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COMPASSIONATE LOVE AMONGST THE BRETHREN

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you." -- Matt. 6:14.

IN HIS masterful and immortal Sermon on the Mount, the Savior earnestly appeals to His followers to recognize and lay hold of those grand godlike qualities that make up the character of God, in order that they may be the children of their Father in heaven. In other words, if they would be the children of God they must be like Him in respect to certain elements and qualities of character, the sum of which is love. The plan of redemption as we have seen, is founded upon the fact that "God so loved the world," and accordingly purposed to show mercy and compassion to the extent of providing a way of escape from all these sad conditions of death ; His provision, including the opportunity of returning to Him, to a state of holiness and fitness to enjoy His presence forever.

No matter from which standpoint we consider the great quality of godlikeness, love, it must be recognized and acknowledged by all to be vitally essential to full happiness; and a most important factor in the lives of those who would dwell together in peace and harmony and enjoy the favor of God throughout eternity. It is for this reason that St. Paul declares that the greatest and most essential of all qualities is love. The Master dwelt much upon the importance of love's manifestation in the direction of mercy, compassion, forgiveness, appealing to His disciples to recognize that as they stood in most urgent need of God's loving compassion and forgiveness, so they should be exercised toward one another by this same merciful and forgiving attitude.

Great Need of Mercy and Forgiveness on Earth

Under the present circumstances and state in which our race is fallen and depraved and imperfect, every exhibition of His favor in the way of the various gifts and blessings of life "on the just and on the unjust," is so much revelation of His goodness -- of mercy and compassion. In view of the present sad conditions amongst men it is recognized that there is much need for the exercise of the spirit of loving forgiveness everywhere. It is because there has been so little of this spirit in the dealings of men, both as individuals and as nations. that our histories present to us the sad story of strife, bloodshed and war. But above all places where the compassionate love of God is needed and to be looked for, is in the Church of Christ, amongst those who have taken

the great Teacher for their example and have signified their purpose to live according to the rules which He laid down.

The Divine provision and arrangement to forgive our sins presupposes a realization on our part of our own imperfection, and that we who desire to have our own sins cancelled will be magnanimous toward others. And the Lord makes this a condition of our discipleship. Therefore we must not only start with the state of uprightness of heart, justification before God by the forgiveness of our sins, but we must persevere in the effort to put away "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," everything in the nature of unloveliness and bitterness of spirit or feeling, and strive to be like God. By way of assisting us and giving us inspiration in the direction of achieving this most desirable state, we are admonished to seek for the knowledge of God; that is, to strive to know experimentally what the love of God is, and what it means to be loving, compassionate and forgiving toward others as He is toward us. As we gain increasingly of this knowledge of the Divine character and as it is worked out in our lives, in our thoughts, words, and deeds, we should become proportionately more and more generous, kind, loving and godlike. Failure to develop this character on the part of those who have become God's children signifies that the knowledge received has not profited them and instead of continuing in the justified and approved state before God, such will be considered by Him as having lapsed again into sin -- and greater sin, because of greater light -- and will be treated of the Lord accordingly.

As We Forgive Our Debtors

One of our Lord's most ardent followers, the Apostle Peter, evidently recognized this principle in general: he saw that it was his duty to forgive the trespasses of his repentant brother. But he was doubtful how far this principle of forgiveness should go. Our Lord had instructed them in this matter early in His ministry: He had taught them to pray, "Forgive us our debts [sins, trespasses] as we forgive our debtors," and He had explained the meaning of this to them, saying, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." -- Matt. 6:12, 15.

It is not necessary for us to suppose that one of the Apostle's brothers was a great annoyance to him, continually doing him wrong and continually needing to repent of; it and to be forgiven. We may suppose that the Apostle was turning over in his mind the broad teachings he had received on general principles, to ascertain of the Lord definitely how far this rule of forgiveness was to be applied in the ordinary affairs of life. He no, doubt made what he thought a very liberal suggestion, that the proper limit of forgiveness would be seven times: but our Lord's answer must have given him still broader and deeper views on the subject -- "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

If all God's creatures on earth were perfect then there would be no need nor call for the exercise of forgiveness, neither mercy nor compassion, for these are qualities that may be exercised only where there is sin and imperfection. If all were perfect then a law of justice and demands of justice would be properly in order. But since all are transgressors and objects of Divine pity and grace, there is no room for any one to take his stand upon justice. And he who stands upon the principle of exactness and, justice will fall before the sword. Hence, our Lord declares,. "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." If we realize our own weakness and imperfection and need of help. from on high, and if we exercise a similar generosity in the smaller affairs of life with our fellows in tribulation, we will be the kind for whom God designed the full measure of His grace: but if Divine favor does not thus reach our hearts and mellow them toward others, we are not of the class to whom the full measure of Divine favor will be extended, and we will be accounted unworthy of that spiritual heritage which is in reservation for, the children of God.

The Parable of the Two Debtors

To the Apostles and to us, even "all those who should believe on Him through their word," our Lord gave the illustration or parable of the Two Debtors. The parable is not of general application, but merely applicable to the Kingdom of Heaven class -- the Church-called to run the race and, by the grace of God, to win the prize of joint-heirship with their Lord in His coming Millennial Kingdom. The generosity of the King in the parable, toward his servant who was so greatly in his debt, illustrates God's magnanimity, mercy, toward us through Christ. The debt, ten thousand talents, was an enormous one, representing in value about twenty millions of dollars: this debt fitly represents our great obligations to God as a race, and our utter inability to meet the obligations. The entire human family was already "sold under sin" and was involved in slavery, when God graciously had mercy on us through Christ and provided .for our liberty. The liberated servant, whose prayer for mercy was heard, represents the Christian believer who has been made free from sin.

The parable proceeds to show a wrong course of action which, alas, we often see exemplified; for some of those who have received Divine grace in abundant measure are very hard-hearted, uncharitable, unforgiving, vindictive, malicious, and vengeful toward those who trespass against them, and whose trespasses are sometimes purely imaginary. We do not live in a day in which a creditor may wantonly inflict physical abuse upon his debtor, nor need we expect under present enlightenment that any Christian would feel like wreaking his vengeance, upon his fellow servant by physical force. We rejoice that the day of such cruel torture is gone. But we live in a day when, nevertheless, the same spirit can-and does manifest itself, but in less flagrant, though not less cruel and sinful forms. The modern method of attack upon an enemy is not with red-hot irons to gouge out his eyes,

nor with molten lead to fill his mouth and ears; but instead the weapon is slander; back-biting, evil-speaking, and according to its degree it may be the spirit of murder. Indeed, our Lord seems to have taken more notice of the evil-speaking that would come upon His people, than of the physical sufferings, for over and over again He points out, "They shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake." -- Matt. 5 :11.

If Ye From the Heart Do Not Forgive

What shall we say of the Christianity of the brother or sister who, meeting a debtor, or one whom he esteems to be a debtor (justly or unjustly), thus abuses his fellow servant. But it is much more important that we should know how the Lord would regard such an one, and in the parable before us He has answered it fully. In the parable the King was wroth and called the forgiven but unforgiving servant to account, pronouncing him at once a "wicked servant." And applying the lesson of the parable, our Lord declares: "So likewise shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Let it not be overlooked that our Lord here very particularly called attention to the difference between an outward and formal expression of forgiveness with smooth words, and the true forgiveness which is from the heart. The former, or outward forgiveness, is only lip-deep, and means that a wrangling of an evil, unforgiving spirit is within, and that it will only be a matter of time until, the pent-up force of malice and hatred will break forth in words of slander. God reads the heart and, whatever the lip professions may be, He will not consider these unless the heart and life correspond with them. It is in vain, therefore, that any one should say, I love my brother, and at the same time seek either by word or act to do him injury. All the evil-speaking, malice, hatred, envy, strife, proceeds from evil in the heart: hence, the necessity on the part of all who desire to be of the Lord's Body, that they "purge out the old leaven of malice" from that they may be members indeed of the unleavened that they may be members indeed of the unleavened loaf -- the Body of Christ.

In the parable the evil servant was delivered to the "tormentors." The tormentors of olden times (and also of today in some Oriental countries) inflicted scourging or other torment upon accused persons for the purpose of extorting from them money or information or whatever they might be unwilling to give up. The analogy to this in God's dealings with His people might reasonably be expected along the lines of earthly disciplines, such as the Apostle referred to, saying of one, I have delivered him "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:26.) This might mean financial difficulties, or losses, or physical ailments, disease or what not. Not infrequently, we believe, the Lord through these agencies teaches His servants important lessons respecting their own weaknesses, and introduces and develops in them

patience with others and more of His own holy spirit -- meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness -- Love. We do not mean to intimate by this that the afflictions and reverses of life are always in the nature of chastisement and corrections in righteousness. We understand that sometimes they are tests instead of chastisements -- tests to prove the degree of our loyalty to the Lord, and to develop in us larger degrees of faith and of the various graces of the Spirit.

Repentance Precedes Forgiveness

We cannot properly leave this subject without calling attention to certain conditions which ought to precede forgiveness. For instance, in the parable the King does not exercise compassion until the debtor asks for it: so also God does not forgive our sins until we acknowledge our sins and ask His forgiveness. Likewise, in the parable, the second servant, who owed a hundred pence (about sixteen dollars), asked mercy of the one to whom he owed it, before that one was obliged to forgive: and in a further comment on the subject, mentioned by Luke (17:3, 4), our Lord expressly states the propriety of expecting those who trespass against us to make some acknowledgment of their fault before expressing full forgiveness. He says, "If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent! thou shalt forgive him."

We are not to accept one portion of the Divine direction and to ignore another portion: we are not to say that our Lord meant it, when He said, "forgive him," and that He did not mean it when He said, "Rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." With the majority of people, however, it would probably be quite unnecessary to urge the propriety of repentance; unless they were the transgressors whose duty it is to repent. Most people are sufficiently disinclined to forgive, to wait until their forgiveness is asked. The trouble is that then the large majority apparently do not "forgive from the heart" but merely from the lips. Heart forgiveness leaves no sting, no animosity, no grudge.

Should Always Be Filled With Spirit of Forgiveness

On the other side of the question, however, a caution is necessary. The Christian is to have the loving, generous disposition of heart, a copy of the Heavenly Father's disposition. In trivial affairs he is to have so much sympathy and love that he will take no notice, just as God for Christ's sake deals with us and does not impute sin to us, except as it represents knowledge and willfulness. With such a rule operating amongst Christians, a determination not to recognize as an offense anything that is not purposely done, or intended as an offense, would be a great blessing to all, and the proper godlike course. The transgressions to which our Lord refers, are not trivial affairs of no consequence, are **not evil surmisings and imaginings**, are not rumors, are not fancied insults, but positive wrongs **done us**, which are susceptible of proofs, and on account of which it is our duty, kindly and lovingly and wisely to give some proper rebuke; some intimation

that we recognize the wrong and that it has grieved us and hurt us. Then comes in the Divine rule respecting the one and only proper manner of rebuke, pointed out in Matt. 18:15-17.

The disposition to forgive should be with us always and should be manifested by us at all times. Our loving generosity and kindness and desire to think no evil or as little evil as possible, should be manifest by all the words and acts of life. This is godlike. God had a kind, benevolent, generous sentiment toward us, even while we were yet sinners. Nor did He wait for the sinners to ask forgiveness but promptly manifested His desire for harmony and His readiness to forgive. The whole Gospel message is to this effect: "Be ye reconciled to God." Our hearts should be so full of this disposition toward forgiveness that our faces would not have a hard look, nor our words of reproof a bitter sting: they should manifest the loving forgiveness that we should have in our hearts at all times.

Forgiveness, "in your hearts," is the condition which is always to obtain there: we should never harbor any other feeling than that of forgiveness and good will toward all, no matter how seriously they may have trespassed against us: and if this be the case, we will be longing and anxious to exercise the forgiveness outwardly and to express it to the repentant ones. Hence, we will not seek to compel the most elaborate statement on the part of the penitent; but, like the father of the prodigal, to see the repentant one coming in an attitude of humility will touch our hearts and prompt us to go out part way to meet him, and to forgive him, and to kiss him, and to put on the robe of fullest fellowship and brotherhood. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." -- Matt. 6:15.

"LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?"

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." -- John 6:67, 68.

OUR LORD speaks of various voices calling mankind and leading astray, and contrasts them with His own call of His own "sheep" who hear and obey it, saying, My sheep hear My voice, and they follow Me; strangers will they not follow, because they recognize not the voice of strangers. (John 10:3-5.) These the Master's words are full of solemn significance to the people of God today as they have ever been in the past.

There are numerous voices in the world, calling mankind to follow in the pursuit of pleasure, of riches, of wisdom, etc., and various are the inducements presented, and to the young and inexperienced the bewilderment of so many attractions is great. But experience has taught many of us that these seductive siren voices would but lead us

to shipwreck upon hidden rocks and shoals, and that "all that glitters is not gold." We have learned that the cravings of our own human natures are quite unreliable, that we are fallen beings, that our tastes and appetites are perverse, and so depraved that frequently we crave the things that tend to do us injury, and are inclined to reject the things which are best for us.

The Shepherd's Voice of Truth

Not all are able to hear and recognize the Shepherd's voice in the present time; the majority are deaf on this subject, however acute their hearing may be as respects the inducements held out to them by the world, the flesh and the Evil One. Consequently the Scriptures say, "He that hath an ear to hear [the Gospel] let him hear." But the opening of our ears to hear the good tidings, of which Christ is the center, does not close them to the various voices of selfishness, ambition, pride, avarice, and vainglory, and the other voices proceeding from the various evil sources: it would seem indeed that, after accepting us to be His sheep, and after giving us some opportunity to learn the sound of the Shepherd's voice, the voice of Truth, we are intentionally exposed to the various voices which would call us away from our Shepherd, and from following in His footsteps. And oh, how many stray away! "Walking after their own desires." How many thus become side-tracked on the way to the heavenly city! How many are ultimately entirely switched off into another direction! How many have thus gone "back and walked no more with Him!" How few, what a "little flock," they are that follow on, day by day, to know the Shepherd more fully, to walk in His paths, and ultimately with Him to reach the Heavenly Kingdom!

Siftings and Testings Among the Apostles

It will be remembered that the words of our text were called forth by a certain sifting of the discipleship. Our Lord's ministry had progressed considerably at first, the people hung upon His words and said, "Never man spoke like this man," and "great multitudes followed Him." But towards the close of His ministry, as the jealousy and animosity of the "Doctors of Divinity" and the Pharisees began to manifest itself, He became less popular, and in our context we find that many of His hearers were leaving Him, and He said, "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given him of My Father. From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered and said unto Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Such siftings and testings of the Lord's disciples have been in progress throughout the Gospel Age, and still continue. Many have directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, repudiated the great Shepherd, His leading and His instruction. Some, because the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees said, "He hath a devil and is mad. Why hear ye Him?"

