

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

VOL. XI. December 1, 1928 No. 23

HOPING FOR "REVIVAL" OF REAL RELIGION"

MANIFESTLY, progress along natural lines of the practical application of knowledge in the affairs of men under present conditions, does not necessarily go hand in hand with progress and advancement in spiritual things. Nor does the increase of natural wisdom in Christendom tend to prevent apostasy or decline in those spiritual forces with which the Church of Christ has been blessed from the beginning of the Age. Long ago holy men wrote of our time, describing the progress of events and the changing and stirring scenes occasioned by the increase of knowledge along all lines. They clearly predicted that a great and dreadful crisis or climax would be reached as a result of the new elements and forces entering into world affairs which would result in the complete overthrow of the present order of things. These same holy men of old under Divine inspiration also described the general apostasy amongst professing Christians, explicitly telling us that there would be many and imposing forms of godliness with little or no power of the Spirit or the presence of the Lord in evidence.

It is not to be wondered at that some who have a measure of the sober and vigilant spirit recognize the absence of those vital forces and elements of godliness in the great communions of Christendom at the present time. In "The Calgary Herald" we read from the pen of one who is evidently a careful observer, a true and impressive description of conditions and the sore need of the present time. This writer goes on to say:

"Many of the religious leaders of the old land are convinced that there is a striking similarity between conditions today and the early years of the eighteenth century. They feel that a withering blight has passed over their churches, and that the progress of the Gospel has been arrested, and conversions are seldom spoken of. There are many religious leaders on this side of the water who are convinced that these conditions are not confined to Great Britain, but that striking evidences of similar conditions are found on this continent. We are not prepared to say we have drifted to the same degree of spiritual apathy as revealed in the eighteenth century; but there is sufficient drift to cause great concern.

"A great body of people are convinced that the supreme need of this hour is a similar spiritual awakening, and in the old land, Thursday, October 4, was set aside by multitudes as a day of collective prayer for all parts of the world. In speaking of this the sainted and beloved F. B. Meyer, of London, writes: 'Has not the time come for the insistence in each of our great gatherings for earnest, intense, prolonged prayer that the Living Spirit of God might not only be powerfully present at the vast demonstration, but that each one of us, who is pledged to the integrity of the Bible, should also be pledged to private, personal, definite, and heaven-moving prayer, not only that the Eternal God should vindicate His Book, but that there should be a loosening of the long winter, and the irresistible up-rush or down-coming of a world-wide Spring-time of Revival. "Awake, O North Wind, and come thou

South. Blow upon the garden that the spices thereof may flow out; and let our Beloved come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits!"

"The need of our day is a fresh baptism of the apostolic spirit and the apostolic Evangel. For after all the Evangel is the Gospel, while evangelism is the application of that Gospel; the Evangel is the message, while evangelism is the method of presenting the Gospel. The latter may vary, but the former is constant and abiding. The progress of science, philosophy, metaphysics and ethics can never change the permanency of that Evangel. It can never be exhausted by one century. Our conceptions of it may be enlarged and enriched through the generations but the underlying principles and efficacy of the cross are unalterably basic and all-inclusive. They are adequate for the ages and large enough for all learning.

"A revival of real religion can only come through prayer, and through the life and influence of Spirit-filled people, who have the yearning in their souls for the salvation of others. It is by the Spirit-filled power of a church and not by its social prestige that the Kingdom of God is extended. The church demonstrates its faith and loyalty not so much by argumentative discourses of vindication of the Bible or the Gospel. F. B. Meyer is right when he says: 'The supreme vindication of the Book would be that Aaron's rod should bud; that beneath its spell the skeletons in the valley of vision should arise and become an exceeding great army.' A lion needs no defense; liberate him and he will defend himself.

"The revival Christendom needs today is one of real religion. We need revived the consciousness of the sense of God. He must be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. -- He must be a Personal God, honored, loved and obeyed. The only God many people recognize is a god whom they think they can manage and patronize. We may criticize the conception of God held by the Puritans as severe and harsh, but to men like Bunyan and Milton, God was One whom to obey was, life and to disobey sure tragedy. Such a revival will also give a rightful place to the Person and work of Christ. It will acclaim Him without question the Son of God, and exalt His redemptive work as the only hope of mankind.

"Real religion when revived in the lives of people will express itself in Christian living. It will reveal the ethics of Jesus. There is little use a man talking about his loyalty to the Gospel who refuses to pay honest debts. The law of Christ is not 'Can we do this and get away with it?' The real question will be 'What is right?' People crazy about spiritual vagaries and careless about common duties of life are bound to lead people into religious chaos. The world is languishing for a spiritual, dynamic, ethical revival of real religion which has in its loyalty to Christ, love for souls, integrity in living, and dynamic with the power of the Holy Spirit."

God's time and God's way as set forth in His well ordered purpose, offer the only solution to the present situation in Christendom. The Kingdom class, the "Little Flock," referred to by Jesus will all be found; and evidently we are living in the days when the Lord is about to conclude the work of selecting and preparing these. It is therefore the time referred to by the Revelator, when "the voice of the Bridegroom and the Bride are heard no more in her," Babylon, Christendom. With the departure of these spiritual influences from her midst, there could remain only the empty form. The Kingdom of God in the hands of His well beloved Son will bring in the great "revival of religion"

for which some today are faintly hoping, through which all humanity shall be revived and blessed.

APOSTOLIC INJUNCTION OF SOLEMN SIGNIFICANCE

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." -- Rom. 13:12.

THE BIBLE is explicit in its teaching that after man was created, God "rested from all His work" -- that is, as it related to all the earth. As the sacred record tells us that six days had been consumed in the creative work, His rest-period must have begun with the commencement of the great seventh day and has continued ever since -- six thousand years up to the present time. From a careful study of Bible chronology and the times and seasons which are therein revealed and set forth, it seems evident that each of the six great days in which Jehovah prepared the earth for man, ending with man's own creation, was a period of several thousand years -- probably seven thousand years each. This inference is drawn from the fact that God's rest-period has lasted six thousand years so far, and reckoning that one thousand years more, or the seventh thousand-year day has been set apart for the Mediatorial reign of Christ and that He does not turn over the Kingdom to God till all things are restored at the close of the seven thousand years, that would mean that the day of God's rest is seven thousand years altogether. This seventh day, therefore, of His "rest," seems evidently a period of seven thousand years, ushering in at its close the glorious and perpetual jubilee of earth, 49,000 years after the beginning of the ordering of the earth.

Furthermore, this great rest-day of Jehovah has been man's week of toil and work, each day of which has been a thousand years long, and from the standpoint of the Divine Plan the last day of this great work-week being the Millennium of the reign of Christ, is to be the time during which the conditions of the curse, the pain, labor, and toil will gradually be caused to cease; and man's rest in the final and complete sense will not commence until the close of the seventh thousand-year day, or at the end of the times of restitution of all things.

Deliverance Long Foretold

When therefore the Apostle Paul wrote that the night was far spent and the day was at hand, more than four of these thousand-year days were in the past; and they were then in the fifth day. Practically all of this time had been a reign of sin, darkness, and death due to man's state of alienation from God. It was truly a night time of spiritual darkness, occasioned by man's separation from God. So the Apostle Paul could truly say, as he looked back, that this great and dreadful night of darkness was then far spent and the day was at hand, in the sense that the great step in redemption had been taken and the glorious day was seen to be therefore in evidence and approaching. From the Old Testament prophecies and from those wonderful revelations which he himself had received from the Lord, he was given full assurance that through the sacrifice for man, which had been made by the Lord Jesus Christ, a glorious day of emancipation from the bondage of sin and death was to

come-the seventh day of man's great week. It is of this glorious Sabbath day that the Apostle here speaks.

For more than one-half of the long period since the fall of our first parents, there had been but a very obscure light as regarded any deliverance from the curse of death pronounced upon the father of our race for his disobedience. There was the mere glimmer of a promise that God would at some future time do something for mankind. First, there was a declaration to the serpent, which had brought about man's downfall, that the seed of the woman should bruise or crush his head, while he would .but bruise the heel of the promised seed. Then the clothing by the Lord of the nakedness of Adam and Eve with the skins of slain animals suggested à future covering provided by the death of some unknown redeemer -- the seed of the woman. Later, God manifested His acceptance of the animal sacrifice of Abel. A little later came a suggestion to Enoch (Jude 14-16), and still later a promise to Abraham that God would yet bless all humanity through his seed.

Then came a gradual working out of a feature of that promise to Abraham through the Hebrew people, to make of them if they would prove worthy, a nation who would be light-bearers to all other nations and peoples. Still with all the disciplinary experiences which Israel received, when our Lord Jesus came, those who had been under such special Divine instruction were as a nation totally unready to receive Him as the Messiah of God. And not recognizing Him as the sent of God, they crucified Him. Yet they were in advance of other nations, for God had not given instructions to other nations as He had given the Prophets, the Law, etc., to the people of Israel. But while this specially favored nation was quite unprepared and unfit for the light as represented in the Lord Jesus and His teachings, there were some among them who were ready to receive Him as the Messiah of prophecy, Israel's long looked for King; and such were designated "Israelites indeed."

The Call of the Bride

Here we have placed before us the significance of the words of the Evangelist, "He came unto His own [nation] and His own received Him not." At the time of the crucifixion of Christ, after John the Baptist had done his work and after our Lord's three and one-half years' ministry among them, only a remnant, a little more than five hundred, had become Jesus' disciples and had remained true. Yet at Pentecost and onward others were awakened, indeed a much larger number, and came into the light of truth, accepting the Gospel Message and receiving the promised Holy Spirit. About twenty-five thousand, according to what seems to be a reasonable estimate received this transformation of heart. After all, then, it is a most marvelous thing that so many of that little nation were found in a condition of readiness to accept Messiah. No other nation in the benighted condition of heathenism and idolatry would have made so good a showing. And as history has proven, nearly nineteen centuries have been required to select or make up the remainder of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, elect from .the Gentiles.

It is interesting for us to recall that at the time the Message was given forth, the Gospel call that was designed to select a Bride to be associated with Messiah in His glorious Kingdom, it was not designed for all, but only for those who had the ear to hear and the heart to respond. .If we place ourselves 'back in the days of the Apostles we can think of them as preparing themselves for their great coming glory and as thinking that the foreordained

number to constitute this honored company would soon then be completed. They probably thought these thousands gathered from all the Jews in Palestine and other countries and especially augmented by some from the Gentiles who they perceived were later received, would then make up the "little flock" which would compose the Bride of Christ. Hence the Apostles were continually speaking as if the Kingdom were at hand. They thought it imminent -- were expecting it every day.

No Clear Chronology till Our Day

But, the Apostle Paul who apparently received more abundant illumination through the visions given him than any of the other Apostles, pointed out to some of the Church in his day who were expecting Christ to be revealed and to receive them then, that certain Scriptures had not been fulfilled, and that there must be a great falling away or apostasy in the Church before the great day of the Lord would come. The early Church probably had no particular-method by which they could have reckoned definitely the number of years since Adam. The matter of reckoning years as we have it, is comparatively a modern arrangement. In ancient times each nation had its own chronology. They merely reckoned that it was so many years since this or that dynasty began; so many years from a certain notable event to the first year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar or Cyrus, etc.

And so it was with the Hebrew nation. They reckoned time according to the length of the reign of their various kings; as for example, they would say that it was in such a year of the reign of David or of Solomon, that such and such an event took place. But it was not always easy to connect up matters in such a way as to have an accurate chain of chronology. There were indefinite periods and broken links which have since been supplied. for us from the New Testament; it evidently being the Lord's intention that in "due time" the information would come to light. And so today in the modern arrangement of our Bible, with various helps, concordances, etc., We have more advantage every way in the matter of reckoning chronology than did the Jews of old. The Hebrew Scriptures were written on parchment and kept much in seclusion; it was difficult to handle-these parchments because they were written on great scrolls or rolls.

It seems manifest then that the Jews had little resources or means whereby they could accurately reckon chronology from the beginning, and poor means for availing themselves of information on the subject. It is not surprising that they were not clearly informed. The Lord undoubtedly by design left matters in this uncertain condition until His own "due time" for their revelation.

The Day of Christ now at Hand

In the primitive period of the Church it was truly declared by the Apostles that the day of the Lord was at hand. They perceived that a great light had appeared in the world., a new dispensation was ushered in, marking the turning point in a certain important sense, in the history of the world. But still it was not the shining of the great sunlight of the Millennial Day. The Apostles accordingly referred to the surrounding conditions then, describing them as that of the darkness of the night, for darkness still covered the earth and gross darkness the people. The Master Himself had explained that the light that then shone from Him was not the great Sun of Righteousness, which would later shine out upon the whole world. Neither did the disciples of Christ shed a light as the light of the sun upon humanity. But reversely,

Jesus told His disciples that they should put their light upon a candlestick, that it might give light to all those in the house.

