

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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THE HIDDEN LIFE IN CHRIST

"For He is our peace." -- Eph. 2:14.

THE more closely the various offerings of Israel's typical arrangement are studied, the more wonderfully they are seen to point to the completeness of our sufficiency in Christ. As with any other portion of God's Word, so here, a hasty, casual study will fail to discover the deeper lessons intended. To the studious mind, however, it is obvious that the detail of information given in the making of the type must be full of significance to those who live under the blessings of the antitype.

Paul, in writing to his Jewish brethren, reminded them that the Law had served as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. This similitude seems very fitting, for the Law not only revealed the need of Christ as a perfect sin offering, but in its diversified types it is ever pointing the believer or beneficiary of that sin offering, to the fullness of his supply, in Christ. When therefore the type reveals that "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin" and thus negatives all the believer's efforts in that direction, then it must follow that the efficacy of the antitype -- the "better sacrifices" -- will actually purge from guilt, leaving "no more conscience of sins." Surely this is what the Apostle intends when he concludes his argument on complete justification through faith in Christ with the statement: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." -- Rom. 8:1.

"In the Holiest of All"

God's foreknowledge of our feeble faith may have had something to do with the very frequent repetition of this important lesson in type and antitype. He foreknew the difficulty we would experience in accepting a full reprieve from past condemnation; and appropriating our full standing "in the Beloved One." With what condescending grace, therefore, He has provided for our need in this respect. To the Apostle's exhaustive expositions of this doctrine in the Epistles, God has stored up a volume of corroborative evidence in the typical rites of the Law. And on this reinforced foundation, "the law and the testimony," the believer is furnished a "full assurance of faith" in the reality of his sonship in Christ.

In the sin offerings and in the burnt offerings of Israel's typical arrangement, we have prefigured the completeness of Christ's work of sin atonement, and of the Father's approval of the devotion and faithfulness of Jesus in His great work of sacrifice. These very important lessons seem comparatively easy of comprehension to all believers in the shed blood. But is it not manifest that so often the thought of many never rises above the level of pardoning grace. They think chiefly of a cancellation of the penalty formerly held against them. They, of course, experience varying measures of peace and joy in the knowledge of their reconciliation with God through Christ, but the exalted privileges of fellowship and communion with God as sons, and with Christ as joint-heirs, "in the holiest of all," seems much more difficult to apprehend.

To assist us in this apprehension, we have a most helpful lesson taught in the "peace offering" sacrifices, which were based upon the acceptableness of the preceding sin offerings. In this arrangement, or order, the peace offering testifies that sin has been fully atoned for. But the mere cancellation of the penalty against the sinner is not the end of the Divine purpose. God seeks fellowship. He desires communion with His children. Likewise Jesus our great Sacrifice is not content merely to have stayed the hand of Justice and to have delivered us from wrath. He too yearns for fellowship and intimate communion with His brethren, purchased by His shed blood. All this, then, is the central thought in the peace offering. By virtue of the believer's faith in the Sin Offering he is now brought into a condition where his fellowship may be established with "the Father and the Son," where his grateful vows and covenants may cement and intensify the joy of his communion in this wonderful relationship.

What Was Prefigured in the Peace Offering

In Leviticus, Chapter 3, and again in Chapter 7, verses 11-18 and 30-34, we are shown that the Lord, the priest, and the offerer, all ate of or shared the peace offering. As proof of this let us note the following texts:

"And he shall offer thereof his offering, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire for A sweet savor: All the fat is the Lord's." -- Lev. 3:14-16.

"And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's, and his sons'. And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest . . . for the wave breast and the heave shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel from off the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest and unto his sons." -- Lev. 7:31, 32, 34.

"And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning. But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten." -- Lev. 7:15, 16.

This sharing of the offering, it will be observed, is the important difference between the sin offering and burnt offering, and the offering we are considering. In the former offerings the central thought is sits atonement, and the pleasure God Himself receives in beholding the devotion represented in the sacrifice being made. But the beneficiary occupies the position there of waiting for the cancellation of his guilt, and his subsequent privileges. He might be said to be a spectator.

But now in the peace offering the higher privilege of fellowship is introduced. The believer is now invited to eat of that which is so pleasing and precious to God, that on which He Himself feasts; representing primarily our sharing with God our great Peace Offering.

Of the Household of God

In Ephesians 2:14-22 Paul again establishes this thought. We quote: "For He is our peace, who made the two one, and removed the dividing veil of enmity, by His own body; making void the law of commands by true thoughts, so that from these two He might create in Himself one single new man, making peace, and reconciling the two in one body to God through His cross; having destroyed the enmity by means of Himself: and coming, He announced the good news of peace; to you afar off, and peace to those near; because through Him we both have access in one spirit to the Father. *Therefore* now you are no more foreigners and aliens: on the contrary, you are *fellow-citizens with the saints, and the household, friends of God*: resting upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being Himself the Angle-stone: into which the structure, harmoniously arranged, rises up into a holy temple for the Lord; and into whom you are being built for a dwelling place of God in Spirit." -- Fenton.

Here the Apostle, following his characteristic rule, puts Jesus in the center of the arrangement. He is the great Peacemaker. It is His work that is made the pivotal point around which Paul draws the circle that embraces "the saints," "fellow-citizens," and "the household friends of God." The Jewish believers, brought out from under the Law, and those once "afar off," Gentiles, are all given equal access through the same grace into the full fellowship and communion of the family of God; or, reverting to the type, he is revealing a feast of which God partakes with deepest delight, in which Jesus as Priest rejoices with full satisfaction, and in which we also share with inexpressible love and gratitude.

How God Feasts

With the picture before us then of the three participants in this peace-offering feast, Jesus being the center of attraction both to God and to us His redeemed and now adopted children, let us inquire how God feasts on His portion in this offering.

None but God could fully appreciate the faithfulness of His beloved Son as He beheld the constant, joyful devotion of that obedient One. This seems to be beautifully illustrated in the type. The choicest portions were first of all to be laid on God's altar, representing not only the propriety of the act, but also teaching that only God could perfectly estimate and enjoy the faithful obedience of Jesus. And with what delight God has feasted on the excellencies of His only Begotten Son! When He was "found in fashion as a man," the perfect corresponding price, prepared with a body and ready to sacrifice, the Father attests His approval: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." When the sacrifice is finished and He has ascended on high, the decree goes forth, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things Under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory [and the delight] of God the Father." -Phil. 2 : 9'-11.

But God enjoys further feasting as He beholds Jesus in His priestly service for us. Of God's attitude of heart, toward us we are informed by Jesus -- "The Father Himself loveth you." Yea, so precious are we that the very hairs of our head are numbered. He "commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." "Shall He not with Him also freely, give us all things." -- Rom. 5:8, 9; 8:32.

Surely so. When He sees our penitent hearts, He looks at Jesus and we are forgiven. When he sees our poverty and rags, He looks at Jesus and we are clothed. When he sees us wrestling against the evils within and without, beholds our frailties and remembers that we are but dust, He looks at Jesus and we are perfect. We are to Him a joy and delight, His peculiar treasure. All the joys of fatherhood are His as He views us reconciled through Christ.