Some, because they did not understand His teaching, and they said, "This is a hard saying: who can believe it?" Others, because His teaching drew the line too sharply between righteousness and sin, between God and Mammon; and we may understand as literal our Lord's statement that eventually only a "little flock" will be found worthy of the Kingdom:

Gathering Out All Things That Offend

It may sound harsh to some, because of their misconception of the subject, when we say that the Lord's message and leading were as much intended to shake off and repel one class, as to attract and hold another class. That would be inconceivable, if the ones repelled and shaken off were understood to suffer eternal loss. On the contrary the attraction and the drawing was to the Kingdom, and the repulsion was from the Kingdom; and the sifting and separating of our Lord's day, and since and at the present time, is to the intent that the Lord may gather out and separate from those who are His true and loyal disciples, the Kingdom class, all who are not acceptable to Him, and who are unworthy of those blessings. As it is written, concerning the end of the Gospel Age, and the final glorification of the "little flock," "He shall gather out of His Kingdom [class all things that offend and them that do iniquity Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." We may rest assured that none who are fit for the Kingdom will be sifted out. Of such it is written, "No man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand"; and again, "If ye do these things [hearken to the voice of the Lord and cultivate His spirit and walk in His ways] ye shall never fall: for so [doing], an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

How all-important then it is, that we have our minds thoroughly made up respecting the voice that we will obey and the footsteps that we will follow -- for "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." We "cannot serve God and Mammon," however much we try. We cannot hear and obey the voice of Satan and Sin and the World and Self and the Flesh, and at the same time hear and obey the voice of the Good Shepherd, the voice of Truth; the voice of Love. Let this be settled and fixed in our minds, that it may keep us from all wavering after we have once taken our place amongst the Lord's sheep.

Many Voices Appealing

In order that the decision may be the proper one, and in order that it may be the final decision, from which we will not think to turn, it is well that we should note the different voices calling us, and to what they lead. We will not notice these voices as they appeal to the world in general, but merely as they appeal to those who have already heard the voice of the Good Shepherd. They assume that they will not antagonize our faithfulness to the Shepherd, but that they will heartily co-operate. The Shepherd, however, declares that this will not be the

case; that the selfish voices of the world are calling, influencing, drawing away from Him and the path in which He leads His sheep.

Wealth calls to us, holding out its golden charms, and promising great things; suggesting meanwhile that our religious zeal is right enough, but overwrought, fanatical, and that in this measure only it is in opposition to wealth; and that even if obliged to leave the Lord for the sake of wealth it need only be temporarily, and that soon, having acquired wealth, we could pursue after Him with redoubled energy and thus gain the Kingdom. Alas, how delusive! and yet how many are attracted by this call and presentation! Well does the Apostle say that "The love of money is a root of all evil, which some coveting after have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Then, too, how false are these hopes, how few amongst the many who pursue wealth ever attain it! Indeed, it is not the wealth that is the evil, for God is rich above all; it is the love of earthly wealth and the manner in which it absorbs the heart affections, away from the truth and its service and heavenly things, that constitutes the evil and the snare of wealth which remarkably few ever resist, overcome and bring into subjection to the Divine will.

Many hear the voice of Fame, and pursue it, if peradventure they will become famous, highly esteemed among men. The impelling motive here is, in part at least, pride and approbation -- ambition for self -- not for God, nor for righteousness. And how few who turn aside from the Lord's way, in whole or in part, to gain fame, worldly renown, honor of men, ever attain to fame in any considerable measure! It is a false voice leading on to false hopes, soon shattered in death, if not before: it would induce us to turn aside from the humble path of obedience and self-abasement in the Divine service whose reward is "Glory, honor and immortality" at God's right hand of favor.

Besetments and Roots of Selfishness

Others hear the voice of worldly pleasure, and see the millions of earth seeking it in the gratification of the flesh; and there is a great drawing to go with the multitude, seeking pleasure through the gratification of our perverted natural tastes. How long it takes us to learn assuredly that worldly pleasures are fleeting, and that they have a bitter which counterbalances every sweet, and that the tendencies of Vanity Fair are quite contrary to the new ambitions, new hopes, new desires of our new natures! How many efforts all of the Lord's people have made, to blend or mix the pleasures of the world with the heavenly joys, only to find that they will not blend, and that true happiness for those who would abide in Christ and follow in His footsteps, means the rejection of all pleasures which have a sinful combination or tendency! How long it takes us to learn that the only pleasures which the new creature can truly enjoy, are those in which our Lord can be our companion, those which we can discuss with Him and in which we can enjoy His fellowship!

All of these besetments, be it noticed, have their roots in selfishness -- they are all in some form inclinations to self-gratification: on the other hand the voice of the Good Shepherd is calling us away from our debased selfish conditions, moods, and desires to a higher plane of sentiment, a plane of benevolence, love of God and righteousness and fellow men, which seeks to "do good and to communicate." We see, too, that having set before us the new conditions, our Lord, our teacher, is permitting the selfish tendencies of our natural hearts and of the world in general to call us in other directions; so that by learning to resist these, we may more and more establish for ourselves strong characters, rooted, grounded, fixed, in righteousness and love, strong and able to resist the weaknesses of our own flesh as well as the influence of friends and of the world in general.

Love of Many Grows Cold

Only such as thus develop character can possibly be "overcomers" of the world, and only such will be accepted of the Lord as His joint-heirs in the Kingdom. It will thus be seen that the Lord is not merely seeking those who will make a covenant with Him, but by lessons of trial and discipline and testings by the way He is seeking to prove His people--to test them, to find and separate to His own service not, those who are strong in self-will, strong according to the flesh, but those who, abandoning the will of the flesh, give themselves so completely to the Lord that they become transformed by the renewing of their minds -- "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

In these recent years; as is recognized by many, there have come upon the Lord's people everywhere very severe testings and fiery trials: brethren who formerly have earnestly and lovingly co-labored in the Master's service and walked in company in the house of God, have been driven apart apparently by a new and hostile influence which has spread throughout the ranks of the Truth people, resulting in the introduction of strange and doubtful teachings, doctrines and interpretations, which in turn have led to the application of unholy and unscriptural tests of fellowship. Consequently the love of Christ in many has grown cold, and many brethren have proven unfaithful to the Lord and to one another. Along with these circumstances many new teachers have appeared upon the scene, presenting conflicting voices and appeals to accept of their leadership and follow in their way. In consideration of all this strange and unhappy outlook, with the many disturbing elements everywhere, causing many to walk no more with Him, what wonder that these days should be peculiarly days of fiery trial upon the Church; -- days in which the Spirit of the Lord is, through these sifting influences, searching the hearts of all to make manifest who is on the Lord's side; and no marvel either, if we seem to hear the Master saying to us in these days, as He said to some of old, "Will ye also go away?" Nor can we answer our blessed Lord in any better manner than that in which the beloved Peter replied: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Not Every One That Saith Lord, Lord

In harmony with this thought that the Lord is searching and testing His people today, are the words of the Lord to fleshly Israel, the typical people -- "The Lord your God proveth you to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deut. 13:3.) This explains the object and intent of the Divine course with us, the true Israel, throughout the Gospel Age: He has been proving His people, testing them, to ascertain the degree and strength of their love for Him. He tells us that "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom": that many who make the covenant of full consecration will fail to keep it, fail to obey its requirements, and that their failure will indicate a deficiency of love for Him, and that self-will still reigns in their hearts, giving God only the secondary place. And the Kingdom is intended only for those who by God's grace shall at heart become like to the Lord Jesus in that they will love the Lord with all their hearts, with all their souls, and be able to say, "Not my will, but Thy will, O Lord, be done." No other condition than this condition of full submission to the Lord can make us acceptable for the Kingdom; for no other condition represents full selfsubmission and full love to God. And let us not forget that all the heavenly things which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," God hath reserved for them that love Him supremely.

Hence, however desirable it may be that our friends and neighbors should surrender themselves to the, Lord on their death-beds, if they will not sooner surrender, it is nevertheless very evident that those who so repent in their dying hours, are not to be regarded as in any sense of the word, "heirs of the Kingdom"; for it is not supposable that in the few short hours or days after their repentance they could develop the requisite staunch characters: they have not passed through such testings of faith and love and zeal for the Lord as would develop in them the characteristics of "overcomers" -- the Kingdom class. Those who surrender to the Lord on their death-bed may, however, be encouraged to hope for His blessing in the Millennial Age, and for an opportunity to come to a fuller knowledge of the Lord and to have an opportunity to cultivate character in that Paradisaic condition -- as the Lord promised the dying thief.

Beloved, Count It All Joy

If we could but keep in memory the fact that every trial, every persecution, every difficulty in life, permitted to come upon those who have made the covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is intended to prove them, to test their love, to see whether or not their characters are fixed, rooted and grounded in righteousness and being built up in love, it would put all these trials, difficulties and temptations in a new light before us, and greatly assist us in fighting a good fight and overcoming. We would say, If by these little trials the Lord is proving my love and devotion to Him, then, however trifling they may be or however important, I will diligently use them as favorable

opportunities to demonstrate to my Lord the fullness of my love and devotion .to Him and His cause. Thus viewed and thus met, every trial and every difficulty would prove to be a blessing: as the Apostle puts it, "Beloved, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations"; "greatly rejoice, though now for a season ye are in manifold temptation, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." "Blessed is the man that endureth [faithfully I under] temptation; for after his trials he will receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." "These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" -- if rightly utilized. -- 1 Pet. 1:7;. Jas. 1:2, 12.

Thus we are again assured that those who love the Lord, and who in consequence will receive the Kingdom, will be those whose love will have been tested by trials and temptations on the way to it. Those who do not love the Lord with all their hearts, in whom self or some other idol has first place, will be seduced by the world, the flesh or the devil into some form of rebellion against the Divine Word or Divine providence: they will have schemes and theories. which they will prefer to the Lord's plan, and their own theories and plans when analyzed will usually be found to be based either. upon selfishness or ambition or upon an evil spirit of envy, hatred, jealousy, etc. The Lord's leading and the Lord's words lose their attraction to such, and they lose their interest correspondingly, and like those who turned away from the Lord at the First Advent, saying, "This is a hard saying" -- they walk no more with Him. It becomes evident then why it is that many who name the name of Christ at the present time will be rejected of the Lord: Sin and unrighteousness can not dwell together, for "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

What Fellowship Hath Light With Darkness

Another has forcefully dealt with this point: "Nothing can be more dishonoring to the pure grace of the Gospel than the supposition that a man may belong to God, while his conduct and character exhibit not the fair traces of practical holiness. 'Known unto God are all His works,' no doubt; but He has given us, in His Holy Word, those evidences by which we can discern those that belong to Him. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' (2 Tim. 2:19.) We have no right to suppose that an evil-doer belongs to God. The holy instincts of the Divine nature are shocked by the mention of such a thing. People sometimes express much difficulty in accounting for such and such evil practices on the part of those whom they cannot help regarding in the light of Christians. The Word of God settles the matter so clearly and so authoritatively, as to leave no possible ground for any such difficulty.

'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.' It is well to remember this, in this day of laxity and self-indulgence. There is a fearful amount of easy, uninfluential profession abroad, against which the genuine Christian is called upon: to make a firm stand, and bear a severe testimony -- a testimony resulting from the steady exhibition of 'the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.' It is most deplorable to see so many going along the beaten path -- the well-trodden highway of religious profession and yet manifesting not a trace of love or holiness in their conduct. Christian reader, let us be faithful. Let us rebuke, by a life of self-denial and genuine benevolence, the self-indulgence and culpable inactivity of evangelical yet worldly profession. May God grant unto all His true-hearted people abundant grace for these things!"

Christ Alone Hath the Words of Life

But the consolation remains that some will continue to walk with the Lord; some will not be driven from Him by any of the arts and wiles of the Evil One. They are such as are at heart fully the Lord's, not their own; they will follow wherever the Lord may lead, because they have no will except His will. These will follow the Lord in the narrow way of trial, discipline and testings during the present life, and by and by, as He declared, "They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy." (Rev. 3;4.) Nor will this company lack in numbers by reason of the falling away of some. No, it will be full, complete, the predestinated number which God foreordained He would select to be joint-heirs with His Son, our Lord Jesus. His foreknowledge permitted Him to make full allowance for all who would turn back, as well as to foreknow that the requisite number would go on.

Those who go oil .will all have the general character of Christ -- faithfulness to the Lord and to His Word of promise: and when various voices call in various directions, away from the narrow way of consecration and sacrifice, humiliation and self-denial, they, in answer to the Lord's query, "Will ye also go, away?" will answer as the Apostles of old, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." They know nowhere else to go; they cannot turn back, for they can see clearly that to turn back on their part would be as the Scriptures express it, to "turn back unto perdition," to the second death. Having heard the calls of the world, the flesh, and the Devil, they have seen also the emptiness of all their false promises, and how none of them can give a satisfying, portion. But in our Lord's call they have recognized not only righteousness, justice, but have recognized, also the promised reward of righteousness through Christ, which He has promised to them that love Him -- namely eternal life.

The Way Growing Still Narrower

Nowhere else is there such a promise; from no other quarter comes such a hope; in no other service, therefore, could they think of engaging but in this service. With the hope of obtaining this prize of eternal life, they could rejoice even in laying down this present life. Truly, this is that "blessed hope." With such hopes before them, clearly understood, and with the narrow way distinctly marked out, and with an understanding of why it is so narrow and why so few find it (because it leads to the great exaltation of the Kingdom and its joint-heirship with Christ), who could think for a moment of turning aside, or even listening, to the voices calling to wealth, honor, fame, pleasures of this life, etc., seeing that even hearkening to them would interrupt our progress in the way to the Kingdom, and thus frustrate our hopes and make the exceeding great and precious promises of none effect to us. The rather, therefore, will we lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us in the Gospel.

