern times. The increase of the human family, and the advance of civilization and commercialism have become the occasion for the introduction of various legal instruments and arrangements by which the world's business might be transacted orderly. The matter of a corporation is one of those which the Lord's people may make use of just the same as they may make use of a railway train, although St. Paul journeyed hundreds of miles by foot.

None are urged to become members of this "institute," nor is membership in this association in any sense or to any degree made the test of fellowship or of service; and brethren who are not members of the "Institute," but who have ability and talent as teachers, and who show the spirit of the Lord, are given equal share in the ministry to that of other brethren who are members of the, "Institute." Those who have been reading the columns of. this journal well know that we have repeatedly discouraged everything in the nature of bondage to men and to systems, and everything in the nature of lording it over the Church. In accordance with this we wish the friends to use their own personal judgment with regard to accepting what they read, and to receive nothing as truth except they recognize that it is well established by suitable and satisfactory Scriptural evidence. The fact that you may not see and accept every view advanced shall not be allowed to make any difference or hindrance so far as full fellowship in Christ is concerned. Each should accept only so much as he fully recognizes to be the Truth.

The brethren now having charge of the affairs of the "Institute" do not for an instant consider that they have a. monopoly over the Lord's goods, or that they have any special anointing to an office above other brethren not in this position. We do believe that the Lord has greatly blessed our humble efforts in these recent years to the encouragement and edifying of many of the scattered sheep, but we equally believe that other brethren could just as well, and possibly better, have performed this ministry and have received fully as great a blessing from the Lord. For the good that has been accomplished the Lord be praised. There is no desire in the minds of any of the brethren here to build up a system, nor are we determined that this is a Divine arrangement that must abide. To the contrary, if it shall please the Lord to dispense with the entire arrangement of the "Institute" and its

ministries, at once, we trust to accept the same with proper humility. There is no intimation, however, that the Lord intends to do this, for His blessing seems to be increasingly upon the humble endeavors put forth; but when the time shall come that it is His will for this arrangement to cease, we desire to accept the same in full resignation to the will of God, being fully persuaded that His ways are wise and just and that He doeth all things well.

Christ, the Center of Our Unity

Finally on the subject of Church organization and what it is that unites us together in Christ, we submit the following as a most clear and Scriptural statement, well worthy of the careful and prayerful consideration of all:

"And then as to the 'standard' [around which we gather]: What is it? Is it a doctrine? Nay. Is it a theological system? Nay. Is it an ecclesiastical polity? Nay. Is it a system of ordinances, rites, or ceremonies? Nothing of the sort. God's warriors do not fight under any such banner. What is the standard of God's militant host? Let us hear and remember. It is Christ. This is the only standard of God and the only standard of that warrior band which musters in this wilderness world, to hosts of evil, and fight the battles of the Lord. Christ is the standard for everything. To have any other would only unfit us for that spiritual conflict to which we 'are called. What have we, **as Christians**, to do with contending for any system of theology or church organization? Of what account, in our estimation are ordinances, ceremonies, or ritualistic observances? Are we going to fight under such banners as these? God forbid! Our theology is the Bible. Our church organization is the one Body, formed by the presence of the Holy Spirit, and united to the living and exalted Head in the heavens. To contend for anything less than these is entirely below the mark of a true spiritual warrior.

"Alas! alas! that so many who profess to belong to the Church of God should so forget their proper standard, and be found fighting under another banner. We may rest assured it super-induces weakness, falsifies the testimony, and hinders progress. If we would stand in the day of battle, we must acknowledge no standard whatsoever but Christ and His word, -- the living Word, and the written word. Here lies our security in the face of all our spiritual foes.

"It is ever the aim of Satan, as it is the tendency of our hearts, to lead us to stop short of God's mark in everything, and specially in the center of our unity as Christians. It is a popular sentiment, that 'the blood of the Lamb is the union of saints, that is, it is the blood which forms their center of unity. Now, that it is the infinitely precious blood of Christ which sets us individually as worshipers in the presence of God is blessedly true. The blood, therefore, forms the Divine basis of our fellowship with God. But when we come to speak of the center of our unity as a church, we must see that the Holy Spirit gathers us to the Person of a risen and glorified Christ; and this grand truth gives character -- high and holy character -- to our association as Christians. If we take lower ground than this we must inevitably form a sect or an ism. If we gather around an ordinance, however important, or around a truth, however indisputable, we make something less than Christ our center.