How Jesus Feasts

As previously stated, the joy of Jesus is not limited to our deliverance from death. He too finds deeper joys in the relationships established through faith in His work for us. The Prophet represents His joy as being very closely identified with His redeemed brethren: "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee." How amazing the grace that bought us! How transcendent the love that embraced us as His betrothed! When He saw His Rebecca, He loved her, and having loved her, He loved to the end. "Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it." "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me shall be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory." "In all their afflictions He is afflicted," in all their failures "He is touched with a feeling of their infirmities." In all His victories they shall share, for, "He shall divide the spoil with the strong" -- share with His Bride all the triumphs of His reign. Truly He feasts upon the fruitage of the offering that unites God and us.

How We Feast with Them

The Apostle John has shown us that such a privilege is ours: "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3.) The same Jesus who is the delight of heaven, is a source of joy, comfort, and strength to us. God has given us the same object of delight and joy as that in which He Himself rejoices. Yea, "All things are ours because we are Christ's, and Christ is God's." We are given "richly to enjoy" His perfections, His acceptableness to the Father, His righteousness, His access into the holy of holies, out "of His fullness have we received."

In this connection it will be of interest to note another feature of the peace-offering type. Certain variations were permitted here that were not granted in the sin-offering and burnt-offering types. The animal offered could be either an unblemished "male or female." It could be offered either as a vow or as a thank offering. This striking difference would seem to illustrate the varying powers of appropriation possessed by the worshiper. In the matter of the sin offering, or the burnt offering, when these are recognized by believers generally, the fact of God's acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus and His perfect obedience are readily seen; but not so the matter of the complete deliverance from condemnation secured for us thereby. Doubting Castle with its Giant Despair is still found on the way to the Celestial City by many a pilgrim traveler. The old lament may still be heard:

"'Tis a point I long to know
Am I His or am I not?"

And when this lament is heard, it is the telltale evidence of an immature and unenlightened faith. Let us listen to the words of one who knew the full measure of peace in Christ that reconciliation and sonship imply: "If God is on our side, who, is there to appear against us? He who did not withhold even His, own Son, but gave Him up for all of us, will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"

Who shall impeach those whom God has chosen? God declares them *free from guilt*. Who is there to condemn them? Christ Jesus died, or rather has risen to life again. He is also at the right hand of God, and is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" What a feasting was Paul's. Is it any wonder that the malignant evil powers, the deepest affliction and distress, the bitterest persecution, the direst circumstance could never disturb his confidence. No indeed: "Yea amid all these things we are more than conquerors." Therefore, "Thanks be unto God who causeth us always to triumph through our Lord Jesus Christ."

All are familiar with the many statements of the Apostle, wherein our present privileged standing is set forth; for example: "Ye are dead and your *life is hid* with Christ in God." "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled, in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." But how very few appropriate the full meaning of these words of inspiration. Many thus deny themselves the joys of such a full assurance of faith. Yet is it not plain that the Lord delights to see us all feasting as fully as did Paul? All that I was, Jesus became, in order to bear my guilt. All that Jesus is, I am now made, in order that I may fellowship with Him. He took my place in death that I might reign with Him in life

"Hallelujah, what a Savior!"

As illustrating the difficulty so many experience in apprehending this great verity of grace, peace, and fellowship permitted us through Christ, we quote from a letter recently read. The writer of this letter had been a child of God for many years, deeply consecrated and wholly devoted to the Lord. But as the type shows, so it has proven true in experience, full atonement is a feature of grace least understood and last apprehended. The letter follows

"My dear _____,

"I was so pleased to get your nice letter, and feel I should reply to it, even although in pencil. I have not your letter at hand to refer to, but I noticed that you mentioned "our covenant by sacrifice" several times, and I just wonder what it all means to you. I used to think of that as meaning what I was doing, and many an unhappy hour I had thinking how constantly I failed in doing and in not doing. Many a time I surrendered myself to God, but I now think I was always thinking of the 'I' in the surrender (what I would vow do or say), and that went on for a long time.

"Many a lesson God gave me, and I always laid hold of something, but I can now see, it was always in connection with something on my part. I could fill a book, dear _____, with all the gracious things the Lord showed me, and I *thought I* understood it all, but now 'I have entered the valley of blessing so sweet,' and there is no more 'I' in the business.

"About eighteen months ago I was reading and studying Colossians a lot, and saw that Jesus was everything. In Him everything in heaven and in earth was centered --

God's will for us the Church, and His Plan for the world, and that He was always well-pleasing to the Father. While thinking about that, it came to me how pure and perfect, how lovely and all-satisfying to God our dear Savior was, and I thought if I were hidden in Him, then I too would be always well-pleasing to our Heavenly Father. It was as if a door opened and that door was Christ our Lord,

and I stepped in and was swallowed up in Him, lost in Him, and God found me in Him. *What* a day I had! All the verses I used to delight in had a deeper, sweeter meaning to me. He had overcome and He counted me as also having overcome. Out of His fullness I am all that He was and is. 'By whom the world is crucified to me and I unto the world.'

"I see my own weaknesses and failings, but I seek to follow Paul; and glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. The blood of Jesus Christ is always cleansing me, and He has taken me into the Holy of Holies, and made me sit down with Him, and His banner over me is love. What a difference! I understand what it . means to reckon myself dead in the old nature, in a way I never did before. I have entered into the joy of the Lord, praise His name! and everything has a different look in a way I can hardly describe. The work is done, and all is finished, and I go on following in His footsteps, seeking ever to refer all things to Him, and to lay hold"

This is feasting on Him. This is the lesson our patient, loving Father is ever seeking to teach us. It is for this purpose that He points us continually to Jesus as the one in whom He is well pleased, assuring us that if we will not only believe on Him, but learn to abide in Him we may then affirm, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and the Son," and then go on our way rejoicing in our share in His legacy of peace.

"TO COMMUNICATE FORGET NOT"

"But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." -- Heb. 13:16.

OUR Heavenly Father is very rich, possessing all things, lacking nothing, yet if we may judge from His dealings with His earthly creatures, His pleasure has been not so much in the possessing of these great riches as in the using of them for the good and blessing of His creatures.

"His providence is kind and large,
Both man and beast His bounty share;
The whole creation is His charge,
But saints are His peculiar care."

So also we become more and more like Him -- "partakers of the Divine nature" -- benevolence, kindness, and love will become more and more characteristic of us. Few perhaps of the "little flock" have been made stewards of this world's goods. It may be because there are few who could use and not abuse the trust, but such as have it should esteem it a privilege to be imitators of our benevolent Heavenly Father; not wasting it, neither hoarding it, but esteeming it merely as an agent for blessing and "doing good unto all men, especially to the household of faith." And we should be anxious and careful to use whatever God has put into our hands, and to be faithful whether over a few things or many things, remembering that the man with but one dollar may be as really a miser or a philanthropist as he who has a million.