As the faithful disciples realized a meaning in the Master's teachings during His presence then, which the majority could not realize, so now at this time His words have a preciousness and a meaning and a force to those who are in heart-harmony with Him, which they do not have to others; hence now, as at the First Advent, some are stumbling and going back, and others are being drawn to the Lord more closely than ever, by His keeping power-the Truth and His Spirit. As we progress in the way, toward the close of this trial time, we need not be surprised if the way should grow still narrower, more difficult, and if the tendencies to "stumble" should become more frequent. Well indeed therefore will it be for all of us if we are more and more on guard against the wiles of the Adversary; and let the perfect love of God rule in our hearts, driving out self-love and world-love, and their pride and ambition and folly; and let this devotion to God bring into our hearts the promised fullness of joy and rest and peace; and let us abide in Him, the Vine, and be fruitful branches, responding to all the prunings of the great Husbandman with more abundant fruitage; and if beguilements come to us, let us view the matter as did the Apostles and say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

THE STILL SMALL VOICE

(Continued front last issue)

*"And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped
his face in his mantle, and went out,
and stood in the entering in of the cave." -- 1 Kings 19:13. ,*

Contributed from outside the Editorial Committee

AS INDICATED in the sacred record, Elijah, after he heard the still small voice, was prepared to receive and follow the Lord's instructions. The storm had passed, the voice of the tempest was still,

the convulsions of the earthquake were succeeded by a calm, the glare of the lightning was followed by the brightness of the day; the evidence of its fury was seen in the damage done, but the atmosphere had been cleared and the wondrous beauty of the heavens of the East came again into view. For up from the valleys of the peaks of Horeb there came that peace which follows the storm. And so with the Prophet's mind -- it had likewise cleared, and an unspeakable joy came to him as he realized that here was the voice of God, infinitely more sweet and appealing than in the violence of nature which he had just witnessed. The Lord bade him go; and as he went to engage further in the Lord's work, what a changed man he was! He had learned his lesson. "The joy of the Lord now became his strength."

Not in the permission of the destruction of the reigning house of Israel by Jehu and Hazael was God discerned as in the love which was to spare seven thousand of the faithful of Israel. Not in the parting of the Red Sea, or the fire which appeared on Sinai, or the fall of the walls of Jericho was God brought so close to man as in the still small voice of the Babe of Bethlehem; in the awful silence upon the cross, or in the quiet resurrection of the crucified Lard, by which assurance was given that all mankind would thus be raised from the dead, some to be rewarded with life everlasting at once, and others to be given a trial for life through processes of instruction and discipline. By the still small voice God spoke to Elijah and we can believe that by the same He delights to manifest Himself to His people.

God Is In the Quiet Things

Three points are emphasized here -- stillness, smallness, and voice. It is difficult to realize that in the quietness which followed the tempest, God's presence could be discerned. If the lesson means anything to us at all, it means that the silence was more Divine than was the wind, the earthquake, or the fire. And one of the hardest lessons for us to learn is that God is in the quiet things, in the gentle influences around us. In the quiet hour do we find Him most easily. In health and in prosperity we often fail to find Him, so He comes to us in sickness and adversity. We do not find Him in quietness, so He comes in the storm that we may be prepared to find Him. But He would rather come in the quiet way.

In quietness then is power, and some one has said: "This is a truth which in these days we are very apt to forget. We have fallen upon a generation of fuss and bustle and trumpet-blowing and advertising. It would almost seem that many of us would take the world by storm. We get up excitements by mass meetings, and pass resolutions, and listen to eloquent orators, and make thundering plaudits, as if these alone were to win the day. We have more faith in the wind and in the earthquake than in the still small voice; and we mistake a momentary out-flashing of enthusiasm for the celebration of a final triumph. The sensational is everywhere in the ascendant. We see it in the extravagance of dress, that seeks to call attention to itself. We see it in

the domain of literature, in the highly colored and hotly seasoned romances. We see it in feverish speculations. Surely there is something in this vision for our sensation-loving life. It were well that we had less faith in noise and more in that which is the most Godlike thing on earth, namely a character molded after the example of Christ, and created and sustained by the agency of the Holy Spirit. It were well that the voices among us were less loud and the deeds were more pronounced. Life is more potent than words: and character, though quiet, is more influential in the long run than any immediate sensation that flares up and crackles like a blaze of thorns."

Illustrations in Nature

God's greatest works are conducted in silence, from the stately movement of the planets in their orbits to the division of cells and the growth of tissues seen under the microscope, or the condensation of the dew drop. "Night quits her 'ebon throne' and resigns her empire to the king of day." And how quietly it is done! A phenomenon with which we are all so familiar that we scarce think of the wonder of it, for it comes so quietly o'er us stealing, that the slumberer upon his couch is not awakened. Watch the first faint streak of light as it is seen in the east -- so faint that we scarcely perceive it. But silently star after star becomes dim, and a diffusion of light, faint and delicate, spreads before us, and the silence seems almost oppressive and awful, as the great center of our system appears, little by little, silently but surely, until he bursts upon us in all the beauty and glory of a new day. We think of the Psalmist and with him say, "There is no speech nor language; their voice is not heard." And we resolve as God's children to strive more earnestly this day to please a Heavenly Father whose power and glory all nature demonstrates.

As the Master leaves the crowds behind on that last night upon earth, He seeks the silence and solitude of Gethsemane. Here He bares His heart to the Father -- His Father and ours. Here He agonizes, and here He is strengthened by communion with God -- silent prayer -- and finally that blessed assurance that He is well pleasing to the Father comes to Him, and He passes out to meet the mob. What is it that prevents them from seizing Him then, and why do they fall to the ground before Him? That silent, quiet, powerful influence prevents them-until He Himself is ready to be taken, and then He is the calmest perhaps of them all.

Munkacsy's "Christ Before Pilate" shows Him surrounded by a howling mob, the very embodiment of brute force, seeming able to crush Him like an insect. Why do they not do it? Because in Him there is that silent strength of personality, imbibed from His relations and communions with God. In Him there dwelt the secret strength of God and God was with Him and not with the mob. Not until He was ready dare they lay hand upon Him to crucify Him. But in God's wisdom it must be and so it was. His strength was in His calm, quiet submission

to the will of God, as He overcame His human nature which shrank from death.

What a lesson in strength and fortitude and submission to God's will! What a lesson for His brethren as they are called to sacrifice their human earth-rights! The call to the things of the flesh is strong, and perhaps as we think of a perfect humanity, the call becomes stronger. But we have consecrated unto death; and we dare not look away from our hope and our strength as found in Him. Ours is a glorious inheritance -- a change of nature that we may have a part in His revelation to the sons of men. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Safe Only As We Dwell in Nearness to God

The Master prayed earnestly and often. The quietest room in a cotton mill is the power room, the room in which that massive engine is producing power for the whole-mill. Every loom depends upon the maintenance of the engine. Let that be neglected, or let it be overloaded by too many looms, and the mill breaks down. Our power room is the closet, where we are wont to go to commune with God. Do we neglect it, we become weary and our Christian life is joyless, and our efforts are non-productive. We may have overloaded the engine, we may have neglected the means of strength and power. Let us resort more frequently to prayer -- simple, common prayer, through which our supply of grace comes to us.

In the old fable the wind and the sun vied with each other to see which could first make the traveler remove his cloak. The wind blew and blew, harder and harder, and the harder it blew, the closer the traveler drew his cloak about him, until finally the wind gave way to the sun. And as the sun shone warmer and warmer, the traveler unloosed his cloak, threw it open and back, and finally removed it entirely. The sun by its quiet power had accomplished what the blustering mighty wind could not do: The sun might be likened to the quality of love, the bond of perfectness. And this is the quality we attain unto by the power of prayer in our lives. It is this quality by which men know that we have been in God's presence and communed with Him. As God is love, so the children of God should possess His love. It was even by this quality that our Master laid down His life for mankind, and it was even so that God raised Him up, whereby He became the surety of our hope.

We are safe only as we dwell in nearness to God and we are near to Him only through prayer. Let us draw near to God that He may draw near to us. Only can He draw near to us as we open our hearts, divest us of the things of the flesh and let Him come in and reign. It was said of our Lord Himself, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? And the early Apostles were despised as ignorant and unlearned men. Yet they laid the foundation of a faith which has since moved along as the

Body of Christ has been quietly selected -- one here, and one there, until we believe the whole number has been nearly completed.

Surely the time is at hand, if we read correctly the signs of the times. As we see the distress of nations upon the earth, the setting up of the Kingdom cannot be far in the distance. And because the world does not see this, it will be necessary for the next phase of His Plan to be preceded by the antitypical tempest, the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation--this tempest to be followed again by the still small voice which will usher in the times of peace, and happiness upon the earth. Then "the desire of all nations shall come," when He shall take away the heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh and "He shall be their God and they shall be His people."

The Voice of Conscience

We must not despise the small things, for with them He did confound the mighty. It was the coral insect which produced great areas of the American Continent and filled the Pacific with unnumbered islands. It is the age-long accumulation of mica flakes which produced the mighty Alps. The lime deposits of the earth were caused by the death of countless millions of microscopic animals to the square inch. So we must not undervalue the small things.

God has spoken to man ever since those early days when He walked with him in, the cool of the day, and talked with him. In those days He found pleasure in man. Today He speaks in the voice of conscience, and happy he whose hearing has not become dulled that he cannot hear that voice. He bids us come and reason with Him, and if we will, we are given to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom.

The voice of the human Jesus was the voice of God while He traveled the plains of Galilee and made known to the minds of men the mind of God, when He spake as no other man ever spake. He did not lift up His voice in the street. He did not strive, but in His presence the spirits cried out for mercy. Pain and sickness and sorrow and death yielded to His touch. As the voice of God, He declared the Gospel of love and peace in place of the Law. As He sat in the mount with His disciples, away from the multitude, and declared that "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven," we see a new order of things, and the smoke and the fire and the trembling of Sinai are forgotten. No longer does the blood of bulls and goats avail, for He is soon to make that sacrifice once for all -- the whole world. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," are the sentiments of love, and supercede the eye for an eye -- the sentiments of the Law, based upon justice alone.

Our Only Real Possession, What We Are

"It is finished" were the most fateful words ever spoken upon earth, for it indicated that the sacrificial feature of God's Plan Was accomplished, the corresponding price had been secured, and the

Prophet of old had been vindicated. Sorrowful hours and days these were to the faithful few who had followed Him. They failed to recall the days of the regeneration which were to come, and their promised participation. It required the presence of the Holy Spirit later to bring all things to their remembrance.

It is this voice when lifted up that shall draw all men unto Himself. It is a drawing voice, a compelling voice, to him who hath an ear to hear -- a voice known only to His sheep, for they alone follow Him. How marvelous that voice as He unfolds the Divine Plan to such, and what an unspeakable joy comes to him who takes up his cross and follows him in discipleship, in joint-heirship they whom John saw standing with the Lamb upon Mount Zion: "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth . . . being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb . . . for they are without fault." -- Rev. 14:4, 5.

To quote from another: "When we have crossed to the other side of the gulf that separates the seen from the unseen, we shall find that nothing has ever mattered except faithfulness to that voice. Place does not matter -- one might gain all the glory of the world and yet be a stranger to his own soul; fame and station count for nothing in that mysterious beyond towards which we are all hastening: The only possession we can carry there is what we are. Can we not live now as though our hearts were set only upon eternal values? Can we not do with our lives now what we would do if we knew for certain that nothing shall live but love? Can we not gaze calmly at the destructive effect of earthquake, wind, and fire, when we know that the still small voice is whispering, 'Well done good and faithful servant'? Above all we shall not be tempted to think that success or failure depends in the least upon what the world can see."

"Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives our service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

"O sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
The silence of eternity
Interpreted by love! .

"With that deep hush subduing all
Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of Thy call,
As noiseless let Thy blessing fall,
As fell the Manna down.

"Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease!
Take from our souls the strain and stress.
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

"Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm!
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire!
Speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,
A still small voice of calm!"

TRANSFORMED AND RENEWED

"Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." -- Rom. 12:2.

THE TERM transformation is a most appropriate one to use with reference to the process and change that take place in the Christian from the time he becomes a follower of the Lord Jesus until he finishes his course in death. The word literally means "To change the form of; to change in shape or appearance"; "to change in nature, disposition, heart, character, or the like." Such a definition is in full accord with the general description given in the New Testament, of the life and experience of such as consistently follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Great indeed is the responsibility associated with becoming a Christian, and none better than the great Apostle Paul was aware of this fact. He admonishes "Wherefore; . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in .you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." The Scriptures without doubt

teach that the Lord by His Spirit performs His work, or works in His children; and without His work there can be nothing achieved in the way of a transformation; yet the Apostle's words show that there is to be a co-operation on our part, a "working out" of our salvation.

The Life of the Overcomer

The thoughtful reader of the Scriptures must often be impressed with that intensity of zeal and earnest striving urged upon all the followers of Christ who would so run as to obtain the prize of our high calling which is of God in Christ Jesus. For example, we read further, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the Master of the house is risen up and has shut to the door"; "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"; "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple"; "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"; "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life"; "Watch unto prayer"; and, then, "Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that shall be brought unto you at the appearing of Jesus Christ." The Apostle Peter adds, "Beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless Seeing that all these [present] things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

How different all this appears from that easygoing, lukewarm Christianity peculiar to these latter times which seems but a very little removed from the spirit of the world; a kind that is not only observed to be prevalent in the great leading bodies of Christendom, but is so often manifest amongst brethren professing Present Truth. It is a kind that is so common that the zeal which strives and runs and fights and watches with sober vigilance that the sacrifice of self is kept upon the altar, is generally regarded as extreme, peculiar, fanatical and foolish. Nevertheless, in the face of this latent opposition and as well as . of all open opposition, the course of the overcomer, if he is to succeed must be right onward. It is a course of self-denial and cross bearing, even unto the end. It is as the Scriptures clearly teach a dying daily to the spirit, hopes, aims, and ambitions of the world which control other men and women, so that in the end of our course we may be of that happy "little flock" of overcomers of whom it is written, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

What It Is to Die Daily

These thoughts are strongly suggestive of what it is to be an overcomer. It is as the Apostle Paul expresses it, to become dead with Christ; -- "Now if we be dead with Christ we believe that we shall also- live with Him"; "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." If we would reach that point of deadness to the

world which will in the end constitute an overcomer, we must die daily. But herein is a deeper significance than may be apparent at first glance. To die daily, to deny self, and humbly take up and patiently bear the daily cross, to mortify the deeds of the body (that is, to put to death the former disposition, etc.) signifies a very great deal. It implies far more than merely that of the putting away of sin. No one has a right to sin, and all who would come to Christ and be accepted of Him must renounce it when first they come. And as new creatures hoping to be partakers of the Divine nature in the resurrection as a result of the dedication of all our ransomed powers in the service of God alone and a consequent begetting of the Holy Spirit to this new nature, our business is to die daily to the ordinary and otherwise legitimate ambitions, hopes and aims of the present life. For, as the Apostle Paul expresses it, "Be not conformed, but be ye transformed." That is, we are to submit our minds not to the earthly but to the heavenly influences; which will dictate to us in every matter, great and small.

