

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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SELF-EXAMINATION AND OUR HERITAGE THROUGH THE YEARS

*"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not,
then have we confidence toward God." -- 1 John 3:21.*

INASMUCH as the Word of the Lord gives assurance that He crowns the year with His goodness, it is eminently fitting and to their profit that the Lord's people shall continually keep trace of the mercies and blessings they enjoy -- otherwise the pressure of the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches would so crowd in upon their minds and hearts as to cover from their observation and ultimately choke out completely the springs of Divine grace, which, kept open, minister continually to their joy and refreshment in the Holy Spirit.

To this end it is important that we have a yearly as well as a daily review of the blessings we enjoy -- calling to mind the privileges that are ours, the providences which have guided our way, and the blessings, both temporal and spiritual, which have come to us; some of them in common with the world in general and others of a special kind, known to and appreciated by those only who know the Shepherd and are known of Him; who hear His voice and to whom the rod and staff, His chastenings and guidance, are continually a comfort and joy.

But it is with special appropriateness that at the beginning of a new year we take a comprehensive view of our experiences, looking circumspectly at, the way we have traveled and' considering well which have been the steps that hindered progress, and which have been proper steps in the footprints of Jesus, bringing us nearer the goal-the "mark," which we must surely attain if we would be accounted worthy' of a share in ,the promised Kingdom.

A year may seem a longer or shorter period, according to the circumstances. To the mind of childhood it is a very long period, while to more developed minds, filled. with the activities of life, it seems much shorter -- speeding all too rapidly to permit the accomplishment of all the things desired to be achieved. Then again, the year will seem proportionately long, as it has contained draughts of bitter experience or sufferings, mental or physical-proportionately short, as' it has con

tained joys and pleasures which seem to slip away all too quickly. To a certain extent such experiences are common to all mankind; yet the Christian especially if he has been for some time in the School of Christ and is somewhat developed both in knowledge and in grace, has a larger capacity than others for grasping and appreciating life; because; no matter how unsound his natural mind may have been, he

has now "the mind of Christ," "the spirit of a sound mind," which is far better able than the natural mind to estimate matters at their true worth.

Looking Back We Praise the Way

Such an advanced Christian looks back through the year and recalls life's storms as well as its sunshine, its sorrows as well as its joys, its tears as well as its smiles, and sorrows not as others who have no hope (but who, instead, have more or less of vague fear and dread of the future, both of present life and that which is to come). His troubles have been divested of their hobgoblin features, and minimized by the spirit of a sound mind, and the instructions of God's Word; which assures all such that the trials, difficulties and adversities of life, rightly accepted as lessons, are blessings in disguise -- which will work out "a far more exceeding end eternal weight of glory" in the life to come. -- 2 Cor. 4:16; 17.

He will perceive too that his jobs have been of a purer and a more solid kind than any he ever knew before he was begotten of the Holy Spirit. They have not had commingled with them the bitterness of envy, malice, and hatred, but have been unalloyed; because they have not been rejoicings in iniquity, but rejoicings in the truth. Moreover, they have been much more numerous than before; because he is not only able to joy in the Lord, joy in His Word, joy in the Holy Spirit, joy in fellowship with brethren of like precious faith, but by the grace of God he has been enabled additionally to joy in tribulation also -- not because he loved tribulation, but because he loved the patience, the experience, the character, which God assures us are a fruitage which all tribulations must yield us under His providence, if we are rightly, exercised thereby. -- Jas. 1:3, 4; Rom. 5:3.

Of whom are all these things true? Not of every man, surely, for alas! there are many who have no such experience -- the world that lieth in darkness knows not God. Nor are these experiences true of all people of intelligence -- professing Christians. Surely but comparatively few of those who profess the name of Christ enjoy these precious experiences, or will be able to look back upon the year with satisfaction of this kind, realizing that God has crowned the year with His goodness! Many who cannot rejoice in the goodness which we have enumerated foregoing, will nevertheless return thanks for temporal good things and mercies, and strive to peer into the darkness with which an insufficient knowledge and, an insufficient faith enshrouds the trials and difficulties of life, which to them are incomprehensible and sources of no joy, and generally of little advantage; because they have not taken the necessary step of full consecration to the Lord, to bring them under His protecting care and under the enlightening influence of His Word through His Spirit; or, having taken the step of consecration, they have not been performing their vows, but seeking to serve both God and Mammon, without pleasing either, and without receiving satisfactory blessings from either.

Thou Shalt Guide Me With Thy Counsel

To the sincere and thoroughgoing consecrated children of God alone pertains the fullness of the blessing of the Christian life, because such only realize the fulfillment of the Divine promise of God's special care and of guidance by heavenly wisdom causing all things to work together for their highest good. In these reflections at this time it will be well for us to consider afresh how much the wisdom and privileges from above, mean to us. As the years come and go and as the lessons of life are impressed upon our hearts, the need for the Lord's guidance and for the wisdom and instruction from above, is all the more obvious. The true value of the counsels that come from God is revealed in the Apostle's words when he states that "the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits."

These heavenly counsels have been in the Lord's Word for centuries, they have been in our hands and before our eyes for years. We know them, we assent to them and yet how many -- how few -- seem to know how to apply them in the ordinary affairs of life. Surely as the Lord looks down upon us He must say, These people require line upon line, precept upon precept, instruction and repetition continually. Alas that it is so! We all might well be thoroughly discouraged were it not for the assurance we have that the Lord looks deeper than the outward conduct, that He is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and that according to what He sees to be our desires and efforts is His judgment respecting us. The thoughts and intents of our hearts are sometimes short of the standard that we ourselves approve, and O how short of any standard we could approve would be much of our conduct if we could but see ourselves as others see us and especially as the Lord sees us!

We are not making these suggestions with a view to discouraging any dear brother or sister who is painfully, laboriously, striving to climb up Zion's hill along the Narrow Way. On the contrary, we have nothing but sympathy for them, and are assured that the Lord regards both them and us compassionately -- "He remembereth our frame, He knoweth that we are dust." The Lord recognizes that we are imperfect, fallen creatures, and He is not expecting perfection of us. He has made provision for the covering of such of our imperfections as we do not at heart assent to; He has also given us instruction respecting His will, and He is carefully scrutinizing us day by day to see to what extent our love for Him and for the principles of righteousness, which He has enunciated and which we have acknowledged, are entering into and controlling the forces and conduct of our lives; for, after all, the words of our mouths are but the echoes of our hearts, and to whatever extent our hearts are clean, our words will be pure, and to whatever extent our hearts are loving and gentle and kind, our words and conduct will be in accord with these divinely approved qualities.

First Pure, Then Peaceable

Let us examine ourselves afresh to know the condition of our hearts, remembering the Word of the Lord, that if we judge ourselves we would not require that He should judge us, but that if we neglect to judge ourselves He will chasten us, because we put our cause in His hand, because we are His. The word pure has in it the thought of innocent, without deceit; it has in it the thought of virtue and chastity; it contains the thought of clean, true, and truthful. We cannot hope that any, either in the Church or out of it, are actually pure in the absolute sense of this word, but we do rejoice that our dear Master gave the key to a proper understanding of the matter when He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart." So long as we are in this present; mortal, imperfect condition, absolute purity is impossible; for us to be pure of heart is possible -- purity of intention, purity of motive:

When we begin a self-examination to see whether or not we are using our time and talents and influence wisely, this is the first point for scrutiny Are we pure in heart, in our daily course of life? Are we sincere in the prayers that we utter to the Lord, in our endeavors to please Him? In our relationship toward the Father are we candid and honest? Do we love Him with a pure love, heartily, fervently, or do we not? Let each decide this point for himself before proceeding to the next. If upon examination we find that our hearts have not been pure in respect to our covenants and relationship to the Lord and His Word and to the Father, let us go no farther until we have asked Divine forgiveness and resolved that by the Lord's assisting grace we will be nothing less than pure in heart, pure in endeavor.

If we can assure ourselves that our motives and intentions have nothing of selfishness connected with them, that our purposes are pure in the sight of the Lord, then, indeed, our hearts may rejoice whatever may have been our weaknesses and imperfections of the flesh, in our relationship toward the Lord or the Father or our neighbors or the world.

The next point is, Are we peaceable? Have we thus far in the journey of life been seeking to cultivate peace, or, as the Scriptures put it, "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"? Have we lived thus far as peaceable, as pure of heart toward God and His Word and the brethren as is possible for us? If so we have cause for rejoicing afresh and being of good courage; if not, here is another lesson and opportunity for going to the throne of grace to acknowledge our fault, to pray for more of this wisdom from above, which is first pure and then so far as possible peaceable toward all-peace loving, peace disposed.

"Easy of Entreatment"

How has it been with us so far? Have we been hard-hearted, cold and repulsive, or have we been gentle, kind, sympathetic with those with whom we are in contact, easy to be entreated, willing, yes, anxious to do everything which in our judgment would seem to be in the interest

and for the welfare of others -- proper, reasonable and right to do? If so, happy are we, but let us not too hastily conclude, not too hastily congratulate ourselves along this line, until we have made close inspection of the pathway over which we have come. Have any appealed to us for forgiveness and been refused? If so, ours is a very dangerous position. The Lord declares most positively that while that is our attitude we can expect no mercy from Him. He insists upon this -- "After this manner pray ye, Forgive us our trespasses as we also forgive those who trespass against us."

Emphasizing the matter, we remember that the Master explained, "Unless ye forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." What a thought! Do we need mercy? Do we need to have our faults and weaknesses of the flesh covered? Do we rejoice in the privilege of approaching the Throne of Heavenly Grace to obtain mercy? Then, as a condition to those privileges and blessings, we must be in the attitude of heart where we not only will forgive those who trespass against us, but forgive them gladly, freely, heartily. Our Lord specially warns us against a forgiving with the lips which does not include a forgiving from the heart, saying, "Except ye shall from your hearts forgive," etc. -- Matt. 18 :35.

Let no one deceive himself -- mercy is a prime essential to every one who would be counted amongst the Lord's saints, and who would count himself as having any of the evidences of acceptance with the Lord to a participation in the glorious high calling. If we have been derelict in this matter in the past, let us be the more zealous now to correct matters, and the more on our guard as respects the future that we may not err farther in this same direction.

"Full of Mercy and Good Fruits"

Ah! Here we have the pith of the whole matter: Full of mercy does not signify that we are not wholly without mercy, merciless; nor does it signify that we should have a little tinge or coloring of mercy in connection with our thoughts, words, and doings. On the contrary, it does mean that the Lord is very merciful -- Love is His name, and that in proportion as we have received His spirit, in that proportion we are full of love and full of mercy. He that lacks mercy lacks the Spirit of the Lord, as though when we read, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His," we should substitute the word mercy and say, If any man have not mercy he is none of Christ's O, merciful Lord, help us, we pray Thee, that we may have more and more of Thy spirit of compassion and sympathy and love, that we may more and more become copies of Thy dear Son and thus copies of our Father whose mercy endureth forever, and obedient followers of Him who said that unto seventy times seven we should be ready to fully and freely forgive from the heart those who transgress against us and repent!

Full of good fruits! Yes, mercy is one of the good fruits of the Lord's Spirit, but there are others, and it is a consolation that being filled with mercy does not mean that we shall be unable to contain the other graces, but rasher that the fuller we are of mercy the more of the other graces of the Lord's Spirit we may possess. While mercy may not be considered one of the richest fruits, it is classed high. It is really a negative quality; it signifies merely that we do not resent the evils of others, that we are willing to forgive, to have compassion. Still more is necessary, we must also have the active traits of character that will reach out toward others, not to injure them, not to pull them down, not to slander them, not to backbite them, but to do them good. The fruits of the spirit of evil are anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. Whoever finds any of these lurking anywhere in his heart should both labor and pray to have himself cleansed from the leaven of corruption that he might be completely filled with the fruits of the Spirit, good fruits, meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness, love, that these things might be in him and abound.

Patient and Forgiving

If we have mercy towards a dear brother or Sister who may have transgressed against us, we are not to feel boastful of the matter, but to realize that we also have been forgiven much and are objects of Divine mercy, and we are to go on to cultivate in our hearts and to be filled with the other good fruits. We ought to learn to exercise patience toward a brother, to help him over his natural difficulties and weaknesses in a most kind, gentle, sympathetic manner, remembering ourselves, also lest we should be tempted. We should be on the alert to exercise brotherly kindness, not merely toward those whose natural dispositions we admire because like or superior to our own; but rather our love for the Lord and love for the brethren should lead us to sacrifice our natural tastes and inclinations to some degree, that we might give aid and encouragement and assistance in the good way to those members of the Body who are naturally less amiable or who have made less progress or whose weaknesses or shortcomings are more apparent.

This will be brotherly kindness, and it will also be godlikeness, for thus the Almighty and our Lord Jesus, while having the common fellowship with the holy in heaven, condescended to us and continually bow down to hear us, to sympathize with us, and to assist us. Let us be more and more godlike then in our relationship and dealings with. and toward each other, and finally these various elements of love will form in us more and more completely until, by the grace of God, eventually we shall be filled with His Spirit, the spirit of love until we shall have that perfect law in full control of all our words and thoughts and doings, and thus attaining let us stand fast, waiting for the glorious conditions of the First Resurrection, which the Lord has promised to all such overcomers of the world and its spirit of sin and bitterness and evil.

HE MAKETH THE STORM A CALM

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."
-- Psa. 46.1.*

UNDER the reign of evil, the pathway of mankind is represented as a stormy one. Associated with the sentence of death upon all, there are troubles, heartaches, afflictions, and besetments of various kinds to which all are subject, that may bring great sorrows at almost any moment. Calamities, accidents, disease, earthly loss, etc., bringing distress and disappointment to the soul, come under the general classification of the storms of life. Even the children of God, who have come nigh unto Him by the blood of the cross, are not promised exemption from such experiences, for they are instructed that trials, sorrows, and sufferings are useful in God's purpose, and under the control of His unerring wisdom are made to contribute to the furtherance of His wise designs, in the developing of great and important qualities and in the proper rounding out of character such as can be entrusted with important responsibilities hereafter.

The advantages of the children of God over others of humanity are however obvious. Such have the promise that they shall be protected in the midst of trouble; that they shall be sustained and upheld, so that while they may be in deep distress and suffering pain at times, such experiences shall not hurt them in the sense of doing them real and permanent injury. Here is one of these promises: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isa. 43:2.) The history of the true servants and children of God in all ages has time and again proven God to be true to His promise. He has never left nor forsaken any of those who have trusted in Him, but has caused their experiences to work out sublime lessons of faith and obedience.

A Striking Illustration

One of these lessons recorded for our edification is to be observed in connection with our Lord's earthly life -- the occasion of His stilling the tempest on the sea of Galilee. From the various accounts we may reasonably suppose that the twelve Apostles were with the Master in the boat, and probably other "men" -- seamen, as Matthew's account implies.

The opinion expressed by some that "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2.) had something to do with creating this storm -- that it had more than natural causes, seems worthy of credence. It is remembered that the Adversary had already endeavored to induce our Lord to leap from the pinnacle of the Temple, but had not succeeded. Apparently now he would drown Him in the sea. But the Lord, who declares Himself able to make the wrath of man to praise Him, caused the

wrath of Satan or the wildness of the elements, whichever it was that induced the storm, to praise Him -- to show forth His mighty power.

During the storm our Lord lay asleep in the hinder part of the vessel on a cushion. Evidently He was thoroughly exhausted from the labors of His journey and ministry. As the storm increased, the boat with its precious load began to fill with water more rapidly than it could be bailed out. No wonder the disciples, fishermen and experts at sea though they were, were alarmed. We cannot avoid the thought that in some manner the Lord's providence had something to do with His prolonged sleep under such circumstances, and that the intention was to put the faith of the disciples to the test. They had seen His mighty works, His healing of the sick, and His awakening of the dead; they had heard His teachings, and had taken a miraculous catch of fish under His direction where they had failed before, and by this time they should have had considerable faith in His power every way. The fact that they approached Him at all indicates that they did have faith to some degree, though not implicit faith.

"Have Ye Not Yet Faith?"