True Benevolence and Breadth of Mind

What we should endeavor to possess is true benevolence and breadth of mind, charity, love. "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus our Lord," and it will lead you to regard and treat with tenderness and loving kindness, even those with whom you differ. Let us remember in this connection, too, that, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

The Spirit or mind of Christ is a meek and quiet and charitable spirit. It "vaunteth not itself, is not easily puffed up." Its fruits are the opposite of the depraved fleshly nature, namely love, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, etc. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" and "not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another," but displaying the Spirit of our Father in heaven, "and we shall be the children of the Highest, for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." "Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful."

But if it is a joy and privilege to be God's stewards to a greater or less degree in earthly goods, how much more blessed is it to be permitted to dispense the spiritual blessings and thus to be "stewards of the manifold grace of God." Do we appreciate the fact that each disciple of Christ is a steward, some to a greater, some to a less extent; some with many talents, some with few, yet "to every man [in Christ] is given a measure of the Spirit to profit withal" -- to make use of. What use are you making of the talents given to you? Before saying to us, Have rule over two cities, five cities or many things, He will ask us to give an account of our stewardship. He will not expect me to give an account of your stewardship, nor you to give an account of mine. To the Master each servant will give an account and stand or fall.

"Truth How Sacred is the Treasure"

But while it is true that we each have been given special blessings of knowledge and truth, and that certain responsibilities come with them, we would rather provoke others to love than fear. If we possess the Spirit of Christ, love, we shall esteem it a great privilege to be permitted to carry to others that which has done so much good, which has removed the clouds from our minds and brought us into the clear sunshine of God's love, revealing to us the grandeur of our Heavenly Father's character, the beauties and harmonies of His Word, and the "exceeding riches of His grace in His loving kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." If it has set our hearts to ringing in melodious harmony with the heavenly music, "bringing glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people," may it not produce the same effect upon others? Would that the story filled each of our hearts, that as a flame of fire it would consume all dross from our own hearts and set fire to all with whom we come in contact. Like the widow's cruse of oil, our treasure will fill to overflowing all the earthen vessels ready to receive it. Oh that every word of the beautiful song -- "I love to tell the story" -- could be the emphatic and truly heartfelt expression of all the brethren.

"I love to tell the story,
'Tis pleasant to repeat,
What seems each time I tell it,
More wonderfully sweet.

"I love to tell the story,
It did so much for me,
And that is just the reason
I tell it now to thee."

Again, if we would "do good and communicate," how should we tell the story? Tell it simply, tell it plainly; be entirely swallowed up with the grandeur of your theme. Lose sight of yourself and what you have learned; and let it be all "of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love." Too many take pleasure in telling the story only as they can make battle with it. They delight in using the Truth as a knock-down argument. This is an element of the old nature which, not yet dead, asserts its right to fight what it terms the Lord's battles or the spiritual warfare. A sad mistake; be not deceived into developing an element of the carnal nature in direct opposition to the fruits of the spirit-meekness, gentleness, patience, love.

Let Your Light so Shine

Truly we are told that "the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit," but remember it is not our sword. The Spirit does its own smiting and in its own way, but to us it says, "Put up thy sword." The command to us is, Be light-bearers. "Let your light so shine" by showing forth the fruits of the Spirit, that men may see your good fruits and glorify your Father in heaven. The Word is a lamp. By its light put on Christ's righteousness, and truth as a garment, then life it up to others that they may see your clean robes and be led to desire the same. Then let the Spirit use His sword upon others as He may see fit to humble them, strip them of pride, and bring them to the Rock that is higher than they.

We should not become discouraged if there are but few who love light rather than darkness. We should remember that the God of this world has succeeded in darkening the minds of many that they cannot appreciate the light of truth; that we are as it were, surrounded by men and women blinded totally or partially by sin and ignorance. Some, totally blind, can see and appreciate none of the good news; others can see a little but cannot see afar off. They can see only "the present evil world" (age) and are losing much pleasure and joy because they cannot see afar off, how that, "In the ages to come, God will show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His loving kindness toward us [who are] in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7); and how it is His Plan that both Jew and Gentile shall obtain mercy through your mercy. (Rom. 11:31.) Surely as it would afford great pleasure to strengthen and heal physical sight, much more should we rejoice to lead those who are blind spiritually to the Spirit's eye-salve the Word -- that they may rejoice with us in singing:

"O, the prospect it is so transporting,
Reapers, hasten the gathering we pray."

Of many it is as true today as when uttered: "Eyes have they but they see not, ears but they hear not." God shows us through the Lamp that this Age ends the, probation of none except those who do see and hear clearly and plainly; that because of Jesus' ransom there is to be an age of restitution. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." "Then all shall come to the knowledge of the truth" and "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth" and none shall say to his neighbor, "Know thou the Lord," for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest of them.

Seeking the Lord's Jewels

In presenting the good news of the Kingdom and the deep things of God, we should seek to follow Jesus' example, that is, while we at all times hold up Christ's righteousness to all men and thereby be to them "living epistles," we should seek to show "the deep things of God" to those who seem to have the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:9-16) ; knowing this, that spiritual or deep things cannot be discerned except by those having the Spirit. "He that hath an ear let him hear," saith the Spirit. This must be our method, therefore, when we find any one without an ear to hear, leave off telling such an one. You cannot give him an ear; God will do that in His "due time." Waste not valuable time and energy. Leave them in love and sympathy with God, and put no obstacle in their way.

Whenever you meet what seems to be "an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile," expect in such an one to find "an ear to hear." Commune with him first on spiritual things familiar to you both, that he may come to recognize you as led of the same Spirit -- a fellow member of "the Body of Christ," and an heir of the same glory. Then present to such the deeper things of God and your communion, instead of being a battle of words, will be profitable and blessed to both. To fully appreciate the meaning of our text, we should do good and communicate until we feel it. It is with such sacrifices God is well pleased. It does not amount to a sacrifice to merely give a dollar, or a moment, or an hour for which we have no other use. Let us give until we can feel it and then we may expect to feel in our hearts that "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." In concluding his marvelous exposition, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," Brother Russell gives the following impressive message:

"The Second Advent of Messiah, to set up His Kingdom in the earth, is an event in which all classes of men may have hope, an event which, when fully understood, will bring joy and gladness to all hearts. It is the day when the Lord's 'little flock' of consecrated saints has the greatest cause for rejoicing. It is the glad, day when the espoused virgin Church with joy becomes the Bride, the Lamb's Wife; when she comes up out of the wilderness leaning upon the arm of her Beloved, and enters into His glorious inheritance. It is the day when the true Church, glorified with its Head, will be endued with Divine authority and power, and will begin the great work for the world, the result of which will be the complete restitution of all things. And it will be a glad day for the world when the Adversary is bound, when the fetters that have held the race for six thousand years are broken, and when the knowledge of the Lord fills the whole earth as the waters cover the sea.

Are We Still Willing?