The heavenly influences draw a distinct line of demarcation between things earthly and things heavenly. Upon the one side are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which are of the world; while on the other side is that simplicity and godly sincerity whose delight is in the beauty of holiness, and whose adornment is a meek and quiet spirit, submissive and yielding to discipline, patient in tribulation, always abounding in the work of the Lord and delighting only in His manifest favor. But who is sufficient for these things? Who can walk so contrary to the course of this present world? Surely none who have any considerable measure of the world's spirit. It is only as we become filled with the Spirit of God that we can do these things. Our sufficiency is not of ourselves; but "Our sufficiency is of God." He "worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." He it is who, for the asking (if we labor in harmony therewith), will so fill us with His Spirit that we can go forth from victory unto victory: "If ye . . . know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

God Works In His Children

How obvious it is that the first and all-important consideration for those who would go forward in the life of faith and wage a successful warfare, is to be able to definitely and positively affirm their standing and relationship with the Lord; to know that they have stepped out of the condemned state and are figuratively speaking risen indeed with Christ.

Having once gained that measure of victory represented in a full surrender of all to God, the child of grace and justified one is in a position to make claim to those blessed and ever precious promises of strength and grace sufficient for the conflicts and battles of the Christian way. All such will be impelled to lay hold of the grace provided. And God will bestow His grace upon all that diligently seek it of Him through our Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, our Head, our

Leader and Teacher. Therefore says St. Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," and again, "The love of Christ constraineth us." Those who have been accepted as God's children and have the Spirit of Christ, which is also the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, are His disciples under His teaching and training. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Thus it is that God works in us by His Spirit to will and to do of His good pleasure, while in His strength we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. He works in us to this end by all the incentive of His exceeding great and precious promises, of His providences, His discipline and training, and also by the inspiration that comes from sweet fellowship with Himself, with Christ, and with His saints, which is our present and daily privilege.

Growing Unto Christian Maturity

Examining carefully the Apostle's words concerning the transformation that the Christian is to experience, it is obvious that the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of truth is here teaching us that the change is one that is wrought gradually through the years by the "renewing of the mind" by the exercise of the thoughts -- longings, ambitions, affections--in obedience to the spirit's leading and instruction. Thus we learn to know by experience the meaning of the Apostle's admonition, "But grow in grace and in the knowledge [experimentally] of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Herein also we learn to appreciate increasingly the meaning of all God's commands and promises concerning our being "no more children," and with regard to our "growing up into Christ" in all things, until we come unto the perfect man, "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." It should be something real for us to look forward to that we can by His grace attain a state of maturity and that we need not continue always to be babes needing milk; but that we may through experience and by reason of having our spiritual senses exercised, be found amongst those appropriating the strong meat, causing us to display the elements and qualities that mark the Christian's maturity, and enabling us to discern quickly and deeply both good and evil.

Let us then grasp more firmly the Scriptural thought that, as another has expressed it, there is to be "A growing that does really produce continually progressing maturity, and a development that, as a matter of fact, does bring forth ripe fruit. We expect to reach the aim set before us; and if we do not find ourselves on the way toward it, we feel sure there must be some fault in our growing. No parent would be satisfied with the growth of his child if day after day, and year after year, it remained the same helpless babe it was in the first months of its life. And no farmer would feel comfortable under such growing of his grain as should stop short at the blade, and never produce the ear, or the full corn in the ear. Growth, to be real, must be progressive, and the days and weeks and months should bring a development and increase of maturity in the thing growing. But is this the case with a

large part of that which is called growth in grace? Does not the very Christian who is the most strenuous, in his longings and his efforts after this growth, too often find that, at the end of the year, he is not as far on in his Christian experience as at the beginning, and that his zeal, and his devotedness, and his separation from the world, are not as whole-souled or complete as when his Christian life first began? . . .

Must First be Planted in Grace

"The children of Israel, wandering in the wilderness, are a perfect picture of this sort of growing. They were traveling about for forty years, taking many weary steps, and finding but little rest from their wanderings; and yet, at the end of it all, were no nearer the promised land than they were at the beginning. When they started on their wanderings at Kadesh Barnea, they were at the borders of the land, and a few steps would have taken them into it. When they ended their wanderings in the plains of Moab, they were also at its borders; only with this difference, that now there was a river to cross, which at first there would not have been. All their wanderings and fightings in the wilderness had not put them in possession of one inch of the promised land. In order to get possession of this land, it was necessary first to be in it; and in order to grow in grace, it is necessary first to be planted in grace. When once in the land, however, their conquest was rapid; and when once planted in grace, the growth of the spiritual life becomes vigorous and rapid beyond all conceiving. For grace is a most fruitful soil, and the plants that grow therein are plants of a marvelous growth. They are tended by a Divine Husbandman, and are warmed by the Sun of Righteousness, and watered by the dew from Heaven. Surely it is no wonder that they bring forth fruit, 'some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.'"

How manifest it is therefore that as Christians we have a life work before us! It is not enough that we covenant with God to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and that we find ourselves accepted in the Beloved; that is only the beginning of this higher life. Then follows the work of gaining the mastery, of overcoming, of dying to self and to the world. And who has ever found it easy to pass through the death process? Experience clearly reveals that every victory gained in the crucifying of the flesh gives the new life the more room to develop and to expand its powers; and as the spirit of the world, and the will of the flesh recedes, we find ourselves more and more in the company and fellowship of our Lord. True, it is, on the one hand the fellowship of His suffering, but on the other, it is the fellowship also of His peace and joy. We enter with Him into the joy of knowing and doing our Father's will. And the language of our heart is, I delight to Thy will, O my God. Like Him, we have meat to eat that others know not of; and we sit together with Him in the heavenly places of communion and fellowship. The deep things of God are ours, the precious things symbolized by the gold in the typical tabernacle -- "The exceeding great and precious promises," and a lively appreciation of them, the

deeper experiences of Divine grace, the abiding presence of the Father and the Son, the fellowship with the Father and the Son, and the communion of saints.

Transformed by Cultivating Spiritual Aspirations

These are some of the present rewards of dying daily to the world and becoming correspondingly alive toward God. The new life daily becoming more and more alive toward God has an increasing sense of the value of these spiritual blessings; and with such appreciation comes a more earnest, ardent longing after more of the fellowship and favor of God, and a more intense longing after holiness. The language of every such heart is beautifully expressed by the Psalmist: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"

This hungering and thirsting after righteousness, this reaching out after God, this patient, loving submission to all the providential discipline and all the heavenly influences of Divine grace through whatsoever channels they may flow to us; these are all parts of the transforming work that will, in the end, make us overcomers. To resist continually those influences and powers around us which would conform us to this world, is to die daily to the world, to overcome the world and to refuse to be conformed to it. While to cultivate the higher spiritual aspirations is to be transformed, changed, to be developed as new living ones, begotten to the life from above. This process of dying daily to the things of this world and of being transformed by the renewing of the mind to the Divine nature and likeness is the Christian's most important life-work. If it be diligently pursued, we shall at last be accounted worthy to be of the spiritual seed, which, in the resurrection, shall receive its own appropriate body, like unto Christ's glorious body. But this self-ward does not end with self, for it includes a growing zeal for God which by example and precept and diligent service, ever strives to push forward the work and ministry of the Lord in behalf of others.

In this view of the matter it is clear that this work before us requires patience, watchful diligence, spiritual ambition and effort, fervency of spirit and persevering energy and faith in God. Only those who have and who cultivate these qualities can ever hope to be overcomers -- "dead with Christ." It was such consideration that prompted those earnest exhortations from the Lord and the Apostles to faithfulness and to diligence in our warfare against the world, the flesh, and the Evil One. We are reminded, too, that in our warfare we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with the invisible powers of darkness, strongly entrenched both in the world and in the downward tendencies of our fallen flesh; besides which there are innumerable arts and wiles of the Adversary, against which we must maintain a vigilant watch.

He Will Complete the Good Work Begun

None can afford therefore to slacken their diligence, or to grow negligent in availing themselves of any of the means of grace, or to waste the present time granted to them for this overcoming work, in idly dreaming of the crown, while they fail to bear the cross. Dearly beloved, let us be up and doing, for "The time is short," the work in us important, the way .is narrow, the obstacles are many, the foes and their devices increase: let us be sober, let us be vigilant. But let us not forget that the work is the Lord's, in the sense that His strength applied to us is vouchsafed to accomplish ,it and that He who has begun the good work in us is able to complete it; and He will do so, if we let Him; that is, if we obediently and devotedly follow His leading, doing His will.

Again, we are made to realize the importance of our faith. If our faith is strong, we will be strong Christians. If our faith is weak, we will be weak Christians. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." A wavering faith will strive to hold on, with one hand at least to the things of this life, as "something tangible," being afraid to let go and trust in the things unseen and to live for them alone. But our Lord encouragingly admonishes, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Having overcome, He has long since entered into His glory; and it is without doubt the Father's good pleasure that they shall share that glory with Him, who when tried and proved, as He was proved under the discipline of fiery trials, shall not be found wanting in faithfulness and zeal for God.

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

Dear Brethren:

You will likely receive a report of the Convention at Saginaw, but I desire to mention a phase of the Convention which was deeply impressive and inspiring to me, and that was the love of God in the hearts of the brethren gathered there. It was with difficulty, financial and otherwise, that many of these succeeded in assembling thus together and many of them spoke of their hunger 'for spiritual fellowship and their joy for the blessings they were receiving. As I beheld this manifestation of the Spirit of the Lord amongst His people, my own heart was knit unto the hearts of the brethren.

Our young son whom we had prevailed upon to attend some of the meetings; also felt the power of the manifestation of this holy spirit of love amongst Gold's people. I have felt anxious and concerned because of the difficulty of getting his mind from the many interests of this day long enough to impress the instructions of God's Word, but in the little time he spent at convention, he was moved by the power of the witness in the lives of God's people, and he spoke to me of the love amongst them and the joy he heard them speaking of, and he said, "They've got more joy than I have." He felt that these Christians possessed, after all,

a joy that was deeper than the world give. I thought of the words, "Living epistles, known and read of all men."

What a privilege of service lies here within the power of the humblest of us and "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one for another."

Another blessed prompting of the Spirit. of which I was a recipient was an increased realization of the privilege and power of prayer. This came through some thoughts presented in a sermon and in connection with a recent experience of "effectual" prayer on behalf of a dear disciple of Christ. I felt that there were others offering up prayers on behalf of this same one and learned later that it Was so.

I recognize a blessed avenue of service open here, in that we are privileged to pray for the brethren, and experience verifies the assurance of Scripture; that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

The Lord bless thee and keep thee!

In Him,

Mrs. A. K.-Mich.

Dear Brother in Christ:

I had the pleasure of attending the Saginaw Convention. It was of a similar character to the Dayton Convention. The spirit of love and "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren," prevailed. We rejoiced in the privilege of association with those who have learned through trial, that the arm of flesh will fail us, and the spirit of man will lead us to trust in man's efforts instead of in the spirit of God and a "thus saith the Lord." How easy it now seems to discern between the Lord's spirit and man's spirit. Our Lord has made it clearer to us of late. St.. Paul wrote about this in 1 Cor. 2: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Spirit teacheth comparing spiritual things with spiritual." We have appreciated the humble spirit in which so many deep spiritual truths have been presented in the "Herald" and that our dear Redeemer has been upheld as the only Head of the Church; so different from other journals and teachers among the truth people who seem to be sure that God now uses them alone to instruct His people regarding doctrine and service. How strange and unscriptural is such a theory that those who are walking by faith, living by faith ("The just shall live by faith"), should depend upon a human being set by God to guide and instruct and. teach them? for that would be walking by sight. Instead our Savior taught that when lie ascended on, high, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would be sent upon His followers to guide them into all truth and to bring to mind what He had told them. The Apostles taught the early Church to accept the ministrations of themselves and others as brethren and not as specially ordained heads.

We rejoice in Brother Zink's step out of bondage into the full liberty of the sours of God. All of us Older ones know of his long years of faithful service and that he was always a Christian gentleman in the many homes he visited. There is so much to the credit of such Christians.

One more thing I wish to mention that has been appreciated in the "Herald" has been the kindly manner in which it has reprovved or condemned false teaching when that has seemed advisable. We have learned valuable lessons from it and are trying to improve our own language or way of saying unpleasant truths when it seems right to take a stand for sound doctrine. A sister who takes the "Herald" and enjoys it very much and who did attend the meetings held by the "new Class" in her town, is now attending meeting at the old Class again and writes me that she never did approve of the criticisms made in the Class meeting regarding other religious organizations or congregations of Christian people and that we all know to our sorrow of the misapplications of Scriptures, etc., and why need it be dwelt upon, etc. In thinking the matter over I concluded that the disagreeableness of the criticism lay in the spirit manifested and the way it was said perhaps. It seems that Brother Blackburn's visit was satisfactory because of no "unkind criticism." How carefully and prayerfully we must speak in public or semi-public meetings. perhaps I would better say in any meeting or congregation of Christian people, lest we might stumble one of the Lord's little ones.

Please send the "Herald" for six months to Mr. _____.

Your sister by His grace.

Mrs. D. A. W.-Ohio

Dear Brethren:

Greetings! We wish to thank you very much for your announcement in the "Herald" of our Convention held [at Vancouver] the 3rd, 4th and 5th of this month. The Lord blessed us greatly. There were about 350 present at the public meeting Sunday evening, and at the other meetings the attendance was about. 200 to 250.

All seemed to be rejoicing in the blessed liberty that there is in Christ. We trust that it may never become license, that we may be faithful, to the end, come what may.

Your brethren in Christ,

The Program Committee,

Per J. H. M.-B. C., Can.

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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VALUE OF THE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." -- 2 Pet. 1.19.

THOSE who receive the Bible as the inspired revelation of the purposes of God with regard to the human race, setting forth man's origin and destiny, are not surprised to find that the sure word of prophecy occupies a very large space in the sacred writings. This is essentially true, for the reason that the prophetic writings outline the several steps, the many developments and various features of God's Plan through long centuries in advance of its outworking and consummation. Prophecy is merely history written in advance; the announcing and foretelling of proceedings, occurrences, and events in advance of their happening or before they come to pass.