It would require the light of the Sun of Righteousness, Christ and His Church in glory, to enlighten all the earth. And the Savior pointed out that this would come at the conclusion of the Age that was then just begun -- the Gospel Age as it is generally called, the Christian dispensation. Thus the Savior in the beginning of this Age planted the seed which would produce the wheat class, the Kingdom or Bride class, those who should reign with Him upon the earth in the dispensation to follow. But He forewarned also that the enemy, the Adversary, would sow the seed of error in the Lord's wheat field and that his effort would be successful in producing a large crop of tares. Accordingly, He explained that at the end of this Age He Himself would be present and would, as the principal Reaper, exercise a supervision of the reaping; He would gather the tares in bundles to be burned and would gather the wheat into the garner. Referring to that time and to the Kingdom garner into which the wheat would be assembled, He says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."

Assembling the Kingdom

Manifestly, that blessed time has not yet fully come; yet this glorious day is about to break in all its splendor. The great changes that we witness during the present generation may be considered powerful hints that the dawn is near. This must signify that the majority of those who will constitute the Bride of Christ are already chosen and have finished their course; and if our conclusions are correct, those who have finished their racecourse have already been assembled in the presence of the great King and have shared in the joys of the First Resurrection. Further, those who are alive and remain are joining that blessed throng as they complete the course of their consecration and prove faithful unto death; and thus is fulfilled the Apostle's inspiring description, "Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air [the spiritual realm]: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

That we are now living in the very dawn of the great seventh day of man's great week seems abundantly corroborated by the events that are taking place about us on every hand. From one standpoint it appears that the Millennial Age chronologically has already begun and that the Day of the Lord is now at hand -- now present. This must signify, as the Apostle suggests, that we as consecrated disciples of Christ should not sleep, but should be wide awake. Some events of tremendous importance are to occur as the Day of Christ draws on, before the full shining forth of the Sun. The social, religious, and financial disturbances of modern times, including the great World War, are evidently a part of the preliminary processes that are to introduce and prepare the way for the inauguration of the Kingdom of God.

Works of Darkness and the Armor of Light

"Cast off the works of darkness," urges the Apostle. This injunction was recognized by the Apostle as being most appropriate in his day. Those who came in contact with the Savior and heard something of His Message and saw Him to be the light of the world, were thus enlightened themselves and became burning and shining lights, and were able to recognize that the dense darkness prevailing around them was largely the result of ignorance, superstition, and deception propagated by the Adversary, who is the great

deceiver. In addition to the fact that the nations composing heathendom were in gross darkness, the Hebrew nation itself was groping in blindness, except the comparatively few, the minority, who received the light of Christ. But what darkness was the nation in general in, concerning the significance of God's providential dealing with that people and with regard to the real meaning of the promise to Abraham and his posterity, that they should bless the world!

All those who became children of the light by the acceptance of the Savior, and His exposition of the truth concerning God, were given the privilege of entering into special covenant relationship with God through the begetting of the Holy Spirit, and such became members together with Jesus as the elect and chosen seed of Abraham, to usher in the Kingdom of God and the long-promised day. Accordingly, it is God's children, these bearers of the light, who have been addressed in the Scriptures all the way along through these nineteen hundred years. And as we reflect upon our day and observe that the light of the Word is fully corroborated by the progress of events at the present time, it becomes a matter of conviction that a new dispensation is about to dawn. The Apostle admonishes that we should "cast off the works of darkness" and "put on the armor of light." Manifestly the works of darkness relate to those deeds, practices and customs that are done in the dark. The works of darkness are all the works of evil, sin, and wickedness. Many of such works are not done out in the open as a rule. They are generally practiced in the dark and away from the illumination which the light brings. When they are done in the open, it is while they are posing as works of light, but wherever the light of the Savior has gone, it has reprovved the works of darkness as the Apostle said it would. It is recalled that Jesus in His own words reprovved many of the evil deeds in His time; He condemned the works of hypocrisy and pretense. He referred to the Scribes and Pharisees and declared that while they prayed on the street corners and put forth effort to manifest outward piety, they privately devoured widows' houses, took advantage of widows and swallowed up their property. Likewise the Apostle Paul enumerated various of the evils that were generally practiced at that time-covetousness, lasciviousness, adultery, witchcraft, hatred, wrath, strife, heresies, evil-speaking, idolatry, etc. All of these things are works of darkness, works of the flesh and of the Evil One, and they are still practiced throughout the world today.

Power and Glory of the Light

Children of God who are designated children of the light, are logically admonished to put on and wear the "armor of light." They are to consider well the spiritual light that has come into their lives the light of the knowledge of God, that reveals His will as to what they should live for and of what kind of characters they are to be whom the Lord will be pleased to grant the reward of eternal life, even immortality, the highest form of life. It is the light too that reveals the great consummation of the Divine purpose so far as the groaning creation on earth is concerned. What comfort comes to our hearts as we are permitted to look forward by faith and realize that there is to be a glorious deliverance for all the oppressed, for all the willing and obedient of the human race, that there is to be an end to the moans and sounds of sorrow and crying, that death itself shall cease.

But this light, this knowledge of God, is to reach further than merely the intellect; it is to affect the heart, the affections, desires, and innermost

purposes of the soul. This blessed light from heaven is to have the effect of acquainting us with God in a very personal way, so as to enable us to recognize that He is indeed our Father in heaven, and we must learn to trust Him so fully and implicitly as that we shall be enabled to cast all our care upon Him, knowing that He careth for us.

Knowing then through the revelation that God has given us what He requires, let us put on this heaven-provided armor as a protective and defensive vesture against the assaults of the Evil One. Let us put on the breastplate of righteousness, covering the heart, realizing that nothing but heart purity and absolute loyalty to God may be considered; for God is for us. Let us recognize that the whole armor of God includes also the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God and all the other pieces enumerated by the Apostle. These all constitute the armor of light so designated because it is of the light and comes from God who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all.

Individual Trial of the Saints

In this our day, it is surely as important that the children of God shall put on this armor of light and shall put off the works of darkness as it was for the Church of the Apostle's day. Surely if ever the whole armor of God was needed, it is now. Manifestly God's dealing with His children is as individuals-both as respects the putting off of the works of darkness as well as the putting on of the armor of light. It is "he that doeth the will of My Father," and "to him that overcometh." And the important consideration is that all who put on this spiritual armor will find themselves in accord with the Lord and with those who are truly His everywhere, because of the one spirit and the one purpose moving them and impelling them in obedience to the Divine will. As God's faithful people march further on into this Day of the Lord, no doubt they will see more and more of the significance of the prophecies which, as the Apostle says, will shine more and more until the day dawn. Surely there never was a time in the history of the Church when the prophetic page was so much illuminated as it is at the present. It is because there is such rapid fulfillment in these days of the things that have been written concerning the fall of the empire of evil and the coming in of the Kingdom of God's dear Son. There has been a real need for this clearer discernment of God's purposes and the truth concerning the same, above former times; the evil day is upon us to try every man's work of what sort it is. And since the Lord has made provision for the complete fortification and strengthening of His people, it signifies that they have that much more responsibility to put on the armor of light and to walk as children of the day and not as children of the night.

Danger to even the fully Consecrated

It is possible that some even of the fully consecrated children of God, surrounded with and involved in many cares and interests of this life, or weary of the struggle against sin and evil, or somewhat beguiled by the present things of time and sense, may have become more or less drowsy and so stand in special need of the stirring exhortation which the Apostle in this connection gives to the Church, and is particularly appropriate today. "It is now high time to awake out of sleep!" In other words, it is time for earnest searching, self-examination, for more thorough and diligent watching to see that we do not, allow the things of this life and its interests to intrude themselves and absorb our thoughts and energies to the imperiling of our

heavenly hope so soon to be realized; if we remain wholly faithful to the end. It is solemnly important that all who would ultimately have the Divine approval in the fullest sense shall seek for a still closer walk with God, a more intimate and abiding fellowship with Him, a more thorough self-abasement and self-abnegation, a more diligent cross-bearing, and more complete and faithful conformity in every respect to the whole will of the Lord concerning us. This will of the Lord we know is not unreasonable; it is that we may attain the very highest station and things possible; our eternal inheritance is involved. Indeed, how very reasonable is our Heavenly Father in calling us to go this way since He promises that His grace shall be sufficient for every day, every hour, every moment!

A careful, prayerful searching of our hearts will make plain and manifest wherein we lack in conformity to the perfect will of God, If, on any such careful inspection it is discovered that there is any perverse way in us, -- surely we should correct it. By so doing, we shall be heeding the admonition, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ" -- the mind or disposition of Christ, and be-filled with the spirit of love and loyalty which characterized His entire career. The Apostle Paul in his day said, "the time is short"; but surely it is more literally true of the present than, it was then. How vitally important it is in the very short time that remains to us, that we, fully awake and apply ourselves diligently to the work at hand -- that of the cultivation of the Godlike, Christlike disposition of love; the love which seeks above all else the glory of God, which is kindly affectioned toward the brethren, which rests in the precious promises, which trusts fully in the dark as well as in the light, and which has no shadow of doubt that all the good things promised in the Divine revelation shall be fulfilled.

Let Us Walk as Becometh Saints

Another thought which the Apostle associates in this connection is, "Let us walk honestly as in the day." He probably had reference to certain vile practices then common, such as drunkenness, rioting, chambering, wantonness, etc. But we need not necessarily gather from this that he meant this language as a reproof to the Christian believers at Rome; rather, as a pastoral exhortation that they should be on guard against these men and is a reminder that the principles that they had adopted as Christians were in direct contrast to those which generally prevailed. Very different standards of morality were current among the heathen. It seems that a considerable number of the believers at Rome had been heathen and accustomed to immorality Hence the Apostle's words were those of caution; for we would not suppose that saints would be guilty of these things.

His words, "let us walk honestly as in the day," shed forth a warning light. Much of the rioting and drunkenness is done at night; and such is the custom even unto the present time. Works of darkness and sin thrive best at night, for the reason that the darkness favors such works by hiding them so that they are not seen. But the beloved Apostle points out that while this is the great night of darkness, sin, and separation from God, yet those who are in Christ have been taken out of the darkness into the illumination of God Himself. And such are looking forward to the full dawning of the morning of the new dispensation and striving to live in harmony with Him -- walking honestly as in the day.

Considering that the day here referred to relates to the time of the great revealing of Christ and His Bride, we may well understand that nothing in

the nature of .sin will then be allowed. Sin and evil in every form will be restrained and rebuked. For His Word assures. us that "judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place." Surely the Apostle's instruction is that those who are saints of the Lord should live as those will be living when the day shall have fully come -- when the Sun of Righteousness will be shedding His beams over all the earth.

It is a part of our overcoming to live as though the day were fully ushered in, as though everything had been fully manifested and revealed. Whoever will take the Apostle's advice in this matter, will surely be richly blessed; in fact, any other course would be sure to be disastrous to us as New Creatures in Christ!

MORNING

"The sun is rising in the East,
Clothing the cloud with richest gold;
O'er mountain, sea, as to a feast,
Marching with glory manifold.

"Yea, from the East gleams with God's sun
A mystic glory on our race,
A splendor for a world undone,
A reflex glad from God's own face.

"And all the stars their homage pay,
When bursts the sun from eastern skies,
Image of a diviner day
The Star whose radiance never dies.

"O Star of Bethlehem! be Thine
Our hearts, our praise, our fervent love;
To us may all the beams that shine
Be symbols of the light above:"

JACOB'S PREVAILING PRAYER

"I will not let thee go except thou bless me." -- Gen. 32:26.

THE JOURNEY of Jacob back to the land of his nativity and to the presence of a presumably hostile brother, now wealthy and powerful, and from whose face he had fled for his life some twenty or perhaps forty years previous, may well be considered of the most convincing evidences of his faith in God and of his respect for; and valuation of, the promises of God, whose fulfillment could be expected only in a far distant future, between which and the present the Jordan of death rolled. Like Abraham, he looked for a city whose Builder and Maker is God -- the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of God on earth. He knew that Abraham had died in faith not having realized the promises, and he was willing to likewise patiently wait.

God has always honored faith through all the ages past, and it is so still. Those who now for His sake and because of their respect for the Divine promises, suffer the loss of earthly home and privileges and comfort, may be sure that these testings of their loyalty to God will not go unrewarded. The Lord seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in Spirit and in truth; only with such is He well pleased; only to such: do the angels of heaven minister, for we read, "Are they not all ministering spirits; sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Not the Fulfillment of the Promise .

The return from Padan-aram to the land of Canaan, the land of promise, can by no means be considered the fulfillment of the promise of possession of the land, the whole land of Canaan, for himself and his posterity for an everlasting possession as some teach. And that Jacob did not so regard is very manifest from his message to Esau on coming into the land -- "And he commanded them [his servants] saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have **sojourned** with Laban, and stayed there until now." (Gen. 32:3, 4.). To such a claim the Apostle Paul gives most emphatic denial and shows that this promise never was fulfilled to them; nor has it even yet been fulfilled to their posterity, though it most assuredly will be, both to them, and to their posterity, at the time appointed. St. Paul says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a land which he should after receive for an inheritance obeyed. . . . By faith he sojourned [moved about, not settling down as an owner] in the land of promise as in a strange country dwelling in tents [temporary, movable dwellings], with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city [an established kingdom] which hath foundations [permanence], whose Builder and Maker is God. . . . These all died in faith; not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth." -- Heb. 11:9, 10, 13.