"Hence, it is more important to ponder the practical consequences which flow out of the truth of our being gathered to a risen and

glorified Head in the heavens. If Christ were on earth, we should be gathered to Him here; but, inasmuch as He is hidden in the heavens the Church takes her character from His position. there. Hence, Christ could say, 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world?; -- and again, 'For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified -through the truth.' (John 17:16; 19:.) So, also in 1 Peter, we read, 'To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed .of men, but chosen of God and precious; ye also, as lively stones, are built 'up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' (Chap. 2:4, 5.) If we are gathered to Christ we must be gathered to Him as He is, and where He is; and the more the Spirit of God leads our souls into the understanding of this, the more clearly we shall see the character of walk that becomes us. It is Christ's position which gives character to the position of. the Church, and her position should ever give character to her walk. The more closely we adhere to Christ, and to Him alone, the stronger, and the safer we shall be. To have Him as a perfect covering for our eyes, -- to keep close to Him, -- fast by His side, this is our grand moral safeguard."

RESULTS OF PRESENT TESTS UPON THE CHURCH

Dear Brother Hoskins:

Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Although, I am under the impression that our secretary array have already written you, I wish to tell you personally what a blessing we received, and how refreshed we have felt spiritually as the result of your recent visit to us.

We felt very much encouraged indeed at the attendance of sixty-five in the morning and seventy-seven in the evening, especially in view of the fact that those present represented the friends who had so recently been disfellowshipped by a resolution drawn up and passed by the I. B. S. A. members here; copy of which resolution is herewith appended, together with one drawn up by those disfellowshipped in reply. As is clearly discernible, the spirit of sectarianism is thoroughly manifest in their resolution, whereas the spirit of liberty which the Apostle enjoins us to exercise in Galatians 5:1 is conspicuously absent.

Let me take this opportunity to tell you how much we are enjoying .the Heralds; the, February 15th number was particularly timely, I thought. I have mailed it on to an isolated sister in the country.

I also note that there is a likelihood that Brother Streeter's splendid articles on Daniel may be compiled and published in book form. How I would love to contribute something toward it if it is the Lord's will to

publish it. I hope soon to be able to send something towards the "Good Hopes" fund. I was so glad to get the supply of free literature for distribution among those with whom I come in contact. The subjects are certainly timely, now when almost without an exception every home is suffering -- the results of evil in the world.

Brother S. joins me in Christian love to you 'and all who are laboring together with you in declaring the Truth to the Lord's poor scattered sheep everywhere, and we assure you of -our prayers.

Your sister by His matchless grace, E P. S.-Va.

[The two resolutions referred to in above letter follow:]

We, the undersigned, members of the Richmond, Va. Ecclesia of International Bible Students, hereby desire to express our loyalty to and firm belief in the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society with headquarters at Brooklyn, N. Y., as the exclusive channel used by our Heavenly Father for dispensing the Present Truth and that we are in full harmony with the work of the Society as at present conducted.

We further desire that a motion be made and acted upon by the Ecclesia to the effect that no one shall participate in the forthcoming election, either as a voter or to stand for election to any office, who will not publicly declare the same.

Signed: [Thirty-eight names follow.]

Copy of Motion

That this Ecclesia require each one that participates in the next election, either as 'a voter, or to stand for election to any office, to publicly declare that they accept the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society, with headquarters at Brooklyn, N. Y., as the exclusive channel used by our Heavenly Father for dispensing "present truth" and that they are in harmony with the *work* of the Society as at present conducted: _

To the members of the Richmond Ecclesia of the I. B. S. A.:

Inasmuch as a resolution was submitted to the Class on Sunday, the 13th. inst., and passed; thereby automatically disfellowshipping a large number of said Class and depriving them of their rights and privileges as members of the Body of Christ, we the disfellowshipped ones, submit the following:

That the said resolution was not only contrary to law and order, but was responsible for resolving the I. B. S. A. into an unqualified sectarian body, thereby causing the signers thereof to separate themselves from us as members of the Body of Christ.

This being the case, we the undersigned feel persuaded that some .of the individuals who signed said resolutions, as well as others who

supported same, were led into this error without a full realization of the enormity of the offense.

Therefore in order to maintain our position before the public in an honorable manner, and with a desire to do justice to those who have separated themselves from us (Rom. 8:35, 39), we are constrained to give any one who has participated in the aforesaid lawlessness the opportunity to repudiate the part that they have taken therein before we make use of said resolution.

Based on the principle of justice, coupled with benevolence, we are prepared to wait for a period of ten days in order to hear from any who, upon further consideration, are now of the opinion that they have made a mistake so that their names may be erased before we exercise our prerogative. -- Mic. 6:8; Prov. 21:3.

We regret that our many efforts counseling brotherly love as the "tie that binds," seem to have been fruitless. Nevertheless we feel confident that our risen Lord, the great miracle worker, is thoroughly capable of eventually overruling the matter to the good of all. Rom. 8:28.

Yours by His grace,

Signed: [Thirty-one names follow.]

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

Dear Brethren: It is with a heart overflowing with deep and overwhelming appreciation to 'our glorious Creator, our loving Heavenly Father, and to Our beloved Bridegroom (whom having not seen we love), and to you His brethren and humble followers, for the wonderful feast of truth which is revealed in the "Chronology" Herald and "Revelation" volumes.