'A careful examination and survey of the Scriptures cannot fail to convince one that the prophetic writings constitute a much larger proportion of the Bible than any other. The books that are directly of a prophetic character constitute more than one quarter of the Divine canon. And when to these we add the many passages that contain predictions and forecasts of future things, especially in the Psalms, and remember 'also the system of types and shadows of things to come that is embraced in the history of the Israelitish nation, including the Tabernacle services and sacrifices, the typical significance of the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles, Firstfruits, the Jubilees, etc., we are compelled to conclude that prophecy constitutes the much larger proportion of the "all Scripture that is given by inspiration of God," profitable for correction, reproof, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect and thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.

Why Some Discourage Study of Prophecy

Notwithstanding the fact noted foregoing, there exists amongst professed believers of the Bible a disposition to undervalue or minimize the importance of prophecy and even to go so far as to discourage and hinder its study. Nor is the present time any exception in this regard. There are doubtless several items that enter into this matter of the sad neglect of and indifference to the study of the sure word of prophecy on the part of many. One of the principal reasons is that many wild, fanciful; and unwarranted interpretations of prophecy have been given out by would-be teachers, theorists, and superficial thinkers. Many foolish constructions, applications and interpretations of prophecy have time and again proved failures. But this fact should not be allowed to have any weight against, or to discourage the sober, humble, and reverent study of the prophetic page. It should be remembered that the failure of the follies of speculative men in the study of prophecy has characterized every, generation of Church

history. Just as many have wandered away from the fundamental teachings of the Scriptures and have given heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, so many have done the same concerning Divine prophecy and have failed to derive the true blessing from it because they have neglected to follow the special God-given instructions with regard to its interpretation.

Things the Angels Desire to Look into

We quote in this connection a timely selection from Mr. H. G. Guinness, who has very ably dealt with this point, as well as the importance of the study of prophecy: "A wide distinction exists and should be recognized between students and expositors of the Word and Works of God, who, humbly, soberly and reverently searching into the facts of Nature and Scripture, of providence and of prophecy, reach conclusions which sanctified common sense can approve, and speculators who running away with isolated and mysterious expressions, indulge in imaginations of their own, and become prophets, instead of students of Divine prophecy. No employment of human intelligence is nobler than an adoring investigation of the revealed purposes of God, which things the angels desire to look into, while few are so puerile, as a presumptuous pretense of predicting the future, apart from such cautious and careful study of Divine revelation.

"In conclusion, the author would strongly deprecate the false and foolish popular notion, that all study of prophecy is unpractical -- notion too often propagated by passing, but mischievously-influential allusions to the subject, from pulpit, platform, and press, made by those who know little either of it, or of its effects. It ought to be a sufficient rebuke to the levity that hazards such an assertion, or admits such an idea, to recall the facts, that one-third of the Bible consists of prophecy; and that our Lord and Master said, 'Search the Scriptures,' not a portion of them. The Apostle Peter expressly tells us that we do well to take heed to the 'more sure word of prophecy,' as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise. Is it unpractical to make use of a good lantern on a pitch-dark night, in traversing a dangerous road? or is it not rather unpractical and unreasonable to attempt to dispense with it? And further, a special and emphatic blessing is attached to this study in the closing book of the Bible: 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein, for the time is at hand.'

Inspiring Examples of Holy Prophets

"It is a reflection of the gravest kind on the wisdom of God, to suppose that the study of a branch of, truth to which He has in His Word accorded singular prominence should have an injurious tendency, or be devoid of a directly, sanctifying effect: and moreover, it is a conclusion completely at variance with all the facts of history and experience. Enoch was a student of prophecy and of prophecy that is to this day unfulfilled, and Enoch was the saintliest of men, an eminently holy and practical preacher, who walked with God three hundred years, and was not, for God took him, and before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. Noah was a student of unfulfilled prophecy, and Scripture presents no more practical preacher of righteousness than he was. All the holy prophets were students, and diligent students, too, of their own and each other's predictions, and especially of their chronological predictions. 'The prophets inquired and searched diligently, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow.' (1 Pet. 1:10, 11:) Daniel was a student of unfulfilled prophecy, yet he was not only a practical statesman; but a man of singular holiness, classed with Noah and Job as one of the most righteous of men.

"There is everything in the nature of the study to make those who pursue it both practical and holy. It imbues the mind with the counsels and judgment of God about the affairs and events of earth; it reveals what shall be, and thereby lessens the inordinate power of that which is now, bringing the spirit under the influence of things unseen and eternal, and thereby weakening that of things seen and temporal. It affords to hope much needed: food, lacking which we must languish and grow feeble; and to faith and love peculiar stimulus and enjoyment. Without an intelligent acquaintance with the teaching of the prophetic Word, no man of God is or can be thoroughly furnished to all good works, for it is part of the 'all Scripture' given by inspiration, and profitable for the purpose of rendering him so.

"Perhaps one reason for the prevailing neglect of prophetic expositions and preaching will be found on reflection, to lie, not in the fact that it is unpractical but rather in the fact that it is so peculiarly practical, that few have the boldness and courage to face the ridicule, opposition; and contempt it is sure to incur in the world. Jeremiah lived on the eve and in the crisis of a day of judgment on the apostate professing people of God. He was commissioned to deliver prophetic discourses full of denunciations of coming judgment; and of chronological statements of its proximity and duration. We know what, Jeremiah's lot was, and few are prepared to play his sad and thankless role in society!

"So far from the study and exposition of the prophetic Word being profitless and vain, we believe it is impossible to estimate the loss sustained by the Church, or the injury done to the world, by the very

general and unjustifiable neglect of it. Is it not so that where one prophetic discourse is delivered, ten thousand doctrinal and practical sermons are preached? By what authority do we thus shelve a line of truth to which Divine wisdom has given such prominence in Scripture? Is it not our duty to declare 'the whole counsel of God'?"

Take Heed until the Day Dawn

Little need be said on the subject of why in God's providence the many prophecies were uttered. It was in order that devout followers of Christ in later times should have that which would vitally strengthen their faith and enable them to cast not, away their confidence in the midst of the very trying and fiery ordeals through which their pathway would lie. Thus St. Peter tells us that the Prophets of old, who were used of God to record the prophecies, spake and wrote not so much for the people of their time, nor for themselves, but in behalf of God's servants of the then distant future who would be living in the times when many of the prophecies uttered would be fulfilled. It is this same Apostle Peter who gives assurance to the saints that what was presented to them in the Gospel story was not any cunningly devised fable; for he and others of the disciples were eye witnesses, in that they saw in a figure the glory of the coming Kingdom of Christ when they beheld the glorious vision of Moses and Elijah and Jesus in glittering garments, etc. Yet the Apostle while telling us of this vision points to the greater importance of the prophetic testimony, saying, "Ye have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn." He was well aware of the fact that the prophetic writings could not be fully comprehended by any at that time and thus urged a watching attitude on the part of believers, a watching for the fulfillment of what had been written by all the holy Prophets concerning the restitution of all things," which constitutes so large and important a part of their testimony; and his words imply that the holy prophecies will have fresh meaning and important truths to disclose to the godly all the way along until the day dawn.

Faithful Children Long to Know

Again, Brother Russell in a few, choice words has well expressed the sentiments of God's watching and faithful people: -- "Faithful children of God long to know when the King of Glory shall come in, and the prince of darkness be bound; when the children of the light shall shine forth as the sun, and the darkness be scattered; when the saints shall be received into full Divine adoption, and the groaning creation released from the bondage of corruption; and when our Heavenly Father's glorious character shall be fully revealed to an astonished world, causing all who love righteousness to bow their hearts in adoration and love and obedience.

"To be devoid of such desires indicates a lack of interest in, and appreciation of, God's plans. The Apostles, the Prophets and the angels

all desired and sought earnestly to know what time the Spirit of God indicated through the Prophets. -- And this interest on the part of His children is ever pleasing to God; for though He never heretofore gratified such desires to any considerable extent, because the due time had not yet come; He never once chided such interest. On the contrary, He called the inquiring Daniel greatly beloved, and answered his inquiry so far as was consistent with His Plan."

Jesus, Greatest of All Prophets

Some of the Lord's people have made the serious mistake of supposing that Old Testament prophecy exhausts itself in the record of events associated with the First Advent of our Lord. But the facts carefully examined show that many of those ancient prophecies really only began their fulfillment at this important period of the world's history. Our Savior Himself was a diligent student of prophecy and often made reference to what had been said by one or another of the Prophets. Not only so, but He was Himself the greatest of all prophets, besides being, as He said, the subject directly or indirectly of all prophecies. Even His words to His chosen disciples were woven through and through with predictions concerning the future. Nearly all of His parables were predictions and forecasts of things to come. So important did He regard the words of the Prophets that He was ever reminding His disciples of the importance of giving heed to His prophetic utterances. We find the same to be true of the Apostles who were specially chosen to complete the Divine canon of inspiration. One can not fail to observe that large portions of the writings of the Apostles Paul, Peter, James, John, and Jude are made up of predictions relating to the future and of exhortations to the faithful to soberly watch and give heed thereunto.

The sublime dignity and grandeur of the Church's high calling involves the study of those truths that relate to the interesting and wonderful events associated with the finishing of her earthly career and her glorification together with Christ. Who then could believe that God would spread out before us the grand chart of prophecy if He had not desired that His people should study and meditate upon its grand unfoldings? And why should God have so carefully outlined beforehand through the instruction of the Prophets; the strange and peculiar pathway of His dear Son, commencing with His experiences on earth and tracing the same all the way through to the triumph of His glorious Kingdom in the coming Age, if He had not known that His people would be helped and benefited by such a forecasting! Nay, had He not seen that it was necessary to their strengthening and upbuilding, He would not have done this. The invitation of our blessed Savior to follow Him, relates not only to emulating Him in our moral uprightness, and in the exercise of our spiritual faculties -- our consecration, etc., but also to following Him in His example as a diligent student of Divine prophecy; and, especially is it important that we listen to His instructions to give heed to His own personal

exhortations concerning the importance of prophecy, as well as to those of His chosen Apostles, who were inspired of God to unfold the future station and achievements of our glorious king.

Highest Incentives to Holy Living

As we explore this wonderful field of prophetic promise and revelation, we find interspersed in it, not only inspired prediction, but grand and glorious doctrines, precious promises, practical illustrations and precepts, which together constitute the highest incentives to holy living. The strings of the prophetic harp have been touched by holy men from nearly all the ranks of life -- by mighty kings and statesmen, as well as by lowly peasants whose occupation was to till the soil, and engage in other humble, temporal activities. Above all, He who is to occupy the highest station in God's universe has touched the strings of the prophetic harp and brought from it some of its sweetest and entrancing melodies. "Shall we then," says one, "depreciate such exalted companionship and rob ourselves of such spiritual enjoyment simply on the ground of an unwarranted prejudice against the study of prophetic truth?"

It is only through prophecy that we learn of the destiny of this present world in which we live. The development, reign, and overthrow of vast empires were foreseen and foretold centuries before their fulfillment, thus enabling us to know where we live on the stream of time. One who is familiar with Divine prophecy can look backward and fully realize that it is God alone who "changeth the times and seasons"; who "removeth kings and setteth up kings" ; who "knoweth what is in the darkness," and "reveals the deep and secret things." Such can clearly see a solemnity in the trend of events as they have been unfolding themselves toward an inevitable crisis in human affairs -- a crisis which will bring to this world the Kingdom long prayed for. The steady march of the history of long centuries has been and is a fruitful theme of the prophetic harp; and these prophecies reveal to us that we have been slowly but surely approaching a particular turning point, predetermined by the Almighty, culminating in a revelation of human destiny and hope. We are enabled to see that each revolution in human affairs is assisting in moving the world on toward its prophetic destiny: that "all things keep step along the lines of God's eternal purposes; and the Christian who fails to read history by the lamp of prophecy, will find no other light to illumine the deep mysteries surrounding this earthly planet."

Much Prophetic Testimony Now History

How few, even among the professed followers of our Lord, know that much, very much of the predictions of holy men of old, has crystallized into history, and are so many evidences of the Divine authority of the Bible. There never was a time like the present when the Bible as a Divine revelation is being so strongly attacked and discredited; never a time when so many are being shaken in their faith.

Divine prophecy is one, if not the greatest weapon that can be wielded to meet this assault and strengthen the faith of the weak ones. The Bible challenges the skeptic to discover or detect any flaw in its marvelous assertions of the future. History today corroborates, so far as prophecy has become history, that the Bible is the infallible Word of the living God. Indeed, twenty-five centuries of the history of the Jew and Gentile have demonstrated the Divine authenticity and truthfulness of the inspired Daniel, who was one of those "holy men of God," specially chosen to record the history beforehand of these two classes that have been the great actors on the stage of human affairs.

The Apocalypse as a Prophecy

Passing by the many wonderful prophecies made by our Lord during His earthly life, as well as those found in the epistles of the inspired Apostles which have met their fulfillment, and which, if there were no others in the New Testament, are so numerous as to have required the labors of many historians and many large volumes to record the same, what shall we say of the prophecy paramount to all -- the Revelation which the all-seeing God gave to Jesus Christ, to show unto His servants things that were then to begin to come to pass? No book has been so ill-treated; no book has been so traduced; no book has been so despised and neglected, as this, the most wonderful of all the Divine forecasts of future things. No book has been so hated by Satan; no book has been so misdealt with by the professed followers, yea, even the true followers of the Divine Author. Every way conceivable has been resorted to by even the friends of Divine revelation to discourage, to disparage, to belittle and to destroy the influence which obedience to Christ's inviting words, "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of the prophecy of this book," would accomplish, if heeded by His followers. Thank God, there have always been a few, and even today there are some still in the world that have given heed to this loving, invitation, and have received the blessing promised. Many say it is too deep to be understood. However, the Bible does not place any premium upon that mental ignorance which ignores and neglects the study of the blessed book. The objection made that it requires too careful and too diligent a study to explore the deep mines of this wonderful revelation, and to gather the hidden jewels it contains, is not at all in harmony with the dignified relationship of sonship existing between the children of God and the Divine Author of the wonderful unfoldings of this book -- unfoldings which were specially given for their good.

As Viewed by Some

It would be amusing were it not so solemn a matter, to listen to the excuses, the criticisms, the foolish reasonings of some who minimize, yea, even seek to discourage any attempt to fathom the wonderful revelations that God has given to the Church. Some tell us that the book was never intended to be understood; others, that if it is to be understood God will choose some special one to disclose its mysteries, and that they are waiting for this one to appear. Again, there are those who say that the visions of the book are all to be fulfilled in the future, and that they will be understood in a due time; while others say to the contrary that the fulfillment of most of its visions is in the past, in the history of God's saints, and what interest have we today in the history of those of God's people who lived in the centuries gone by. This last indeed savors of selfishness. How glad are the hearts of those who, instead of listening and giving heed to these strange voices, have heeded the one great Voice of all, the Lord Jesus Himself -- "Blessed is he that readeth," etc., and have had fulfilled in their lives with increasing power the help and blessing promised!