The slightly different accounts of the event given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, some one has paraphrased as follows -- Matthew: "Save, Lord, we perish." Mark: "Teacher, carest Thou not that we perish?" Luke: "Master, Master, we perish." All three accounts are correct -- one disciple cried out in one way and others in different words. Some one puts it thus: "Little Faith prayed, 'Save us.' Much Fear cried, 'We perish.' Distrust urged, 'Carest-Thou not?' More Faith said, 'Lord.' Discipleship cried out, 'Teacher.' Faint Hope cried, 'Master, Thou with authority.'" Jesus arose (awoke) and commanded peace and quiet, which immediately followed. The record mentions the cessation of the wind and additionally the calming of the sea. Some one might claim that a storm which came up suddenly might happen to stop with equal suddenness, but this would not account for the calming of the sea. Waters thus lashed to a fury could not be calmed thus quickly except by superhuman power. This, indeed, we may assume to be a prominent feature of the miracle.

It is rather peculiar that the Greek word used for "Be still", in the record is the same word used by our Lord to the demon. (Mark 1:25.) This rather corroborates the suggestion foregoing respecting the storm being the work of the Adversary. In any event this miracle shows clearly that storms should not be accredited as they frequently are, to Divine malevolence; for if the Father had caused the storm, the Son would not have interfered with it. We do not wish to intimate, either, that every storm is of Satanic origin; we do not dispute that many of them arise from natural causes; but we do hold that some of them are supernatural and of the Adversary, and as a Scriptural evidence along this line we cite the whirlwind raised up by Satan. which, smote the house in which Job's children were feasting. -- Job 1:13, 19.

That our Lord intended this experience to be a lesson to the disciples, along the line of faith in Him, seems to be borne out in the sacred narrative. (Mark 4:40, 41.) He said unto them, "Why are ye fearful? Have ye not yet faith?" Has your faith not yet developed to such a degree that you can trust Me, and realize the Father's favor and power ever with Me for My protection, and that while with Me no harm could possibly overtake you -- nothing that is not wholly under My control? No wonder the Apostles gained additional reverence for the Lord as a result of this miracle. Apparently it came just in the right time and order to be their appropriate lesson. In fact we may conclude that every item of their experience and every item of our Lord's conduct, teaching, and mighty works was especially for the instruction of these twelve, who were to be His witnesses to us and to the nations of the earth respecting that ministry.

Spiritual Lessons for the Spiritual Household

There is a precious lesson in this miracle for all of the Lord's followers outside of the apostleship, too. We also have need of faith and need of tests to our faith. Our daily experiences since we became the Lord's followers have been guided and guarded apparently by the power unseen, to the extent that as pupils in the School of Christ, we may all be taught of Him and develop more and more of the graces of the Spirit, and particularly more and more faith. How important this item of faith is we probably cannot fully appreciate now. It seems to be one thing that the Lord specially seeks for in those now called to be His followers. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "With faith all things are possible." Proper faith is understood, of course, not credulity, not reliance upon the words of men, but implicit faith in the Lord for all that He has promised. "According to thy faith be it unto thee."

So important a grace must of necessity require many lessons for its proper development, and it does not surprise us that in our individual experiences as Christians we find those which correspond to the experiences of the Apostles noted in this lesson. How suddenly the Adversary may at times bring against us a whirlwind of temptation or 'of opposition or of persecution. How at such times our sky seems overcast, dark, foreboding; how the waves of adversity or affliction almost overwhelm us, and the Lord seems asleep and heedless of our distress and indifferent to our necessities! Such experiences are tests of our faith, as this one was a test to the faith of the Apostles. If our faith be strong enough under such circumstances, we would keep on with our proper endeavors to adjust matters corresponding to the bailing of the boat and the working of the oars, but meantime, with an implicit faith in the Lord's promise that "all things shall work together for our good," we would be able to sing as did the Apostle Paul and Silas while in the stocks, after being beaten for their faithfulness to the Lord. They rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. So it is still the privilege of the true disciples of Christ to

rejoice always, even in the midst of sorrowful and trying experiences -- by faith to see the outcome of the present time of severe testing and trial. None of course can enjoy the suffering of itself, but we can be joyful in the thought of those blessed and eternal consequences that the present trials will bring if endured faithfully.

The development of strong character is gradual. Each experience should be a step forward. If in the beginning our faith was weak and we cried out in dismay, the Lord heard our cry and granted deliverance with perhaps the gentle reproof, "O ye of little faith." But as the days go by and the light of His countenance is shed upon us, the Master will expect greater trust in Him, and a full assurance of faith that will cast all our care upon Him. We should be more and more confident that He who is infinitely strong and loving will not suffer us to experience any measure of defeat, but will at last bring such faithful ones off more than conquerors.

The Church's Experiences Prefigured

Some one has suggested, apparently on reasonable grounds, that this experience of Jesus and the Apostles in the boat during the night pictured the experiences of the Church during this Gospel Age. The Lord assured His people; saying, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the Age," and "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also," and "nothing shall by any means hurt you," etc. The Lord's faithful people all through this Age have realized with more or less distinctness the certainty of these precious promises; they have felt that the Lord indeed is with His Church; yet it has seemed at times as though He were asleep, inattentive to the prayers of His faithful, and inattentive to their cries and groans. For nineteen centuries His dear ones have been tempest-tossed by the Adversary, persecuted, afflicted, buffeted -- all through this dark night in which the only light available has been "Thy Word a light to my feet." The experiences of others in the past are our experiences in the present.

The children of God representing His cause are still in the midst of difficult and perplexing circumstances. There are raging elements of human passion, strife, and selfishness with which they must contend. And it is still true, as it was in St. Paul's day, that our warfare is with invisible powers of darkness in exalted positions. Our troubles may seem to come from fellow-mortals, but really back of all the storms is the Evil One. However, being informed of Satan's devices, and assured that He that is for us is greater than all that can be against us, none of the faithful, trusting ones need be dismayed. By faith we discern the presence of our Lord with us according to His promise, "Lo, I am with you always."

Soon the time will come for Him who careth for us to exert His great power on our behalf, to deliver His people, to say to the raging elements, Peace, be still. Then will follow the great calm, the great rest

from the Evil One for a thousand years, for he shall be bound that he shall deceive the nations no more. Then will come the eternal rest of the heart to all who are now in the boat with the Lord, and then will come the opportunity for all these to be co-laborers with Him in the great and glorious work of blessing the world. It must not surprise us, however, if we find ourselves today merging into a dark hour -- if the time has come when the stormy winds are so fierce that many are crying out in fear and trembling. Let us bear well in mind the precious lessons that our experiences have taught us, so that our faith shall not fail us in this stormy time--so that in the darkest hour we shall be able to sing and to rejoice in Him who loved us and bought us with His own precious blood, and to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

"TRUST"

"Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in Him, whate'er betide,
Thou'lt find Him in the evil days
Thy all-sufficient strength and guide;
Who trusts in God's unchanging love,
Builds on the rock that nought can move.

"What can these anxious cares avail,
These never-ceasing moans and sighs?
What can it help us to bewail
Each painful moment as it flies?
Our cross and trials do but press
The heavier for our bitterness.

"Only thy restless heart keep still
And wait in cheerful hope; content
To take whate'er His gracious will,
His all-discerning love hath sent.
Doubt not our inmost wants are known
To Him who chose us for His own.

"He knows when joyful hours are best,
He sends them as He sees it meet;
When thou hast borne the fiery test,
And art made free from all deceit,
He comes to thee all unaware,
And makes thee own His loving care.

"Not in the heat of pain and strife,
Think God hath cast thee off unheard,
And that the man, whose prosperous life
Thou enviest, is of Him preferred.
Time passes and much change, doth bring,
And sets a bound to everything.

"Sing, pray, and swerve not from His ways,
But do thine. own part faithfully,
Trust His rich promises of grace,
So shall they be fulfilled in thee;
God never yet forsook at need
The soul that trusted Him indeed."

SALVATION! O THE JOYFUL SOUND!

*"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not
the Son of God hath not life." -- 1 John 5:12*

THE SCRIPTURES are most explicit in the teaching that without the mercy and grace of God provided through Christ our race is in a state of abject poverty and without the slightest ray of hope for the future. In other words the lesson constantly advanced throughout the Bible is that of the utter helplessness. of mankind and their dependence upon God for deliverance from the present unhappy state.

Addressing Christian believers who had begun to experience to some extent the effects of the love of God through Christ, the Apostle Paul declares, "Ye were bought with a price," and another Apostle assures us that we were "not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ."

What different sentiments these inspired. Words awaken in different hearts! To the one who is fully in heart harmony with God and His gracious purposes, they are precious words, full of comfort and joy. But to the unregenerate heart such sentiments are very objectionable. Such convince themselves that they did not need to be bought; that they did not need to be redeemed; that they have no serious ailment of sin. Some would perhaps be ready to admit and would surely find it difficult to dispute that they are imperfect; that tried in the balances of Justice they would be found wanting. But to such these lacks of perfection are very slight and deserving of but trivial. punishment of some kind, and that punishment they expect to bear and believe that they do bear to the full in earthly troubles.

The Natural Heart Unbelieving

The natural heart believes in a Great First Cause of some kind which it calls God. It believes also in certain laws of nature which it holds are irrevocable and unalterable; but it sees no room for a philosophy or process of forgiveness. In this time of the great advance along the lines of worldly wisdom, human learning and science (often falsely so-called), this is coming, to be more and more the viewpoint; and they further believe that our race are gradually working their way from a lower to a higher state; that through the struggles of many ages, creation on this planet has been slowly but surely arising and making progress. Consequently, such claim that the present advanced state of

civilization is proof of how mankind are redeeming themselves and that there is no room for any doctrine of atonement for and forgiveness of sins. Such as become fixed in that viewpoint are wholly out of harmony with the Gospel proposition of a sin offering, a ransom for all and consequent forgiveness of sins under the terms of a special covenant by which God will extend mercy and uplift to mankind in a coming Age.

This class of unbelievers is in many respects the most hopeless; because their worldly-wise philosophy so fills their minds that it hinders them from seeing the beauty of the true Bible philosophy. They are usually blind to the very simplest logic that could touch this question as presented in the Scriptural declarations, "The wages of sin is death," and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." While they cannot and do not claim perfection, it seems never to have occurred to them that all imperfection is unrighteousness, that "all unrighteousness is sin," and that the judgment of a perfect God would properly and naturally be the destruction of that which He does not approve, and the blessing and perpetual continuance of those things only which are acceptable in His sight, perfect things and perfect beings. Not until this view is grasped are any properly prepared for the message of the Gospel -- the message that God is operating in Christ for the reconciliation of the world unto Himself. Only as the natural man learns that "the wages of sin is death" does he appreciate the fact that eternal life is a gift of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The inspired messages of the Lord's Word seem to give offense to the natural man and to the man fallen from grace; it hurts his pride to admit that he has been bought with a price; it implies that he is being treated as a slave, or chattel, to be bought and sold. What could be more galling than such a thought to the proud, unregenerate heart?

The Meek and Humble-Minded Who Hear

This thought is kept up throughout the Scriptures, and the meek, the humble-minded, alone are able to appreciate the grace of God. They hear the Apostle's statement that all were "sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14), and they realize the truthfulness of the declaration. They find abundant evidence in themselves and in the entire race that all mankind are "slaves to sin"; they find "the law of sin in their members" and in others. They find the power of sin so strong that it cannot be broken by any; that, although it may be fought against, nevertheless it holds over all mankind a mastery which the enslaved ones cannot fully overcome. They see thus, in the Apostle's words representing sin as a great taskmaster ruling the world, a very grim but very truthful picture of the facts. They inquire of the Word of God, How comes it that God, Himself good, pure and perfect, has brought forth human children under such a bondage to sin through imperfection? They inquire, Do not the Scriptures declare of God, "His work is perfect"? Why then this imperfection, why this subjection to the power of sin? An answer can come, from one quarter only -- the Word of God; and that answer

is the only satisfactory answer, the only one which meets all the requirements of the conditions as they are known to men.

It is the one which points out that Father Adam sold himself and the posterity yet in his loins to sin, for a momentary gratification of self-will, and that this meant not only his own enslavement, but, also that all of his posterity would be born in such slavery to sin. And such are the facts of the case; all of his posterity can say with one of old, "I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Man Degenerate But Not Totally Depraved

Here we come to the thought which was evidently in the minds of some of the early reformers. when they promulgated the doctrine of total depravity, which is held by many at least theoretically, but from which we must dissent. We hold with the Scriptures that as a result of Adamic transgression there is a general depravity which extends to every member of the human family, so that "there is none righteous, no, not one"; but we deny that this depravity is a total depravity; we deny that any individual of the human race is totally, hopelessly, in every particular, wholly without anything that is good or commendable. The only sample of total depravity of which we have any clear knowledge is Satan himself-the father of lies and of every wicked work.

But general depravity is general enough; and, being general, no man should have any difficulty in finding to some extent the portion of it which he himself has inherited, as well as discerning it in others. True, although the depravity is general, it is not alike general. Some are more depraved than others; some have the original moral likeness of God less blurred and defaced than others. In harmony with the Scripture statement that we are born in sin, every discerning person whose eyes have been opened to what depravity is, can note the evidences of it even in childhood. Self-will and passionate obstinacy are often, to be noted in infants but a few weeks old, and very patient should the parent be, as well as very attentive and thorough the correction of his child, when he remembers that the very traits which need correction have come down to the child from himself. Thus the Christian parent should be not only the most thorough in the matter of training up a child in the way it should go, but also the most patient, considerate and, kind in giving this correction.

We have then before our minds the fact and general prevalence of sin and whence it comes; and we see the force of the Apostle's words when, he personifies sin as a tyrant master, and represents mankind as his slaves; to whom he pays his wages -- death. "The wages of sin is death." We have seen that God is not blamable for this enslavement, but, as the Scriptures declare, it was by one man's disobedience that all were brought under the power of sin and subjected to the wages which it pays. While the extreme wages only are mentioned -- death -- yet,

before the payment of the full wages, we all received incidentally, many of the aches and pains and difficulties, mental, physical, and moral, imposed by this great taskmaster, sin. And as a groaning creation travailing in pain together under this hard taskmaster and suffering from his cruel lashes, all long for deliverance, and some of us have cried out to God for help -- for salvation from sin and death, into righteousness and life.

When There Was No Eye to Pity

God wishes us to learn very thoroughly the lesson of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," of its gall and bitterness, and of the hopelessness of any deliverance, except that which He will provide. Personal experience has proved to us that we cannot deliver ourselves from this slavery, that, in order to overcome the wicked one and his wiles and arts, which take firm hold of us because of the weaknesses of our flesh and because of the fall, we need a power. that we do not by nature possess. Finding ourselves powerless to help ourselves, we would naturally look to each other for aid; and indeed might get some aid from each other; but we all know how little aid can be given or received from natural sources. And when we learn the lesson which the Scriptures teach that all are slaves, that all were sold under sin, that "there is none righteous, no, not one," then we see the utter helplessness of our condition as a race. All who realize the situation and feel the bondage and seek deliverance may thus see that the only hope is in God. If they reflect that it was God Himself who pronounced the sentence of death, and that He could not annul His own sentence nor transgress His own laws, let them reflect also that He has superior power to ours, He has also superior wisdom, and that He may know how to do that which to us would seem an impossibility.

And this was the case: When there was no eye to pity and no arm to deliver, then God pitied and His arm (power -- in Christ) brought salvation. (Psa. 69:20.) This He did by providing that all the slaves of sin sold into slavery by the disobedience of Father Adam shall be delivered by a great Savior who first of all would purchase them and afterwards set free all who will accept freedom upon His terms and conditions.

The price in the original sale was disobedience, and its sentence death; the price of the purchase was obedience unto death. Not only so, but, this is expressed in the meaning of the word "ransom;" a corresponding price; the redemption price by which the race is purchased must correspond in all particulars to the original sentence. The purchase price, the ransom price, must in every sense of the word correspond to that which was forfeited by the transgression. Adam was perfect as a man before he sinned hence, whoever will be his redeemer must be a perfect man. A perfect angel would not do, nor would a perfect arch-angel be a suitable price; they would be as inadequate as a sacrifice to meet the conditions, as an imperfect man would be, or a lower animal. God has placed the matter in such a form by His own

law and. sentence, that only a perfect man could be a ransom, a corresponding price, for the perfect man who sinned, and in whom the whole race of mankind had been sold under sin and under its penalty, death.