After forty years' absence from home, Jacob was ready at the Lord's command (Gen. 31:3, 11-13; 28:15, 20, 21; 32:9) to return. Experience had taught him confidence in God and lack of confidence in his Uncle Laban. Jacob was now ninety-seven years old, and rich in flocks and herds; and with his wives and twelve sons he started on the then long journey of four hundred and fifty miles; humanly fearful of the consequences, yet, notwithstanding his fears, boldly walking out on the promises of God.

The First Recorded Prayer of the Bible

Remembering the anger of his brother Esau when they parted twenty years before, he sent at the hands of servants several valuable presents of cattle, sheep, etc., with the message that he was coming on in peace. In reply he learned that Esau with 400 mounted men was coming forth to meet him. He feared that this meant an unkind reception, and accordingly sought the God of his fathers for help and guidance. Some have pronounced this a perfect prayer as measured by the standard of the Lord's Prayer; for it seems to follow the same general lines: (1) Adoration to the Almighty; (2) humiliation and self-effacement in the presence of the Lord; (3) petition for Divine care and protection; (4) repetition of the Divine promises as the ground for faith and hope. The various parts of the prayer thus indicated are: (1) "O God of my Father Abraham, and God of my Father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto

me, Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good; (2) I am unworthy of the least of all the mercies and all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant; for with my staff [without other possessions] I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two companies [referring to his large possessions of flocks and herds and herdsmen, etc., which he had divided into two bands or companies]; (3) deliver me, I pray Thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, and the mother with the children [that is, root and branch]; (4) And Thou sadist I will surely be with thee, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

It cannot be claimed for Jacob nor for any of the Ancient Worthies (nor for any one else for that matter) that they were perfect and that therefore the Lord favored them. The one thing that stands out sharply, distinctly, above any other thing in the character of Jacob, as in that of Abraham and of Isaac, is his faith. Let us remember that he did not live under the favored conditions which we enjoy of fellowship with the Lord through the Holy Spirit and through communion with the brethren -- that on the contrary he was alone in his faith. Nor had anything in particular been explained to him respecting the grand, ultimate consummation of the Divine Plan as it is our privilege now to see this through the telescope of the Divine Word and the illumination of the Spirit of Truth. He merely knew that a promise had been made to Abraham that seemed to imply the ultimate blessing of the world through his posterity, and his faith had grasped this promise, so that to him it had become a reality, the predominant power and influence in his life. For that promise he had endured and was still enduring, and confident even in the face of hostility, even though he trembled in fear of his greater antagonist -- for by this time Esau, the possessor of Isaac's wealth and the lord over his servants, was known as the "prince of Edom."

Confirmed by Better Promises

The lesson to us is that a still greater promise being left to us -- that is to say, the same promise having further developed and divided into two parts, and the higher or spiritual feature having been bestowed upon the Church of Christ -- we who realize ourselves to be heirs of this same promise, and who now see its spiritual force and signification, have still more reason than had Jacob to humble ourselves before the Lord, to acknowledge our dependence upon Him, to ask Him for deliverance from the great enemy and from every foe to our best interests, and to plead His gracious promise, confirmed unto us in the death of Jesus our Lord. Ah, yes! the Apostle clearly indicates this when he says to us, "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." -- Gal. 3:29.

Jacob indeed will come in as one of the heirs of the earthly phase of the blessing, but the distinguished honor of sitting in the throne has passed to the spiritual Israel, and we who are now called according to the Divine purpose should be very alert to make our calling and election sure; and still more intelligently and more fervently should we, who have now been brought nigh by the blood of Christ, glorify our Father in heaven in respect to the riches of His grace, to which He assures us we are welcome upon a manifestation of the necessary faith and obedience. Shall we not cry day and night unto the Lord respecting the exceeding great and precious promises given unto us, and our expectation of realizing them -- that we may have grace and, strength

to overcome, to come off conquerors through Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood?

Wrestling in Prayer

Jacob was not content merely to pray; he labored also, and set his affairs in the best possible order for the ordeal of the morrow in arranging his company into two great bands. Then the prayer probably was continued, only a synoptical statement being given us. The sacred narrative goes on to say that after Jacob had made all of his prudent arrangements, that he was "left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." Another commenting upon this interesting incident has very ably observed that, "This is a turning point in the history of this very remarkable man. To be left alone with God is the only true way of arriving at a just knowledge of ourselves and our ways. We can never get a true estimate of nature and all its actings, until we have weighed them in the balance of the sanctuary, and there we ascertain their real worth. No matter what we may think about ourselves, nor yet what man may think about us; the great question is, What does God think about us? And the answer to this question can be heard only when we are 'left all alone.' Away from the world; away from self; away from all the thoughts, reasonings, imaginations, and emotions of mere nature, and 'alone' with God -- thus, and thus alone, can we get a correct judgment, about ourselves.

"'Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him.' Mark, it was not Jacob wrestling with a man; but a man wrestling with Jacob; this scene is very commonly referred to as an instance of Jacob's power in prayer. That it is not this, is evident from the simple wording of the passage. My wrestling with a man, and a man wrestling with me, present two totally different ideas to the mind. In the former case I want to gain some object from him; in the latter, he wants to gain some object from me. Now, in Jacob's case, the Divine object was to bring him to see what a poor, feeble, worthless creature he was, and when Jacob so pertinaciously held out against the Divine dealing with him, 'he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him.' The sentence of death must be written on the flesh, the power of the cross must be entered into before we can steadily and happily 'Walk with God. We have followed Jacob so far, amid all the windings and workings of his extraordinary character, we have seen him planning and managing during his twenty years' sojourn with Laban; but not until he 'was left alone,' did he get a true idea of what a perfectly helpless thing he was in himself. Then, the seat of his strength being touched, he learned to say, 'I will not let thee go.'"

God Desires Sincerity and Earnestness in Prayer

All the particulars of Jacob's prayer are not recorded, but apparently the appearance of the angel of the Lord was in human form, with some communication respecting his prayers and his fears. It is not in conflict with the foregoing that in his earnestness to have the Divine blessing Jacob also laid personal hold upon the angel, urging a blessing -- feeling that it was a matter of imperative need, that he could not be fit for the events of the morrow unless he had this blessing.

Jacob's experience here reminds us of our dear Redeemer's experiences in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He wrestled with strong crying and tears, pleading with Him who was able to save Him out of death, out of the hands of the great enemy. Our Lord agonized for long hours and finally got the

blessing. And so it was also previously in Jacob's case here narrated: he urged, he pleaded, he wrestled with the Lord for the thing which he knew the Lord had promised him -- the Divine blessing upon his home-coming and in respect to his future as a servant of God and an heir of the oath-bound promise. The entire procedure of the night is briefly summed up in the few words

They "wrestled until the breaking of the day" -- the angel apparently endeavoring to avoid giving him the blessing, and Jacob determined so much the more that the blessing was necessary and that he must have it. It was then that the angel touching Jacob's thigh, wrested the sinew. But in spite of all, Jacob held on and got the blessing with the break of day.

We are not to suppose that God was averse to the giving of this blessing and that Jacob prevailed to secure it in opposition to the Divine will. On the contrary, we are to understand that it was God's good pleasure to give the blessing. He had already intimated this; but that the blessing might be valuable to Jacob it was withheld for a time until he would more and more feel his need of it and cry out and struggle to obtain it, that when obtained it might be the more highly esteemed, and effect thereby the greater influence upon his heart and faith and future course. And it is so with our prayers. "The Father Himself loveth you," is the Master's word; nevertheless, Jesus said we should pray and not faint, not grow weary, not lose our interest in the things desired if they are the things that God has indicated to be in harmony with His will. If, for instance, we read in the Scriptures that the Lord is more pleased to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children, then it cannot be amiss for us to watch and pray with patience and continuance for this Holy Spirit -- that we might obtain this great blessing, the character-likeness of our Lord.

"The Trial of Your Faith"

We have found that it is often by bringing us into severe trials, ordeals, putting us under crucial tests, that the Lord develops more and more our faith, our love, our trust, our hope in Him. He would have us learn well our lesson, that without Him we can do nothing, but that with His blessing and favor all things are ours, because we are Christ's and Christ is God's. Let us, then, in all the important junctures of life, be sure that we are seeking chiefly the Divine will, as expressed in the Divine, promise, the Oath-bound Covenant; let us seek it patiently, earnestly, persistently -- let us wrestle with the Lord that thereby we may be made the stronger, that when the proper and advantageous experiences have been enjoyed the blessing will come -- at the proper moment to do us the most good and in the manner that would be most helpful.

In some respects this return of Jacob to the promised land shadowed the coming return of his posterity, which is even now at hand. As a nation they have trembled for fear of extermination in all parts of the world; they have been uncertain as to when the blow would fall, or in what manner their interests would be injured; but those of them who are in the right attitude of heart toward God will, we believe, very soon come to this praying point. The Lord intimates this, saying respecting the day just before us, "I will pour upon them the spirit of prayer and of supplication, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced." (Zech. 12:10.) The result of this praying, supplicating, will be the blessing of the New Covenant under which, with the

Lord's favor, they will go on to the grand fulfillment of the gracious things already declared more than 3,000 years ago.

The New Name -- A Prince with God

As a part of the blessing granted by the angel in the name of the Lord, Jacob's name was changed to Israel, which was explained to signify that he was a prince with God, or had great power with God, as exemplified by the fact that he had secured this blessing by the demonstration of great faith and loyalty and zeal. This name, Israel, is the one by which all his followers prefer to be known -- they are Israelites. As the Gospel Church is termed in the Scriptures spiritual Israel, and as the Head of the Church is Christ, we see another parallel or foreshadowing by Jacob of Jesus -- of Jesus' struggle and our Lord's ignominy in the Garden. It was because our Lord overcame, because He exercised faith and obedience, that He indeed is the great Prince of the Lord, appointed the great Prince and Savior for the people.

Already Christ is the Prince of the Church, which in obedience to His call is seeking to walk in His steps, that they may be joint-heirs with Him in the glorious Oath-bound Covenant which He has inherited, just as the Israelites sought to follow Jacob and become heirs of the same promise. But as there were tests upon Jacob, so also there needed to be tests upon his people : and likewise as there were tests upon our Redeemer, so there must be tests upon all of His people, His followers, His Gospel Church. Many of the people of natural Israel stumbled because of lack of faith -not holding on to the Divine promise they were overcome by the spirit of the world, the spirit of selfishness, etc. Similarly today, in this harvest time of the Gospel Age, we find the indications to be that many more have been called than will be chosen -- than will be worthy of acceptance as footstep followers of the Redeemer, the true Israel, the spiritual Prince with God. As Jesus was the prevailing Prince with God, so all of those whom He accepts as members of His Body, His Church, must also have the same spirit and be, in the language of the Scriptures, "overcomers."

The Church's New Name

By his faith Jacob obtained a rank, a standing, amongst his posterity with his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham, and in olden times no Israelite would appropriate any of these three names -- they were considered too sacred for others than the originals. The changing of Jacob's name reminds us of other similar changes: for instance, amongst our Lord's disciples Simon was renamed Peter, and again Saul of Tarsus was renamed Paul, and this gradually led to the custom prevalent throughout Christendom of giving to every convert a new name, a Christian name, and this principle was eventually applied, to children of :believers and ultimately to all children.

But God proposes a new name for His people -- His Church -- the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. As Jesus was our Lord's name and He became the Christ, the Messiah, so all who become members of His Body come under His new name, and are recognized of the Lord and may be recognized of each other as members of the Christ (Rev. 3:12); and again, the Lord, prophetically speaking of Christ, says, "This is the name whereby He shall be called, The Righteousness of Jehovah." (Jer. 23:6.) And again, speaking of the Bride of Christ, we read, "This is the name by which she shall be called, the Righteousness of Jehovah." (Jer. 33:16.) The name of the Bridegroom is given to His Bride -- "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I

make up My jewels." (Mal. 3:17.) And those who will get this new name, we may be sure, will all be called upon to demonstrate that they will be overcomers. They must all pass approval before the Lord for their faith and their persistency in holding to Him and His gracious promise -- the Oath-bound Covenant.

"Do It not, Worship God"

The answer of the angel, when Jacob in turn asked for his name, reminds us of the words of the poet:

"O ! to be nothing, nothing
To Him let their voices be raised;
He is the fountain of blessing,
Yes, worthy is He to be praised."