Many fail to attain satisfactory results in their study of the Apocalypse because they neglect the first principle laid down in the Divine Word necessary to be observed and applied in the study and interpretation of this portion of Divine truth, the Revelation of Christ. This first principle is stated by the Apostle Peter in the words, "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation."

Let it be borne in mind; first, that it is prophecy that the Apostle refers to -- not Scripture in general, as the Romanist would have us believe. - The Apostle says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy is of any private interpretation." The meaning evidently is that prophecy is its own interpreter; that is to say, no one or single prophecy should be read or interpreted alone, as if it had no connection with the whole Divine Plan or arrangement of prophecy. The words, "For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man," mean that it is not the expression of the many minds of men, "but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." This implies that one perfect mind is the author of and the planner of all prophecy; therefore, in all these prophecies there must be one connecting thread, and one harmonious whole. To illustrate it is comparatively easy to find some plausible interpretation and application of a single prediction, but quite another matter to make this application fit into the general divinely prophetic plan or arrangement of all prophecy. The thought is, there is one grand skeleton or arrangement of Divine prophecy, and this must be understood first, and every interpretation made to fit into this Divine arrangement.

Daniel and the Revelation

The Divine skeleton of prophecy is that of the great image of empires of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar; and its fuller outline in the vision of the four wild beast empires of Daniel 7. These two grand outlines are divinely explained, and the explanation shows that they cover an unbroken period of history for twenty-five centuries, reaching to the establishment of the Kingdom of God over the earth. Every minor prediction fits into, or connects itself securely with these Divine skeletons of prophecy. The visions of the Revelation connect on to this great skeleton of prophecy in the first century of the Christian era; the Roman power being the fourth in the great outline or skeleton of Divine prediction. It not only connects on to this Divine skeleton, but every single vision of the Revelation when rightly understood fits into its proper place, according to an orderly arrangement by the Divine mind; and the various visions meet their fulfillment one by one in consecutive order, filling in many additional details until the Divine skeleton stands upon its feet, figuratively, speaking, like those of Ezekiel's vision, clothed completely with flesh. All the predictions that have to do with mortal man's dominion in the earth will then reach their completion; and a new, a Divine rulership succeeds. The visions then describe the immortal dominion, when human authority is lost in the Kingdom of God. One prophetic expositor thus illustrates this point--this method of interpreting prophecy

"The Apocalypse is not isolated from the rest of prophetic Scriptures. It is intimately related to the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament, and agrees perfectly with the other prophetic teachings of our Lord and His Apostles, in the New. As to its relation to the former -- the Book of Daniel -- its subject is the same, and its symbols are the same. At the time when John, lived, the three earlier empires, of Daniel had passed away; but the fourth, or Roman, was in the zenith of its power, and was destined to continue in existence for nearly two thousand years. Daniel had briefly outlined its character and career under the striking symbol of the ten-horned wild beast. John enlarges the Daniel foreview, employing the same symbols. Three times over in the pages of the Apocalypse this terrible ten-horned wild beast is portrayed. (Chapters 12, 13, 17.) Moreover; the most notable feature of this wild beast as represented: in Daniel -- its blasphemous; persecuting, 'little horn'; whose actions draw down the advent of the Ancient of Days in judgment-reappears .in the- Apocalypse with fuller detail, and in more vivid coloring. Its, rise, place, power, pride, tyranny, blasphemy are the same; its duration as assigned in Daniel and the Apocalypse is the same, and the time and manner of its destruction are the same. This identity is indeed the principal key to the Apocalypse"

The Apocalypse presents a consecutive, continuous outline of events which would take place in the outward history of the Church from John's day to the Second Advent and beyond; but it presents it in symbolic language, in a form which would veil the true meaning for a

time, but would allow "it to become progressively clear in the later stages of the dispensation."

Agreement Between the Parables and the Apocalypse

All the prophetic parables of our Lord fit into and agree with this great Divine arrangement or plan of prophecy. "In the parables the King is seen to go into a far country, to receive the investiture of His Kingdom, and to return for its exercise; in the Apocalypse the King is seen in the heavens, and His Second Advent in manifested glory is symbolized and foretold. In the parables we have the marriage of the King's Son; in the Apocalypse 'the marriage of the Lamb.' In the parables the virgins are awakened by the midnight cry, 'Behold the Bridegroom; go ye forth to meet Him'; in the Apocalypse the Advent is represented with its accompanying events. In the parables the conduct of the faithful and faithless servants. is described, and the reward of their respective works; in the Apocalypse we see the two classes and the issues of their acts. The Lord comes, and His reward is with Him, and He gives every man according to his works. The lesson of the parables as to the Kingdom, which is the everlasting recompense of faithful service, is repeated in the Apocalypse, with a fullness of detail and splendor of imagery peculiarly its own.

"The same harmony is traceable between the prophetic teachings of the Apostles of our Lord and those of this final New Testament prophecy. The oft-repeated warnings and predictions occurring in the Epistles of Paul with reference to the great apostasy which was to take place in the Church of Christ -- predictions echoed more or less clearly and emphatically by all the Apostles -- are confirmed by the wonderful Apocalyptic symbolizations of that apostasy, especially that part of it which portrays its connection with Rome. and the persecution of Christ's faithful witnesses by the Apostate Church. St. Jude's prophecy of the advent of Christ in judgment on the ungodly (quoted from Enoch 'the seventh from Adam'), is in harmony with the detailed vision of that advent and of the judgment in the Apocalypse; and so also Peter's prophecy of the new heavens and the new earth.

"The Book of Revelation enlarges this last into the exquisite imagery of its twenty-first and twenty-second chapters, adding a multitude of details, of definite features, entirely omitted in Peter's earlier prediction of the ultimate issue of Divine Providence, and of the eternal state of mankind."

Unfolds the History of the People of God

We thus see that the two marvelous predictions in Daniel 2 and 7, which are divinely explained to represent, or picture, the unbroken, continuous, consecutive, outlines of the world's history for twenty-five centuries, culminating with the Second Advent, furnish the divinely appointed skeleton of human governments into which must be fitted all other predictions: Furthermore, when these predictions are properly understood, we have revealed to us just that time in history in which

the Apocalyptic visions connect on to and blend with those of Daniel; for we see that that part of the grand outline or skeleton represented in the fourth or Roman Empire was at the zenith of its glory and power, at the time the vision, were given to St. John. In other words, the visions of the Apocalypse unfold the history of the people of God through the long period of the Roman power, in its various aspects until its downfall at the Second Advent. As we become familiar with the general outline of the history of this period, we are enabled to set in their proper place all the marvelous visions of the wonderful Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Exact Day and Hour Not Revealed

We find nothing in the foregoing review of the subject of prophecy to give us the thought that the forecasting of coming scenes, times and events was for the purpose of enabling God's people to determine the exact moment or time of their deliverance and glorification, or the **exact** day or year when the present order would pass away and the Kingdom be established. Such information seems not to have been set forth in any prophecy; nor indeed is it necessary. Rather, the sacred predictions set forth such general descriptions of events and circumstances as to enable the sober and humble child of God to approximate the time of the end and the consummation of all things; and thus be in a position to understand the meaning of those developments and occurrences peculiar to the last days; and understanding them, to be enabled to exhibit that true piety and Christian courage so necessary to all who would develop Christ's character and remain steadfast and loyal in the faith; amidst the stirring scenes with which this Age closes.

In the light of many of the prophecies, the people of God today, without discovering the exact time of their deliverance, may readily discern that the last days are indeed at hand, that the Kingdom of God draws nigh. The events predicted by our Lord and the Apostles and Prophets are strongly in evidence and all things are rapidly moving onward toward the grand climax, the passing away of the present symbolical heavens and earth and the coming in of the new heavens and earth, the Kingdom of God wherein dwelleth righteousness. It is truly significant that Mr. Guinness was able in the light of existing conditions fifty years ago to write the following:

God Has Graciously Revealed Fast Approaching Future

"Those who have carefully looked into this, subject, solemnly and with good ground believe, that the 'Word' we are commanded to 'preach' is full of evidence that the long predicted and long delayed judgments on the Papal and Mohammedan powers which are not only already begun, but are fast accomplishing before our eyes, are to issue, and that speedily, in such a burning of 'Babylon the Great,' as will light up all Christendom with its lurid glow -- the immediate precursor, if it be not the accompaniment, of the glorious advent of the King of kings. With

all earnestness and sobriety of mind they assure their brethren that it is their deep conviction that this is the testimony of sacred Scripture.

"For if we are right -- if there be unequivocal proof in the inspired volume, proof that no previous generation of Christians was in a position to appreciate as we are, that the day of Christ is at hand -- that the time for evangelizing the nations, and gathering in the Church of the Firstborn is speedily to expire -- that the long day of grace to the Gentiles is all but over, and that apostate Christendom, so long spared by the goodness of God, is soon to be cut off by His righteous severity -- that the mystery of God is all but finished, and His manifested rule about to be inaugurated -- that the great closing Armageddon conflict is at hand, and the complete overthrow of the confederated hosts of evil -- if we be right in believing that scarcely a single prophecy in the whole Bible, relating to events prior to the Second Advent of Christ remains unfulfilled -- if we be right -- then surely every pulpit in England should be ringing with timely testimony to these truths -- surely these solemn and most momentous facts ought not, in the preaching of any of God's faithful witnesses throughout the world, to be passed by in silence. And who that has not studied the subject can be in a position to say that we are not right -- that these things are not so?"

"May such a spirit as the Bereans had of old be granted to the Christians of this generation, that they may diligently search the 'more sure word of prophecy,' and draw directly from that sacred fountain the Truth as to the fast approaching future, which God has graciously revealed."

PRAYER

[Contributed from outside the Editorial Committee]

"What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" -- "But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them, that diligently seek Him." -- Job 21:15; Heb. 11:6.

AS A PART of man's heritage in his original creation he was constituted with the faculty and power of conversing and communicating with his Maker -- of exercising the privilege of worship and prayer. Man's threefold endowment is by common consent designated his physical, mental, and spiritual faculties. In the natural world around him in Eden was abundant provision made for his pleasure in and the development of the physical and the mental, but his spiritual desires and longings, his veneration must find satisfaction in a higher realm than the earth. Consequently provision was made for him to have fellowship and communion with God. Here it is that we trace the origin of prayer. Such a privilege was God's own design

concerning His creature man, and a necessity for him equally much as was the provision for his physical and mental development and gratification in the natural world around him in earth.

Deprived of Most Sacred of All Privileges

As an earthly child that is being properly reared, instinctively looks up to his parents, loves, reveres, communes with, and longs for their guidance, so man, the son and child of God, in his original upright state, delighted in communing with and in looking to God for support and guidance. Such was the original heritage of our first parents. How sad they must have felt when the blight of sin came and they were expelled from Eden and from God's presence, and were denied that most sacred of all privileges. Outcast from God, fatigued and worn as the result of battling with the various elements of the accursed earth, how sad and depressed must have been their spirits as eventide of each day drew near; especially as they realized that there could be no delightful fellowship with that mysterious One and no holy and refreshing communion with Him. Often turning their eyes longingly toward the once happy home in Eden, but now barred to them by the cherubim with the flaming sword, it is to be reasonably supposed that they questioned, When shall we return thither and enjoy again that home and communion with God.

There was a Divine purpose already fixed that there should be a great and marvelous redemption wrought out in the earth. An obscure hint of this was given to man in connection with the pronouncement of the death sentence. God foreseeing this coming redemption and deliverance has exercised His providence over our race, setting certain boundaries with regard to man's course and experience so that there might be limitations with regard to his descent into wickedness, depravity, his departure from God and the principles of righteousness. It pleased Jehovah therefore, in keeping with this purpose, while waiting for the due time to come, to foster and encourage in our race to a certain extent an appreciation of Himself and the privilege of approaching Him in worship and prayer. To this end He has made certain revelations, and communicated with certain individuals and people through the ages even before there was a Redeemer, extending to them the privilege of prayer and of communing with Him; accompanied however with the instruction and stated conditions that such worship and prayer could be had only in connection with the proper and acceptable offering of sacrifice to atone for sin.

Spirit of Prayer and Worship Preserved Through the Ages

This fact is borne out in the proceedings of Cain and Abel who offered sacrifice, Abel's sacrifice being of blood was acceptable to God. Cain was told that his sacrifice would be acceptable also if he did well (Gen. 4:6, 7), that is, if he would learn the lesson and offer the right kind of sacrifice in the proper spirit of humility and obedience. Later, in the third generation from Adam, we read that "Men began to call upon the

name of the Lord." (Gen. 4:26.) Some have suggested that this does not signify merely that men began to pray, but that the Hebrew signifies, "Properly, as always, to call with; that is, to use the name in invocations, in the manner of ancient cults, especially at times of sacrifice. (Gen. 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25.)" Whatever the exact meaning of the text, the thought is, that man's religious and spiritual faculties were exercised toward God in worship and homage. Still further on in history men conceived the idea and propriety of building temples and erecting sacrificial altars, and of appointing a priesthood or some kind of an order of priests in connection with their sacrificial arrangements and mediatorial services.

Thus it is evident that with the fall of man the privilege of prayer was not altogether withdrawn, but has been continued and encouraged in connection with the hope of a future restoration. While the majority of the peoples of the earth along through the ages have not enjoyed the privilege of rendering any kind of acceptable worship to Jehovah, there has been preserved in them more or less of the spirit of veneration and reverence and in fact to some extent the spirit of prayer. This fact is to be observed in the folklore of nations. A careful review of the various peoples of the earth today and the diverse forms of worship, perverted and depraved though they be, gives substantial evidence that that part of man's nature and makeup composed of veneration and spirituality has been preserved through the long ages of his alienation from the true and living God.

Jesus Taught Importance of Prayer ,

It is not until we reach that point of time in history when the first great step in redemption was taken -- the Advent of Christ and the offering up of His life in sacrifice -- that the full privilege of prayer and return to communion and fellowship with God was made possible. Jesus, said that His mission and work were to re-establish the normal and proper relationship between God and man; to this end He would give His life a ransom for many. Our Savior answers Job's question, "What profit shall we have if we pray to Him?" when He says that man shall not live by bread, alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Again He said that men ought always to pray and not to faint Men, by responding to the voice of God, by seeking communion and fellowship with Him, may learn the mind and will of God as to how they may so co-labor with Him. that they may enjoy the great boon of life eternal.