"A knowledge of these things, and the evidences that they are nigh, even at the door, should have a powerful influence upon all, but especially upon the consecrated children of God, who are seeking the prize of the Divine nature. We urge such, while they lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh, to lay aside every weight and hindrance, and to run patiently the race in which they have started. Look away from self and its unavoidable weaknesses and imperfections, knowing that all such weaknesses are covered fully by the merits of the ransom given by Christ Jesus our Lord, and that your sacrifices and self-denials are acceptable to God through our Redeemer and Lord -- and thus only. Let us remember that the strength sufficient which God has promised us, and by use of which we can be 'overcomers,' is provided in His Word. It is a strength derived from a knowledge of His character and plans,

and of the conditions upon which we may share in them. Thus Peter expresses it, saying, 'Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord, according as His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature.' -- 2 Pet. 1:2-4.

"But to obtain this knowledge and this strength, which God thus proposes to supply to each runner for the heavenly prize, will surely test the sincerity of your consecration vows. You have consecrated all your time, all your talents, to the Lord; now the question is, How much of it are you giving? Are you still willing, according to your covenant of consecration, to give up all? -- to give up your own plans and methods, and the theories of yourselves and others, to accept of God's plan and way and time of doing His great work? Are you willing to do this at the cost of earthly friendships and social ties? And are you willing to give up time from other things for the investigation of these glorious themes so heart-cheering to the truly consecrated, with the certain knowledge that it will cost you this self-denial? If all is not consecrated, or if you only half meant it when you gave all to the Lord, then you will begrudge the time and effort needful to search His Word as for hid treasure, to obtain thus the strength needful for all the trials of faith incident to the present (the dawn of the Millennium) above other times.

They Will Think You Peculiar

"But think not that the giving will end with the giving of the needful time and energy to this study: it will not. The sincerity of your sacrifice of self will be tested in full, and will prove you either worthy or unworthy of membership in that 'little flock,' the overcoming Church, which will receive the honors of the Kingdom. If you give diligence to the Word of God, and receive its truths into a good, honest, consecrated heart, it will beget in you such a love for- God' and His Plan, and such a desire to tell the Good Tidings, to preach the Gospel, that it will become the all-absorbing theme of life thereafter; and this will not only separate you from the world and from many nominal Christians, in spirit, but it will lead to separation from such entirely. They will think you peculiar and separate you from their company, and you will be despised and counted a fool for Christ's sake; because they know us not, even as they knew not the Lord. -- 2 Cor. 4:8-10; Luke 6:22 ; 1 John 3:1; 1 Cor. 3:18.

"Are you willing to follow on to know the Lord through evil and through good report? Are you willing to forsake all, to follow as He may lead you by His Word? -- to ignore the wishes of friends, as well as your own desires? It is hoped that many of the consecrated who read this volume may by it be so quickened to fresh zeal and fervency of spirit, through a clearer apprehension of the Divine Plan, that they will be able to say, 'By the grace of God, I will follow on to know and to serve the Lord, whatever may be the sacrifice involved

"Whoever comes in contact with truth, realizing its character, has thereby a responsibility with reference to it. It must be either received and acted upon, or rejected and despised. To ignore it does not release from responsibility. If we accept it ourselves, we have a responsibility toward it also, because it is for all the household of faith; and each one receiving it becomes its debtor, and if a faithful steward, must dispense it to the other members of the family of God. Let your light shine! If it again becomes darkness, how great will be the darkness. Lift up the light! Lift up a standard for the people!"

THE LIFE OF SEPARATION

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." -- Gen. 12:1, 2.

THE life of Abraham is a striking example of that separated life which an acceptance of God's call has always meant in all ages. Whenever God has taken occasion to bring certain men into His counsels for the purpose of carrying forward, His Plan for the human race, He has always required that such distinguished ones should stand out in clear view by a process of separation from their former associations -- Moses from the riches and advantages of the Egyptian court; David from the quiet peacefulness of the shepherd life; Paul from the seat of learning and worldly honor; Luther from the obscurity and isolations of the monastery. In every case the path to the glory attained in the Divine purpose was one of painful separations.

Separating Experiences

So it was with Abraham. When he stepped out "not knowing whither he went;" he was setting his face toward separating experiences that were to mould him into God's example of the wholly separated life, to all subsequent believers. His first step will break the ties of his home land. Successive calls will separate him to the life of a pilgrim and a stranger -- separate him to a life of special trials and sorrows that would never have been his had he remained in Ur of the Chaldees; separate him from his own schemes to work out his destiny; and through all, separate him to a high and lofty fellowship with God.

As the "father of the faithful" and as a "friend of God," how his record speaks to us of the great purposes of God in the diversified experiences of our own separated life-explaining experiences which we would otherwise be unable at present to comprehend. As he staggered not at the promise which seemed to involve so much as to surpass human expectations, so he teaches us the need of that far-sighted vision which will enable us to interpret the many windings and turnings that will lead us at last to the place where all the "exceeding great and precious promises" will be fulfilled to us.

This full separation on the part of Abraham was necessary before he could fulfil the Divine purposes. Had he failed in faith and obedience at any crisis in his eventful life by holding back when God called him to take a further step, he must then have made shipwreck of all his extraordinary privileges. He could receive the promise fulfilled in all its fullness, only as his obedient faith led him, further and further from his native home. First it was a promise of "a land that I will show thee," then, when he had set foot on its soil, it was, "to thee will I give it." First it was, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee," then, when he had passed test after test, even to parting from his beloved Isaac, it was, "in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars . . . and as the sand upon the sea shore." -- Gen. 12: 1, 2 ; 13:15 ; 22:17.

Abraham as an Example

Is this not the lesson Peter teaches us of God's multiplication methods? "Whereby are given unto us *exceeding great and precious promises*: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature." Have we not heard a call to separation that has been accompanied with promises of present and future blessings *exceeding* the hopes of all others? Have we not realized that obedience to that call brings us increasing appreciation of the *greatness* of our promised inheritance? And as obedience crystallizes into character, have we not visualized a *precious* inheritance that exhausts God's power to give more? -- the whole land in all its lengths and breadths, and a seed so innumerable as to comprehend the fullest possible reward.

Abraham was a man of obedient faith. Had he lived in our day of Spirit-begetting and greater privilege, how truthfully he could have sung:

*"O! speak, and I will hear;
Command and I obey;
My willing feet with joy shall haste
To run Thy righteous way."*

It is important to observe this feature of Abraham's character. Faith, we are shown, does not stand alone, but is inseparably related to hopes and expectations that produce results -- works. When Jesus found some in His day making claims of loyalty to Abraham, and thereby professing to share his faith, He very pointedly exposed the fallacy of their claim. by showing them that their treatment of Him was not what Abraham's would have been under similar circumstances. Their faith in the matter of Abraham's fatherhood of the nation, and in the promises made to him, was of no real value in itself. "Faith without works is dead" was the diagnosis of their case, as revealed by Jesus. All was null and void because there was no responding obedience. The test of relationship to Abraham therefore has to do with our conduct as well as with our faith.