The angel seemingly had no desire to flaunt his own name and have it handed down to posterity. He was content that he was the mouthpiece and representative of Jehovah God; and desirous that the Lord alone should have the honor and distinction of having conferred the blessing, and that the instrument through which the Divine favor was extended might not be in evidence -- to detract from the glory of the Lord. Would that all of us who are the Lord's people could take exactly this unselfish view of our various opportunities to serve the Lord and His brethren -- to be willing to be out of sight ourselves that all might the more clearly see that the blessings conferred are from the Lord alone. This thought is brought to our attention in Rev. 19:10, where John, as a representative of the Church, having heard and seen wonderful things, fell at the feet of the angel to worship him who had showed him these things. The command was, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant -- worship God." So if there come to any of us a thought of doing homage to the Lord's messengers or servants through whom His blessing has been bestowed upon us, it will be proper for him to give the admonition, "Do it not, worship God"; and in any event it would be our duty to fully recognize that our blessings come not from any human being but from God, however much He may use human, instrumentalities in conveying His blessings. He alone is to be honored and revered and appreciated as the Author and Giver of every good and perfect gift. -- Jas. 1:17.

THE WAY OF NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST

[Contributed]

"Therefore if and man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." -- 2 Cor. 5:17.

FAMILIARITY with the above amazing statement by the Apostle Paul has perhaps caused us to lose sight of its intense significance. To how many is the condition described a practical and vital truth, the basic truth indeed, by which their present decisions in life are determined, and on which their hope of a future existence depends?

In analyzing the words, both the tense employed and the comprehensive nature of the declaration made, are seen to convey facts of immediate importance to all who are "in Christ." The Apostle does not say of an individual so placed that he **may be, should be, or even shall be, but that he "is a new creature"**; not that "old things" **may, should, or shall, pass away,**

but that they "are passed away." And perhaps even more remarkable is the assurance that "all things **are become** new." Not future are the "new things" of which he writes, but the **present** inheritance of those who would otherwise be without life, possessions, or even hope; for their "old things" "**are passed away,**" "**all things have become new.**"

They Are Risen with Christ

It is interesting, and very helpful, to think of these "new creatures" as pictured by a new race of beings, "a holy nation," as Peter describes them. Those who form this nation God "hath translated" out of the kingdom of darkness, into the Kingdom of His dear Son, and they are known as Christians -- the people of Christ.

To enumerate and examine all the "new things" which appertain to this nation would be a lifework; indeed it is the life-work of these "peculiar people," but we may, here suggest a few of them. To begin with, their life itself is new they "were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Their Kingdom, or Country, "is not of this world." On earth they are "strangers and pilgrims" -- "sojourning" there indeed whilst they have the treasure of the Spirit in earthen vessels, but dwelling as New Creatures "in the secret place of the Most High," where their "life is hid with Christ in God." They **are** "risen, with Christ" and "seek those things which are above."

A great Patriotism they have indeed each must die for his Country -- and as they journey through strange and perilous earthly experiences, they cheer their hearts and sustain their courage with a wondrous song of Home, the National Anthem of those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." -- Rev. 14:3.

The Religion of this people is the very breath by which they exist: prayer to their God is to be "without ceasing," **unbroken** communion with Him is obligatory and essential, and "they that worship Him, must worship in spirit and in truth," that is, as those "in the spirit" to whom "all truth" is revealed. -- Rom. 8:9, 26, 27; John 16:13.

Characteristics of the Christian

The Laws of the Kingdom of Christ search deeply, and whilst summed up in the, one word "love," they are expressed in necessary detail for the guidance of those who; being "not in the flesh but in the spirit," must keep not only the letter but fulfil the principle; to them, for instance, evil motive and desire are as reprehensible as sinful action, and slander as criminal as murder. For every infringement of these laws repentance must be demonstrated, forgiveness obtained, and the inevitable effect obliterated from the character with painstaking care; "Sin" and "Death" being as inseparably linked in their relationship as "Righteousness" and "Life."

The Language of the Christians is unique, in that it is impossible for those of any other Country to learn it; to their ears alone does it convey any meaning; they speak "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but "which the Holy Spirit teacheth." "As it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man [the Earth dwellers], the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1 Cor. 2:9, 16.) Blessed

indeed are the ears of the Christians, for when God speaks they both hear and understand!

Their Manners and Customs are described in the Holy Book which is at once the history and constitution of this people. A grave and gentle courtesy marks their bearing, and an affectionate consideration for one another's welfare is a conspicuous characteristic. They are neither jealous nor vindictive, but when injured, forgive as they pray to be forgiven; not "busybodies in other men's matters," they mind their own business and endeavor to live at peace with all-mindful always of the words of their King, "Blessed are the peacemakers:"

Without Rebuke in Midst of Crooked Generation

They are first and foremost a studious people, since every Christian is trained for the Priesthood of his Country, but their occupations, which are part of the priestly education, are extremely varied. Agriculture, fruit-growing, fishing, care of the flocks, preaching, embroidering the beautiful vestments which are worn when they enter upon their priestly work, and military exercise, are some of these. With respect to the last named, it may be said that a system of conscription obtains in the Country -- all must be good soldiers of the King, though they fight only in defense. Since these people sojourn in strange lands, each is considered by the King as His Ambassador, and, as such enjoys His continual protection by means of a Guardian from the spirit world. The knowledge that He so regards them fills them with humble dignity as they seek to represent Him faithfully and suitably -- "blameless and harmless without rebuke, in the midst of a perverse and crooked generation," amongst whom they shine as lights -- the light of the world: Altogether it will be seen that the Christians are a busy and industrious nation.

Leisure time they have, of course, and this is, mainly spent in contemplation of the wisdom and loving-kindness of their Heavenly Father -- speaking often one to another of these things; and in joyful meditation concerning the time when they shall have completed their education and experience in alien countries and be given bodies which can dwell for ever where their minds already dwell, in the presence of their God. Their thoughts at these times are of all that is true and lovely and of good report, for in their Book it is written that as one thinketh in his heart so is he, and they long quickly to grow into the likeness of their King and great High Priest, the "altogether lovely One." -- 2 Cor. 3 :18.

Christians are much given to Hospitality, and delight to minister the holy and spiritual food which, like their language, is peculiar to themselves. The bread and water of life they break and! pour for one another in happy and sacred fellowship.

Old Things Are Passed Away

Seeing that these people have a new life which is under no sentence of death, as is the, life of the Earth dwellers, a very different scale. of values and sense of time obtains amongst them. They have passed from death unto life -- from Time to Eternity -- hence are able to esteem in right proportion the importance of things temporal and things eternal. They easily "count" all present possessions of a material character but "loss and dross" in comparison with an eternal hope, and "as having nothing, they yet possess all things." Thus truly, in the words of the Apostle, to these New Creatures old things are passed away.

Now we, brethren, are this "New Creation." What differentiates us from "the people of the land," those who "walk after the flesh"? Sometimes the question is heard, "What are they **doing**?" It is a very vital question, though not always perhaps in just the sense in which it is asked. If what we have only most briefly sketched be true, no New Creature can have one moment not profitably occupied, however many years his King may ordain that he remain on earth. Do we **actually** live our lives here as those who "have no continuing city, but seek one to come," knowing "no man after the flesh," seeking first in all our relationships "the Kingdom of Heaven"?

Are we sustained, as we may and should be, in all the vicissitudes of our pilgrimage by the power of the religion which is ours -- the religion of prayer? Are we truly so in tune with God that we are in all our affairs led "by His Spirit and filled with His peace? Are the Laws of God so engraved upon our hearts and minds that they control our every thought and word and action?

True Friendship in Christ

In view of the honor, far greater than we can comprehend, which is offered us -- the Friendship of Christ -- can we yet revise some of our customs, manners, and habits, in order that we may be more fit for His companionship? It has been said that "a man's friends are to him what his own character permits them to be." Have we the graces in our own lives which respond to and can appreciate the beauty' and wonder of the character of our Lord? Jeremy Taylor has defined friendship thus: "By friendship I mean the greatest love and the greatest usefulness, and the most open communication, and the most exemplary faithfulness, and the severest truth, and the heartiest counsel, and the greatest union of mind of which brave men and women are capable." A standard, brethren, for those who are friends of, and in, Christ!

Let us think carefully over the occupations entrusted to His followers by the Master. Have we "done all" and exhausted our possibilities of usefulness and service -- completed our training for Priestly responsibilities, and by the experience gained been conformed entirely to the image of our Elder Brother? (Rom. 8:29.) The Chie Reaper is present with us. Are we sharing as every opportunity offers, in the reaping work? There are still evidences that hearts which have long been waiting upon God are now being granted their first knowledge of Present Truth, even the "Mystery hid from ages," and presumably entering into the race in place of some who, alas; have lost their great opportunity therein. Are we watching for these?

The "fruit of the Spirit" surely still requires diligent cultivation -- the weeds of fleshly inclinations and sins will yet spring up and choke the good fruit of the indwelling Spirit of God: if not constantly and ruthlessly dealt with. Only in clean soil and in the atmosphere of love will this fruit grow and ripen. Let us then continually root out and cast away the hatred, depression, worry, impatience, unkindness, impurity, discontent, pride; and thoughtlessness which fills the space where love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, should be found:

There is a Ministry for All

"I will make you fishers of men." We still have the same means of "fishing," and if the fishers keep (as all successful fishermen do) well out of sight, not obtruding **ourselves**, but trusting the bait to do its work, can we say that the same great message which attracted us will not even yet find other hungry "fish"?

"Feed My sheep," "feed My lambs," was the Good Shepherd's own commission. The sheep have need of food which the mature "teachers" and "pastors" amongst us must supply from God's storehouse and by His direction, but what of the lambs, those in our midst who are young in the way of the Lord? Surely all the sheep may from their own experience help such. One might apply here the "hospitality" mentioned by the Apostle; it is good and right on fitting occasions to entertain one another with material hospitality, but let us not forget how valuable are such opportunities for fellowship in holy things, and for offering our guests and partaking ourselves of the "meat indeed" and "drink indeed" which will build us up unto eternal life!

It is not possible here to consider all our "occupations"; the essential point is that there is work for all -- and work which should and can engage our time and thought and effort until our last conscious moment on earth. Not only do we want to have "done all," but we long inexpressibly to hear that by God's grace and in His sight it was "Well done!"

And what of our "leisure hours"? This is a peculiarly searching question, since it concerns that time which we have at our own disposal -- during which no special duties must be performed and no active occupation is suitable; when the mind is free to revert to that which gives it most pleasure -- its "treasure." Are our eyes so "fixed on Jesus" that we have indeed "lost sight of all beside"? If so, brethren, happy are we, for then in His time all our longings will be satisfied -- we, "changed into the same image," "shall awake in His likeness" and be "forever with the Lord!"

"Forever with the Lord!"
Amen, so let it be!
Life from the dead is in, that word,
"Tis immortality.

"Here we are being spent,
As pilgrims here we roam,
Yet nightly pitch bur moving tent
A day's march nearer Home."

THE EASY YOKE

"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." -- Matt. 11:28-30.

THE YOKE is a symbol of servitude and subjection, and all in the world are under yokes of some kind -- political yokes, social yokes, financial or business yokes, yokes of sin, of selfishness, of pride, etc., etc. The man who is under the political yoke finds it a very hard one. He is busy days and nights planning and scheming and working for office, studying all the arts of worldly policy to gain the friendship of voters, spending time, money and thought, and concentrating every energy upon the risky business of seeking office which, if he gain it, brings only a multitude of cares, and exposes him to a host of enemies of the opposing party who are often ready to blacken his character at the slightest provocation.

Those under the financial or business yokes are similarly oppressed. They labor long and hard; they scheme and plan and contrive and fret and worry to be rich, and in so doing they fall into a snare which robs them of the true happiness which riches cannot bring.

Those under the social yokes labor hard and sacrifice much in meeting the demands of society upon them. Few in the humbler walks of life know how galling is this yoke upon the rich, and particularly to those who are viewing with others in better circumstances. Women often wear themselves out in this unsatisfying service; while husbands and fathers are driven to despair and ruin trying to keep up with the financial drain. The yokes of pride, selfishness and sin of every kind are indeed hard yokes, and their burdens heavy. To shake off all yokes and free ourselves from all burdens is impossible in this evil day. The prince of this world, Satan, has already imposed upon all the yoke of sin. And there is none able to deliver us from this yoke and its binding fetters but Christ, who, in His own good time and way, will do it for all who come unto Him by faith and repentance.

While it is the purpose of Christ ultimately to set all such free from every yoke and to release them from every burden, He sees that they are not able yet to exercise and enjoy the glorious liberty of sons of God; and so by way of discipline and training, He purposes, to bring them to that condition. It is therefore necessary that those who would be delivered from the galling yokes of sin and of the present general order of things should submit themselves fully to Christ that they take His yoke upon them. And He invites all who have come to feel and realize the discomfort of other yokes and the weight of other burdens, to come unto Him for rest and release.

In tender sympathy for all the oppressed and sorrowing He says, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you," etc. Thousands have responded to the kind invitation, and they testify in no uncertain terms to the ease of Christ's yoke and the blessedness of His promised rest. And yet the rest is not of general temporal prosperity and freedom from care and toil and from all restraint.