Another who has evidently given the subject of prayer careful and reverent consideration states that it is made up of adoration, thanksgiving, confession petition, and total self-surrender. It is well for every child of God to Carefully analyze his prayers and ascertain if there is any lack of harmony with the Scriptural requirements; for our prayers can be really refreshing and soul-satisfying only as we come to speak with God in the spirit and after the manner prescribed in His

Holy Word. Each of the qualities or elements referred to above are enlarged upon and illustrated from the Scriptures:

1. Adoration. -- "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honorable and glorious; and His righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered : The Lord is gracious and full of compassion."

2. Thanksgiving. -- "O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the land of the enemy."

3. Confession. -- "O God, Thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hidden from Thee. Let not them that wait on Thee, O Lord God of Hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek Thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel."

4. Petition. -- "Look upon mine affliction, and my pain; and forgive all my sins Oh keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in Thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on Thee."

5. Total Self-surrender. -- "Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done."

The mature Christian learns from the Word of the Lord as well as from experience, that his prayers in order to be acceptable to God must be offered in accordance with His will and in a spirit of resignation to His wise and loving providences. Many Christians are often heard praying for certain results and blessings, and while halting to remember that they should add, "Not my will, but Thine be done," proceed on in their prayer and insist that the Lord, give them the particular things they desire and are requesting; as if they said, Not Thy will, but mine be done. How easy it is for those who are not fully resigned to the Lord to make this error

Many Do Not Pray in Faith

Again Jesus emphasizes the importance of our prayers being offered in faith, in the firm and steadfast conviction that God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and this means that we shall believe that He is a prayer answering God. Many do not pray in faith, do not really believe at the time they are praying that the things they are asking will be granted; they are inwardly conscious of the fact that what they, ask for is not in harmony with God's will or with what He has promised His children. The things asked for are often, unreasonable and prompted by personal and selfish considerations. An illustration given by Charles Spurgeon is in order here: A certain lady after reading about the prayer and faith that could remove mountains decided to experiment and try to exercise such a faith one night; at the back of her dwelling was a mountain which was a constant source of

annoyance to her. She earnestly prayed that night for the mountain to be removed. Going to the window the next morning she exclaimed, There it is, just as I expected; I did not think the mountain would go away.

Watching Unto Prayer

Again it is evident that the Lord does not always answer our prayers in just the way our human minds may expect them to be answered. He not infrequently chooses another and different time for bestowing the desired blessing; also He may use a different agency in granting the blessing requested. Another illustration is applicable here: A noble Christian lady in Egypt named Monica was much concerned for her son who had gone into evil ways. She had recently heard that he intended to go to Rome; then known as a great center of evil and iniquity. She prayed zealously that her son might be prevented from going there. But he did go to Rome, and while there became a convert to the Christian faith, and was known subsequently as St. Augustine, the great Christian teacher. It may be asked, Did God hear Monica's prayer? The answer is, Yes. It is true that He did not prevent Augustine going to Rome, but was that really the burden of Monica's prayer? No. It did not matter about the place, it was her boy's welfare that she was concerned about, and God dealt with her prayer accordingly.

The Lord truly recognizes that we do not always know just what to pray for as we ought, but He discerns the mind of our spirit, the purpose in our heart and answers in His own time and way. It is proper for the child of God to be specific and definite in his prayers, not forgetting tomorrow what he prayed for today; and it will be to his edification to know what prayers are answered and what seem unanswered; thus he will be "watching unto prayer."

In John 15:8, we read: "In this is My Father, glorified **that** you bear much fruit." Let us examine the word **that**. Drs. Westcott and Plummer inform us that the Greek word "*hina*" in John's Gospel expresses purpose, and should be translated, "in order that." If this is so, and we believe it to be correct, the sense of the passage would be as follows: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask [imperative] whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. [For] in this is My Father glorified, in order that ye may bear much fruit, and may become My disciples." The point is not that our Father is glorified merely in our fruit bearing, but that He glorifies Himself (causes Himself to be honored) by answering our prayers, and the object in God answering our prayers is that we might be encouraged. Ask, that your joy might be full. And when our Father assures us, that our prayers are holy and acceptable, and that He is glorified in answering our prayers and encouraging us in our pilgrim way, what an inestimable privilege is seen to be ours! Surely we should be stimulated to greater zeal in the directions of prayer.

Lord, Teach Us to Pray

There are many prayers recorded in the Scriptures, but not all of them would be suitable and appropriate for the Christian. The prayers of the Bible must be considered in the light of and in relation to the peculiar dispensation and circumstances to which they respectively belong. In the Gospels we are informed that the disciples of Jesus wished Him to instruct them how to pray, even as John the Baptist had taught his disciples:

It was evident they had found something, distinctive in the life and teachings of their new Master that rendered their previous methods of prayer less satisfactory than before. Concerning just what method of prayer was taught by John the Baptist we have no record, but his spiritual endowment, devotion to God, etc., constituted him such a mighty power for good, that his influence was felt in different parts of the earth, even after the death of Jesus. And did not the Savior Himself choose His earliest disciples from the followers of that noble leader? From Acts 18:24, 25; we learn that about A. D. 52 a disciple of John went from Egypt to Asia Minor and like those who had previously learned of Jesus, was taught more carefully the way of God. Later, when he left, the great Apostle Paul returned to the same spot and found there believers in John's immersion. Josephus also in his Antiquities (about 100 A. D.) says: "Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John; who was called a good man;" etc. And Origen opposing the infidel Celsus, about A. D. 250, says: "For Josephus testifies in the eighteenth book of his Jewish Antiquities, that John was the Baptist." But John was a forerunner; and: Jesus was the one announced and heralded, the Lamb of God who came to reveal a new .faith "in these last days."

The Model Prayer

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth; as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the Kingdom; and the power; and the glory; for ever. Amen." This has been called the Lord's prayer, but some have preferred to call it the disciples' prayer, although to our mind the change of title is unnecessary, so long as we understand it to mean the Lord's Prayer for His disciples: Most obvious, it is that this was not a prayer that He Himself prayed. Since He was without sin, He could not pray, "forgive us our debts." This prayer of Jesus has been truly considered remarkable for its simplicity, brevity, and theological omissions.

There is no reference to the great Christian doctrines of the atonement, justification, sanctification, spirit birth, high calling, the Holy Spirit, or the Redeemer Himself; and it is not offered in His name. Luke's

account of the prayer is still briefer than that given by Matthew. It is manifest from a comparison of the two Gospel accounts, that it was not intended that we should confine our prayer to the actual words, but to remember the expression, "After this manner." No useless repetitions are given here, and the whole prayer can be spoken in less than a minute: We are here reminded of the words of the poet

"As, in life's best hours we hear
By the Spirit's finer ear
His low voice within us, thus
The All-Father heareth us;
And His holy ear we pain
With our noisy words and vain.
Not for Him our violence
Storming at the gates of sense,
His the primal language, His
The eternal silences!"

Notwithstanding the omissions and brevity, it is marvelously comprehensive. We note, too, that later in our Lord's ministry, He said, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," thus extending the privilege of prayer. Tertullian, who died about 220 A. D., called this prayer an "epitome of the Gospel."

Our Father in Heaven

Our Father. -- This term raises the status of the Church from a community, to that of a united family, controlled by love. This endearing term, Father, indicates the idea that Jesus entertained of God. He did not believe in some abstract force, controlling the affairs of nature; He believed in a living personal being. Not one of a cold, austere and unemotional nature, but one who could feel and reciprocate affection; one to whom we could come, and with whom we could hold communion. And more than this, one who could adopt us into His family, and transform us into His character-likeness and fit us for the enjoyment of His presence forever.

Who Art In Heaven. -- As Jesus believed in the personality of God, His Father, so He must necessarily be opposed to that form of doctrine of His omnipresence, that would make God to exist everywhere, as the Theosophist teaches, instead of the true teaching that God is in heaven, controlling everything by His all-sufficient power. The Theosophical teaching that God is everywhere, logically leads to the idea that God is everything, for nothing but God could exist if God were everywhere. This view logically denies the personality of God.

Hallowed Be Thy Name. -- That is, cause to be holy, sacred and revered Thy name; so reveal Thy blessed character to us that we shall ever feel that exalted reverence for Thee, Thy holy name and person, that will prompt to full loyalty and obedience.

Thy Kingdom Come. -- His Kingdom is distinct from all others, and it will not amalgamate with any of them. There are two schools of thought respecting the Kingdom of God amongst the expositors: the one believing it to be developed within the hearts of the people; the other teaching it to be something entirely apart and without. The difference may be recognized by the passage in Luke 17:21. The one school translates "within you," and the other "among you." We choose the latter thought, and believe it to be illustrated by the descent of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, pictorial of the inauguration of the Kingdom. It is not to be developed by human effort, ideas policies, or philosophies, but men are to come under its power and control, are to be taught to obey its laws, which truly will then be gradually engraved upon their hearts.

Thy Will Be Done. -- The time past of our lives has sufficed to convince us of the utter inability of the will of the world, the flesh, and the Evil One to give us genuine peace, satisfaction, or redemption. The prayer is that God's will shall be done without any rival or opposition. At present, there is a permission of evil, yet God holds the reins of government and will not suffer the world to go beyond certain limitations. But we desire that period of earth's history wherein His will shall go beyond mere supervision, and become the governing power inherent in everything.

In Earth. -- As His will is not yet done in earth, it is equally obvious from this prayer that Jesus believed that this earth was to be the scene of the redemption. It would appear, that owing to the idea of the immortality of the soul, and the destruction of the earth at the Second Advent, some have formed the conception that God's will is being done now on earth, in the hearts of believers the Kingdom of Heaven is within us, and is gradually being increased by successive conversions from the world of sinners, so these say. Others have the thought that the Kingdom will be the saints alone on earth, while still others claim that the Church will reign over the earth, which will be inhabited by the descendants of the present human stock. But to us the restitution of all things; the dead and the living, man and his estate, as taught by the Apostles and Prophets, is the only satisfactory conception that harmonizes with the character of God.

As It Is In Heaven. -- "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word." Far away (humanly speaking) beyond even those heavenlies wherein dwells spiritual wickedness (Eph. 6:12), our Father sits enthroned in light, surrounded with those obedient angels who always do behold His face, and rejoice in His commandments:

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread. -- All good gifts around us, are sent from God. Every good and perfect gift, cometh from the Father, and that is why we come to Him with our petitions. He alone is able and willing to give. In Luke's account the expression "this day" becomes, "day by day." God's blessings are thus both immediate and

continuous. A noted expositor, Dr. Lightfoot, says: "The familiar rendering 'daily' . . . is a fairly adequate representation of the original; nor indeed does the English language furnish any one word which would answer the purpose as well." The Revised Version margin reads: "Our bread for the coming day," and we incline to the thought, that this means the same day, in the dawning of which the petition would be offered. Daily bread does not mean luxury, but that food that is necessary to sustain life. While bread is mentioned in this petition, we should remember that there is spiritual bread as well as natural bread, and the Christian should constantly seek that Bread and Life which came down from heaven.

And Forgive Us Our Debts. -- To the Jewish mind this expression would convey memories of the jubilee year. The Greek word here translated "forgive us" is "*aphes*," and the Greek rendering in the Septuagint version, for the year of jubilee in Lev. 25:40 is "the year of the *apheseos*," that is, the year in which all debts are remitted. The expression "debts" here reminds us that we are more accustomed to the word "trespasses." A trespass is a sin committed, whereas a debt is something we owe, something omitted. Our word trespasses comes from Tyndale's version. The difference is only technical, but it is well to notice that the actual meaning of the Greek word is debt. Sin is a debt, or at least it places us in debt to God, and we know we can never pay back what we owe, hence our petition to Him for release; "having forgiven us all our trespasses; having blotted out [cancelled] the bond that was against us by its ordinances." -- Co1. 2:13, 14, R. V. and margin.

As We Forgive Our Debtors: -- The word "forgive" is in the Aorist, and the reading, should be, as we also have forgiven. Two parables appear to be expansions of this germ of thought -- one concerning the creditor who forgave his two debtors, one of whom owed him (according to Dr. Farrar's reckoning) about \$250, and the other \$25. The other parable deals with the matter of forgiveness under a different aspect: a king forgiving his debtor who owed him a sum which probably would be worth now more than \$10,000, which debtor in turn brutally ill-treated a laborer who owed him a mere matter of less than \$20. The lesson is obvious, and is intensified with a reminder of the quality required of our forgiveness, "forgive . . . from your hearts."

Abandon Us Not In Temptation. -- Two other expressions may be considered in conjunction with this. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations," and "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted. of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." These do not conflict with the petition which asks that we be not abandoned in temptation. The Greek word "*peirasmon*" may mean either trial or temptation: The Devil tempts, but God tests. The Devil tempts to entice into evil, but God tests to develop character and to demonstrate its worth, and does not leave nor forsake us in the hour of need. He will not suffer us to be tempted

above that we are able. But why rejoice in tribulation? Because it is a means of developing character-patience, probation, and hope. No Christian should seek for trials, nor feel that he must. really delight in suffering. The joy is not for the trial, but because of its value to us. "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me"; not "let Me have a cup of agony." It was not a love for the suffering, but a love for God's will, that made our Savior endure so much. "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." And so our dear Redeemer prayed for us, saying, "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

But Deliver Us From Evil. -- The similarity of this portion of the prayer to that of the text quoted immediately above, shows the kind of interpretation that should be placed upon it, more especially as both texts come from the same person. Abandon us not, but deliver us; is the antithetic or contrasted parallelism. It is not possible to decide positively whether the word translated "evil" is masculine or neuter gender, as. the forms in this case are the same. Although the definite article occurs in front of it, 'yet that does not prove that the word must be masculine,' says Dr. Farrar; but the analogy of similar prayers among the Jews renders this interpretation "evil one" probable. The Revised Version gives "evil one" in the text, but retains the neuter view in the margin.

(Continued in next issue)

GOD'S ABIDING PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

*"And He said, My presence shall go with thee,
and I will give thee rest." -- Exod. 33:14.*

NO GREATER promise could God give to His people than to assure them that His, presence will be with them; for His presence implies, His favor with them, His protection and His providential supervision over them to see that everything in life is controlled for their highest good.