Behold the Lamb of God

It was in order to prepare the great sacrifice for sin, and in harmony with the Divine wisdom and plan, that the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,. full of perfection, submitted Himself to the Father's will, that He should humble Himself to (without dying) be transferred or translated from His high and glorious nature and condition to a lower nature and condition, lower than that of the archangel, lower than that of ordinary angels, down to the condition of man; not to the condition of sinful man, but to the proper condition in which God had created man (in which Adam was before he sinned). Obedient to this arrangement, our Lord Jesus "was made flesh," became of the same nature as the race which had gone into the slavery of sin, but He did not share in its sin nor in its imperfections. The Apostle's declaration is that, in harmony with this Divine purpose, our Lord, the only begotten of the Father, left the glory of His original nature and "was made flesh" and dwelt among us, and that for the purpose "that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." When, therefore, our Lord appeared in this humble condition, divested of the glories of His original spirit nature -- humbled to human conditions -- it was not that He had died to His previous spiritual condition, for although He came to die, He had not yet died. It was, the man Christ Jesus who gave Himself our ransom in death, and not the spirit being who previously became the man; the humbling from spirit conditions to human conditions, laying aside of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and becoming poor for our sakes, was only incidental to His great sacrifice begun at Jordan and finished at Calvary. But the man. Christ Jesus was the same one who previously had been rich in spiritual nature and glory, and who could and did say, "Before Abraham was, I am" -- thus particularly emphasizing the fact that He had not ceased to exist at any time in the transfer of His being from the Higher to the lower condition.

Ground of Atonement Alike to All

Had our Lord been born as the son of Joseph, or received His life from any other human source, He would have been a partaker of the sentence upon our race, and of the weaknesses of the fallen flesh, and of the slavery to sin through that weakness. And the Scriptures are very careful to point out to us that His life did not come through such a channel, and that it had none of this imperfection, declaring that "in Him was no sin." He was holy, harmless, separate from sinners; although partaker of human nature, He was not a partaker of a fallen human nature, but of its perfection. He received no contamination, no

sinful nature through His mother, inasmuch as He was begotten from above.

Another important consideration that is made very prominent in the plan of redemption is that all of the members of our race are treated as upon a common level; the redemptive processes recognize no grades or casts in the human race; all are treated as a race of convicts. Another has summed up this thought very Scripturally, as follows:

"In the matter of atonement, all must stand on one common platform. There may be a vast difference in knowledge, in experience, in capacity, in attainment, in zeal, in devotedness, but the ground of atonement is alike to all. The great Apostle of the Gentiles, and the feeblest lamb in all the flock of Christ, stand on the same level, as regards atonement. This is a very simple and a very blessed truth. All may not be alike devoted and fruitful; but 'the precious blood of Christ,' and not devotedness or fruitfulness, is the solid and everlasting ground of the believer's rest. The more we enter into the truth and power of this, the more fruitful shall we be.

Atonement is the first thing we get hold of, and we shall never lose sight of it. Let our range of intelligence be ever so wide, our fund of experience ever so rich, our tone of devotion ever so elevated, we shall always have to fall back upon the one simple, Divine, unalterable, soul-sustaining doctrine of **the blood**. Thus it has ever been in the history of God's people, thus it is, and thus it ever will be; . . . and the eternal song of the Church in glory will be, 'Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.' The courts of heaven will forever resound with the glorious doctrine of the blood."

Ye Are Not Your Own

One of the most attractive features about the Plan of God is that He who came to be our Ransomer, our Purchaser, to pay for us the debt on account of which we were all made slaves to sin and death, was in fullest sympathy with the Divine purpose, and made haste so that at the very earliest moment possible He began the work which the Father had, given Him to do, by consecrating Himself even unto death, baptism in water being the symbol of this; and from that time forward He was about carrying out that covenant, dying daily until upon the cross He said, "It is finished."

This did not mean the release of the slaves of sin at once. No; the slaves for whose redemption He gave His life were still in bondage, their slavery was not finished. It was the sacrifice that was finished, nothing more; it was not yet even accepted. The presentation of that sacrifice on our behalf and its acceptance by the Father did not take place until nearly fifty days after He who redeemed us had been raised from the dead by the Father's power, thus giving assurance to all that His work was well and satisfactorily done, and that it would be accepted in due time. And He ascended up on high, and, as the High Priest, appeared before the Father and applied His merit on our behalf

--as believers. The sacrifice offered, the price provided is sufficient to cover every member of the human family. For, since all men came under the slavery of sin and under the sentence to death through the transgression of Adam, now that the corresponding price has been provided for Adam, it implies full satisfaction for all the posterity of Adam, the sharers of his sentence.

While all mankind are represented in the redemption price, so far as our Lord Jesus' sacrifice is concerned, it being once for all, nevertheless, the only ones who are yet received of the Lord, who are yet brought into relationship to Him through Christ, are those who recognize His sacrifice, and who, whether they understand the subject philosophically or not, believe what the Scriptures so distinctly declare, that we were bought with a price -- the precious blood of Christ. It is this class that the Scriptures especially address in this Age; these who realize that they were slaves of sin, and who now realize that they have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, and who having accepted of Him and His power to save, are no longer yielding themselves as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but are seeking to yield themselves as servants of righteousness unto God. It would be useless for God to address any others than these in this manner, but pertinent and forceful is His message to those who realize the true situation, and who are clinging to Christ as their Redeemer, who shall ultimately be their Deliverer. To these He says, "Ye are not your own." Your time, your talent, your influence, your money, all that you consider precious or in any degree valuable, all properly belongs to God. It was not only His by right, in that it originally was His creation, because all that we have that is valuable in any sense of the word, has come from the Heavenly Father; but now it is His in a second sense, in the sense that He has redeemed or bought it back from the destruction to which by sin our first parent delivered it.

Master Seeks Only Voluntary Servants

The Apostle uses this argument as though it should be a conclusive one with all who are right-minded; and so we believe it is. And those who are rightly exercised by this knowledge of Divine grace in Christ not only accept the forgiveness of sins with thankfulness and joy, and with meekness and humility acknowledge that they were slaves of sin and that they were redeemed therefrom, but they also gladly acknowledge the new Ruler, the Purchaser, and that to Him they owe all they have and, all they ever hope to be.

Personal responsibility to the Redeemer who purchased, and to, the Heavenly Father who provided the gracious arrangement, lies at the foundation of all true consecration to God in Christ. As soon as the believing, grateful, justified one hears of the blessing that has come to him, he properly inquires, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? He finds that the new Master does not wish for any except voluntary servants, and that, having provided them release from the sentence of death, He, nevertheless would permit them, if they chose, to go back

and become again voluntarily the servants of sin, and to receive the wages of sin, the Second Death, as the reward for their voluntary submission again to that taskmaster. He learns that to be the servants of the new Master is a great privilege, a privilege that is enjoyed by all who have the proper spirit. Such hear the words of the Apostle, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and your reasonable service." They see the Apostle's own example, how, laying aside not only the works of the flesh and the Devil, but also laying aside earthly ambitions, aims, prospects, and hopes, he gave himself, his time, talent, influence and all he had to the service of the new Master, the Redeemer, and thus to God. They read in his living epistle, in his trials and triumphs through faith in Christ, lessons which some of them at least heartily accept; and as a consequence there have been throughout this Gospel Age some who have been glad to own themselves as the bond-servants (slaves) of the Lord Jesus Christ and of our God, whose representative Christ is.

CHRISTIAN MATURITY OR GROWING UP INTO CHRIST

"For we which have believed do enter into rest." -- Heb. 4:3.

MATURITY of Christian life, of understanding and appreciation of the will of God is surely the goal to be sought by every follower of Christ; because such development alone can bring the fullness of those blessed results that are promised in the Divine Word. Beside the fruit of the Spirit named by the Apostle (Gal. 5:22, 23), peace of heart, rest of soul are among the choicest gifts that come in connection with the mature Christian experience.

True, in the early stages of the Christian life, there is a measure of rest and peace in proportion to the degree of faith and spiritual understanding. But as the hard green fruit that is immediately seen with the fall of the blossom, is not satisfactory and is not fit for use, neither is that condition satisfactory to God that is represented in the early stages of the Christian life. The Apostle says, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a Man, I put away childish things." He is here using the figure of the progress and development of the natural man; there is the period of infancy, of youth, and of mature manhood. So is the growth and development of the spiritual man in Christ. The faith that in the beginning was sufficient to dedicate all of life and fortune upon the altar of sacrifice, must grow until it merges into that stage of constant trust and reliance upon God. The limited rest and peace that was experienced with the first exercise of faith, should grow and become "sweet peace the gift of God's love," or the peace of God that passeth human understanding; causing an abiding rest, an assurance of the soul

in God that no suffering, no storm or tempest of life can remove or take from us.

Living in God's Presence

The Apostle addressing the Church says: "Your life is hid with Christ in God, or, according to another rendering: "The life hidden with the Anointed by God." It is a life that is lived in God's presence in the sense that the soul is feeding upon and engaged in the contemplation of those things that are suggested by the holy place of the tabernacle. Such as dwell there enjoy the light of the golden candlestick; they feed upon the shew bread and offer incense at the golden altar.

It is a life of continued trust and responsive providences which mean personal acquaintance and fellowship with God. Such a life of holy intimacy is known only to those within the Sanctuary, only to those in the Anointed; therefore it is well termed the life "hid with Christ."

It is to this life, dearly beloved, that we have been called; it is the life that results in maturity of experience and walk with God. And since this high and holy privilege is ours, well may we inquire. what are its chief characteristics, how it differs from that of the ordinary Christian, and how we may attain to it in its fullness.

"Come Unto Me"

Of course one of the first essentials to this life of holy fellowship is a full and complete surrender to the Lord, a yielding of our wills to Him; for so long as there is any selfish reserving of the will, there cannot be that oneness of spirit, that full union with the Lord that is so vital to the Christian's success. To be wholly "**in the Anointed**" means the renouncement of self and our baptism into Christ "buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." We realize now that our interests are one with the Lord, that we have nothing apart from Him. Thus we are led to cast all our burdens -- everything that troubles us, spiritual and temporal, upon the Lord and allow Him to manage all our affairs for us. Perhaps one of our greatest burdens, if not the greatest is self -- our weaknesses, our perplexities and worries, our inward affairs of every kind -- our health, our reputation, our service, our possessions -- everything that concerns us. We can appreciate now the Apostle's injunction, "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God; which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:6, 7.) Trusting our all to Him results in perfect peace--an inward rest of soul. The soul that has found this secret of simple faith, trust in the Lord, has "found the key to the treasure house of God." Surely this it is that brings the peace of God.

But why do we find it so hard to trust One who has vouchsafed us so much? As we recall how graciously the Lord hath dealt with us, how,

while we were yet sinners Christ died for us; remembering His gracious invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest"; remembering the assurance of His love -- that the very hairs of our heads are numbered, that He will "supply all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus," that He will never leave nor forsake, that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that we have His "Everlasting Love," what can we wish for more! By trusting Him the result is so glorious. "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." "Thou, wilt keep him, in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." "There is such a thing as having one's soul kept in perfect peace now and here in this life; and childlike trust in God is the key to its attainment."

"Enter Into His Sanctuary"

Just as in the type of the tabernacle sacrifices the death of the animal took place at the door of the tabernacle before the High Priest entered the holy; so in the antitype, death to self must take place, the "yielding of ourselves to the Lord," fullness of consecration, if we would enjoy that life within the Sanctuary of God. This consecration is not in order to purchase the blessings within the holy, neither as deserving them, but in order to remove all hindrances and make it possible for God to bestow His gifts. It was said of our Lord at a certain place that He could do there no mighty work because of their unbelief. It was not that He would not, but He could not. "In the Divine order God's working depends upon our co-operation. We often think of our Lord that He will not, when the real truth is that He can not. Just as the potter, however skilful, cannot make a beautiful vessel out of a lump of clay that is never put into his hands; so neither can God make out of me a vessel unto His honor, unless I put myself into His hands. My part is the essential correlation of God's part in the matter of my salvation; and as God is sure to do His part all right, the vital: thing for me to do is to find out what my part is, and then do it.

"In order for a lump of clay to be made into a beautiful vessel, it must be entirely abandoned to the potter, and must lie passive in his hands. And similarly, in order for a soul to be made into a vessel unto God's honor, 'sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work,' it must be utterly abandoned to Him."

By abandonment we mean an entire surrender of the whole being to God-placed under His absolute control for Him to do with just as He pleases. This may seem hard to some -- to those who know not God, but to those who know Him, it is the "happiest of all lives."

Our Consecration

Let us pause here for a moment's reflection and self-inspection, remembering that though it is possible to deceive our fellowmen, possible even to deceive ourselves, it is not possible to deceive our God. He knows the heart, zenith its thoughts and intents. So, as we ask ourselves some questions, let us answer them before the All-seeing Searcher of hearts.

Years ago, perhaps, or it may be but months, we made a covenant with the Lord. We solemnly vowed to Him to be dead to the world, to renounce sin, self, worldliness in every form; we told Him with honest heart that we wanted to serve Him, to be fully consecrated to His service. As the years or months have come, we have been led into varied experiences -- some dark and stormy; we have met with various temptations, tests, trials. What effect have these years had upon us? Has our love grown deeper? Has our zeal and energy quickened? Has the Lord grown more precious? our fellowship with Him sweeter? Have we with personal communion imbibed more of His Spirit? Has our character become more mellowed? Are the promises more real and personal, so that His Word has become a "living Word"? Does the Lord Himself satisfy our every desire and longing so that we can truly sing,

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
All I need in Thee I find."

If so, we may well rejoice and render thanks to God for His abundant mercy. For if we are of this attitude of heart we will realize that the glory belongs to Him, that nothing we could do, no righteousness of ours has merited or accomplished this transformation, but that the blood of the cross has been our only hope, and continues so to be.

On the other hand, has time and experience caused us to grow careless, lukewarm, indifferent? Has the glorious Plan of Redemption, of mercy and grace, lost its first charm and sweetness, so that it fails to revive, comfort, console, fails to meet in our hearts that hearty response that it once did? Have we lost our "first love," so that while the Truth is still precious to us, the Lord Himself is not so near? Do we seem to be following Him "afar off," and in our prayers and devotion there is not that closeness of communion? Are we saying,

"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I found the Lord?"

"Judge Yourselves"

If this is our attitude, let us diligently seek the reason. Has the world crept in with its allurements and enticements, and led us in any degree to violate our covenant? Have we listened to the, voice of the natural man; and allowed self to assert itself? Has Satan influenced, so that we are allowing in our lives some violation of conscience? Are we "living upon some unsettled principles of conduct?-assuming the rectitude of a

course of **life** with which we are not ourselves honestly satisfied? Is there a suspense of conscience upon subjects of practical life, without a suspense of action"? Right here our hearts may be shockingly deceitful. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will nor hear me." A little thing secreted there, a little violation of conscience may be sapping our spiritual vitality, and be the cause of our stupor and lethargy. Let us turn to the Lord again wholeheartedly, repenting of our former ways, and renewing with our first love and zeal, our covenant of sacrifice to be dead with Him and to live in **newness of life**. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 10:22.) Let us surrender ourselves afresh -- completely to the will and service of our God. If we would rise above this chilling atmosphere that enwraps us, we must make the Lord Christ our paramount object; we must trust in Him, wait on Him, look to Him, live for Him, and Him alone; we must get rid of the dross of nature and of earth; "that we may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."