Light for the Righteous

True children of Abraham, in any age, will display in their reactions toward the unfolding revelations of the Divine will an underlying affinity of spirit with the great principles of God's righteous character. Every advance step in understanding will mean a further step of obedient response. It is a great mistake for any one to act as though truth were given chiefly for our mental illumination. Perhaps it is almost as great a mistake to think that it is given chiefly for our correction in doctrine. Rather, as the Scriptures teach, God's chief purpose in our enlightenment has to do with our reactions toward the great fundamental principles of His character which it reveals to us. How possible it is to attain a very remarkable accuracy of understanding of the doctrinal framework of the Plan, without having learned the spirit and holiness of its Great Architect.

The seriousness of this oversight on the part of many may be seen in the very general use made of many Scriptures which it is feared are often used without due consideration being given to the principles involved. There is great need of careful heart inspection when we would use in discourse, or appropriate in personal application, some of these Scriptures; for instance, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart"; "The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"; "The secret of the Lord is with those that reverence Him"; "The wise shall understand," etc. How very seldom do we hear the emphasis put on these Scriptures where God most

certainly puts it, namely on the righteousness, the uprightness, the justness, the reverence, and the spiritual wisdom of the recipient of His favor. Perhaps this explains why so many seem to have a greater knowledge of God's past and future program than of His present dealings revealed experimentally in hearts and lives fully obedient to the deep foundation principles of His will. To all such the separated life of Abraham contains many needed lessons, teaching one and all that light and favor are given only as faith and obedience prepare the heart.

Abraham a Man of Vision

Abraham's far-sighted vision received the special attention of Jesus: "Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad." Paul also makes mention of this element of his character, reminding us that Abraham looked down the ages and visualized an inheritance secured and established like a city whose builder and maker is God. But in order that we might the more fully appreciate the far-sightedness of Abraham we have a striking contrast presented to us in his nephew Lot. There must be some purpose behind the record furnished us in the Scriptures respecting Lot's association with Abraham. It is not at all necessary that we consider him a typical character and then proceed to find his antitype today, but perhaps some valuable lessons may be drawn from the very marked contrasts in the characters of these two men.

Perhaps Lot's mistakes may very well serve to illustrate similar short-sightedness observed today. No doubt he was quite familiar with Abraham's expectations; it is possible to believe that he even entertained a hope of eventually sharing the promised blessing with Abraham. But lacking the faith and vision of Abraham, he is never known as waiting upon God, or waiting for the positive evidences of His leading. He is a man of immediate action: If Abraham is willing to do nothing but wait for the inheritance, not so with Lot; he will proceed to take possession at once. If he had lived in later dispensations, no doubt he would have been a prominent leader amongst those who would ignore the expressed will of the Head of the Church and proceed to officially oust Satan and then designate his kingdom of darkness Christ's Kingdom or in some other way reveal a disposition at variance with the definite time features of the Divine wisdom.

The plains of Sodom, so representative of the lower levels, in contrast to Abraham's portion in the hills, are preferred by Lot, and after pitching his tent in that direction and later advancing toward that city, he finally moves in. Sodom of course is a wicked city, but he will reform it, "sitting as a judge in the gate." If Abraham remonstrated and urged a residence separate from Sodom, and counseled faithful waiting for God's leadings in the matter, it would not be difficult to imagine that his wise counsel would be rejected as being that of an "old man dreaming dreams," while he himself, young, active, enterprising, a "young man seeing visions," would show what could be done.

He Learned to Wait upon God

They that wait upon the Lord make no mistake. Abraham's dreams made him a man of sterling character. His waiting upon God enriched him a thousand fold. His "dreams," his settled grasp of the Divine purposes, have stood the test of, four thousand years. Today he may stand unashamed before a world familiar with his name and his expectations. He may stand and point back with pride to those cherished hopes that made him glad, and prove them the immutable word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

But what of Lot, the "young man of vision"? What became of his visions of transforming Sodom and establishing himself as a judge and corrector of that which God had predetermined should be utterly destroyed? What of all his claims of what he would accomplish? Yes, what about any expectations he entertained of being approved of God? Is it not a story that has been repeated again and again? "We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants [systems] of the world fallen." (Isa. 26:18.) Surely this contemporary of Abraham has had many successors! How many present day "young men's boasted visions" will not last one year until faces are hidden in shame, "for the Lord hath not spoken."

Would we stand in the place of Divine approval, then let us meditate deeply on the fact that Abraham was separated, willingly, gladly, from all his own plans and schemes, and that he learned to wait upon God.

Abraham outside of Sodom was a greater rebuke to its wickedness than Lot on the inside meddling with its affairs and corruptions. Abraham was out on the hills near to God, developing character in the crucible of faith and patience, and became "like a city set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid." Lot was where character was of little consequence, and the results were the inevitable. Surely he had been seriously affected by the atmosphere of a place that had so dulled his sense of purity and abhorrence of immorality that he could so readily offer his daughters up to a shameful corruption.

To Obey Better than Sacrifice

God is not mocked, and His law cannot be trifled with. If we sow to the flesh, we will as surely reap corruption, death. In the day when the records of our characters are an open book will we be able to face them unashamed? How will our present conduct, our present activities, our present theories, judgments, etc., appear when we look back upon them from the other side of our few short years of life? Solemn question! When God predestines a character-likeness to Jesus, when Jesus teaches that purity and holiness are of the utmost importance in order to see the Father's face, how vital the issue is! The separated life of obedience, of vision, will alone assure to us the ultimate joy and approval awaiting faithful Abraham's children.

Abraham obeyed God. Paul informs us that it was this obedient exercise of his faith that constituted him righteous. Great as his works might be, there was no place for boasting there. Thus it is that again and again we are told of his obedience. This is the secret of his approval. When God speaks he obeys. He "gets out" or he "gets up" without question. There is no attempt at compromise, no parleying with God for some modification of the conditions, but a readiness to go the full limit of the command. As an example he again shows us the way of true conduct.

Compromise where the issue of right and wrong is uppermost is always the sure indication of a deficiency of character. When God speaks to us, or calls us out, or up, there is no possible expediency that can postpone obedience, else He stands revealed to us as prematurely requiring that which wisdom would delay to a more opportune time.

How fortunate it would be if by some means this lesson could be deeply impressed upon the minds of all who profess relationship to the Abrahamic promises. How strange it is that any should trifle with eternal issues that involve a love of righteousness and a corresponding hatred of iniquity, when all must

know that in the judgment of God every wrong act, every sympathy, every preference indulged, every violation of conscience, pulls our characters further away from God.

The Compromising Lot

Obedient Abraham ascends from grace to grace; each call heard and promptly obeyed brings him nearer the goal of his God-intended destiny. Compromising Lot finds no difficulty perhaps in overcoming any question relating to his conduct. His good intentions will be sufficient reason for his residence in Sodom. His exposure of the errors of the Sodomites will detract from any lapses of his own. When God does speak to him, not as friend to friend, but in stern command

"Get thee out," his ears are dull of hearing, the conversation of Sodom has shut out the voice of God. Now if needs be, he will abandon Sodom, but not with prayers of repentance, but and here surely angels would fear to tread -- with stipulations, amendments of the Lord's requirements. There could be nothing wrong about stipulating just how far he should go; God ought to be willing to compromise on Zoar.