This was the promise made to Moses of old at a time when he was sorely in need of Divine aid and comfort. He had faced a great trial and disappointment; the circumstances were most distressing and of a character to cause him to lose all confidence in human support and wisdom. It was early in Israel's experience journeying to Canaan. There had been a most marvelous demonstration of Divine power in behalf of the nation, delivering them from Egyptian bondage. By the power of Jehovah the Red Sea had opened for them to pass over safely. They had also received various blessings along their way, notable proofs of Divine guidance. But regardless of all this, while Moses was up in the holy mount receiving the Law, the people

suddenly became apostate and were given over quickly to rebellion and idolatry. Moses realized that Israel had grievously sinned and his anger was kindled against them. He cast down the Tables of the Law which were in his hands and broke them, when he saw and heard the dancing and feasting and shouting around the idol which they had set up for themselves. The question in the mind of Moses was, What could he expect of a people who had so little appreciation of God that they could be so suddenly turned aside? Even Aaron, Moses' own brother, led astray by the insistence of the people, felt it necessary to co-operate with them in the making of the golden calf. As a result of the kindling of the Lord's anger 'there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.'

History has often been repeated; many are the apostasies recorded of Israel subsequent to Moses' day. Nor does this dispensation of the Gospel present any brighter record concerning the professing people of God. There were departures from the Truth and from God in the Apostolic period; and in addition to the great Antichrist or apostasy of prophecy, our histories tell us of how in every generation of the Church's experience there have been dwelling side by side with the faithful, the elements of apostasy and those influences so potent in the direction of idolatry and the leading away from God and holy things. Thus it is unto this our own day. No sooner is a great and spiritual personality or holy influence withdrawn (as in the case of Moses being absent from the people in the holy mount) than the agencies of idolatry and tendencies to man-worship become active, resulting in the turning of the Multitude away from the holy path of Divine instruction and obedience, setting aside God's will and way and substituting the carnal wisdom of man in its place.

The Great Appeal to Jehovah

The sacred record tells us that Moses went before the Lord in very earnest supplication, pleading that if God would not forgive his people he should also blot out his name from His book. And in response God promised Moses to send His angel before him; but assured him however that he was not yet through dealing with Israel for their iniquity. As a result of the people repenting and humbling themselves, the Lord's anger was stayed and the punishment was quickly ended.

It is not to be wondered at however that Moses, heavy of heart, felt the need for God in some special way to give him the necessary wisdom and grace for the great task of leading so perverse a people into the heritage which the Lord had promised, if they would serve Him; in fact, without some such Divine assurance respecting the future, Moses felt utterly insufficient for the undertaking. So again he appealed to God in earnest prayer. He told the Lord of his fearfulness of heart, his trepidations and his earnest desire for His sustaining help and His presence with him in all the way, pleading; this is too great a work for me!

Then it was that the Lord assured Moses that He would go with him, that he would have His presence throughout the entire journey to the promised land; for he had found grace in His sight. And Jehovah said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Moses then besought the Lord, "Show me Thy glory." It was here that God put Moses into the cleft of a rock and covered him with His hand while He passed by and let Moses see His glory from behind, saying, "No man can see My face and live." This sublime exhibition of Jehovah's power and the promise of His presence to Moses must have greatly strengthened him in the inner man -- must have given him renewed courage and confidence to go forth and to carry out the Divine program concerning Israel, as the sacred record of his life subsequently indicates.

God's Presence Still with the Faithful

Similar promises to that made to Moses have been given to servants of God since Moses' day. In fact, the promise of the presence of God, His keeping power, and His loving care, is one that the true people of God in all Ages can claim. The one important condition on which this blessing depends is that full faith in God shall be confessed and exercised; for it is faith that impels to obedience, loyalty to God, and submission to His holy will.

Though living far down the stream of time today and far removed from those marvelous exhibitions of the power and presence of Jehovah in behalf of His people in ancient time, yet we need be none the less confident or assured that the same God is for us, loves us, is exercising His power over us and granting a sense of His presence amid all the turmoil and strife of the narrow way. Those who are enlightened and led of the Lord's Spirit; learn to appreciate the truth of His Word, that His presence with them does not mean His physical or visible bodily presence; but rather, it is His presence in the sense that it is by His Spirit and through many and varied instrumentalities and messengers under His direction, that He is with, sustaining, blessing, and guiding His faithful children.

We read in the Divine Oracle, "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool." Without doubt the One who has His seat in heaven and whose footstool is the earth is the great Jehovah. But this as reason clearly teaches is a forceful figure of speech, expressing His all-embracing power and control. The thought is not that God actually sits in a certain part of the universe and has His literal feet in another part. This is one of the many instances in which the language of Scripture accommodates itself to the mind of man and thus speaks of God as if He possessed the same bodily members as humanity. Actually none can know what a spirit body is like; as God said to Moses, "No man can see My face and live."

Present Through His Infinite Power

It is the infinitude of God and His unlimited and all mighty power that is implied in the thought of His presence, and that is everywhere set forth in the Scriptures. We read that "The Lord looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation He looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth." However, it is important that we clearly distinguish between the thought of God figuratively looking down from heaven, and the thought of His personal or bodily presence in the earth. It is by means of the innumerable agencies at His command that He is present; having full control of every part of His vast domain, the universe. How wonderful then the promise of God's presence! Not many have access to the power which controls the universe. And these who have the privilege of prayer, of coming to the mighty King of Heaven, may exercise that privilege only in His appointed way, subject to the conditions which He has made.

No limitations may be placed upon the power of Jehovah. The marvelous inventions of this time of the end, which have increased our powers of communication, and so have united all parts of the globe, give us but a very faint conception of the infinite powers of the Almighty God. These inventions, we believe, will continue to increase and multiply through the incoming Age, thus adding more and more to the powers and blessings of mankind. These will give humanity a greater and greater appreciation of the majesty, glory, and might of their Creator as they come to know Him as He is and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Yet no human mind, even in perfection, will be able to comprehend the mighty Maker of the Universe.

The children of God in this dispensation of the Spirit, originally a part of the world, have been invited to come out from the world, and like Israel of old, to journey to a new country, not to an earthly Canaan, but to a heavenly inheritance. Thus we are marching toward the glorious Kingdom promised us and will attain the same if faithful. There are severe tests, trials, and adversities to be encountered along the way. But our God has promised us, as He promised Moses His servant, that His presence shall go with us. There are times when He seems to withdraw from us and to leave us to ourselves; but He does not really do so. He is thus testing our loyalty and our faith in Him by withholding the sense or consciousness of His presence at times. He desires us to feel keenly our need and dependence upon Him. Consequently there are times when we feel as Moses expressed himself when he said, "If Thy presence go not with us, send us not up hence" -- this is too great a task for any man to accomplish alone. But if Thy presence will continue with us, if I can be shown Thy will and be continually directed by Thee, then I will be able to lead this people through the wilderness journey to the land of Canaan. Thus as we seek the Lord earnestly as did Moses He gives us assurance of His presence and of the true rest in Him.

Let none of the true Israel of God today conclude in the hour of trial and discouragement that God is no more with us, and turn again to the gods we formerly worshiped -- gods of wealth, or of pleasure, gods

worshiped ' by the nations around us. Shall we after having put our hands to the plow, look back with desire or give ourselves up to revelry, worldly ambitions and desires, or to any of the things of this life? Shall we forget all the way by which the Lord our God has led us, all the great deliverances which the past of our lives has recorded? Shall anything-either "tribulation or distress or persecution, or famine or nakedness or peril or sword or life or death or things present or things to come or any other thing in creation; be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" Surely not!

We Wrestle Not With Flesh and Blood

The question will frequently arise, To what extent does God really supervise the experiences of His children? Our Savior said, "The cup which My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?" How would it be with ourselves and our cup? Is not God our gracious Father? And are not we members of Christ? Who then but the Father pours our cup? But since we know that God is not a participator in any evil thing to any extent, it may be asked, How has He anything to do with the evils that come to His people? In reply to this the Scriptures teach that there are all manner of evil forces and influences associated with the reign of evil on the earth, and therefore surrounding us. These evil influences emanate first -of all from our Adversary who as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; and there are other fallen ones in the invisible realm also who are under Satan's direction and who follow his counsel these also may attempt, to assault the children of the Lord. But none of these can have any power whatever against followers of Christ except as the Father shall permit it. And He will permit no evil influences to touch us to our injury in so far as the new life is concerned, if we keep close to Him. His protecting care will prevent harm or injury to our physical persons unless He sees it will out work good to us by helping us nearer to Him and to our Heavenly Home.

The closer we live to the Lord, and the greater our faith, the more we shall realize the Divine direction, and the more we shall make use of the means He has provided for our strengthening and upholding. We may call upon Him in our times of trouble; we may go to Him in prayer; and He never fails those who put their trust in Him and earnestly seek to walk in His appointed way. This being true, we may go forth upon our journey in perfect trust and confidence. Having dedicated our all to the Lord to serve Him alone, we are to seek for His guidance, for His presence with us in all of life's experiences in order that we may be used and useful to Him in the highest sense.

Was Heard In That He Feared

Few have such mighty burdens to carry as Moses had. But all of God's children have burdens to bear, and important responsibilities are resting upon each of us who have taken upon us the vows of our God. All should face these responsibilities with godly fear and jealous care. St. Paul informs us that our Savior's Gethsemane experiences were more or less associated and linked with fear; not a fear of dying but a fear of coming short of fully pleasing God, and therefore a fear of losing His life and remaining in the death-state; fear that He would not be accounted of the Father worthy of that glorious resurrection which had been promised to Him on condition of absolute obedience: "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him out of death [by resurrection], was heard in respect to the thing which He feared." He was saved out of death; and further, He was given the assurance by the Father in advance that He would be thus delivered.

In no other way may we explain the statement that an angel of God appeared. to Him in the Garden and strengthened Him -- gave Him the assurance from the Father that He had been faithful unto that moment and that the Divine care and providence would be with Him in the hour of great and sore trial just at hand. Thence forward all the fear and agony were gone. If the Father had approved thus far, and if the Father's blessing and smile went with Him, He could endure all things, come what might. Throughout the remainder of that night and the following day our Master was the calmest of the calm under the most crucial ordeal. He comforted those who wept about Him.

In these experiences of the Master may we not find more or less a repetition in His true disciples? There is one difference indeed: Whereas "Of the people there were none" with Him, with us there is our blessed Master and we may hear Him saying, "Lo, I am With you alway, even unto the end of .the Age," and "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Moreover, with us there is a fellowship of spirit amongst the brethren of Christ, whose words of encouragement by the way, as they watch with us and pray With us, are a source of strength in every time of trouble.

Kept In Perfect Peace

Each member then, of the Body of Christ, of the true Israel of God, is privileged to have the continual guidance of the Lord in every experience of the wilderness journey. His presence will go with them and He will give them rest. Heavenly Manna is furnished for their daily sustenance. The Water of Life flows out to them for their daily refreshing, from the smitten Rock of Ages. The Father's chastening .rod restrains them when they are in danger or when they wander into any forbidden path. How lovingly He brings them back into the right way, and heals their wounds, and graciously forgives their stumblings

and weaknesses! Surely we may; have implicit confidence in our Heavenly Guide. Thus we may rest in Him and be kept in perfect peace. Our hearts can truly exclaim with the poet:

"He has guided my steps where I could not see,
By ways that I had not known;
The crooked was straight and the rough made plain
As I followed the Lord alone.
I praise His name for the pleasant palms
And the water-springs by the way;
For the glowing pillar of fire by night,
And the sheltering cloud by day:

"There is light for me on the trackless wild
As the wonders of old I trace,
When the God of the whole earth went before
To search me a resting place!
Hath He changed for me? Nay, He changeth not;
He will bring me by some new way,
Through fire and flood and each crafty foe,
As safely as yesterday."

He who so faithfully cared for Israel after the flesh, who were a perverse and fickle people, will surely care more abundantly for His true, spiritual Israel, who love Him supremely and are daily seeking more fully to know His will that they may do it.

The Apostle Paul, in warning spiritual Israel not to fall after the same example of unbelief of natural Israel, and thus lose their hold on the Lord, says, "We who have believed do enter into rest." (Heb. 4:3.) It was unbelief that led to the disobedience and perversity of Israel after the flesh, and that led to their final rejection by the Lord as His favored people, to whom should apply the most precious promises. They have lost forever as a nation the special place of favor which was theirs by inheritance. What a lesson this should be to spiritual Israel! And yet it is to be observed today that the great mass of spiritual Israel are falling "after the same example of unbelief." And they, too, will lose the chief place of favor, which was offered them when it was taken from unbelieving natural Israel. Only a faithful "remnant" of both natural and spiritual Israel will gain the great inheritance held out to them by the Lord.

The Glorious Inheritance of Spiritual Israel

Those who prove faithful during the present dispensation shall inherit the most precious things which God has to offer, the secret things which were for ages kept hidden, but are now revealed to the true saints of God. Even in the present life these have been raised to "sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" -- "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." These faithful ones are the twelve tribes of Israel who are to reign with Him. These -- only a little flock, in all 144,000 -- are of the faithful remnant of natural Israel; who were gathered at the beginning of this

Gospel Age, and the faithful remnant from the Gentile Church of this Age. (Rev: 7:4-8; 14: 1-5.) These have "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," and Which none others can know. "My peace I give unto you," whispers the Master to these. We have a rest of faith now; and we are assured that we who have entered into this rest shall in due time if we faint not, enter into the complete "rest that remaineth for the people of God." This rest we shall enter, into when we experience our glorious "change" in the First Resurrection, when we are transformed in body and made like our Lord, and shall see and know as we are now seen and known of God. We shall then be blessed with the exceeding glory which He has promised -- immortality, His own nature and be given a seat with our Savior in, His throne.

The God of Israel is indeed ever present with His true people: He never forgets them but is constantly looking out for their interests, guarding them in every time of danger, providing for their every need, both temporal and spiritual, whatever is best for the interest of the new life. He reads every thought of their hearts; He marks every impulse of devotion and love to Him; He shapes all the influences surrounding their lives for their disciplining and refining, and hearkens to their every cry for aid and comfort and sympathy and fellowship with Him. He is never for even a moment neglectful of their needs. "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." (Psa. 121.) He is near to uphold and sustain and protect, whether or not they can realize His presence at all times.

How blessed the assurance of such constant abiding care and faithfulness! No real child of God need be without these evidences of his precious relationship to the Father -- the God of Israel. And the saints who have been called with the, heavenly calling, and are faithfully responding, are His true Israel in the highest sense, heirs of all His choicest promises. How goodly a heritage is ours! "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."