The Love of God

As we look about us at the wonders of creation -- the earth with its grandeur and beauty, the heavens with its myriads of planets and laws governing to the mutual and harmonious adjustment of all; especially as we reflect upon the creation of man, constituted with intelligence to discern and choose between right and wrong -- we know that the Creator of all these, must be infinite in wisdom, unlimited in power. But too often we stop here. We fail to realize that His love is just as great -- co-equal. And it is the privilege of every child of God to know experimentally something of this love, for it is this mighty love of our Father that is vouchsafed us. "Could we but for one moment get a glimpse into the mighty depths of His love, our hearts would spring out to meet His will and embrace it as our richest treasure; and we would abandon ourselves to it with an enthusiasm of gratitude and joy that such a wonderful privilege could be ours Better and sweeter than health, or friends, or money, or fame, or ease, or prosperity, is the adorable will of our God." As we realize something of this love of God, our surrender will be a glad surrender. It will be appreciated as a privilege, and then will we be ready to receive the fullness of blessing, the peace, the joy that the Lord has to bestow.

"Laying Hold"

After a complete surrender, the continued exercise of faith is necessary. Though a friend may give us a thing ever so fully, not until we believe it is ours, and claim it as ours, do we receive the benefit of it. Most of us understand this principle when applied to the forgiveness of our sins. The doctrine of the Atonement and the forgiveness of sins might have been preached to us all our lives, but never until we

believed and claimed the forgiveness was it really ours. Just so it is throughout the Christian life. As we receive Christ Jesus the Lord, so we are to walk in Him. We received Him by faith, let us continue therein.

The Lord has many blessings to bestow, but we do not receive them from lack of faith, for "according to our faith" is still God's manner of dealing. Just as Israel of old failed to enter into the promised land because of unbelief, so, many Christians today fail to enter into His rest because of a similar unbelief. This is so forcefully pointed out by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, chapters 3 and 4. There he says (3:12-14), "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an **evil heart of unbelief**, in, departing from the living God. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

The Apostle continuing compares the Christian experience with that of Israel and says that they grieved the Lord by their unbelief, and exhorts that we be not like unto them -- "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief: "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, **not being mixed with faith** in them that heard it." Solemn, most solemn warning! Here in the Apostle's words we have the secret of entering into rest, of enjoying the peace that this world knows not of, that peace "passing all understanding" -- perfect peace. It is only as faith takes hold of the promises of God that they become of effect to us; only as we take the Lord at His word, believe, trust, are we able to enter into rest: "For we which have believed do enter into rest."

Ceasing From Our Own Works

The Apostle would have us know that our own efforts, our own struggles, cannot obtain for us this rest, for he says (ver. 10), "He that is entered into His rest, he also hath **ceased from his own works** as God did from His." Ah, yes, how necessary if we would fully enter into the rest of, faith! We must realize that all our works are as filthy rags, that nothing we are able to do counts for anything. Our best endeavors toward righteousness, our efforts, our struggles can not merit for us that which we seek. We must bow at the foot of the cross, and realize that only here have we acceptance with God, only through the merit of the precious blood will we at last be accounted worthy. Our hope is built on Christ alone, and His finished work. "Let us **labor** therefore to enter into this rest, lest any of us fall after the same example of unbelief."

Efforts and struggles indeed there must be, but let us see to it that these are directed in the proper channel. This exercise of faith, and the way by which we enter into this rest, is a "labor." It calls for the exercise of

faith at every step of the way. At first we trusted Him for forgiveness, and it became ours. We trusted Him for righteousness, and it became ours. He lifted us out of the pit and He has seated us in heavenly places with Himself. This was all judiciously ours at the beginning of our Christian course, but practically and experimentally nothing is ours till by faith we claim it, for -- "according to our faith" it has been unto us.

"Labor to Enter Into Rest"

Sweet are His blessings, rich are His promises, if we but have faith to enter in, and it must be a present faith-faith in His finished work for us now. We were utterly powerless to deliver ourselves from our sins and we are utterly powerless now to accomplish for ourselves practical righteousness. Christ and Christ only, can do both for us. Our part is to trust -- hold fast to the beginning of our confidence.

Let us then "Labor to enter into this rest," first, by entire self-abandonment; and second, by implicit faith. No matter what may be our peculiar experiences, no matter what may be our difficulties, no matter what may, be our perplexities, if we persevere in these two steps, the Lord will lead us out into green pastures and beside still waters, and we shall find rest unto our souls.

"Precious self-renouncing. faith!-faith that counts on God for everything and trusts the flesh in nothing-faith which brings God into every difficulty, and leads us, with deepest thankfulness; to **hide self**; and give Him all' .the glory. May our souls know more and more of this blessed faith."

THE VALUE OF COMMUNION WITH GOD

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." -- John 4:23.

NOT THE least in importance of the instructions from the Great Teacher is that which He has given us on the subject of our privilege of Divine worship and prayer. The advanced child of God through his experiences in the School of Christ realizes increasingly that his spiritual health, in fact his entire spiritual existence, depends upon his devotional exercises; upon how sacredly he guards his privilege of communion with God.

All who are properly engaged in the true worship must know something of its quickening and uplifting influences. No sooner do we come into the presence of God and there comes before us a vision of all that is holy, true, pure, and good. We feel immediately the searching gaze of His all-seeing eye. In the consciousness of how great and rich He is, our own needs and poverty are at once intensified and there is suggested that self-inspection, that self-examination, that includes the most secret recesses of the heart. And our hearts are touched with a

sense of sincerest gratitude for the longsuffering and patience of God, with which He regards us in our fallen state.

Sons Who Enter Presence of God

With the privileges that came at our Lord's First Advent at the opening of this dispensation of the Spirit, there came the honor of becoming the sons of God, with all that it implies of approaching the Divine presence and enjoying this privilege of worship as sons of God. The model prayer, known as our Lord's Prayer, thus at once calls our attention to this distinguished privilege: "Our Father, who art in heaven," a privilege unknown to any prior to His coming. The affection of a true father for his child, being one of the most precious in the world, is used to illustrate the relationship of the Lord's consecrated members to the Creator. It is necessary to be some time in the School of Christ as disciples, learners, before we are able properly to appreciate the meaning of this word Father as applied to God, but the more we come to know of the love of God, which passes all understanding, and the more we are enabled to draw near to Him through faith and obedience, the more precious will this term Father become.

Concerning Jesus' prayer as a whole, it has been effectively observed that, "Never before had all that was best and purest in a nation's prayers been thus collected into one noble and incomparable petition -- a petition which combines all that the heart of man, taught by the Spirit of God, had found most needful for the satisfaction of its truest aspirations. In the mingled love and reverence with which it teaches us to approach our Father in heaven -- in the spirituality with which it leads us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness -- in the spirit of universal charity and forgiveness which it inculcates -- in that plural form throughout it, which is meant to show us that selfishness must be absolutely and for ever excluded from our petitions, and that no man can come to God as his Father without acknowledging that his worst enemies are God's children -- in the fact that of its seven petitions, one, and one only, is for any earthly blessing, and even that one is only for earthly blessings in their simplest form -- in the manner in which it discountenances all the vain repetitions and extravagant self-tortures with which so many fanatic worshipers have believed that God could be propitiated -- even in that exquisite brevity which shows us how little God desires that prayer should be made a burden and weariness -- it is, indeed, what the Fathers have called it, a '*breviarium Evangelii*' -- the pearl of prayers.

"Not less Divine were the earnest and simple words which followed it, and which taught the disciples that men ought always to pray and not to faint, since, if importunity prevails over the selfishness of man, earnestness must be all-powerful with the righteousness of God. Jesus impressed upon them the lesson that if human affection can be trusted to give only useful and kindly gifts, the love of the Great Father who

loves us all, will, much more certainly, give His best and highest gift -- even the gift of the Holy Spirit-to all that ask Him."

God Requires Bold Importunate Faith

As further illuminating the thought of how prayer is to avail much, Jesus taught the lesson that there should be coupled with faith, deep earnestness that would persist in prayer in the sense of firmly believing and claiming the promises made to those who properly approach God. Galling attention to the illustration that Jesus gave emphasizing this point, another exclaims: "With what exquisite yet vivid graciousness are these great lessons [on prayer] inculcated! Had they been delivered in the dull, dry, didactic style of most moral teaching, how could they have touched the hearts, or warmed the imaginations, or fixed themselves indelibly upon the memories of those who heard them? But instead of being clothed in scholastic pedantisms, they were conveyed in a little tale founded on the most commonplace incidents of daily life, and of a daily life full of simplicity and poverty. Journeying at night to avoid the burning heat a man arrives at a friend's house. The host is poor, and has nothing for him; yet, because even at that late hour he will not neglect the duties of hospitality, he gets up, and goes to the house of another friend to borrow three loaves. But this other is in bed; his little children are with him; his house is locked and barred. To the gentle and earnest entreaty he answers crossly and roughly from within, 'Trouble me not.' But his friend knows that he has come on a good errand, and he persists in knocking till at last, not from kind motives, but because of his pertinacity, the man gets up and gives him all that he requires. 'Even so,' it has been beautifully observed, 'when the heart which has been away on a journey, suddenly at midnight (i.e., the time of greatest darkness and distress) returns home to us that is, comes to itself and feels hunger -- and we have nothing wherewith to satisfy it, God requires of us bold, importunate faith. If such persistency conquers the reluctance of ungracious man, how much more shall it prevail with One who loves us better than we ourselves, and who is even more ready to hear than we to pray!"

With All Prayer and Supplication

The .saints are exhorted that they "pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance." Faithful children of God do not "say prayers;" they really pray. There is much formal prayer -- much saying of prayers -- which do not rise higher than the head of the one who repeats the words. The Scriptures speak of this as drawing near to God with the lips when the heart is far from Him. It would be better that we should not approach the Lord at all than that we should do so in an improper manner.

It is a most wonderful privilege to draw near to the great Creator and Lord of heaven and earth; and we should come in the spirit of reverence and devotion. Our Lord declared that the Father seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth. We must

come only in the name of Christ. He is the only Way of approach. And we must come thoughtfully and earnestly. We should not think of uttering a single word that we do not mean and have not thought upon. There is no doubt that a great many have done themselves injury by going through a form of words in a formalistic manner. This is not prayer. True prayer is the language of the heart. Therefore the greater our earnestness, the more acceptable the prayer will be, and the greater blessing shall we receive.

There is a difference also between prayer and supplication. Prayer would be any petition, great or small; whereas supplication would mean a special desire for a thing -- an earnest entreaty. Whether it be ordinary prayer or be supplication -- an intense form of prayer -- we should always come in the spirit, with appreciation of the fact that we are coming into the presence of the great Jehovah, and that it is a privilege accorded to only a very few at this time.

And we are to "watch thereunto, with all perseverance." If we really believe that the Lord has indicated that we should pray, and that it is His will to give us the things we need, and above all His Holy Spirit, then we should be alert to note when we receive the answer to our petitions." If we pay no attention to our prayers after they are uttered, never look to see whether they are being answered, this would indicate that we have not really appreciated our need. It would seem that this is the reason why God does not answer many of our prayers more quickly. We should learn to watch for the answers to our prayers, and thus learn the lesson of appreciation and gratitude to Him as we realize that He has granted us our request.

Our Father in Heaven wishes to give us His best things and will not withhold anything that is really good. (Psa. 84:11.) But He requires sometimes that we shall wait for a considerable time. At other times there may be a speedy answer to our petitions.

Pray to Thy Father in Secret

Several instances are recorded in which our Lord Jesus prayed in the presence and in the hearing of His disciples -- a sufficient number to preserve us from the error of some who claim that public prayer is improper. Nevertheless, apparently our Lord's usual method was to go to the Father privately, after the manner He described to His disciples when He said; Enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father in secret.

The spirit of this injunction was carried out by our Lord when He withdrew from His disciples into a mountain alone for prayer, and we have several records of His spending a considerable portion of the night thus in communion with the Heavenly Father. One lesson to us from our Lord's example would be that if He in His perfection needed to have spiritual fellowship and communion with the Father in order to carry on the assigned work; we, His disciples, imperfect according to the flesh, and every way lacking the wisdom; etc., which He

possessed; have much more need to look continually to the Lord for the guidance and comfort, the sustenance needed in all the trials and reverses of life in the Narrow Way. When the Apostle exhorts, "Pray without ceasing." "In everything give thanks;" -- we would understand him to mean that the hearts of the Lord's people are to be constantly in an attitude of prayer, mentally, spiritually looking to the Lord for guidance in all the affairs of life, and to see that their conduct has the Divine approval. This thought of perpetual communion with the Lord, continually looking to Him for His smile, continually watching that no earth-born cloud arise and hide from us the Father's face and blessing is the attitude of the advanced Christian. To such an one every day and every hour is a time of fellowship with the Lord. Whenever business cares, household worries; etc., interfere with such communion it is an evidence that we are being overcharged with the cares of this life, and the difficulty should be corrected; either we should rectify matters by diminishing our business responsibilities, etc., or, if this be impossible, we should counterbalance the cares of life with the more earnest and more repeated turning of our hearts to the Lord for guidance in even the trivial affairs of life; much more in the great ones.

Prayer and the Hope of the Kingdom

In the model prayer the Master taught us to give special prominence in our hearts to the hope of the Kingdom as God and His glory and honor are to be first in the minds of His children 'so' their next thought should be for the glorious Kingdom, which He has promised shall bless the world. We would not, therefore; permit our personal needs to be too prominent, but remember that the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain together, waiting for this glorious Kingdom and the blessing upon all the families of the earth, which our Heavenly Father has promised shall yet come through the seed of Abraham.

This thought respecting the Kingdom, its necessity, and the blessings that it will bring, will keep prominently before our minds our own high calling to joint-heirship with our Lord in this Kingdom. And in proportion as that hope is clearly before our minds it will be as the Apostle explains, as "an anchor to our souls, sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil." This anchorage of hope in the future, in the Kingdom, will enable us to pass safely, and with comparative quiet, through the trials and storms and difficulties of this present evil world. More than this, our thoughts respecting the Kingdom will remind us that if we are to be heirs of the Kingdom it will be necessary that we have the appropriate discipline and training. And so while praying, Thy Kingdom come, our hearts will naturally think next of the fact that our hopes are that when the Kingdom comes we shall be participators with our dear Redeemer in its glory and in its great work of blessing the world. And in proper order then will come the thought that we must now have the necessary trials, difficulties and disciplines to properly fit and prepare us for the duties of the Kingdom. This thought in turn will make all the afflictions and trials of this

present time seem to us light afflictions, knowing that they are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Thus the very offering of this prayer in its proper order will bring us a measure of relief from our perplexities, trials and disappointments before, in their proper order, we reach these to mention them at the Throne of Grace.

Let us enjoy more abundantly the privilege of communion with God. Whether we are on our knees or in the busy walks of life our hearts should go out continually to the Lord for His guidance in all our affairs and experiences, that we may serve Him in a manner that will be pleasing and acceptable to Him, that we may be shielded from temptations that without His aid would be beyond our endurance, and that He will in His own due time deliver us from all evil and imperfection and grant us a place in His Heavenly Kingdom. Dearly beloved, let us constantly put into practice the injunction of our Master, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." -- Mark 14:38.

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OUR HEARTS KEPT FOR THE MASTER'S USE

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is He." -- Prov. 23: 7.

WELL do the Scriptures generally emphasize the importance of guarding the mind, the will, the heart, in harmony with the above text, saying, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." This is because proper thinking and proper keeping of the heart has a most vital bearing upon the formation of character; and as character throughout the Bible is constantly associated with the favor of God and the hope of everlasting life, its proper cultivation and development becomes a matter of the most solemn importance. As we have seen in our study of this subject, keeping the thoughts, keeping the heart properly regulated before the Lord, on the part of the saints who are now called in the Christian race, means life more abundant, with glory, honor, and immortality. Neglecting to do this, refusing to exercise self-control, will mean the permission of selfish desires to be conceived in our minds, and will surely lead away from the Lord and His Narrow Way toward death, toward the wages of sin -- death -- Second Death.

The fact that we are instructed that of ourselves we can do nothing, and the fact too that human energy and effort apart from the Lord's grace are found to be unprofitable and inadequate, and the further fact that it is only by the Lord's grace and results can be the thought by His Spirit that any satisfactory results achieved, presents no conflict with the thought above expressed, to the effect that the Lord places the

responsibility upon each one of His intelligent creatures of keeping and guarding the interests of the heart and soul in harmony with the instructions of His Holy Word.