Previous to sending in my last order (which was my first), I had put into my hand your special number on "Chronology." I at once realized it was "meat in due season." Immediately I sent for more, and the "Revelation" books. All the volumes have been placed, and all who have react pare loaning them to others. We are of one heart and mind in expressing our joy and our deep and reverent appreciation of them.

We have been separated physically from the I. B. S. A. since last July, by being "excommunicated." Our endeavors to hold the Lord Jesus as our "Head" and to abide by the truths of His Word were among some of the **reasons** why we were delivered from many painful circumstances. We looked at this as the Lord's doing, but were still walking in the dark as far as any visible result could be seen. Now we realize even more than ever what bondage we were in. We daily pray for many others, that the dear Lord in His due time will deliver all those who are truly His. Some of us have been many years

appreciating the "Scripture Studies"; and your precious volumes have reminded us once 'again of that former time when our minds were once "illuminated. I will refrain from writing further, but felt I must express my own personal appreciation.

Am sending further order for which please find money order balance to be used to cover cost of postage for this and previous order.

May the dear Lord continue to be "your shield and your exceeding great reward."

By His abounding grace,

' C. C.-Ont.

Dear Brethren:

Thank you very much for your letter of February 3rd, and the enclosed literature. I am satisfied that the harvest work is going grandly on, and that it will not cease until the Lord allows n and his instruments to completely tie our hands.

To think that my stand has been on deductions of the brethren for these last few years and not upon the sure Word of God, makes me feel ashamed, but I am revived when I consider that His mercy is like the boundless mean and that "a just Man falls seven times," and is yet in the favor of the Lord, who raiseth him up again. There are several 'here with whom I am fellowshiping who also are getting interested in your publications. One or two have written you. Enclosed you will find an order for \$-,for my subscription to the "Herald," and the rest to be used as you wish. I would be very thankful if you would send me some of the ..free literature so that I might be more busy, using my "talent "

This self-imposed, antitypical imprisonment, (?) of John the Baptist, in which we -bad thought ourselves since 1918, is far (roan being the Lord's will, rather it is the will of Satan, the Adversary of God and man.

Praying the Father's blessing on - you, I am

Your brother in Christ, J. H. M.-B. C.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

I wish to thank you for the free literature that you sent me for distribution. I find great joy in witnessing to the people. Will you please send me a copy-of "Light After Darkness," and any other information that you may have concerning what was done in 1917 and 1918. My eyes are getting open. and I greatly rejoice; and if you will please do this, it will prove a great blessing to me.

I have greatly enjoyed the "Herald of Christ's Kingdom" the past year. I just finished the March 1st issue.

I surely feel sorry for the Society brethren, whose hopes are dashed regarding 1925, and hope that they will soon see the error of their ways and return to the Lord for information instead of following man-made deductions.

Hoping that I may receive the above literature soon, and thanking you in advance, I am Your brother in Christ, D. A. D.-Ia.

Dear Friends:

Christian greetings in our dear Redeemer's name. By the kind favor of the Lord some of your papers, four copies of the "Herald," were sent to me this year. As I intend too become a regular subscriber am enclosing \$1.00 for this year's numbers, beginning January 1st, please. The dear sheep have been terribly scattered and torn by the wolves in sheep's clothing, but the promise is that they will be regathered. The dear Lord will do it in His own way and time. I am in my fifth year, and have been confined to my room most of the time since November 1918. I name into the Truth as explained by our dear Pastor Russell., in 1901.

With Christian love, asking an interest in your pray err, believe me to remain

Your sister in Him,

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior.

Please send me information as to any literature you have which will enable others to come to a knowledge of the Truth.

I have read the volumes of Scripture Studies and have for over two years been feeding on the Watch Towers. Although exhilarated for a time by the supposed new light which has been coming out, I have had to coarse to the conclusion that I could not be convinced of any of it; that even though the points brought out ware truth, the Towers were not even consistent with each other. I have served as an elder,- but found that I had nothing which I could give to any one, as I myself was being starved; having come to a point where I could not read the Towers, could not pray, and could not read my Bible nor my Manna book because they did not harmonize with the new light (?). "The Herald" was loaned to me when I was completely discouraged, and I began to pick up spiritually. .

Please enter a subscription to the "Herald" to the following addresses: .
. . Also please send me the two volumes on "Revelation," 6 copies of the "Chronology Herald" and 6 copies of the February 15 issue, if you have !them. Send me also a copy of the "Divine Plan of the Ages" in blue cloth. I am enclosing \$- from which you may take the price of the books; the rest may be used to the glory of the Lord in other service.

Praying that the Lord may guide you and enable you to give comfort to the hearts of others as I have received it, I am Your brother in Christ,
H. G. A.-Ont.

Mrs. S. C.-,B. C.