Few would say in viewing the Apostle Paul's experience that the yoke of Christ on his shoulders was an easy yoke, or that the burden of Christ's work which he bore was a light one. But evidently he thought so, for he counted it an inestimable privilege to endure hardness as a good soldier for Christ's sake. He joyfully suffered the loss of all things and counted them but dross, that he might win Christ and be found in Him. He rejoiced to be made a

partaker of His sufferings that he might also be made a partaker with Him of His glory, and share with Him in the blessed work of His Kingdom.

Blessed work! St. Paul gloried in the prospect of such a future mission, and was in haste to manifest his readiness of mind for it, by zealously and most energetically devoting his life here to the Lord's service along the lines indicated in the Divine Plan. He took Christ's yoke upon Him: he did not attempt to guide himself, but humbly placed himself under subjection to Christ, and obediently followed His guidance whithersoever it led him -- whether to prison and the stocks, to an ignominious public beating or stoning that left him almost dead, to shipwreck, to perils on land and sea, among heathen enemies or false brethren, to wearing labor, and painful toil, or what not? And yet the Apostle counted this burden of Christ a light one, and his yoke an easy yoke. He spoke of his trials as light afflictions, and said he rejoiced. in tribulations; and with lacerated backs and feet fast in the stocks in the depths of a miserable dungeon Paul and Silks rejoiced and sang praises to God.

Stephen had the same rest and joy even while his enemies were stoning him to death; and thousands more of God's saints can testify to the same thing-in the midst of poverty, sickness, affliction, temptation, and enemies on every hand, and even in the flames of violent persecution. Whence comes it? or how are rest and even joy compatible with such conditions? The answer is: it is a rest of mind -- "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." None can know the blessedness of this rest until they have experienced it. And none can realize its great value until they have been put to the tests of affliction.

The Lord gives the key to this rest in the words -- "and learn of Me; for I am meek and lovely of heart." Truly, in a meek and quiet spirit is the secret of rest. To be meek is to cultivate the graces of patience; of loving submission to the will of God; of abiding confidence in His love and care and in the wisdom of His guiding counsel and overruling providence's; and to perseveringly pursue this course through evil and through good report, or through favorable or unfavorable circumstances.

Let the beloved children of God seek more and more to copy Christ's meek and quiet spirit, accepting the providences of God and obeying His precepts and leading as He did, armed with the strength which He alone can supply, and will, to all those who take His yoke upon them, and learn of Him.

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Loving greetings in the name of our Redeemer. I feel constrained. to, write you to let you know, how much I appreciate the articles appearing in the "Herald," for as I read them and meditate upon them I realize we have fellowship with one another in the Spirit, and surely our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Furthermore; they quicken the desire for that "life more abundant" which can only be found by knowing Him more fully who is our life.

I have been connected with the Truth for about fourteen years, and until recently have been ä reader of the "Watch Tower," but have now become a

reader of the "Herald," and I cannot help but feel some regret that I did not make the change earlier; for I must have missed much which would have been help.

It is a journal which can be passed on and recommended to everyone who through repentance and faith realize that they have been washed in the precious blood, and thus made acceptable with God, wherever they maybe.

I do pray, dear brethren, that our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Head of the Church, will continue to guide you and richly bless your labor of love for the saints in these last days, for it is such spiritual food as is contained in the "Herald," that is so much needed for the "perfecting of the saints" for "the edifying of the Body of Christ." May you ever realize the Lord's presence with you.

With Christian love and best wishes,

Your brother in the Lord,

L. W. -- Eng.

Dear Brethren:

I should have written you several weeks ago to have our "Herald" sent to our present address: . . .

We enjoyed Brother McKechnie's visit very much. His good effort was to guide us in self-judgment by considering the carefully recorded conduct of certain individuals as they were tried in character by temptations peculiar to their sphere in the affairs of natural Israel; which narratives illustrate to us the underlying motives of action in the doings of all who profess to be of "Spiritual Israel" today.

It does seem that, as a people claiming to be "in the school of Christ," we have been sadly guilty of mental laziness in applying to our own hearts and minds the lessons of each day that are intended for our own personal discipline; to "reprove, correct, and instruct us in righteousness." We all have been more or less guilty of childish day-dreaming in the promises of future exaltation to glory, honor, and power; and, childlike, many attempted to clothe themselves with imaginary glory, and exercise imaginary power at the present time. We have been slow to heed the admonitions which, plainly show that all future prospects are wholly dependent on our "enduring discipline" at the present time; entirely dependent upon our growth as New Creatures, while our human nature dies day by day.

Surely our illustrious Example, who "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself," while He "suffered for righteousness sake;" and "learned obedience by the things He suffered," while He Himself remained through all adverse experiences "meek and lowly in heart," should teach us that not by His authority, may we, while in the flesh, do "a great and wonderful work in His name to thus prove to ourselves and to others that we are Heaven's favorites." Such is the temptation that comes to day-dreamers, and through the leading of those who are tempted to live in their, day-dreams and clothe themselves. with the authority of their, "dreams" (Jer. 23:16); such do not love the "rod and staff" guidance of the school of Christ that makes workers, and not dreamers of His followers while in the flesh. Those who are real laborers for Christ are not workers in the flesh; for Christ's workers are workers against the flesh; using "the weapons of- our warfare" in breaking down the "strongholds" of the flesh, to "cast down [human] imagination and

every high thing [opinion] that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and in bringing our every thought to the obedience of Christ."

The sister from this Class who visited in Toledo several weeks ago delivered the personal greeting from the brother who served the friends there, and it warmed our heart to feel the strength of the bond of co-operative fellowship that should, and does unite all who are joined in one service; that is, to glorify Christ on the earth, while we remain in our proper clothing -- a body of humiliation.

May the Lord strengthen us all in heart, and keep us humble in spirit that we may "endure unto the end:"

Your Brother by His grace,

R. G. C. -- Kans.

Dear Brethren:

Will you please send sample copies of the "Herald" to the following:

We are looking forward with much pleasure to the anticipated visit of Brother Blackburn and hope it will not be a fleeting one.

Surely this is the final testing time. From my own experience and that of others I believe that never was the way so dark and the trials so pressing as far as this life is concerned,,

I have thought much about the faith, of Abraham. You have mentioned it often in the "Herald", and how we must copy it. I have derived much personal comfort from the thought that as God restored Isaac to him when his faith had been tested; and as our Father received back His Son when the sacrifice was over, that surely He would do no less for His children -- that there is an answer to the agonized longings of a breaking heart, when this age of sacrifice is over. But this week I have had a further thought concerning this: God stayed Abraham's hand and the sacrifice was not completed, as it was only a picture; but in our Lord's case, and in ours who dare walking in His steps, the hand will not be stayed, the sacrifice must be completed, even unto death. But, beyond that, my faith looks up to that Father who is Love, and believes that as He received back His own, He would not ask More of us than of Himself. Of course this is only by faith now, and I hope it is not an unreasonable nor unscriptural thought. His will be done, but some times we have to find comfort in a faith that knows no measure, but must be as boundless as our knowledge and belief in His love.

I would surely appreciate an interest in your prayers. The love and kindness of the brethren have been so unailing to me that, if by His grace I may attain to that which I seek, when I would cast before Him my crown, I would say, It is not mine -- these helped me to gain it.

With Christian love,

M. B. -- Ore,

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

VOL. XI December 15, 1928 No. 24

DRIVING SHARP BARGAINS

THE GREAT Teacher counseled His disciples to be like unto their Father in heaven; and from this, and His associated words, it is manifest that He had reference to a likeness to those qualities of mind and sentiments of heart that govern our Father in heaven. Godliness or godlikeness is the thought; and amongst the outstanding qualities or attributes of God is surely love -- generosity, kindness, long-suffering, patience, etc. The Christian disciple is instructed to study and contemplate well God's character in this regard, that he may become more and more like Him. As God is love, He is opposed to selfishness. The quality of selfishness finds no place in the great character and attributes of Jehovah. When therefore we read that in man's original creation, he was constituted an image or likeness of his Maker, the thought evidently is that he was endowed with the qualities of godliness. Man was created and fashioned according to the moral and spiritual likeness of God, and in that original state he was not given over to selfish and depraved tastes and tendencies, but was like his Maker filled with the spirit of love and was himself lovable.

Whence Cometh Selfishness

Whence then is all of this unhappy and deplorable state of selfishness that so permeates and controls creation here on earth? There is but one answer and that is that the selfish propensities of our race have come to the front and predominate as a result of sin and because mankind has been shut out of the presence of and communion with his Maker.

Selfishness is a prolific weed which has sprung up and flourished for six thousand years in the midst of the thorns and thistles where man with weariness and sweat of face has been compelled to earn his daily bread. In the endeavor to obtain the necessities and comforts of this life, the idea of getting as much as possible for as little as possible or, to use a common phrase, of driving close bargains, has well nigh crushed out every noble impulse.

If selfishness flourished only among the miserably poor, it would be at least measurably excusable; but it flourishes no less in the hearts of the rich and comfortably circumstanced. The weed has grown and strengthened its roots and branches so wonderfully from generation to generation that it has come to be regarded largely as a legitimate and natural trait of human nature. It is not surprising, therefore, that the saints, when they diligently compare themselves with the perfect standard of uprightness presented in the Word of God, find this weed in their own hearts, and that as they endeavor to purify themselves, even as their Pattern is pure, they find this one of the most difficult weeds to eradicate. How great is the inclination, even among the children of God, to permit this weed and to eat of its fruit. Would that all could realize more fully how unbecoming it is in the Royal Family.

Dealing Unjustly with God

One of the worst forms of the evil, however, is that which manifests itself toward God. Accustomed to getting as much as possible for the amount paid, or paying as little as possible 'for the thing secured in daily life, the same disposition often manifests itself in dealing with God for the "Crown of Life," the "glory, honor, and immortality" promised to the faithful overcomers.

God covenants with those justified by faith in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, that if they consecrate and sacrifice themselves wholly to His service, He will give them, at once, "exceeding great and precious promises," and in the future the blessed realities. Our little all is indeed a meager pittance. How little remains of our three-score years and ten! How little of mental vigor! how little of physical strength! how little of money and influence! And yet that little all, :however great or insignificant it is to us, is all that God requires in exchange for His great favor. It is by no means an exchange of equivalent values, but it is nevertheless an exchange which will prove to the fullest extent our love and devotion to God.

We confess that it is a great bargain--such exceeding riches, and glory for a price so mean as to be unworthy to be compared with it; and yet shall we, like Ananias and Sapphira, be found endeavoring to keep back part of the price?

According to our covenant, we should do our best to use in Jehovah's service "all our mind, all our soul, and all our strength," which of course includes the products of these -- all our influence; all our money, and all our time as well. Yet how apt are we in action to say to the Lord -- I know it is cheap, but can you not take a little less? I think you will not deny me the prize, even though I keep back part of the price.

Why this Lack of Gratitude and Devotion

Thus many desire a crown of life and glory, if they can get it cheap; if they can get it for less than their little all; if they can hold on to their money, their good name, and fare none the less and if possible a little better than formerly. O shame! such meanness, such a low appreciation of our Father's grace, is unworthy of the high exaltation to which we are called. And surely, if our own hearts condemn us as unworthy because of the incompleteness of our sacrifice, the Lord, before whom all hearts are open, and who is looking for the loyal and loving bride whose heart is already wedded to His, and who counts no possible sacrifice too great to express the strength of her devotion to Him, will not choose such. He does not desire for that blessed relationship one who is mean and selfish.

Logically, the question is asked, What is the difficulty with such as are described foregoing who fail to offer themselves wholeheartedly and with fullness of love? There can be but one answer and that is that they have failed to enter into the life of trust and faith; for if they have exercised full faith and trust in God they have seemingly to a large extent lost that blessed heritage. Lack of gratitude, lack of devotion and obedience to God are always manifest in connection with a weakness of faith. Faith and obedience go hand in hand; and so do mistrust or lack of faith and disobedience.

To God's ancient people of old the command was issued, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength," etc. The

Savior whose message and ministry came later said that this was the first and great commandment. In other words, the great lesson for all God's creatures to learn first of all is that they owe their existence and everything they have to Him who has given them the privilege of living. If this first and all-important consideration and requirement is properly dealt with and appreciated, it means that all the other details of life will quickly fall into line; for a proper appreciation of Jehovah will prompt the heart to gratitude, will incite to fullness of devotion, and with the Psalmist of old all such will exclaim, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?"

God's Unspeakable Grace

Surely if ever there was a people who had cause for true gratitude, thanksgiving and devotion to God, it is those who have been privileged to catch a vision of the Savior and of the love of God that centers in Him and the great redemptive purpose that is being worked out through Christ our Lord. The grace of God represented; in the forgiveness of sin and in our restoration to favor and communion with God is indeed, a great revelation of His love. And the Apostle Paul tells us that this exhibition of the loving kindness of our God should move us to present our bodies living sacrifices, which means the dedication of all of life and fortune upon the altar of sacrifice as a sweet smelling savor, an expression of the heart's gratitude to the great Giver of all gifts.