O presumptuous self-will that fails to bow to the wisdom of God's commands! that dares to refuse to whole-heartedly obey the final call back to the mountains of complete separation! that presumes to believe that a compromise between the wickedness of Sodom and the holy sanctified life of the saint can be secured by "sitting in the gate," rendering judgment, and that such will gain the approval of a thrice holy God! There awaits for such, an anguish and chagrin so bitter, that the Savior can describe it only as "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Abraham's life of obedience to God separated him entirely from the sorrows associated with Sodom's overthrow. Lot's distance from God meant that he was too near to Sodom, and its destruction will ever remain a part of the history of this vacillating man. Would we in the day of fire now at hand, that will utterly overthrow Sodom's antitype, be entirely separated. from its distress, and stand before the Son of Man? If so, our present attitude is that of waiting upon and obeying God as Abraham did; cultivating nearness to God. If we fail in this, our names will be as inseparably connected "with the hypocrites" as Lot's name is with wicked Sodom's doom.

He giveth Grace to the Humble

Abraham maintained his humility. Notwithstanding the exceptional nature of God's dealings with him, he never forgets his proper position before God. If he would address the Lord in prayer, the way was prepared by the humble acknowledgment that he was but "dust and ashes." God might speak to him as friend to friend; angels might sit as guests at his table; but he remains the same striking exemplification of this premier quality of character. How few men there have been whom God could entrust with such honors! A little special honor, a little exaltation, and how few can maintain a humble walk.

But back of all these exhibitions of excellence on the part of Abraham may be found the hidden springs from which such a character grew. Over and over again the personal intercourse this wonderful man enjoyed with God is reiterated. It is in this that we find the true secret of his humility. "Abram fell on his face; and God spoke to him." (Gen. 17:3.) Surely it was that very intimacy that kept him safe from pride of heart. "And God spoke to him." How suggestive the statement! It speaks of a clean life, for God does not converse with the unclean. It tells of commands faithfully obeyed, for God cannot hold communion over a broken

vow or command. It declares in unmistakable language that here was a character, a life, in which God could have His way, to whom He could speak His word, and then see that word bring forth rich fruitage in a human soul that He could ever after introduce to the world as "the friend of God."

Great Examples of Humility

Job furnishes us with an illustration of this same truth, namely that personal communion with God produces humility. The story of his adversity reaches the point where he had exhausted himself in defending his integrity. Then God speaks. When God has been heard, Job forgets his questionings and his labored defense, and is ready to confess, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." How changed his attitude when he kept silent "and God spoke to him."

Isaiah saw "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," and heard the "voice of him that cried." "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips."

St. Paul knew this experience also, and he too teaches us that increasing nearness to God works out in our characters this adornment. In chronological order he writes about the year 59 that he is the "least of the Apostles." Some five years later, during which time he has been learning to "know Him and the power of His resurrection," he writes that he is "less than the least of all saints." About a year later, he writes to Timothy, his life nearly finished, his work almost done, he is ready to be offered, but he is now lower still, "the chief of sinners."

This is the lesson for us. "By their fruits ye shall know them" is an unerring rule. Whether we will have it so, or think to change this law, we cannot escape it. If we are characters to whom God, speaks in terms of friendship and revelation, we must display the stamp of humility, for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." If we would be ministers in His sanctuary, standard-bearers in His service, we must be first of all humble. If we would be prepared unto all good work and be instruments to assist others into closer fellowship with God, we must be clothed with humility. Only such are true servants of God of whom it can be truthfully said, as it was of Abraham, "He fell on his face, and God spoke to him."

Keep back Thy Servant from Presumptuous Sin

By contrast with this wonderful humility on the part of Abraham how striking is the conduct of Lot. With his history before us are we not astonished at the boldness of his approach to God: "Oh, not so, my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in Thy sight." Poor Lot, he had lived too far away from God. His vision of God's wisdom and holiness seems to have been sadly obscured. His estimate of sin had been influenced to such a degree that apparently it was only the impending doom of Sodom that influenced him. The angels of mercy must perforce pull him out of the city -- "saved so as by fire."

Doubtless in the days of fellowship with Abraham he had clearer views regarding sin defilements as he saw righteousness and separation illustrated in Abraham's life. But "evil communications corrupt good manners" and subvert good teachings also. Sitting "as a judge in the gate" may have so occupied his time that he lost sight of the more important matter of his own personal purity and separation. If character came by birth, and through circumstances entirely beyond his control, why trouble about it. If heaven-sent messengers have faithfully pointed to the mountains where the atmosphere is pure and holy, where

Jesus taught, and prayed, and appeared in shining glory, they must be rebuked. "Oh, not so, my Lord," and the daring modification favorable to a personal preference substituted, seeking concessions on the ground of being "thy servant." Oh merciful grace that endures with long-suffering patience the tardiness and self-will of blinded minds! Oh love Divine all love excelling, that will still endeavor to pull the scorched and burning brands from the fire! that will not quickly leave precious souls to the utter destruction of the cities of the plains, but reaches forth to save through "great tribulation" unwise and wayward Lots!

Would we learn this lesson of humility? Then let us remember that after we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants. True humility is never boastful, never parades its accomplishments. It is always diffident, adorned with meekness, and deeply appreciative of the wisdom of all God's arrangements. Abraham bowing to the will of God found exaltation. Lot's choice of the plains automatically drove Abraham to the hills. While Lot was gravitating downward, Abraham was ascending upward, to higher ground. This, beautifully prefigured his life, for as we have seen, every test passed, lifted him nearer to God. He had therefore no complaint against Lot, for he had been willing to leave the choice entirely in the Lord's hands. The portion left to him served his highest interests best.

If Our Vision is Clear

How illustrative this is of age-long experiences. Again and again the true Church has been driven into the wilderness. Various means may have been permitted by the Lord to accomplish this, but invariably this departure to the wilderness has meant a cleansing of the Church. Indeed this must always be expected until the Bride is complete: "Let both grow together until the harvest," said Jesus; "Many are called but few are chosen" implying in both statements an overwhelming number rejected from the heavenly Garner. By reason of numbers, first choice, control, and place in the field falls to those who compose that number, until the Lord, who knoweth them that are His; finally separates His Little Flock from the violent who take the Kingdom of Heaven by force.

If our ears are open, and our vision is clear, this overruling of God's care in Abraham's experience will reveal important and encouraging lessons for us. He progressed from grace to grace over the stepping stones of God's providences. He wasted no time attempting the reformation or overthrow of Sodom, neither did he appear to waste very much time reproving Lot. His special effort in so far as Lot was concerned seemed to be centered in his own example, and in prayer for him.. He appears to have done more praying for the "righteous" in Sodom than in anything else on their behalf, but was always ready to lend a helping hand to deliver his kinsman from danger. This lesson is also a wholesome and much needed one.