Truly, the Word of the Lord came to some of old: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts"; but is it not **human** might and **human** power that is here implied? and only as the heart and soul are impelled by the Spirit of God and the will controlled by that Spirit can the desirable end be attained. Jesus well knowing the futility of all human energy and effort apart from God, said to His followers, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Who can doubt that the Master was here. placing the responsibility of living aright and doing the things that please God with each individual disciple, knowing of course that at the proper time the Holy Spirit, or power from on High, would be shed forth for the purpose of giving the anointing and the illumination of the heart and mind that would impart energy and give ability to perform the deeds and live the life that would bring forth the desirable result of acceptable fruit unto God -- the fruit of character-likeness to His well beloved Son. How evident it is that as respects mankind in general; there is altogether too little thinking done, and what there is, in evidence is more nor less along improper lines and built upon false bases or premises.

The Far-reaching Effect of Thought

Nevertheless, all will agree as respects human welfare, there is a power in thought second to no other power in the universe. Few, perhaps, realize to what extent this is true, to what extent their own happiness and well-being is dependent upon right thinking, to what extent whole communities and nations owe their happiness or misery to their right or wrong thinking upon the important. problems of life. Words are a power in the world, but only in proportion as they awaken thoughts and lead to actions; words, thoughts, deeds, is the order. Over and over again it has been proven that as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. If he thinks justly, he will speak and act justly; if his thoughts are selfish, and ignoble, his words will be deceitful and his conduct dishonest.

It is because the power of thought is to a considerable extent recognized that it is appealed to on every hand. The teacher appeals to it; the preacher appeals to it; the politician appeals to it; the financier appeals to it; the sociologist appeals to it; the thousands of pamphlets, books, newspapers and magazines published in every land and in every tongue are all appealing to **thought**. Thought, indeed, may be said to be the great engine which is moving the whole world in its every department. The difficulty is that few are of logical and discerning mind, the fall having affected every member of the human family has disordered our reasoning faculties; and charlatans and demagogues and self-seekers very frequently take advantage of the weak mental state of humanity to delude with sophistry, and thus to hinder and obscure correct thinking and reasoning: Against the great force and weight of selfishness in its

every member does humanity thus labor, as well as against, the wiles of Satan; and it is not surprising that generally it is misled and deceived, because added to its incubus of false premises it must struggle also against its own inertia, sluggishness, and inaptitude.

The Lord also appeals to the power of the mind through His Word, and urges upon His people that they be "transformed by the renewing of their minds." (Rom. 12:2.) Indeed, it may be said that the cultivation of the power of thought began with God's people, and that so far as religious matters are concerned it has in no particular degree gone from them. While heathen religions seek to restrain the intellect and appeal chiefly to the passions, prejudices, and fears, the Lord, to the contrary, calls to His people, saying, "Come, let us reason together." (Isa. 1:18.) We are willing to admit that the majority of professing Christians have not heeded the Lord's invitation to any great extent -- that very largely many of the brethren avoid thought on religious subjects, and especially avoid reasoning; but we hold that to the extent they thus violate the Divine arrangement they have not their "senses exercised by reason of use," and are to be esteemed, at very best, only babes in Christ. -- Heb. 5:13, 14.

Safety Only As We Hold to His Word

We are willing to agree also that thinking may be a very dangerous matter in the absence of absolute knowledge upon which to base and exercise our reasoning faculties; but the Lord has protected His faithful along this line by providing us in His Word with the proper basis for reasoning on all subjects involving our duty to our Creator and to our fellow-creatures. The Scriptures lay down certain broad lines, and invite God's people to reason within these lines of revelation, and by reasoning thus to taste and see that the Lord is gracious; and come to a clearer knowledge of Him, a better understanding of His character and plan. All the brethren who confine their reasoning and their search for truth within those lines of revelation will be correspondingly blessed and rewarded with the true knowledge. But it is also true that any of the brethren professing to follow God's revelation, who wander outside of the confines of that revelation into the field of speculation and human theories, and who to any extent exalt their own reasoning and theories above the knowledge of God, no matter along what line may be their investigation, will surely fail of attaining the happy result of soundness of faith and the filling of the soul with that wisdom that cometh down from above.

Many who are awakened to independent thinking are careless of the limitations of the Divine revelation, and, consequently the influence of the Divine Word upon them is a mental liberty and enlightenment which, lacking the Divine control, is very apt to go to the extreme of license, selfishness, self-conceit and infidelity. Wherever the Bible has gone it has been the torch which has led civilization; millions have profited by its enlightening influence, though only comparatively few walk close to its light and within its prescribed limitations of reason

and conduct; and these few are the true Christians -- the "wheat" of this Age, "the first-fruits unto God of His creatures," which God is now harvesting. -- Jas. 1:18.

The Control of Thought

Some have claimed that since all are badly affected by the fall and the brain capacity varies, therefore the thinking must necessarily be different. In a word, that a man can think only in harmony with his brain construction. But we reply, Not so, that each one receiving a measure of the Lord's Spirit may proportionately receive of the spirit of a sound mind and may consequently learn to weigh and balance his own thoughts, to curb some and to encourage others. But to do this each one must have not only a measure of the Holy Spirit but must have before him an ideal of character to be copied.

Thoughts can be controlled just as words and actions can be controlled; the will is at the helm, and must decide which thoughts and sentiments it will entertain and encourage, and which it will repel. It is necessary, therefore, first of all for the will to be rightly directed, and secondly, to be strong, and to use its power in the control of thought; in curbing those thoughts which it recognizes as evil, and in stimulating those which it recognizes as good, helpful, beneficial. The will, in Scripture called the "heart," is therefore continually appealed to by the Lord, as He now seeks amongst men for His "peculiar people." The message is, "My son, give me thine. heart" -- thy will. This request is not addressed to willful sinners, for they are not recognized or addressed as sons of God, but as children of the Evil One. Those whom God recognizes as His sons, are such as have been brought into harmony with Him through forgiveness of sins, by repentance and faith in Christ Jesus, the Redeemer. It is to such that the Lord makes known that if they would go on to perfection to the full attainment of His gracious purposes respecting them, the only proper course would be to give their hearts, their wills, to Him in consecration.

Those who have bowed to the will of .God by laying all at His feet will strive to understand more fully each day what are the things that please Him; and to lay hold of those things obediently. To whatever extent this is done, there will be newness of life. The whole outlook in life will gradually change, involving hopes, ambitions, desires, and endeavors of every kind. It is in this connection that the earnest follower of Christ realizes his need of the Divine revelation of heavenly things. Accordingly, such revelation is furnished the children of God; that by feeding upon His Word and filling the soul with such holy contemplations they thereby realize that sanctification of the Spirit which affects the entire course of their lives.

A Powerful Appeal to Proper Thinking

One of the strongest and most powerful .appeals made to the Church urging attention to proper thinking is represented in the Apostle's

admonition addressed to the Philippian brethren: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8.) A mistake made by many is to suppose that such as the above words of inspiration and others of similar character are addressed to mankind indiscriminately, including sinners, evil doers and evil thinkers in general. This we believe is a mistake. The entire Epistle to the Philippians is addressed to "All the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi" (1:1); and the exhortation is applicable to all the saints everywhere, but not to others than saints -- not to the worldly, not even to the household of faith, until they have made a full consecration of themselves to the Lord. It would be useless to address others along this line; the exhortation would be of no effect. Hence, the exhortation of this lesson is not especially applicable to any but the most advanced Christians -- not even to the "babes in Christ," but only to those who are somewhat matured in the new life. As for the babes who are not developed new creatures, they will have their attention very thoroughly occupied with the cruder elementary lessons, respecting the coarser sins which the new creature must abhor and battle against. This text addresses those who have made considerable progress along these lines of putting away "the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit" -- those who are seeking to perfect holiness in their hearts, and so far as possible also in their earthly bodies. -- 2 Cor. 7:1.

The context proves our assertion, for after speaking of prayer and thanksgiving to God and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keeping their hearts and minds, the Apostle sums up this advanced position of grace with the words of our text as the finality or finish of the argument, and of the process of character development: "Finally, brethren."

The Things That Are True

This is the first question to be asked respecting any matter: Is it true or is it false? If it is false the Lord's people are to have nothing whatever to do with it -- no matter how beautiful. Love for the truth lies at the very foundation of saintship, and we remember that the Lord declares through the Apostle that those who will be rejected and stumbled in this harvest time are such as "receive not the truth in the love of it" (2 Thess. 2:10) -- such as have pleasure in unrighteousness (untruth). With our poor and at very best imperfect brains there is great danger of our being misled, and hence the Word of the Lord appeals to us with force that we should not even touch that which we realize is untrue. This does not mean that we may not weigh and balance evidences to discern the truth from the untruth; but it does mean that as soon as the truth is discovered, it will be embraced and acknowledged, and the untruth as vigorously disavowed and completely withdrawn from. To tamper with error after we see it to be error, to "see how it would reason out, anyway," when we know the matter is on a wrong basis, is

to lay a trap for our spiritual feet, one which frequently stumbles travelers on the way to Zion.

If we are following God's admonition through the Apostle, in this text, it will mean an avoidance of fiction, of novels, or unrealities. This, on the other hand, will mean an increased reverence for whatsoever things are true, an increased devotion to them, an increase of time for their study, and an increase of the spirit of truth in our hearts as a result.

The Things That Are Honest

The truth of the thing is only one of the tests to which it must be put. We may find a matter to be true and yet not find it to be worthy of our thought, dishonorable. Who does not know that there are dishonorable and dishonoring thoughts; the pondering of which not only wastes valuable time, but instead bringing a reward, a blessing for the time spent upon them, entails a loss, a disadvantage, in that it leaves a dishonorable stain in our minds, unworthy of us as new creatures in Christ Jesus?

The true but dishonorable or unworthy things presenting themselves for our consideration at the bar of our minds are perhaps oftenest in connection with others-,the weaknesses, the errors, the follies, or what not of our neighbors, of our friends. The entertaining of these thoughts, the pondering of them, will be unfavorable to us, and the sooner we discern the matter and dismiss them the better, the happier, the more noble will be our own hearts. The dismissal of these unworthy thoughts will leave us the opportunity and the energy, if we will, to expend that much more time upon whatsoever things are not only true but also honorable, worthy of our attention as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

The Things That Are Just

Here we have another limitation. Our minds are to be occupied in thinking about righteousness or just things, principles, etc.; we are not to be continually meditating upon grievances and injustices, either real or imagined. We are to remember, on the contrary, that we are living in the period which the Scriptures denominate "the present evil world," and that it could not be this if justice prevailed generally. We are to remember that hereunto we were called, even to endure injustice, for righteousness' sake -- to do good, to lay down our lives in the service of the Lord and His Word, and yet be evil-spoken of and to be misunderstood and to have all manner of evil said against us falsely for Christ's sake. We are, therefore, not to think strange of the fiery trials that shall surely come upon all who are of the Royal Priest-hood; but rather, having settled this matter in advance, when we made our consecration, we are to take it as it comes, as a matter of course, not grieving over nor specially thinking about the trials, the injustices, etc. And thus doing we will have the more time to give to thinking of the more helpful, the more strengthening, the more elevating things -- the things that are just, the things that are in harmony with righteousness,

respecting the past, the present, and the future, as. promised in the Lord's Word.

The Things That Are Pure

God's children above all others are to be examples of purity. Their constant effort will be to separate themselves from everything contaminating. All of us should so strive that not only will unholy things not find any lodgment in our hearts or our motives, but that our thoughts also shall be continually undergoing the purifying process; realizing that if we tolerate unholy thoughts the result will be our defilement in some measure or degree. It is to be recognized also, that purity of life and conduct results from keeping the thoughts pure, but no matter from what source the impurity may come, it is the mind, the thoughts that are first affected. If therefore the intrusion of the evil thought is vigorously resisted, at once, the victory is ours. But if there is a measure of yielding to any unholy suggestion or line of thinking, none can tell to what lengths of evil doing and bad results such a course will lead. As the Apostle declares, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, and that sin ultimately brings forth death.

No wonder, then, that the Apostle mentions the necessity for our thoughts being guarded along the line of purity, and that if a matter were ever so well established as a truth, and if it involved no injustice, and even were not dishonorable, yet were impure; this would be quite sufficient to condemn it as unworthy of the mind of the Lord's consecrated people. Nor is it to be overlooked that any smut or impurity entering into the mind may cause such a defilement as will give trouble in its complete eradication, not only at the time, but for years afterward.

The Things That Are Lovely

The saints are exhorted to be meek and to be peacemakers, but in order to be thus they must have amiable thoughts, lovely and lovable thoughts, kind thoughts, gentle thoughts. These in turn will gradually develop into graces of character. We are not to think upon subjects gendering anger, hatred; strife-vexatious thoughts, quarrelsome thoughts, vindictive and contentious thoughts. These all are to be shunned as enemies. to the new creature, and instead we are to think of the beautiful things, the amiable things, we may know respecting our neighbors, our friends; even though we be not able to fully close our eyes against their injustices or evil deeds, we may at least .refuse to waste valuable time in thinking about their weaknesses and thus cultivating unamiable, quarrelsome dispositions in ourselves.

The Things That Are of Good Report

It may be argued .by some that since the world hateth the light and the children of the light, and rejoiceth in iniquity and in getting the advantage over others, therefore those things which would be reputable with it would not be the holy things suitable to the thoughts of God's

people. But not so, we answer; **the world does recognize** to a considerable extent a right standard, even though it does not follow that standard, nor even pretend to do so—even though it hates those who it sees are endeavoring to walk up to that standard; even though it calls the: children of light hypocrites; and crucifies them, as in the case of our Lord. It is policy and false religion that generally excite religious persecution. Nevertheless, if any one will follow the standard that is reputable, and think upon those things he will find therein a blessing.

For the Victors Are the Rewards

Some may feel that if they thus sifted and tested and rejected all the untrue, the unworthy, the unjust, the impure and the unamiable thoughts presenting themselves, that they would have no topic left whereon to engage their minds, and this we believe would be true with a great many -- their minds for a time would be quite vacant of thoughts, if all the evil and improper ones were rejected, banished; but by the time they would be in this attitude they would have such a "hunger and thirst after righteousness," truth things, lovely, things pure, things noble, that they would be in the right condition to receive the very spiritual food which the Lord has provided for them. There is one thing, and one thing only, which fully combines all of the above propositions, and demonstrates itself to be the one thing true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and that is, the Divine character and plan. Let us think upon its various features. Let us study the Divine Word and behold through it, as a telescope, the beauty of the Divine character, the splendor of the Divine Plan, as revealed in God's Word and Plan, whose length and breadth and height and depth no man can measure; and only the saints can comprehend by the Holy Spirit, and that in proportion as they receive of, the Holy Spirit, the holy mind, the holy thoughts, replacing and displacing the, unholy thoughts and, sentiments of the natural man. (Eph. 3:18.) What a splendid premium the Lord thus places upon the study of His Word in the esteem of all who are of the class addressed by the Apostle.

Such a ruling of the mind is a conquest; such a self-mastery is a victory; the greatest victory that can be gained. As the Scriptures declare, "He that ruleth his spirit [mind] is better than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32.) And the prescription given by the Apostle, for the mental health of the saints, is the very soul-discipline necessary to our development in character, to the degree pleasing to God and acceptable through Christ Jesus our Lord. These are the victors to whom will be granted a share in the Kingdom. Ah, then, as the Apostle exhorts, "Let, us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience 'the race set before us; looking unto Jesus, the author of our faith" until He shall have become the finisher of it (Heb. 12:1,2) ; remembering that He who is on our part, and who has engaged to help us and to carry us through every difficulty, and 'to fully instruct us' if we submit ourselves to Him, and

thus to "make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," is Jesus, who loved us and bought us with His own precious blood.