But what shall we say further of that additional revelation of Divine love in extending to us the call and invitation to become joint-heirs with the great Redeemer in all the wealth, honor, dignity, and glory of the Kingdom of heaven? And in consideration of this further grace that cannot be told by tongue or pen, how can any who get a proper grasp of all its significance, permit themselves for an instant to think of asking or expecting God to grant them that great reward on easier terms or conditions than those that His Word has laid down, namely taking up the cross in consecration to God and walking in the footsteps of Him who had set us an example that we should walk as He walked.

Why cannot all see that the lesson of love, gratitude, the lesson of supreme devotion to God properly learned and applied will bring lasting blessings, riches, and Divine favor; that such as would enjoy such a heritage without end must continually draw their hearts to God in thankfulness and in acknowledgment of His providential care and guidance. Any neglect of such recognition of Divine favor is sure to lead to pride and thus more and more toward sin, and further and further away from the Lord and ultimately to the cutting off of the supply of blessings, because of separation from their fountain.

The more we come into possession of the spiritual blessings which the Lord has promised us and which we have accepted by faith, the more need we will have of humility, and our humility will be proportionate to our appreciation of Divine goodness and our thankfulness therefor. The grateful, thankful heart may go on from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge, from attainment to attainment; but if gratitude begins to wane and our advantages are accepted either as matters of our own attainment or of good luck, in that same proportion we will find ourselves growing cold spiritually, and with unthankfulness will come unholiness, spiritual selfconceit and pride, and all of this will lead to spiritual dearth and if persisted in, to spiritual death.

"Give me a thankful heart, from every murmur free,
A heart which always feels Thy blood, so freely shed for me."

"That I may Win Christ"

How important it is, therefore, that we consider well the meaning of our covenant with God; what it signifies to run in the Christian race-course for the heavenly prize, the crown of life; what the sacrifice of all implies to us. Let us consider it, not in the light of our past conduct and that of other professors, but in the light of our covenant and of the examples of our Lord and the Apostles; and count not our ease, our comfort, our good name, our friends, our property, our business, our money, our health, our life, or anything dear to us; but, esteeming them all as dross in comparison, let us be zealous in our endeavor to testify our love and devotion by our deeds as well as by our words. If we are loyal and zealous, we will not be surprised if we are counted fanatical. Men esteem those fanatical who think and act outside the beaten track of custom, and in whose course they see no reasonable end in view; but we must think and act as seeing Him who is invisible and the glory and honor of being joined with Him as heirs and co-heirs and co-laborers -- reasons which the world and worldly church cannot appreciate and which are therefore foolishness unto them.

Selfishness, while detestable always, is especially so in connection with our covenant relationship to God. Let us rather be very ambitious to increase our capacity that we may thereby increase our service and sacrifice, saying with the Apostle: "I count all things but refuse, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ . . . that I might know Him and [experience] the power of His resurrection [to spiritual being], and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection out from among the dead."

The Covenant-Keeping Sacrificers

"This is the first [Chief] resurrection," and it includes all the overcomers of the Gospel Age -- all the blessed and holy. These are they who are gladly sacrificing all they have in the service of the Lord and the truth, who are not trying to keep back part of the price in violation of their covenant. "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord, in the day that I come to make up My jewels" -- the covenant-keeping sacrificers. See Psa. 50:5; Mal. 3:17.) These shall be with the Lord and behold and share His glory. "They that are with Him are called and chosen and faithful." -- Rev. 17:14.

As we seek to be just toward God in fulfilling our covenant, our hearts will be drawn into closer and closer union with our Lord's, and we shall become more generous, less selfish, in our dealings with our fellow-men. It will lead us nearer and nearer to that grand statement, that golden rule, of our duty to our fellow-men, voiced by our great Teacher -- Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. And obedience to this rule will work a blessing upon ourselves also; for if we learn to deal generously and justly with our fellow-men, it will help us also to exercise the same principle in our dealings with God.

Let us, then, learn to be just in carrying out our own obligations, and generous in our exactions from others. And while so dealing with God and

our neighbors, let us not forget the same rule in our homes. It is surprising and lamentable that many show less justice and less generosity in their dealings with their own families than with others, and are more willing to take advantage of their own flesh and blood than of others. No wonder that such lose influence over each other and lose respect for one another. Beloved, let us more and more strive to be Godlike -- just and generous.

BELIEVERS CONVENTION

The convention held in Boston proved to be one of the most interesting and profitable gatherings that has been held in that City. The number in attendance was even greater than had been expected; between 150 and 200 being present at the various sessions. The spiritual tone of this convention was indeed good, and as is generally said in connection with each convention, the last always seems to be the best. From the remarks of the friends in general it seemed evident that the discourses dealing with one issue or another bearing upon the Christian life and the Church's hope, were uplifting and encouraging in the Narrow Way. The testimonies, prayers, and songs of the friends during the various seasons of fellowship seemed richly blessed of the Lord and had the effect of stirring up the pure minds by way of remembrance, and of reviving and quickening the faith and courage of the brethren. in general. No doubt much of the blessing of this convention was carried away by dear ones to their homes in various parts, and some others who were not privileged to be present at the convention have been blessed by this influence of the Lord's grace and Spirit. Increasingly blessed it is for God's people to thus assemble in spiritual fellowship for the confirmation of their faith and love, and so much the more as they see the day drawing on.

"Let love and faith And hope and joy
Be pure, and free from sin's alloy;
Let Christ's sweet spirit reign within,
And grace subdue the power of sin."

THE ANGEL'S CHRISTMAS TIDINGS

*"For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior,
which is Christ, the Lord." -- Luke 2:11*

IT DOES not surprise us that the heavenly messengers who announced our Lord's birth made mention only of the glories that were to follow and not His sufferings and humiliation which were to intervene. It is not surprising that the angels did not weep for the sufferings and sorrows of the Savior, but proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men"; setting forth clearly the culmination of the great Divine purpose which had its beginning in the Savior's birth. It was not then the due time for the angels to recount the sufferings of the Master nor of His footstep followers during the nineteen centuries that were to pass, before world redemption would be realized.

It is recalled that in the Divine predictions of the Prophets of old concerning a coming Savior, attention is largely called to the fact that He is to be a King, a Deliverer, a Savior. This point is made prominent because God appealed to

mankind along the line of their necessities and hopes. The sacrificial feature of the Lord's ministry was made less prominent than His power and majesty and glory, because the sacrifice related especially to God and was to meet the demands of the Divine Law against the sinner-race. The question of how God would settle the matter consistently with His own sentence of death resting upon the race, would to the average human mind be much less important than the statement of the resultant glories, restitution, and blessings. Hence we find the references to the sacrificial features of our Lord's ministry, largely presented under types and symbols, intended to be comprehended only by those who, as sons of God, would be guided into the truth by the Holy Spirit.

From Glory to the Manger

The Evangelist Luke informs us that it was in response to a royal decree by the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, for a polling or census of the whole world for purposes of taxation, that Joseph and Mary went up to their native city to be enrolled and that thus it was that Jesus was born in Bethlehem; and on account of the great concourse of people at the same time and for the same purpose, accommodations being scarce, the stable of the inn or khan was used by some as a lodging. Joseph and Mary being of the late-comers were forced to occupy these humble quarters, and thus it was that the King of glory, whose Kingdom is by and by to rule the world, was in the time of His flesh born in a stable and cradled in a manger.

The words of another, describing the scenes and circumstances surrounding the Savior's birth, are peculiarly touching and interesting:

"One mile from Bethlehem is a little plain, in which, under a grove of olives, stands the bare and neglected chapel known by the name of 'the Angel to the Shepherds.' It is built over the traditional site of the fields where, in the beautiful language of St. Luke -- more exquisite than any idyll to Christian ears -- there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night, when, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and to their happy ears were uttered the Good Tidings of great joy, that unto them was born that day in the city of David a Savior, which was Christ the Lord.

"The associations of our Lord's nativity were all of the humblest character, and the very scenery of His birthplace was connected with memories of poverty and toil. On that night, indeed, it seemed as though the heavens must burst to disclose their radiant minstrelsies; and the stars, and the feeding sheep, and the 'light and sound in the darkness and stillness,' and the rapture of faithful hearts, combine to furnish us with a picture, painted in the colors of heaven. But in the brief and thrilling verses of the Evangelist we are not told that those angel songs were heard by any except the wakeful shepherds of an obscure village.

"'And suddenly,' adds the sole Evangelist who has narrated the circumstances of that memorable night in which Jesus was born, amid the indifference of a world unconscious of its Deliverer, 'there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will.' . . .

"From their northern home at Nazareth, in the mountains of Zebulun, Joseph, the village carpenter, had made his way along the wintry roads with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. Fallen as were their fortunes, they were both of the house and lineage of David, and they were traversing a

journey of eighty miles to the village which had been the home of their great ancestor while he was still a ruddy shepherd lad, tending his flocks upon the lonely hills. The object of that toilsome journey, which could not but be disagreeable to the settled habits of Oriental life, was to enroll their names as members of the house of David in a census which had been ordered by the Emperor Augustus.

Savior's Birth Devoid of all Earthly Comfort and Splendor

"The enrollment had drawn so many strangers to the little town, that 'there was no room for them in the inn.' In the rude limestone grotto attached to it as a stable, among the hay and straw spread for the food and rest of the cattle, weary with their day's journey, far from home, in the midst of strangers . . . -- in circumstances so devoid of all earthly comfort. or splendor that it is impossible to imagine a humbler nativity -- Christ was born.

"Distant but a few miles, on the plateau of the, abrupt and singular hill now called 'Jebel Fureidis,' or 'Little Paradise Mountain,' towered the palace-fortress of the Great Herod. The magnificent houses of his friends and courtiers crowded around its base. The humble wayfarers, as they passed near it, might have heard the hired and voluptuous minstrelsy with which its feasts were celebrated, or the shouting of the rough mercenaries whose arms enforced obedience to its despotic lord. But the true King of the Jews -- the rightful Lord of the Universe -- was not to be found in palace or fortress.

"Guided by the lamp which usually swings from the center of a rope hung across the entrance of the khan, the shepherds made their way to the inn of Bethlehem, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger. The fancy of poet and painter has reveled in the imaginary glories of the scene. They have sung of 'bright harnessed angels' who hovered there, and of the stars lingering beyond their time to shed their sweet influences upon that smiling infancy. They have painted the radiation of light from His manger-cradle, illuminating all the place till the by-standers are forced to shade their eyes from that heavenly splendor. But all this is wide of the reality. Such glories as the simple shepherds saw were seen only by the eye of faith; and all which met their gaze was a peasant of Galilee, already beyond the prime of life, and a young mother, of whom they could not know that she was wedded maid and virgin wife, with an Infant Child, whom, since there were none to help her, her own hands had wrapped in swaddling-clothes. The light that shined in the darkness was no physical, but a spiritual beam; the Dayspring from on high, which had now visited mankind, dawned only in a few faithful and humble hearts."

The Angels and the Shepherds

The vicinity of Bethlehem, is a pastoral country, and today is covered with flocks. It was the custom at the time of the Savior's birth for the shepherds to remain with their flocks by night as a guard against thieves as well as against wild beasts. It was in this vicinity that David (afterward king), when a shepherd-boy protecting his flocks, slew on one occasion a lion and at another time a bear. The shepherds as a class were not particularly well educated people as respects schools, and yet many of them were thoughtful and thus secured, in their leisure time while watching their flocks, by reflection and by conversation, considerable knowledge, so that they might be termed an intellectual and thinking class of people -- their minds being turned more to reflection on large subjects than are the minds of some who

are constantly immersed in trade and mechanics. The shepherd whom God honored in making him king of His typical Kingdom, was a great poet, and evidently much of his time while shepherding was given to the muse, and one of his most beautiful poems (Psalm 23) represents Jehovah Himself as the Shepherd of His people His flock, for which He cares.

Exceptionally noble men must have been those shepherds to whom the Almighty sent the angelic message respecting the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, which has rung down the ages and reached our ears -- the message which thrills us the more in proportion as we are able to grasp its meaning. First a single angel appeared to the shepherds and allayed their fears, saying, "Fear not; behold I bring you good tidings." It would appear that fear is one of the dominating impulses of the human mind, especially in conjunction with any revelations from the Lord. Men realize -- even the best of the race - - that they are imperfect and that the Almighty and His laws are perfect. Instinctively the world seems to realize that a curse or condemnation of the Almighty rests upon it, and instinctively it fears a further curse and further condemnation, realizing its continual and increasing sinfulness. The same, is true today with all except the comparatively few who are well informed respecting the Divine character and plan. Thus the subject of religion is generally obnoxious to the worldly -- a subject which they prefer to avoid, because of a feeling of guilt and a dread of further knowledge and condemnation.

Good Tidings of the Resurrection

It is for the true children of God .today, as it was for the angels at-that time, to assure the world that Gad is better than all their fears -- that God so loved the world as to redeem them from the just sentence of death, the curse that came upon all as inheritors of Adam's imperfection and sentence.