Let us then look to Abraham, the father of the faithful, observe his example of obedience, separate ourselves fully to the will of God, and ere long we too shall possess our land of hope and promise in all its lengths and breadths.

WHO SHALL STAND IN HIS HOLY PLACE?

"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." -- Psa. 24:4.

WHEN in the Divine counsels it was determined that a great redemption should take place on earth, the signal proclamation went forth, Who is worthy to be

entrusted with so high an office? Who is there in all creation that has so won the approbation of Jehovah as that he would be accounted worthy to be entrusted with the responsibility of opening the great Scroll, of unfolding the Divine purpose, and bringing in eternal redemption?

For a time it appeared as though none would come to the rescue, that none was found qualified to undertake this great office. Long ages rolled by, while the curse of sin with all of its tragic consequences rested upon creation on earth, and it seemed that there was to be no deliverance. Then another proclamation went forth when the Lord Jesus, by His faithfulness and loyalty attested by the supreme sacrifice which He made, was declared of the Father worthy to carry forward the great redemptive purpose and was seated at the right hand of the majesty on high, King of kings and Lord of lords-"Let all the angels of God worship Him."

Who is Worthy to Stand with Christ?

But there was in the counsels of the Great Jehovah a call for joint-heirs with His Son, and a declaration that those joint-heirs should be chosen from amongst the sons of men. Again the question was logically raised, Who is fit, who is worthy, to be so highly honored as to sit with Jesus in His throne? In the language of the Apostle, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Indeed, no one is in himself worthy; it was to be the opportunity for the matchless grace of God to work marvelously. And not until the power of God has wrought the effects of the transformed life is there anything to be found of value in His sight. Herein is the sum of the operation of the Spirit of God in this dispensation, in those who, having heard the Divine Message, have renounced sin, and, becoming partakers of His holiness, ultimately constitute the class of whom it is said, "They shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy."

Long centuries ago in prophecy the solemn and important question was asked, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in His holy place?" To ascend into the hill of the Lord is to come into His Kingdom as loyal and obedient subjects, as true citizens, worthy of all its blessings and privileges; and not as aliens and foreigners, having no part nor lot in the common interests and inheritance of all the true and loyal people of God, namely eternal life and all its blessings of righteousness, peace, and everlasting joy. Who indeed shall be counted worthy thus to ascend into the mountain of the Lord? "And who shall stand in His holy place?" The reference here is to the antitype of the typical temple of God, which, standing upon the top of Mount Zion, prefigured the glorious true temple, the Church of the living God, in Kingdom power and glory. Who shall stand in that holy place in that. Age of glory and blessing now so near at hand? -- who shall be counted worthy to reign with Christ in His Kingdom?

Qualifications for the Kingdom

The answer to both inquiries is the same, "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." These will be the required qualifications for citizenship in the Kingdom, when the Kingdom is established; and they are also the qualifications required now of all those who would be heirs of that coming Kingdom. It will be observed that the qualifications mentioned are not those of faith (for faith in the Gospel of the Kingdom, which included faith in Christ the King and Redeemer, is implied in the desire to be in the Kingdom in any capacity); but the qualifications mentioned here are those of character. The Scriptures elsewhere make more specific mention of the necessary faith, but always implying a character consistent with the faith. (Acts 16:31; John 3:16, 36.) The Prophet does not ignore faith, but points to that character which is the legitimate consequence of a true faith exercised unto godliness. A faith which does not produce character is null and void. (Jas. 2:17.) Therefore it is plain that both the heirs, and the subjects of the Kingdom Of God must have that character which is both begotten and developed by the faith of the Gospel; for if the faith of the Gospel be held in unrighteousness there is no place in the Kingdom for any such. (Rom. 1:8.) Let us consider the character-requirements here mentioned.

"Clean hands." -- That means clean actions, clean conduct. If bad, habits of any kind have been cultivated, they must be promptly forsaken. The hands must not be defiled with the holding of bribes, nor with the gain of oppression, and every evil thing must be resolutely put away. (Isa. 33:15.) It is in vain that any profess loyalty to God and to His anointed King and Kingdom while they continue in a sinful course of action. Loyalty to the Kingdom signifies determined opposition to sin in all its forms and a firm resistance of it.

"A pure heart." -- That signifies purity of will, intention or purpose, which, like the needle to the pole, always turns toward righteousness. Though some sudden or strong temptation may for an instant, through the weakness of the flesh, draw it to the right or to the left, yet quickly it recovers its normal position, which is true to righteousness and truth. A pure heart loves righteousness and truth, and hates iniquity. It loves purity, and despises all that is impure and unholy. It loves cleanliness of person, of clothing, of language, and of habits. It delights only in the society of the pure, and shuns all others, knowing that "evil communications corrupt good manners."

Pride and Deceit

"Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity." -- Pride is an abomination to the Lord and to all those who partake of His Spirit. It is a weed which, if once permitted to take root in the heart, will soon crowd out every grace. The Psalmist says, "I hate vain thoughts"; and such should be our sentiments. The grace of humility, meekness, is one of the most beautiful that can adorn the character. It takes a sober estimate of personal qualifications, is not puffed up, does not behave unbecomingly, and seeks to exercise its talents, not for pride and vain glory, but for the joy of doing good. It is modest, candid, and sincere, both in consideration of its own qualifications and those of others. What comfort and pleasure are found in the society of those possessed of such a spirit!

"Nor sworn. deceitfully." -- Those who make a solemn covenant with the Lord, and who thereafter willfully despise or ignore it, have sworn deceitfully; and surely no such disloyal subjects can be admitted either to citizenship or heirship in the Kingdom of God. But those who, in this Age, have made a solemn

covenant with God and who are true to their covenant, even unto death, they shall ascend into the holy place; the temple of God -- they shall be the heirs of the Kingdom, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; while all such, in the Age to come, shall be recognized and privileged citizens of the Kingdom.

The Prayer for Cleansing

But, beloved in Christ, what processes of the Spirit's working in us are necessary in order for us to meet the prophetic description foregoing and be accounted worthy! What humility, what insight and discernment are necessary in order that we may discover those secret recesses of the heart that contain selfish and unholy designs! Is it any wonder that David prayed, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults." (Psa. 19:12-14.) These words of the Prophet are the sentiment of all the saintly. By these words David showed his recognition of the fact that he was not capable of cleansing himself. He recognized that he might have secret faults that he did not appreciate himself -- that he did not see himself. Perhaps he did not see some faults that others would see. He desired God to cleanse him from these. This indicated that he desired to get away from everything that was not in harmony with God.

This would be the proper sentiment for all Christians. We should pray to the Lord that He would show us whatever in our lives is not fully pleasing and acceptable to Him, that He would help us to see ourselves as others see us, and especially to see ourselves as He sees us. We believe that many of the Lord's people have been shown their imperfections and weaknesses (in the Lord's providence) by a very severe jolt. We ask the Lord also, as did the Psalmist, to keep us back from presumptuous sins, to cleanse us wholly from these.