ELIJAH A TYPE OF THE CHURCH

*"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
-- Rev. 2;10.*

IT IS only when we view the history of Elijah from the standpoint of a type of more wonderful things coming afterward on a larger scale, that we can grasp in any measure the force and meaning of the lessons taught through his experiences. Nor are we left to do any guessing or surmising on this subject. There are positive statements in the Scriptures which unmistakably indicate that Elijah was a typical character. The prophecy of Malachi, recorded in the last Book of the Old Testament, bears us down to the close of the present dispensation and identifies an Elijah class "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Mal. 4:5.) Again, reference is made to Elijah in the New Testament, in connection with our Lord's First Advent. The work of John the Baptist was said to have been the work of Elijah, that is, a work more or less corresponding to the work of Elijah the reformer. (Luke 1:17.) Our Lord Himself identifies Elijah with the work that was going on at that time. (Matt.11:14.) And Jesus said, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things." -- Matt. 17:11.

The closing scenes in the life of this great character are indeed of special interest to the Christian. The separation from Elisha by the fiery chariot, and his being carried heavenward by the whirlwind, are features that may be properly regarded as of special import, for the reason that they are evidently pictorial of matters and circumstances that pertain to the close of the Church's career in the flesh.

Typical Features in the Life of Elijah

We have observed how John the Baptist was a repetition of the picture, he being a fresh type corresponding to Elijah, as Herod corresponded to Ahab; and Herodius was an advanced type of Jezebel. Similar to Elijah, John the Baptist sought to effect a reformation in Israel, and similarly failed. We shall be edified if we glance but hastily at the antitype of these things portrayed in the Book of Revelation. There the antitypical Jezebel is distinctly pointed out, and in harmony with commentators since the Reformation time, we understand the antitype to be the apostate Church, the Papacy -- the civil government of the Roman Empire in its decisions corresponding to King Ahab, consequently the agent of the antitypical Jezebel in accomplishing her desires, in propagating her system and destroying the prophets of the Lord. As had been predicted, so it was fulfilled: "She wore out the saints of the Most High God," and "was drunken with the blood of the saints." -- Rev. 17:6 ; 18:24,

If Papacy is represented by the woman Jezebel, and if the civil power is the antitype of Ahab, where is Elijah in the antitype? We answer that the antitypical Elijah all through this Gospel Age has been made up of the Lord's faithful people, the saints -- a body of many members, yet in all a "little flock." We have already seen how the antitypical Elijah, who must first come and do his work before the Second Advent of Christ in the glory of His Kingdom, is the true Church of Christ in the flesh -- of which Jesus was the Head, of which the Apostles were prominent members, and to which number all the true saints of the Lord from then to the end of the Gospel Age, while in the flesh, must belong. This Elijah class was invisible during a large portion of this long period of nearly nineteen centuries, As Elijah the Prophet disappeared just prior to the drought and was not seen and could not be found during the drought, so with the antitypical Elijah class. As a class they disappeared about the year 300 and were not seen for about three and a half symbolic years, namely until the time of the Reformation, about 1550, even as Elijah disappeared after announcing the drought and did not re-appear until nearly the conclusion of that period of three and a half literal years. The drought really began about 539 A. D. and the copious. showers, of refreshing came three and a half symbolic years later in 1799 A. D.

This period of three and a half years, equaling forty-two months, or 1260 days, is particularly mentioned in all three of these different forms in Revelation, (12:6, 14; 13:5.) The whole world is witness to the great drought that prevailed throughout Christendom from the year 300 until the time of the Reformation. It is particularly known as. the period of the "Dark Ages." With the reappearance of the Elijah class prominently before the world, represented in the Reformers of Luther's time, we have some measure of reassertion of the proper worship of God. The Reformation work up to the year 1799 was pre-paratory, just as the work of Elijah on Mount Carmel and with the priests of Baal was preparatory. Then followed the great shower of blessing, scattering the Word of God throughout the whole world in every language under heaven. Nearly all of the present Bible Societies were organized between 1803 and 1815. There has been a great and refreshing shower of Grace and Truth come to the world. The antitype of Ahab, the civil government, has to a considerable extent recognized the general truth of the matter, but it is more or less closely affiliated with and under the influence of the Jezebel system, and alas! as Revelation clearly points out, Jezebel today has daughters -- systems termed Protestant which, nevertheless, copy largely the Mother's spirit. It is through the influence of the Daughters that the antitypical Elijah may expect future persecutions, instigated by the Mother, accomplished through the Daughters, as typically represented in the case of John the Baptist, beheaded by Herod at the instance of Salome, but at the instigation of Herodias -- Jezebel. This, however, is looking down to a period in the future.

Inasmuch as the close of Elijah's career was of such an unusual character, associated with such spectacular demonstrations, we feel justified in assuming that this also formed a picture designed for the edification and instruction of the Church, particularly as it forecasts or foreshadows the close of the Church's experience and her separation from earthly scenes through fiery trials (pictured in the fiery chariot and horses) and her departure to heavenly scenes (pictured in the whirlwind by which Elijah was lifted heavenward).

Moderation in Finding Types

But while we may very reasonably and profitably see these general lessons and pictures in the career of Elijah, we are inclined to caution against making types of every detail and incident. We believe a great mistake has been made along this line and many have been led into vagaries and into idle and foolish speculation, resulting in much confusion of mind; as for instance, the smiting of Jordan with the mantle, by both Elijah and Elisha; their journeying to Gilgal, to Bethel, to Jericho, and thence to the place where the parting occurred; other related incidents, such as the anointing of Hazael, King of Syria, and Jehu, King of Israel, and the slaughters in Israel wrought by these kings -- all of these matters are regarded by some as being positive types and pictures of circumstances and events that relate to the experiences of the Church. Neither is it for us to positively deny that some or all of the above points mentioned may be pictorial or intended as types; we are merely giving a word of caution in saying that we cannot be too sure respecting these related incidents and details that are connected with the lives of Elijah and Elisha; and for ourselves, we believe we would be making a serious mistake to attempt to draw positive conclusions and to base certain special activities in Christian work on our personal interpretation of these minor incidents in the history of Elijah and Elisha.

The brethren of this ministry have been appealed to repeatedly to attempt to fix something definite as to the significance of the smiting of Jordan, and as to the significance of the various stops that were made by Elijah and Elisha in their journey just prior to Elijah's departure. Others have sent to us their manuscripts presenting results of many days of investigation of the subject, with the request that we publish their findings as newly discovered light. We can only say that up to the present time we have been unable to arrive at any definite conclusion that the various items mentioned foregoing were intended to be particularly illustrative of certain events and developments in the midst of the Lord's people in these latter years.

"We Speak That We do Know"

Not that we would say that these things have no meaning to us at all, for we regard them as containing general lessons; but as for fixing them as positive types, the Lord has not yet given us to see that it would be pleasing to Him to do this. We freely acknowledge that in

the latter years of the ministry of Brother Russell, he did speak quite freely respecting some of these incidents in the experience of Elijah and Elisha, but his statements show that he himself had not arrived at positive convictions regarding a typical significance; as for instance, at one time, in expressing his opinion upon the subject, it would appear to him that the symbolical smiting of Jordan was in the past, and that the Elijah and Elisha classes of the present time were sojourning beyond Jordan, "walking and talking together, as they approached nigh unto the place of separation." Again, at another time, he would express the matter reversely, as though the smiting of the Jordan on the part of the Elijah class was still future. However, as we have before stated, our Brother gave us no utterance that would lead us to believe that he had conclusively fixed the interpretation of such points as this; and while we hold our minds open and ready to see whatever of further information the Lord may be pleased to give, we can only say that if the minor incidents, such as the journeying together of Elijah and Elisha, the smiting of the Jordan, etc., are intended to be positive pictures of events here, up to the present time the Lord has not given us to see the significance sufficiently clear to make any definite presentation, and we are content to wait patiently upon Him, believing that this attitude and course on our part are more acceptable than if we became feverishly impatient and determined that we must make positive pictures and types out of every item and detail in the career of Elijah and then attempt to judge our brethren or to launch soiree great work on the basis of our theories.

As bearing upon the closing features of. Elijah's career, we submit the exposition written and published by Brother Russell in his magazine in August, 1904. Of all his writings that we have, on this particular matter, we know of none that is more illuminating, clear and convincing than this. It is commended to the careful consideration of all.*

*** In this connection we would also recommend the careful rereading of Chapter 8 of the Second Volume of Studies in the Scriptures, which deals quite exhaustively with the typical features of the life of Eliiah.**

A REASONABLE EXPOSITION CONCERNING ELIJAH AND ELISHA

"The words, 'When the Lord would take up Elijah,' suggest that Elijah had a specially protected life-that it was not subject to the power of his enemies -- that he was wholly under Divine control. And this is true also of the antitypical Elijah class of this Gospel Age. It was true, we remember, of the great Head of this class, Jesus in the flesh. The Scribes and Pharisees made many attempts at His life before the successful one, but could not harm Him previously because 'His hour was not yet come.' So with every member of His Body in the flesh, every member of the Elijah class-not even a hair of their heads could fall without Divine notice and permission. These are not to esteem that any of their affairs are accidental, for being fully consecrated to the Lord and fully accepted by Him; all of their affairs, great and small, are under Divine supervision -- their health or sickness, their rights or privileges, their joys or sorrows.

"We are not in this wishing to intimate fatalism, but rather a Divine supervision. If trials and disciplines and corrections, either of poverty or sorrow or ill health, be necessary for the correction of these, they will surely have them; and some or all of these may come to them even though not as chastisements, but as lessons of experience necessary for their development for places in the Kingdom or for their usefulness in the Lord's service in the present time -- as was the case with our Lord. Those who are of the Elijah class, fully consecrated to the Lord, will be glad to have this Divine supervision of their affairs and will rejoice in it. This, however, would not mean that they may not and should not do whatever would appeal to them as being wise and reasonable for the maintenance of their health or its recovery, for the satisfying of their hunger or thirst, or for the betterment of their temporal interests. But while using what to them may appear to be reasonable means, they will consider that these also are in the hands of the Lord, and, if successful, that they are His provision, to be accepted with thankfulness; while, if unsuccessful, they will be willing to accept the results without murmuring -- with full assurance of faith that God is able to make all things work together for their good.

"At the School of the Prophets"

"Elijah and Elisha were at Gilgal, one of the cities at which was located a 'school of the prophets,' where piously inclined young men sought instruction respecting the Divine Law under the supervision of those who were recognized as prophets, and with a view to become doctors or expounders of the Law of God in the various cities in which they lived. Elijah and Elisha had been at this place for some time, and now Elijah proposed a journey, suggesting that Elisha go not with him. The latter, however, would not forsake the older prophet, whom he styled his master, and toward whom he performed the duties of a body-servant. So they went together to Bethel, at which was located

another 'school of the prophets.' We are not told how long was the stay at Bethel, nor what the prophets did or said at the school, but we do know that the pupils, known as the sons of the prophets, came privately to Elisha and in confidential whispers asked him if he was aware that the Lord was about to take from him his master Elijah.

"Elisha's answer was that he did know it, but did not wish to discuss the matter. Evidently he was filled with sorrow at the thought of the loss he was about to sustain, for everything indicates that during the ten years or more that he had been Elijah's servant and co-laborer in the prophetic office, a deep personal attachment had sprung up between the two men, who, in some respects were very dissimilar. Again Elijah suggested that Elisha should tarry while he would go on to the city of Jericho; but again, with strong vociferations of his earnestness, Elisha declined to leave his master. When they arrived at Jericho, Elisha had a similar experience, the sons of the prophets again asking him whether or not he had heard of the Lord's intention to take up the Prophet, and again he refused to discuss the matter. For the third time Elijah suggested to him that he tarry while he would go farther under the Lord's direction, not to a city but to the river Jordan, but Elisha would not tarry and they went on.

"These visits to the schools of the prophets before Elijah was taken away doubtless had a beneficial effect upon these students of the Lord's Word, who well knew the aged Prophet and his allegiance to God and God's power manifested through him. This last visit would be impressed upon their minds and go with them to the various cities of Israel in due time. Meanwhile the revelation which had been made to them, that God intended to take Elijah by a whirlwind, would prepare them for this final miracle and attestation of him as a servant of the Almighty. Apparently the prophets of this last school, fifty in number, while modestly refraining from following with Elijah and Elisha, nevertheless were deeply interested in the event they knew was about to take place. They went to a prominent point near Jericho, high above the river Jordan and overlooking it, and there witnessed what transpired. In the distance they beheld Elijah take off his mantle and roll it into the form of a club, and therewith smite the waters of the river Jordan, dividing them so that the two passed over as the Israelites had previously done by the miracle which the Lord wrought through Joshua at very nearly the same point. On the Prophets went, up the steep hillside beyond Jordan -- quite possibly Mount Nebo, where Moses died. -- Deut. 32:49, 50.

"Harvest Siftings Typified"

"There has been considerable speculation respecting this account of the three times and places at which Elijah invited Elisha to part company with him: that Elijah was too modest to desire many witnesses of the final manifestation of God's favor toward him, or that he wished to spare Elisha the sadness of the later parting; but these suggestions are not satisfactory to us. To our mind these were a feature

of the type whose antitype must be expected in this present time. As Elijah represented the consecrated ones who will as overcomers constitute the Body of Christ and become participants with our Lord in the glories of the Kingdom in the First Resurrection, so apparently Elisha would represent a consecrated class of this time, in some respects inferior. These will have an acquaintance with the Elijah class, will minister to them in various ways, yet not be identified with them as members of the same death-devoted company.

"In harmony with this illustration or type we shall expect that, as the present Age draws to its close and the Elijah class passes away entirely, there will come various siftings or testings to this class of inferior consecration to separate them from the company and fellowship of the Elijah class. Whoever will fall away in this sifting will cease to belong to the Elisha class. Those who endure the siftings and testings will thus maintain their position in the Elisha class, and some will thus continue according to the type down to the very close of Elijah's experience, and will then in consequence of this faithfulness receive a great blessing -- a double portion of the Elijah spirit.

"As the two Prophets went on, Elijah said to Elisha, Make request what I shall give thee, as I go from thee shortly. Elisha's request for a double portion of the spirit of Elijah is not to be understood as meaning twice as much of God's power as Elijah possessed, for this would have constituted Elisha a prophet of double the power of Elijah. Besides, how unreasonable a request would it have been for him to make - that Elijah should give more than he himself possessed. We must understand him, therefore, to mean that if Elijah's spirit or power would in any wise be remaining with any prophets in the earth who would represent the Lord, that Elisha desired that he might have twice as much as any other one -- not selfishly, we may assume; but that he appreciated Elijah's disposition and, position as a servant of God, and desired that as far as possible he might enter into a similar work of service. His request was granted conditionally, but he was told that it would be dependent upon his own watchfulness.

"The lesson which we draw from this request of Elisha and the conditions of its fulfillment is that the consecrated class whom he represents in the end of this Age will need to be on the alert if they would discern the passing away of the Elijah class, and that only in proportion as they do discern the completion of the Elijah class and its passing into glory will they become the recipients of a proportionately large measure of the spirit and zeal of the Elijah class. From the Scriptures we get the thought that after the Elijah class shall have been completed, tested, proved, and glorified, there will still remain a period of time before the full ending of the 'present evil world' or dispensation -- before the full inauguration of the Millennial glories. During that period the class which we believe Elisha represented -- namely, a consecrated class, but lacking in some measure the full spirit, of devotion exhibited by the Elijah class -- will be quickened and energized by the change of dispensation and the evidences. of :the

fulfilling of the Divine Plan, so that thereafter they will be practically as devoted and self-sacrificing and zealous every way as the Elijah class had been.

"The receiving by Elisha of power from the departed Elijah seems to correspond in considerable measure to the 'foolish virgins' getting their oil and being able to trim their lamps after the 'wise virgins' have gone in to the wedding, and the door is shut. As the 'foolish virgins' were not evil, but good 'virgins' -- so Elisha was not an evil man but a good man and a prophet; as the foolish virgins lacked something that the wise virgins possessed, so Elisha lacked something of what Elijah possessed; and that lack, which was supplied to the foolish virgins in the oil, is represented in Elisha's case in the mantle and blessing.