"Good Tidings" is another translation of our word "Gospel." How beautiful the thought that the Gospel is really and truly Good Tidings! The angel elaborated, saying that his message was Good Tidings of great joy, which should be unto all people, which means that God's Plan is wider and deeper and higher and grander than anything we have ever conceived. As every member of Adam's race shared in his fall and in the curse of death which came upon him as a result, so every member of the race was included in the great redemptive sacrifice which our Lord Jesus offered and which was finished at Calvary. God's Plan in Christ, as it is being worked out and shall ultimately be accomplished, will mean great joy for all people, and the tidings of this were given at the very moment of our Lord's birth, because He was the one through whom all the glorious things of the Divine purpose and Plan shall ultimately be accomplished.

The Gospel or Good Tidings announced by the heavenly messenger to the noble shepherds, stated the philosophy of the Divine Plan, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ [Messiah] the Lord." There we have the key to the entire Gospel statement of how God could be just and yet be the justifier of sinners who accept Jesus. The word "Savior" here signifies life-giver, and how beautiful is the thought that as death is the wage of sin, the curse upon the race, this Messiah who was born is to be the one who will rescue the race from the sentence by giving them life again. The explanation of how He would give life is not given, nor was it necessary at that time; but now, in the light of developments, and with the explanations furnished through the Spirit in the New Testament, we see how our Lord's

voluntary sacrifice of His life, dying the just for the unjust, settled the claims of Divine justice against Adam and thus incidentally against all who shared his sentence.

Truly the more we see of God's purpose for our salvation, which began to take shape in the birth of Jesus, the more we feel like shouting with the angelic choir, praises to the God of heaven, thankfulness for His mercy to the children of men. It mattered not that the Babe born in Bethlehem was the Savior only in prospect, that He could not even be anointed to do His work until He reached manhood's estate thirty years later; it mattered not that even then it would be necessary for Him to lay clown His life gradually through three and a half years of His earthly ministry, to be finished at Calvary; it mattered not either that the resurrection was still three days after that, and His ascension forty days later, and that the blessing in general would be deferred for nearly nineteen centuries thereafter. As the angels could sing and rejoice at the first budding of the Divine Plan of Salvation, so also can all who have faith in the ultimate outcome rejoice with joy unspeakable and give praise to God in the highest and to His Son our Lord.

"Saved by Hope"

Although nearly nineteen centuries have rolled away since that angelic message was delivered, it has not yet been fulfilled except in a limited measure by faith to those who have the eye of faith and the ears of faith, in all a "little flock." But the tidings of great misery for nearly all people has been spread abroad in the name of Christ, much to the discredit of the Divine Plan and to the dishonor of the Divine character. Instead of carrying joy, the message has very generally carried grief and sorrow, especially to the kind hearted and more generously disposed. Indeed, we may say that no message of the Lord Jesus, either true or false, has ever reached all people. Even today, after nineteen centuries of propaganda, only a comparatively small portion of the human family have ever heard of the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved-"nor is there salvation in any other." -- Acts 4:12.

What, then, shall we say of the salvation which is come to those who have truly accepted Christ as their Savior, and who are today rejoicing in Him as such, and who by faith are seeing the salvation of God begun in their own hearts and yet to be fully accomplished under the whole heavens? This the Apostle calls the salvation by hope. His words are, "We are saved by hope." (Rom. 8:24.) We are not saved actually; we are still surrounded by sin, pain, sighing, crying, and dying; the curse is not yet rolled away. All that the best of the Lord's people have received is salvation by hope, by faith. Yet this anticipation of the future salvation, of the resurrection from the dead, of a participation in the glory, honor, and immortality of the Divine nature promised to the faithful, is so strong, so clear, that those who possess it are enabled to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, even in the midst of trials and difficulties and weaknesses and unfavorable conditions incident to the curse which still rests upon the race.

Deliverance of the Church Early in the Morning

Yes, the angelic message was a prophecy of good things to be accomplished for the Church and the world during the Millennial Age. The Church is to have the first blessing. The First Resurrection is to be composed only of the blessed and holy who shall live and reign with Christ during the Millennium,

the thousand years 'in which' Satan shall be bound and when the good influences of truth and righteousness shall enlighten the whole earth. The declaration of the Scriptures is that the deliverance of the Church will come early in the morning of that Millennial Day, as the Prophet declares, "God will help her early in the morning." -- Psalm 46:5.

But much as we rejoice in the glorious hopes of the Gospel set before us who now see, who now believe, who now rejoice with joy unspeakable, we are glad that the Divine mercy and love are of such lengths and breadths and heights and depths as to encompass the whole world of mankind, and to provide a blessing for every member of Adam's race through Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood.

It will be during that glorious new dispensation then that this prophecy of the angel will have its fulfillment, and the great Savior who has already redeemed us by His sacrifice will stand forth as, the King, the glorified Messiah, and establish His dominion of righteousness in the world for the blessing and uplifting of every member of the race. In harmony with the words -of the Apostle, those will be times of refreshing, "times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." :If the Lord had based the hope of the world upon some works of merit or righteousness of the world's doing, then surely we might have feared -- indeed, the more we know of the world the less hope we would have. But, on the contrary, the Lord has based the entire proposition for the future blessing, not upon our worthiness, but upon the worthiness and sacrifice of His Son -- to you is born a Life-giver, which is Messiah the Lord.

How it adds to our enjoyment of the coming Age blessings to know that the trials and difficulties of this present Gospel Age are subject to the Divine supervision in the interest of the Little Flock that is now being gathered in advance from amongst men-the "Elect," the Church. We see how the present trials and difficulties are the chiselings and polishings necessary to our development in the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit in the character-likeness of God's dear Son, our Lord, our Hope, our Bridegroom. How joyful the thought that soon the elect number called from the world to be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, will be completed and enter into her glory. How precious the thought that then they shall be privileged with their Lord and Master to extend the Divine favor of blessing and uplift to the world! What higher honor or privilege or blessing could possibly come to any!

Peace on Earth not Yet but Soon

It was after the giving of the message of good tidings of great joy by the heavenly one that a host of angels appeared to the shepherds saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." This, too, is prophecy. It is not yet true, but will be fulfilled in every particular in God's due time, which we believe is now nigh, even at the door. Not yet does God receive glory in the highest, not yet is there peace amongst men. Quite to the contrary, God's name is blasphemed, not only by those who vulgarly and in ribald jest take the Divine name in vain, and not merely, by the heathen who worship devils and think they are gods, but even by Christian people God's name is blasphemed every day.

Noting that peace on earth and good will to men have not followed the Savior's birth thus far, and discerning that this is a prophecy of what is to be accomplished during the Millennium, many have been inclined to change the

translation of this verse so as to have it read, "On earth peace amongst men, in whom He is well pleased." However, by thus changing it the statement would not be true, for even the Lord's people have no peace on earth. Whatever peace they have is in their hearts, and based upon their faith in the Lord and in the glorious things which He has promised. Our Lord Himself and the Apostles testified to this, assuring us that whosoever in this present time would live godly should suffer persecution, that a man's foes would be they of his own household, etc. (2 Tim. 3:12; Matt. 10:26.) Let us not confuse ourselves nor abridge the testimony of the Word, but with the eye of faith look forward to the day of Christ in which all these glorious things shall have their fulfillment, in which peace shall indeed fill the whole earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, bringing Divine favor and rolling away the curse from the entire groaning creation, as pointed out by the Apostle. -- Rom. 8:22.

All Voices at Last Praising God

Not even with the inauguration of the Kingdom -of God will this prophecy be completely fulfilled: not until its close, when the human family shall have been lifted by the Kingdom regulations out of sin, sickness, pain, sorrow, and death, up to all that was lost in Adam -- not until then will there indeed be glory to God in the highest, not until then will there be peace amongst men. Nor are we to understand that the entire race will be appreciative of the Divine love and favor even after they have fully seen the righteousness of God in Christ manifested. On the contrary, the Scriptures seem to clearly teach that there will be a class who will then prove unfit for life eternal, unappreciative of the Divine favor, and who will be utterly destroyed from amongst the people in the Second Death. Thus eventually by the close of the Millennium, Satan and all willful wrong-doers having been destroyed, the time will come as declared in the Scriptures, when all voices in heaven and in earth and under the earth shall be heard praising God, Him that sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb forever and ever. Hosanna! Glory to God in the highest! Peace and good will to men! will be the final shout of a redeemed race when the great Plan of Salvation shall have been fully outworked according to the Divine Plan set forth in the Scriptures.

THE SCRIPTURE MOTTO FOR 1929

A motto for the year 1929 has been selected and we trust will be acceptable to all.

"SO TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS
THAT WE MAY APPLY OUR HEARTS UNTO WISDOM."

This text expresses a beautiful prayer that voices the heart's sentiments of every experienced Christian; all recognize the need of leaning upon the Lord and having the guidance of His counsel so that we may rightly estimate and value the days of our sojourn here, and so apply our hearts unto the wisdom that cometh from above.

The style of this card is somewhat different from that used in previous years. The text is printed upon very substantial cardboard with gold edges. Associated with the text is a very pleasing and attractive design. The card is 10 x 14 inches. It will be supplied at the usual price-twenty-five cents each, postpaid. It will be an accommodation to our office if the friends will group

their orders together, so that as far as possible the mottoes can be mailed in lots.

CHOICE SCRIPTURE POST CARDS

We supply choice post cards of various styles-beautiful and attractive. One design is especially appropriate for use during the Christmas season; another for sending New Year greetings; another with Christmas and New Year greetings combined; still others are for general use, appropriate all through the year. In ordering please indicate just which designs you desire and how many of each. Twenty cents per dozen, postpaid.

PARABLE OF THE VIRGINS

[This article submitted by a brother in Great Britain, is published not as representing the views of the Editorial Committee of this journal on all the Scriptures dealt with, neither as having the Committee's endorsement on all the conclusions reached. At the conclusion of the article some friendly comments are appended for the careful consideration of the brethren. -- Editorial Committee.]

WHEN trying to understand any particular portion of the Bible it is usually considered a safe plan to take careful note of the context, so that it may have its intended significance, and bearing upon the conclusions arrived at. At the same time it is well always to bear in mind that the original writings are not divided into chapters as we have them today, neither are they punctuated like ours. One finds that this comparatively modern method, which is intended as an aid to the proper understanding of the message, frequently has the opposite effect by disconnecting passages which should follow on in natural sequence: one such instance is that of the parable of the virgins which follows quite naturally the contents of the previous chapter,

The Lord has been telling His disciples of those things which would happen in the world during His absence in heaven; and towards the end of the chapter He begins to answer their question: "What will be the sign of Thy presence, and of the end of the Age?" First He warned them -- "Of that day and hour knoweth no man"; then He indicated the conditions which would prevail in the world, not so much as a sign of His presence perhaps as to show how ignorant they would be of the great event. "As the days of Noah, so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the presence of the Son of Man be." In their day Noah and his family exercised faith in God, and put their confidence in His word; they were, therefore, not children of darkness, but children of light. On this account they were privileged to go into the ark before the destruction came. Surely their safety lay in their faith in God, in works done in accordance with their faith, and in watchfulness. In view of the approaching climax of the Age, those who are just men, perfect in their generation as new creatures in Christ, may be expected to show similar characteristics, and also receive similar favor -- entering the open door before it is shut.

Solemn Warning for All

In the next two verses Jesus shows that God's chosen people will be following their ordinary occupations in these closing days unrecognized by men. We read: "Then shall two be in the field [world]; the one shall be taken, and the other left." "Two shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left." Here our minds pause awhile, wondering just what is meant. The thought of two men following similar occupations in the present life, and one is taken as a disciple and the other left is, perhaps, not very difficult of apprehension; but "two grinding at the mill" seems much more suggestive, and we cannot think that this special occupation is thus emphasized for no particular purpose. If it means that even those preparing spiritual food would be divided in this manner, it is a solemn warning for us all, and it should keep us on our guard respecting the food we accept.

Judging by the next three verses (42-44), the Lord is pointing out the great importance of watching, and being ready -- "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." Probably all students are aware that there is a feeling of expectancy abroad in these days, not confined to any particular people, but of a far reaching character amongst Christians. Again we read, "the one shall be taken," and we think of Jesus being "taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight"; of Elijah going "up by a whirlwind into heaven"; and "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him"; and our thoughts go to the Apostle's words: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up," and we wonder, realizing all the time that the words might have same such meaning for us, or on the other hand, an altogether different meaning to any of these, and that no one is likely to be able to expound their true significance before their fulfillment. Yet to ponder over them is to direct our thoughts in a proper direction, and at a very fitting time.

"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." Then follows a simple and straightforward statement by the Lord to His disciples, of what was to be looked for as evidence of His coming (arrival): "Who then is a [the] faithful and wise servant [singular], whom his lord hath made ruler over his household [domestics], to give them meat in due season?. Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing." "Indeed I say to you, that over all the possessions of him he will place him."

"Then [at that time] shall the Kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." Whatever meaning these words may have for us, it is not difficult to recall the days when the virgins had one consuming thought impressed upon, their minds, and which affected their lives to a large or small extent, according to the influence this hope had upon them. A little further on we read, "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept"; or, literally translated., "they nodded all, and did sleep."