"As the Parable of the Virgins does not go on to show what happened to the foolish virgins except that they failed to enter into the marriage because the door was shut, so the Elisha picture merely shows that Elisha did not accompany Elijah, but on receiving his benediction and power he continued for awhile the work that Elijah had been doing. So it is our thought that during the great time of trouble there will be a consecrated class who had not a sufficiency of zeal in self-sacrifice to be counted of the Lord as members of the Elijah class or Body of Christ, who nevertheless will experience a great time of refreshing and become thoroughly devoted after they realize that the Church has been glorified--after they begin to see also the fulfillment of various Scriptures respecting Babylon. This class, whom we understand to be represented in the Scriptures as the 'great company,' whose number no man knows, who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, and eventually come up to spirit conditions, though not to be of the Royal Priesthood in the throne (Rev. 7:9-17) -- these are represented as recognizing by and by that the Little Flock, the Bride class, the Elijah class, have passed beyond the veil, and they are shown to rejoice accordingly, saying, 'Let us be glad and rejoice and give glory to God, for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His Wife hath made herself ready!' This class in turn, though not worthy to be the Bride, the Wife, is invited to participate in the great marriage feast which is to take place shortly after the glorification of the Church. -- Rev. 19 :7-9.

"Elisha, if a type, a Double One"

"We might here remark that although we are treating Elisha as a part of the type as well as Elijah, yet there is nothing in the Scriptures that positively intimates that this is the case -- it is a mere inference. In Elijah's case, as we have already pointed out in a previous lesson, there is no doubt; beyond peradventure Elijah was a type of the elect Church in the flesh. But if Elisha was a type; we believe that we are justified in considering him a type of two classes. First, of the class already suggested, who are with the Elijah class and who maintain relationship to the close of Elijah's period and who, then become partakers of his spirit. And, this type would seem to extend as far as Elisha's

re-crossing the Jordan, smiting it with the mantle of Elijah. If the crossing of Jordan into the land of Canaan be taken to represent death, then the picture should be read as indicating that this 'great company' will all pass through death, which is just, what the Scriptures elsewhere seem clearly to show -- that in order to be on the spirit plane at all it will be necessary for them to 'all die as men.'

"In this view of the matter we assume that Elisha, after crossing the Jordan and entering Canaan, would represent another, a different class, namely the earthly phase of the Kingdom -- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the Prophets, the beginning of the restitution class. Elisha's work after crossing Jordan was restitution work in many respects, and in this particular would well correspond to what we may expect of the earthly phase of the Kingdom after its establishment -- after the great time of trouble. But again we remind the reader that the typical character of Elisha is not beyond question, as it is nowhere affirmed in the Scriptures, but merely inferred by us because of his association with Elijah.

"Chariots of Fire and Horses of Fire"

"The record is that Elijah and Elisha were separated by chariots of fire, but that Elijah was taken up not by these but by a whirlwind into heaven (margin). We might draw different inferences from this, but feel safer to adhere closely to the wording of the text. The fiery chariots and horses we infer to be a part of the type, and shall not be at all surprised to find the fulfillment in severe persecutions which will come upon the last members of the Elijah class -- persecutions unto death possibly. If this be the correct interpretation of the type there would be a special significance attaching to Elisha's seeing the departure of Elijah. It would seem to signify close personal friendship and loyalty between them down to the very close, and that the effect of these fiery trials would be to energize those who had previously been less energetic in the carrying out of their consecration: "The whirlwind in the type should be interpreted, in harmony with general Scripture usage, as signifying a fierce trouble -- a trouble, too, which would agitate the heavens or ecclesiastical powers as an earthquake would represent disturbances of the social conditions. Thus read in advance of the fulfillment the type seems to imply that the end of the Elijah class will occur amidst great ecclesiastical commotions, accompanied by fiery trials -- thus we think probably the change will come to the last members of the elect 'Body.' . . .

"The change of these members at this time; the Scriptures clearly indicate to be one which the world will not recognize As the Scriptures declare, although we are sons: of God, sons the Highest, nevertheless we must die like men -- we must go down like the great Prince, Jesus, into death, and must be raised to the newness of life, to spirit conditions, to the Divine nature. The, Apostle assures us that those living in the end of this Age, during the *parousia* of the Son of man, will not need to sleep -- to tarry in the death condition -- for the

moment of their death will be the moment of their change to glory, honor, and immortality, the Divine nature."

It will be observed in the foregoing quotation from Brother Russell that his position on some points is stated as a tentative one, and that, as his language indicates none could be really sure in advance of the exact manner of the fulfillment some of the typical features. As for example the suggestion that the last members of the Elijah class may literally suffer persecution unto death, and that the Elisha class will become more zealous and active in service thereafter than they were formerly, may be subject to question. From the facts as they appear at the present time, it would seem that, the fiery test upon the Elijah class is one that has to do with their loyalty to God and the principles of truth, honesty, and righteousness; and that the class typed, by Elisha (if he is intended to be a type) are less zealous for righteousness and truth, though some of these may be abundantly zealous while the Elijah class is still here, in outward works of what they think to be the work of the kingdom. It is not the mission of any of the Lord's people to attempt to make a separation between the two classes at that present time ... only the Lord can judge with righteous and unerring judgment. The important lesson for the faithful is to pay strict attention to the discharging of their duties faithfully as disciples of Christ and to be zealous for the Lord and the principles of His Word that they may be prepared to meet all the fiery and searching tests of these last days: of the Church in the flesh.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

(Contributed from outside the Editorial Committee)

*"I John, . . . was in the isle that is called Patmos,
for the testimony of Jesus Christ." -- Rev. 1:9.*

FRIENDS of Jesus have no difficulty in accepting His own testimony concerning Himself, for they know that, as He said, "Though I, bear record of Myself, yet My record is true." (John 8:14:) We who have followed and are following in the footsteps of our blessed Master, have proved His claims to be gloriously true. He is indeed the Light of the World, as He claimed to be (John 8:12), and just in proportion to the sincerity of our consecration, in proportion to the warmth of our zeal and enthusiasm for His cause, just precisely in proportion to the depth of our love for and loyalty to Himself have we, His followers, not walked in darkness but have found Him to be the Light of Life, as He promised.

And yet, He who was not merely truthful, but was Himself the Truth, did not ask His hearers to accept His testimony uncorroborated. On the contrary, He, who justly bears the tale of the Faithful and True Witness (Rev. 3:14) waves His right to testify on His own behalf (John 5:31)

and appeals to other testimony as a basis for faith in Himself. It will not be possible at this time for us to consider all, but it will be interesting and profitable for us to note some of the lines of testimony introduced by the Apostle John in behalf of Jesus.

In studying John's Gospel we note his clearly defined purpose: "These are written," says he, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." (John 20:31.) Here we have his purpose plainly stated -- that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name. Yes, indeed, says the Apostle, Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples which I am not here recording, but these are written with the very definite purpose of convincing you that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.

That Ye Might Have Life

We will not stop at this time to discuss the subject of Faith. It will be enough for present purposes to note that belief rests on evidence; consequently, we shall expect John to present evidence to the effect that Jesus is the Messiah. Testimony on behalf of Jesus, that is what John ought to give us that we might believe. In studying the Gospel of John it is essential to remember this underlying purpose -- that of furnishing testimony to Jesus; evidence that He is the Messiah. As we read, let us ask: Is John doing what art he set out to do? Is he proving Jesus' Messiahship? Does he present convincing evidence?

It is important to notice too that "these are written" not merely "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God," but they were written also "that believing ye might have life through His name." While the historical enumeration of facts might result in a mental assent to the truth that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, yet more than a mere mental assent to this truth would be necessary, in order to "have life through His name." John well understood the mystery of godliness. It was no mystery to him. He knew the secret of it. He knew that, as another has said, "Godliness is not an open philosophy, which all can judge of for themselves, but a spiritual experience which can be learned only by being godly."

The evidence John presents therefore will be found to consist of two elements: first, evidence which will bring about this mental-assent to the truth that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and second, evidence which will cause us to so believe as to have life through His name. We shall expect to find in his Gospel a chain of testimony which will not be exclusive to an account of events and teachings merely, however accurately stated, but which will include a view of the effect of these events and teaching on the hearts and lives of men on those who received Him not, as well as on those who received Him and who thereby received the privilege of becoming the sons of God. As we ponder his writings, we shall not be surprised to find the

testimony on behalf of Jesus which he introduces having a double effect, appealing alike to our hearts as to our heads, convincing us not only of the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, but leading us on to receive Him by faith into our hearts, influencing us to wholehearted devotion to the Master he himself loved so well.

Those Who Waited For the Consolation of Israel

That the people living in the days of Jesus knew the direction whence to expect the Messiah is evident from the fact that when the Magi inquired of Herod, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" the chief priests and scribes were able to inform Herod that the Prophet Micah had foretold that "Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel." -- Matt. 2:1-6; Mic. 5:2.

To what extent the time features of that day were understood is not easy to determine, and yet it would appear that Daniel's seventy weeks had been rightly interpreted by some, for there was a general expectation of Messiah prevalent. (Dan. 9:24; Luke 3:15.) People were musing in their hearts concerning John the Baptist, whether he were not the long looked for Messiah; and when Paul appeared before Agrippa it was a fair statement of the case when he said that he was being "judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God night and day hope to come." (Acts 26:7.) While it is not supposable that every member of the twelve tribes was relying very strongly on this promise of God, yet there were a number of devout people who had respect unto the promise and who were waiting expectantly for God to perform it. To one of these, Simeon, who waited for the consolation of Israel, it pleased God to be especially gracious, revealing to him that the coming of Messiah should be in his lifetime. (Luke 2:25, 26.) It must have been a severe test of faith to Simeon, when instead of a great prophet, priest, and king appearing with suddenness from the city of Bethlehem in the full splendor of His Messianic glory, he beheld a helpless babe. What must have been his emotions when "He took Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said" (Luke 2:28-32, R. V.):

"Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, Lord,
According to Thy Word, in peace;
For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;
A light for revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Thy people Israel."

The Messiah, The Logos

But while the views held with regard to Messiah's office and work were confused and partial, His relationship to Jehovah was yet more imperfectly understood, and it remained for the Apostle John himself to affirm that the Messiah of Jewish hopes was none other than the

Logos, the Word of God, and that the most sublime feature of all Messiah's work would be that of revealing, of making known the Father. This he tells us in the prologue to his Gospel, which consists of three main propositions, briefly summarized as follows:

First:

"In a beginning was the Logos; and the Logos was with the God; and the Logos was a god."

Second:

"And the Logos became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."

Third:

"No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

The first proposition draws our attention to a god, a mighty spirit being whose relationship to Jehovah is as our words are to us. Just as our words reveal us, so He would reveal Jehovah. In a beginning was the Logos; and the Logos was with the God and a god was the Logos. -- John 1:1, Diaglott.

John's second proposition is that in due course this mighty spirit being became flesh: "And the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us, . . . full of favor and truth." -- John 1:14, Diaglott.

These first two propositions he now unites in a third, namely that the mighty spirit being who became flesh is none other than the Son of God, Jesus; and John is now ready to introduce testimony to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God -- Revealer of the Father. "No one has ever seen God. The Only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father He has made Him known." -- John 1:18, Diaglott.

Testimony of John The Baptist

The first testimony he introduces is that of John the Baptist. But the question arises, why does he give such prominence to John the Baptist? There has been considerable discussion in some quarters as to who wrote the Gospel we call John's Gospel. Let us suppose that some one who had not been well acquainted with the Baptist had written this Gospel. It is hardly likely that he would have given such prominence to the Baptist's testimony. The fact, therefore, that such prominence is given to the Baptist is important and suggests to our minds that whoever it was that wrote this Gospel was well acquainted with and very probably a disciple of the Baptist. Again it is interesting to notice that in the fourth Gospel the Baptist is mentioned nineteen times and not once is he referred to as the Baptist, but is called simply John. In Matthew he is seven times called John the Baptist; in Mark four times, and in Luke four times. But in the fourth Gospel the writer does not need to distinguish John the Baptist from himself, whose name is John, by calling him the Baptist. This then is a second important item of

internal evidence of the genuineness of the Gospel. We saw just now that it was very probably written by a disciple of the Baptist. We now see that that disciple's name was John. In other words, without going outside of the fourth Gospel we have every reason to believe that the writer must have been John, a disciple of the Baptist, who on the Baptist's advice and testimony left him to follow Jesus, whom the Baptist declared was the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. -- John 1:35-37.

Another has very ably commented on the competency of the Baptist as a witness in the following language:

"The Baptist was in a position to know Jesus well. He was His cousin; he had known Him from childhood. He was also in a position to know what was involved in being the Messiah. By the very circumstance that he himself had been mistaken for the Messiah, he was driven to define to his own mind the distinctive and characteristic marks of the Messiah. Nothing could so have led him to apprehend the difference between himself and Jesus. More and more clearly must he have seen that he was not that light, 'but was sent to bear witness of that light. Thus he was prepared to receive with understanding the sign which gave him **something more than his own personal surmises** to go upon in declaring Jesus to the world as the Messiah. If there is any man's testimony we may accept about our Lord it is that of the Baptist, who from his close contact with the most profligate and with the most spiritual of the people, saw what they needed and saw in Jesus power to give it; the business of whose life it was to make Him out, and to arrive at certain information regarding Him; a man whose own elevation and force of character made many fancy he was the Messiah, but who hastened to disabuse their minds of such an idea, because his very elevation gave him capacity to see how infinitely above him the true Christ was. Seen from the low ground, the star may seem close to the top of mountains; seen from the mountain top it is recognized as infinitely above it. John was on the mountain top

"It is, I say, impossible that we can make nothing of such a testimony. Here was one who knew, if any man ever did, spotless holiness when he saw it; who knew what human strength and courage could accomplish; who was himself certainly among the six [?] greatest men the world has seen; and this man, standing thus on the highest altitudes human nature can reach, looks up to Christ, and does not only admit His superiority, but shrinks, as from something blasphemous, from all comparison with Him."

What is the flaw in John the Baptist's testimony? Ah, there is no flaw, and gladly do we accept his testimony and receive Jesus as our light -- as the Lamb of God, able to take away our sins and to make us partakers with Himself of His Holy Spirit.

Signs and Works

But, says Jesus, burning and shining light though he was, I have greater witness than that of John, for 'the works which the Father bath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me that the Father bath sent Me.' -- John 5:35, 36.

Now, bearing in mind the underlying purpose of John's Gospel -- that of giving testimony on behalf of Jesus -- his selection of miracles. "Let me see," muses the Apostle, "which of Jesus' mighty works shall I record? I want to emphasize those that best demonstrate His Messiahship." When we remember that there are forty miracles recorded by the four evangelists and hints of even more, anti when we remember that John was fully informed concerning them all, and recorded only seven,* it becomes a matter of absorbing interest to learn the principle which guided him in their selection. The seven are as follows:

*** The eighth mentioned in Chapter 21 is not included in "these" of John 20:31.**

- 1 Water turned into wine.
- 2 Nobleman's son healed.
- 3 Man with infirmity thirty-eight years healed.
- 4 Feeding of five thousand.
- 5 Walking on the water.
- 6 Blind man given sight.
- 7 Lazarus raised from the dead.

"Truly," says the Apostle, "many other signs did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written [these seven] that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ [the Messiah]; the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name."

It will be profitable for us to pause a moment here and notice the word "sign." It appears seventeen times in the Gospel by John, and is always translated in the Revised version as "sign," though sometimes in the Authorized Version it is translated "miracle." Scholars have pointed out a very interesting shade of meaning in the original Greek word. Suppose Jesus had by the exercise of some powerful spiritual force picked up a couple of elephants and held them up over His head -- that would have been a miracle certainly, an exhibition of power without a doubt, but John would have used a different Greek word from the one he does use, to describe that kind of a miracle. Suppose Jesus had jumped off the pinnacle of the temple and without injury to Himself had landed on His feet-that would have been a miracle too, and such a deed would have excited wonder amongst those who beheld it , but the Greek word for than kind of miracle is very different from the word John used. For that kind of miracle would have been meaningless, whereas the works of God which Jesus did, the signs to which John refers, and especially the seven which he records, are full of meaning.