Casting our mind back, we recall that the very year which failed to produce the hopes and anticipations of the virgins, namely that their "change" would take place and they would behold the Bridegroom, did in fact produce something else instead; something which caused them to become drowsy over the very matter which had previously possessed them. The war which commenced that year quickly attained such proportions that the whole of Christendom was pre-occupied with it, to the exclusion of practically every other thing. Before relief from this had come, severe trouble amongst the

brethren had broken out, which is not yet over; it has meant a dark and troublous time for the virgins.

If it be a fact that we have now reached the virgins' midnight hour, it means that it is due time that "there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom! Go ye out to meet Him." It is interesting to note the somewhat casual way the parable intimates the matter -- "there was a cry made." In a manner almost unsung, and often ignored, the cry "Behold the Bridegroom!" has encircled the world during the past two years. What are we to make of it? Surely we dare not ignore the fact in all the circumstances. It is noticeable that at the moment the "cry" was raised, it was not possible literally to see the bridegroom, he had not come we read of the virgins bestirring themselves, a trimming of lamps, requests for oil, and a going forth to buy some, and not until then did the bridegroom come. The revival of interest in the approaching *apokalupsis* of the Bridegroom has been very widespread and marked amongst a certain section of our brethren of late, which fact is quite pleasing to those watching.

Before the great event of entering the open door comes, we may expect something more to occur of a nature to correspond with the inquiry for oil. Apparently the time will come when a section of the virgins will awaken to a lack of something which is necessary to them, whereby they may go forth to meet the Bridegroom; it will be interesting to watch for the fulfillment of this. However we read: "While they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and **they that were ready** went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." "Watch therefore, for ye know, neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." The parable proceeds to show that some virgins will be found unprepared, therefore not worthy to share as part of the Lord's Bride.

Other Lessons

The parable which next follows makes clear the importance the Lord will place upon the use of the talents that have been entrusted to His followers. It is significant that these two parables are evidently intended to, indicate what is required of those who will form the Bride of Christ. In their setting they follow a description of experiences to be looked for during the Gospel Age, before our Lord's return; then, what was to be looked for at the time of His return.; then come these two descriptive parables; and immediately afterwards follows the coming of the new dispensation now drawing near, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory to judge all nations.

Truly "the Logos of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12.) It is also said of 'Him, "He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel." (Isa. 8:14.) What was it that demonstrated the difference between an Israelite, and an Israelite indeed? Was it not the recognition of the presence of the Logos of God? What demonstrates the difference between a wise and foolish virgin? Is it not the Logos of God, and their readiness, or otherwise, to receive Him? Will not the Bride hear His voice and follow Him quite closely, so that He might be to her a sanctuary, and not a rock of offense? If these things be so, how very forceful are the words, "Be ye also ready!"

SOME FRIENDLY COMMENTS ON THE FOREGOING

Attention is called to the fact that the writer of the above article appears to take the position that the announcement, "Behold the Bridegroom," is intended to describe the time when the Church would all be changed -- "Behold Him," in the sense of being ushered into His presence and glorified. Thus the article above goes on to say, "Casting our mind back, we recall that the very year [1914] which failed to produce the hopes and anticipations of the virgins, namely that their 'change' would take place and they would 'behold the Bridegroom,' did in fact produce something else instead." It does not seem to us that such a construction of the statement, "Behold the bridegroom," can be sustained by all the facts set forth in the parable. Let us note the order of events as indicated in the parable: First, there is the statement that ten virgins took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Some information had evidently reached them or some evidence been brought to their attention by which they understood that it was about the time when they should expect his arrival. Then apparently there was a delay; something of a disappointment, a tarrying time, during which all the virgins became drowsy and slept. Then at "midnight," that is, far into the night and considerably beyond the time when the bridegroom had been expected, a cry went forth "Behold the bridegroom; go ye out to meet him,." The meaning is obvious and there appears to be no room for equivocation. .

While the ultimate expectation of the virgins was that they would go in with the bridegroom to the marriage, yet this was not the immediate objective in their minds at the time they slept; the object then was the coming, the appearance of the bridegroom. Hence when the cry was raised!, "Behold the bridegroom," it could be nothing more or less than an announcement that he had come, that he was present. There were other preliminaries to be enacted before "going in with him to the marriage." They must go out to meet him; there must be greetings, etc., and this would require time and involve other considerations as the parable goes on to show; for it is at this point that a positive difference in the virgins is discovered. Some lacking oil in their vessels realized their lamps going out as they proceeded forth to greet the bridegroom. It is not till we reach verse 10, that we discover the point of the parable that relates to the glorification of the saints: it was after the discovery of the lack of oil on the part of the foolish virgins; it was after the discussion about securing more oil; it was still subsequent to their departure to the market place to purchase more oil: "While they went to buy, they that were ready went in with him to the marriage."

Behold the Presence of the Bridegroom

Now then we have the facts clearly before us: After more than eighteen centuries of the Church's career had passed, through the more sure Word of Prophecy and the signs of the times, faithful watchers became convinced that they were living somewhere near the time of Christ's Second Advent. They went forth to meet Him, in the sense of becoming deeply interested and engaged in an earnest investigation of the entire subject. The years went on and there was a disappointment; there appeared to be a delay, resulting in the virgins growing tired and weary and in their falling asleep on the subject. But they were aroused by an announcement, "Behold the Bridegroom." In other words, as they had been looking for and expecting the speedy return of the

Lord, when the announcement was finally made, it signified to the watchers as it did to the virgins in the parable, that their expectations were realized, that the Bridegroom had come and was present. Since then, other portions of the parable, such as the discovery of the lack of oil, the insufficiency of spiritual light to make progress in the Narrow Way, has been and is being fulfilled. And still we are waiting for the fulfillment of that point in the parable which denotes or signifies the glorification of the Church, represented in the words, "and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage," etc.

When the Cry Went Forth

Now while it is true that about the year 1914 many of the watchers were expecting to realize the end of their course and to go in with Him to the marriage, yet this would in nowise mark a fulfillment of the proclamation, "Behold the Bridegroom," inasmuch as this proclamation relates not to the Church's glorification, but is an announcement of the presence of Christ. And, as there are strong evidences of the Second Presence of Christ having been an accomplished fact for a considerable period of time prior to 1914, we must therefore look farther back to fix the time when the proclamation or announcement was due to go forth, "Behold the Bridegroom." In fact we do find that some forty years prior to 1914, this cry was raised, "Behold the Bridegroom"; and we discover nothing in the course of events that denotes a fulfillment of any part of the parable in connection with the expectations associated with 1914 .or the occurrences of that time.

As previously indicated, it is not till we reach that point in the parable which states that the wise virgins went in with Him to the marriage, that we find anything that corresponds or makes any specific reference to the glorification or completion of the Church. This, we have every reason to believe, is still future. And whereas the writer in the above article takes the position that the announcement or cry, "Behold the Bridegroom," has "in a manner almost unsung and often ignored, encircled the world during 'the past two. years," we would say that now for **more than fifty years** the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom,"* has in a most marvelous and remarkable manner encircled the entire globe many times in all the leading languages of the earth. It has signified not the announcement of some particular and exact date when the Church would finish her course and be glorified, but a proclamation of the official presence of the great King, an announcement that the Bridegroom has come and is gathering His jewels unto Himself and, enacting other preliminary features, preparatory to the establishment of His Kingdom.

* At whatever point we locate the going forth of the announcement "Behold the bridegroom," we must also locate the "midnight," for the parable explicitly states that it was at midnight that the cry went forth.

The Virgins Did not Know in Advance

.It is most worthy of consideration that in the parable of the virgins, there is nothing whatever to indicate or imply that the five wise virgins were given any knowledge in advance or had any definite information beforehand as to the exact time when they would all go in with Him to the marriage. The parable is entirely silent on that feature. It merely states that a time came when they all went in and that then the door was shut; in other words, the Church being complete, there were no further admissions. This would appear to be a strong hint that the Lord's people now, while they have heard the announcement, "Behold the Bridegroom," and are on their way, or have gone out to meet Him, are given no specific or definite information in advance as to just when they will all have gone in with Him to the marriage, or have entered the glorified state. The reasonable presumption is that such information was evidently not intended to be conveyed to any of the virgin class. They are still to walk on by faith; and having the oil in their vessels, their lamps will not go out and they can journey on in the light of their lamps until the due time comes and they all go in with Him to the marriage. Thus they continue that order marked out in the beginning of the Age, that "we walk by faith and not by sight."

"Be Ye also Ready"

From the lessons of the parable of the virgins* as well as from other portions of the sacred Word, we learn that the present is without doubt a most solemn and. perilous time for the Church-a day indeed in which every man's work is being tried, of what sort it is. "Let your moderation be known unto all men," says St. Paul. Thus this great Christian leader would impress upon all, the need for the application of the spirit of a sound mind, for the exercise of reasonableness, moderation, sobriety in all things. From the lessons of the past we may all learn that while it is eminently proper for the Lord's people to be deeply and earnestly concerned with regard to the time of the deliverance and exaltation of the Church, we may not with becoming grace attempt to pry into secrets that have not been revealed. Undue anxiety over matters that are not disclosed has led to speculative conclusions, the fixing and setting of dates when the Church is to be glorified or when other events were to occur, only to result in the end in discouragement and disappointment to those who have thus indulged themselves or to those who have been followers of such. The vital and all-important consideration for all .of God's children is represented in the Master's admonition, "Be ye therefore ready," that is, give all diligence in applying the principles and admonitions of the Lord's Word and give such careful attention to the working out of the Divine will in your life that no matter when the hour, day, or year may come for the closing up of the record of this life, you may be ready for the summons from above and hear the Master's Well done. -- **EDITORIAL COMMITTEE.**

* The parable of the virgins has been exhaustively dealt with in the October 15, 1927 issue of this journal and we shall be pleased to supply copies free on application.

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

Dear Brethren:

Beloved in Christ Jesus our Blessed Savior and Redeemer. Greetings in His holy Name.

I see the name of Brother Wiley mentioned as one of the blessed of the Lord who has been called to come up higher. All praise be unto the Most High for His loving kindness towards His faithful who enter into their great heritage. They are passing on one by one, those saints whose names have become familiar to me by their mention in the "Herald" -- that sweet messenger of precious uplift and cheer to the isolated and lonely little ones of the household, whose great joy it is, in this dark and weary wilderness of woe, through the selfishness of man towards his fellow-man.

I am sorry, dear brethren, that I am again late with my subscription, but my health has been so poor that for months I was, it was thought, sick unto death. Oh, how glad would I have been to lay down this weary burden of the flesh, had my Father willed this release for His weary aged one. But He surely has some wise and loving purpose in preserving His child in the midst of much trial and discouragement and darkness -- lonely, oh so lonely -- yet never alone, since He is ever present, praise His holy name, to sustain and comfort His helpless one. Truly it was He, my loving Lord, who inspired the thought and guided the pen of my beloved brethren by the most gracious messages in the precious, helpful Herald articles.

Surely, I loved my Father's most precious Word of Truth, which is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path in the truest sense, but only the Lord can know of the sweetness of the gracious light shed upon the Word by Present Truth teachings, as put forth by the late Pastor Russell in his writings -- Bible Studies, Tabernacle Shadows, and the good Towers, as edited by this true servant of God; and later those priceless Heralds, and the Peoples Paper. Oh my Father has been most gracious and thoughtful of His child's needs.

I am in the midst of a community so-called religious -- so imbued with Churchianity that they have neither time nor inclination for Truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Some time ago I sent you the names of three dear souls, earnest workers for the so-called church, prayerfully hoping their eyes would be opened, but Babylon has them firmly held, and they smile and tell me those American papers are too deep for them, wondering what any one can find in them. May the all-wise and loving One open the eyes of their spiritual understanding, and draw them with the cords of His love into His own wondrous and glorious light of truth.

I am enclosing a bank note to cover another year's subscription for the "Herald." Use the balance as you think best. I had hoped to send more to cover cost of Heralds sent out to others, but I am hemmed in with difficulties of which only God knows, and by His grace His child is learning obedience by the things she suffers I am learning my lessons in the school of Christ, for He knows and understands me altogether. I had been very willing to serve Him in my own way, but in mercy and tender love the blessed Master is gently leading His willful one unto Him.

The Lord God reward you dear brethren for your faithful service and Christly assistance to those in need of spiritual uplift and the Light of Truth. I am,

yours in His love, a sister by His grace through faith in His finished work of redemption. Mrs. A. G. -- Aus.

Dear Sir:

Having read one of your pamphlets entitled, "When the Morning Cometh," and seeing your invitation to correspond with you, I thought I would do so. I have heard a little of your work from a friend of mine, who is associated with your movement. I would be pleased if you could send me any other pamphlets on prophecy, etc. I would like also to know what amount of cash in our exchange would suffice for payment for the two books mentioned: "The Divine Plan of the Ages," also Volumes I and II of "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," particularly the latter one. I shall indeed be pleased to have this information from you if possible, and I thank you much for the pamphlet already received. I am,

Yours truly, a follower of the Lord, R. H. -- N. Z.