Embodiments of Truth in Deeds

If Jesus had turned stones into bread for his own use, would have proved Him to be a wonder-worker most assuredly; but it would not have proved Him to be the Messiah. But the seven signs which John records are not written to prove that Jesus was a wonder-worker; but to constitute evidence that He is the Messiah. The thought contained in the Greek word which John uses here in reference to the mighty works of Jesus is that these signs constituted proofs not only of His power, but of His-Messiahship. And how do they do that? By the kind and quality of the miracles He performed. They were miracles having significance; that is the thought in the Greek. As another expresses the matter: "They were miracles not ending in themselves." They were miracles constituting object lessons; embodiments of truth in deeds. Examination of them discloses the fact that while each has its own particular lesson to impart, they unite in teaching one special lesson, namely Jesus is the Messiah. Just as the heavens declare the glory of God, so the works of Jesus declare His glory.

When Jesus takes to Himself His great power and reigns, there will be no necessity to bring forward evidence to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. In that day mankind will all be fully informed on the subject and it will then be futile for His enemies to oppose Him. But in the days of His humiliation He performed certain miracles which in themselves disclose His identity, and reveal the fact to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, that He is none other than the Messiah; the Sent of God. They point to the activities of the great Millennial Day of Messiah in the most eloquent language.

In the turning of water into wine may first be seen the change which comes into the heart and life of a believer during this Gospel Age, when having heard the story of the Savior's love and realized what a restoration to human life rights and privileges this means to him, he consecrates all these and gladly yields himself to do the Father's will and to walk in the footsteps of Jesus even unto the end. What a transformation takes place in that one's life as the Father honors him with the Spirit of sonship! Then, too, what gladness of heart such will experience when at the commencement of Messiah's reign the Marriage of the Lamb takes place and we, with our Lord, partake of that which the fruit of the vine, the wine, typifies -- the Kingdom joys and honors! And what new life will be imparted to this world as it partakes of the rich fruitage of love which the true vine and its true branches, our Lord Jesus and His faithful Church have borne!

Manifested Coming Glory

"This beginning of miracles aid Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him." Yes, Jesus, Master, Lord, this sign alone convinces us -- this sign which causes some to hate Thee, this sign which causes some to despise and reject Thee cause us, Thy true disciples, to explain with true devotion and

joy: My Lord and My God! It satisfies our heads, as we recognize it not only as a miracle, but as one worthy of our great Messiah, revealing to us, ahead of time, Thy glory.

And so with the rest of these deeds having significance, these sighs that were written that we may believe. The healing of the nobleman's son, the cure of the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda -- What were these mighty works but illustrations of the gracious work of restoration which Messiah will undertake in that great Millennial Day? Was it only to appease the hunger of the moment that He caused five thousand to sit down and be fed from five barley loaves and two small fishes? Ah, no, in this as in them all, He displays His glory. He discloses His identity. He shows himself to be the great Messiah who is the bread, the living bread come down from heaven; and mankind shall yet with joy appropriate the rights to human life which He so graciously surrendered, that they may live forever.

How sublime the evidence He presents that He is the Light of the world! How little the need there is to argue this point in the presence of the blind man who received his sight -- the man who was born blind, not on account of his own sin, neither on account of the sin of his parents, but that the work of God might be manifested in him, -- that one of Messiah's Millennial Day works might be displayed in him, and thereby disclose Jesus as the Messiah. How plainly does this point to the glorious day approaching when Messiah will open the eyes not of one blind man, but of all; when he will restore the sight of those who are blind not only physically but mentally -- yes, and morally too; when he will open the eyes of their understanding and enlighten their minds with respect to the Father; when He will be their guiding light indeed!

The Sign That Speaks of Resurrection Hope

Again, the circumstances in connection with our Lord's walking on the water bear unmistakable testimony to His Messiahship. The disciples were in a boat on the sea. A storm came up, and on account of the strong wind the boat was being tossed about with the waves. Night came on and it drew very dark, when in the fourth watch of the night, just before the dawn, Jesus came to them walking on the water.

"Ah," muses John, as he selects the miracles which in just judgment will best emphasize Jesus' Messiahship, "I must not leave this one out." And how glad we are that he did not; for is it not a very exact picture of the way our Lord returned? Has not the Church been tossed about pretty much all down through the Gospel Age? Is not the darkness growing more intense? Is not the night fast closing in upon us, that dark night in which no man can work? Do not the seas roar and foam? Are not the restless turbulent masses of society dashing up against the firmly entrenched powers that be and are not men's hearts failing them from fear?

And just as to the disciples in the boat Jesus came in a manner quite unexpected, walking on the water, so He returned and made His presence known to His faithful watchers in a manner not previously thought of. Is it not a joyous thought, too, to remember that just as the waves subsided and the wind, and they soon reached their haven, so will He subdue all things under Himself shortly, and we shall reign with Him a thousand years!

And, dearly beloved, you who have stood in silence by the cold and silent form of one you have loved, and watched the body lowered beneath the sod, you who have come away with your heart all crushed and broken, is there any significance to you in that mighty work which Jesus wrought when He awakened Lazarus from the sleep of death? Ah, how eloquently this sign speaks to us that still mightier work the Father wrought when He raised up Jesus from the dead. It points unerringly do the time now near when Messiah, the Living One, the One who became dead, and who is alive for evermore, shall speak with authority, and all that are in their graves shall come forth; and they that hear and obey His precepts shall live.

Oh, Blessed Jesus, Oh Faithful and True Witness! Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, and believing thus we have life through Thy name.

BRINGING FORTH ACCEPTABLE FRUIT

"Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." -- John 15:8

IT IS remarkable how fully the Lord has covered the whole range of illustration in describing the oneness subsisting between Himself and His consecrated followers. He gives us an illustration from the mineral kingdom, saying that we are living stones, built together upon Him as the foundation and capstone, to be the Temple of our God. From the animal kingdom our Lord drew illustrations of this oneness like-ning Himself to the good Shepherd and His true followers as the sheep under His care, one with Him in fellowship. From the vegetable kingdom He drew the illustration of this lesson -- I am the vine, of which My true disciples are the branches. From the family relationship He drew an illustration of the true husband and true wife, and their complete, thorough union of heart and of every interest. From the family again He drew another illustration representing the Creator as the Father, Himself as the elder Son, and all of His followers as brethren. From the human body we have another illustration, Jesus Himself being the Head over the Church, which is His Body, for, as the Apostle declares, we are members in particular of the Body of Christ. In proportion as our faith can grasp these declarations, in proportion as we can realize their truthfulness, in that same proportion we may have strong faith and confidence that He who has begun the good work in us is both able and willing to complete it. Whoever of a

loyal, obedient heart can exercise faith has thus provided for himself strength and grace for every time of need, for every hour of trial, for every difficulty and perplexity, and for the affairs of life -- the ballast which will give equilibrium and enable us to profit by all of life's experiences, the bitter as well as the sweet.

Our Lord's declaration that where two or three of His disciples are met together in His name they constitute a Church or Body of Christ, and *He as the head is with them for their blessing in proportion as their hearts are loyal to Him and seeking His guidance, leads us to conclude likewise that wherever two or three of His members are, there we have a representation of the Vine, and they may have all the blessings of branches and all the privileges of fruit bearing. Very evidently, however, the Lord did not wish us to understand that in every little company of those who have named the name of Christ there would be so thorough a purging, so thorough a burning, that only the true branches would remain. His intimation is that He deals with us individually, as well as collectively, and that if we would maintain our personal relationship to Him it must be by the receiving of the sap from the Vine, the receiving of the Holy Spirit, as one of the results of the union and fellowship with Him.

So surely as we receive the Holy Spirit into good and honest hearts the result will be a tendency to fruit bearing, but the illustration our Lord, gives teaches that some may become true branches in the vine and yet overlook and not possess the fruit-bearing disposition. Sometimes a healthy, strong branch develops from a good stock and root, but has no fruit-bearing qualities. The husband-man with a trained eye discerns been buds which would bring forth grape clusters and the buds which would have only leaves. Those which do not have the fruit buds are known as "suckers" -- because they merely suck the juices of the vine and bring forth no fruitage such as the husbandman seeks. These are pruned or cut off, so that the strength of the vine may not be wasted in such merely outward splendor, but may be conserved for its purpose of fruit bearing. Evidently a class of true professors resemble these suckers, who selfishly would draw to themselves as much of the righteousness of the Vine as possible, and would make a fair outward show in the world with leaves or professions, but would have no thought of bringing forth the fruitage which the Lord requires and which can only be brought forth through sacrifice.

The Object of Pruning

Aside from the suckers there are branches which, while having fruit buds, would never bring the fruit to a good ripe development if allowed to take their own course and to develop themselves as branches merely, and hence the wise husbandman, noting the bud, is pleased with it, and pinches off the sprout, the vine beyond the bud, not to injure the branch but to make it more fruitful. So with us who have not only joined the Lord by faith and consecration and been accepted as branches, but who as branches desire to bring forth good

fruitage, which the Lord seeks in us -- we need the Husbandman's care so that we may bring forth the much fruit, so that the fruit that we bear may be more to His pleasure, large fruit, luscious fruit, good fruit, valuable fruit. The methods of the Lord's prunings should be understood by all the branches, otherwise they may be discouraged and droop and fail to bring forth the proper fruitage.

It would appear that the great Husbandman prunes the branches of the Christ sometimes by taking away earthly wealth or property, or sometimes by hindering cherished schemes and plans. Sometimes He prunes us by permitting persecutions and the loss of name and fame, and sometimes He prunes by permitting the loss of earthly friendships toward which the tendrils of our hearts extended too strongly, and which would have hindered us from bearing the much fruit which He desires. Sometimes He may permit sickness to afflict us as one of these prunings, as the Prophet declared, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray." Many others of the Lord's dear people have found some of their most valuable lessons on the bed of affliction.

If we will not bear the fruitage the Master desires, we may not remain in relationship with Him; if we do bear the fruits, if we have that spirit and disposition and desire the Lord's grace and strength and assistance, His grace will be sufficient for every time of need, and we will come off conquerors and more than conquerors through Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood. The bearing of the fruit which the Father desires cannot be accomplished, we cannot be pleasing to Him, except as we are related to Christ and as His fruit is born in us by our relationship to Him and the power of His Spirit and His Word working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. The assurance is that if we abide in Him we will bear much fruit and that without Him we can do nothing and have no fruit that the Father will accept.

Outward Service Not Fruit of Spirit

The fruit of the Spirit is sometimes taken to be activities in the service of the Truth, as, for instance, the scattering of the Truth, the talking of the Truth, the bringing of some out of darkness into the light and knowledge of the Truth, the expenditure of money for the publishing of the Truth -- all these are sometimes considered the fruit which the Lord expects of the branches. Not so! The fruit is something still nobler and grander than these things, and is described by the Apostle as the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit of the Vine must permeate all the branches and the fruit of the Vine must be in every branch. This fruit of the Spirit is enumerated -- meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love; if these things be in us and abound, says the Apostle, they make us to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior.

These fruits are all one in some particulars: that is to say, the essence of proper Christian patience is love; the essence of hope and faith and

joy is love for our Father, and our confidence in His love, as expressed in His promises to us. So the name of all these fruits and graces of the Spirit is expressed in the one word, Love. These are the fruits which must be found in every branch if it would retain its place as a branch and be of the glorified Vine by and by. Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that other things will do, and that we may pass the Divine inspection without these. The other things, the good works, the seeking of the Truth, the distribution of the literature, etc., are only to be acceptable to the Father in proportion as they are the results of this fruitage in our hearts. The Apostle expresses this forcefully when he says, If I should give my body to be burned and all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it would profit me nothing.

The same thought is true in regard to service to the Lord: if we should spend every day and every hour in the Lord's work, if we should give all our money to printing tracts and books, or use ourselves in any other way for the service of the Lord's cause, it would profit nothing unless it were the result of love in our hearts. We see, then, that the thought is that we must cultivate in our hearts the graces of the Holy Spirit, meekness, gentleness, patience, etc., love, and that we must have these in abounding measure to be pleasing to the Lord, to bear "much fruit." The expression of these fruits, therefore, undoubtedly will be through various channels, perhaps of giving goods to the poor, perhaps of such faithfulness in the presentation of the Truth as might lead us to martyrdom, that our bodies might be burned. If the burning of the body or the loss of all our goods comes in such a course through our faithfulness to the principles of righteousness, through our love and loyalty to the Lord, then happy are we indeed.

Fruits of Membership in the Vine

Our Lord proceeds to tell us what some of the fruits of this union with Him will be:

First, such may ask whatsoever they will and it shall be done unto them. There is only one condition or limitation, namely, that before they are thus prepared to ask, they must see to it that they give attention to the Lord's Word that they may ascertain what is His will and what they may ask according to His will. Those who abide in Christ must have no will of their own, theirs must be the will of their Head, and their Head has already declared that His will is the Father's will. These, then, are the limitations that we have the Father's will in our hearts and the Father's promises in our hearts; then our requests will be in conformity to these and the Lord will be pleased to grant all such.

The second fruitage or result will be that the Father will be glorified the more in proportion as our fruit increases, and on these terms -- our discipleship shall continue, namely that we shall habitually seek to know and to do the Father's will and to glorify and honor Him, by lives, obedient to His will. Anything short of this would forfeit our discipleship. Not that it would be forfeited instantly, as though the

Lord would take occasion to cast us off lightly, but that it is a part of our covenant relationship that we will grow in grace, grow in knowledge, grow in harmony with God, grow in the fruit of the Spirit, and if we turn from this engagement or contract we cannot be considered as retaining our relationship as disciples, members.

For This is the Love of God

The third fruit or evidence of this membership in the Vine and of our continued growth as branches is stated in verse nine, namely that as the Father loved the Lord Jesus, the Vine, so our Redeemer loves us, His branches or members. What a wonderful thought this is, that our Master has toward us the same kind of love that the Father has toward Him! Could our faith always grasp this thought and maintain this hold, we should indeed have nothing to wish or to fear -- our summer would last all the year. The next thought suggested is that having reached, having attained this high position in the Lord's favor, if we are His disciples and truly appreciate what He has done for us in this respect, we will desire to continue in His love. Next in order come the terms and conditions upon which we may continue in that love, namely that we keep His commandments.

By way of showing us that this is not an unreasonable proposition, our Lord declared that these are the same terms on which the Father deals with Him, namely "Even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." We cannot expect to abide in the Lord's love and be careless of His injunctions. The measure of our faithfulness to Him will be indicated by our obedience to Him, as the measure of His love for the Father was indicated by His obedience to the Father. The Apostle intimates this same thought and adds a little to it, saying, "For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3.) It is not enough that we keep the commandments, but that we keep them lovingly and loyally, of good pleasure, that we do not consider them grievous, but rather are to be glad to be in line, in harmony, with all the Lord's righteous provisions and arrangements. Let us all more and more seek this spirit of full heart-harmony with all the principles of righteousness laid down by our Lord Jesus -- His commandments.

Our Lord concluded this little lesson, so short and yet so full of meaning and depth, by an illustration of why He gave it, saying, "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be filled full." "This is My commandment that ye love one another even as I have loved you." Wonderful words of life are these that have come down to us through the centuries, that have helped to cheer and encourage so many of the Lord's followers in the Narrow Way.

Those who have truly made a covenant with the Lord, who have truly accepted Him, who have truly laid down their lives at His feet and become His followers in sincerity, are filled with His joy, as He

promised; and it is an increasing joy, which day by day and year by year becomes more nearly complete -- a joy which will not be complete, however, until that which is perfect shall come and that which is in part shall be done away; until in the resurrected condition we shall see as we are seen and know as we are known and appreciate to the full the joys of our Lord, hearing His welcome invitation; "Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord." We enter now into those joys through faith, through anticipation, through rest of heart, but by and by we shall enter upon them in the actual sense.

Let us, dearly beloved, not think of getting the benefit of the Lord's gracious provisions by merely learning how to get them, but let us take the necessary steps -- see that we are fully His, see that we live close to Him, see that we are fruit bearers, see that we abide in His love, in the Father's love, in the love for one another, which He has enjoined.