But how is this holiness perfected in us? How does God work in us to will and then do his good pleasure? The Apostle answers this question, assuring us that it is God's part to give us the promises; and that these promises constitute the incentives to those who are in the right attitude of mind. Without these Divine promises of the present and the future blessings, who would battle against his, own weaknesses? Who would strenuously resist the attacks of the world and of the Adversary? Moreover, who would willingly sacrifice his life and all his natural rights to serve the Lord and His cause, if there were no exceeding great and precious promises to quicken and energize him to the service of the King, in battling against sin, in assisting all who are on the side of righteousness? Surely there would be few, if any at all. And so we read, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves," etc. The promises are indeed the power of God unto our cleansing -- our salvation -- as pointed out by St. Paul. -- Rom. 1:16.

"Great and Precious Promises"

Looking into the context to see to what promises the Apostle refers, we find in the preceding verses the declaration, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:17, 18.) What a promise! What a suggestion! -- that we, by nature defiled and imperfect, should not only have the notice of our sovereign Creator, but should be invited to become His children and be given the assurance of His parental affection for us -- that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence Him." How wonderful it seems! And then, as the Apostle elsewhere declares, this is not the end of the matter, but merely the beginning, for he says, "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and

joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." -- Rom. 8:17.

Yes, it is this thought of what is implied in the term children of God, sons of God. The blessings and riches of the Father are to be extended through our Lord Jesus, especially to the Little Flock, which is now being selected from amongst men to be His Bride and associates in the Kingdom. These are not accepted into the Kingdom at once, but as it were on probation, as the Apostle says, "Now are we the sons of God; but it Both not yet appear what we shall be" -- if we are faithful. As sons of God in the present life we have the joy of knowing of our Father's character through His Word, which we are permitted to understand, but which the world does not understand. We are assured of Divine supervision; so that not the slightest thing can happen to these sons except as their Father sees would be to their advantage. But they must show their love, their devotion; their oneness of spirit with the Father and the Redeemer ere they can be counted in as His Bride in the full, absolute and complete sense, and be granted a share in His glories.

If They Stand These Tests

It is to demonstrate their possession of these graces that these consecrated ones are left for a time in the midst of evil and unfavorable surroundings -- to prove their love of righteousness, their opposition to iniquity, their love to God and their faithfulness to Him, their love to all who are in sympathy with the Divine arrangement. If they stand these tests fully, it will mean that they will endure considerable opposition from the world, the flesh, and the Adversary; and that they will be correspondingly strengthened by these experiences. It is this class to whom the Apostle refers, saying, "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." We are to suffer as He did for right doing, and because our neighbors and friends are blind as to what is the right, the proper course. We are to suffer gladly and joyfully whatever cup the Father may pour for us.

This is the generation of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob. Men do not obtain Divine blessings without seeking them, nor without seeking them in God's way -- through Christ, by humble reliance upon His finished work of redemption, and by the full consecration of all their ransomed powers of mind and body to His holy will, which is only our reasonable service.

Beloved, ye who are called by His grace to stand in His holy place, let us ponder these things. Are our hands clean and our hearts pure? Are we humble and faithful to our covenant? Let us see that we meet these conditions, and let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus.

ENTERS HIS PROMISED REST

Brother McKechnie Finishes Earthly Labors

After a protracted illness our dear Brother and Pilgrim, John McKechnie, finished his earthly labors, at his home in Montreal on the morning of June 15, 1929, and we believe entered his rest.

The last six months especially were a season of painful waiting and longing for the grim enemy, death, to finish his consecrated service. Though doubtless inclined at times to wonder why our Lord did not sooner permit the snapping

asunder of the last cord, he was far from desiring to dictate in the matter and accepted the weeks and months of weakness and pain as among the "all things," which he knew were being overruled for his good, according to God's promise. Such experiences we know may be permitted as tests of faith to develop our trust in God; or, they may be profitable to us as giving lessons which will the better enable us to sympathize with the poor, dying world in general, many of whom experience similar afflictions, without the supporting grace and strength of the everlasting Arm, which carries us through victoriously.

Brother McKechnie was born in Greenock, Scotland, September 27, 1863. He was converted in 1887, and became a member A Plymouth Brethren, and so continued till his acceptance of present Truth in 1914. We are sure the deep sympathy and love of all the friends will go out to our Brother's companion left behind.

Brother McKechnie's attitude was one of loving patience and resignation. A few months ago, after he had entered this season of illness, he wrote as follows: "I have sought to be submissive to the ruling and overruling of our loving Heavenly Father. There has been no lack in the manifestation of His gracious and faithful hand. If it is the Lord's will to call me from earthly scenes, through His grace I am ready. Carry on, dear brother. The interval, compared to eternity, will only be a moment till we all meet at His dear feet -- the worthy One who has made our entering in at all possible."

While he had his health it was our Brother's chief pleasure to tell the Glad Tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people. And even after entering the period of this, his last illness, he loved to converse on the things that lay nearest to his heart, things that appertained to the redemption of the Church and the world, things involving the revelation of the love of God, and things that relate to the Church's present mission of developing the likeness of her Lord and Master. Again not long since, our Brother wrote the following in a letter:

"Your prayers are all valued for His overruling, that will redound to His glory. Aside from experience repulsive to the flesh, I am happy in the Lord, enjoying His promises which do not fade in an hour like this, but become a greater reality. How thankful I feel for God's gracious revelation of His truth these fifteen years! and following His long and gracious dealing since first I knew His acceptance, November 27, 1887! The Lord grant each one to continue steadfastly to the end, with single eye for His glory."

During a considerable part of the past two years Brother McKechnie labored in the Pilgrim work, traveling from place to place and ministering to the scattered brethren. His labors, often in weariness and pain, were of much value to the friends and deeply appreciated, as is attested by many messages that have come from friends in various parts of the country.

Our Brother was deeply zealous for the spiritual interests of the Lord's people. He sought to minister to them along lines that would strengthen and build them up in the inner life. Thus he wrote two days before he passed away: "I have only one desire to live, that is, can I glorify the Lord and be a help to the dear distracted sheep of His who are rent by many non-essential questions not affecting the vital union with Christ -- questions such as the Sin Offering, Covenants, British Israel, Bridegroom, etc. We ought to be far ahead of these 'Shibboleth,' and basking in the sunshine of His love. By His grace every vestige of strength left shall be used to direct the friends to 'Higher and Holier Ground'."

Brother McKechnie died trusting in the consummation of our hope as set forth in 1 Cor. 15:51-53. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, they rest from their labors but their works follow with them." (Rev. 14:13.) It is not for any of us to judge or to fix the reward of any, but believing that our Brother has been faithful to his calling and that he has lived a successful and victorious Christian life, and believing that we are now living in the time indicated in the text by "henceforth," the time of the Lord's Second Presence for the setting up of His Kingdom, it is our hope that our dear Brother is one of the faithful of the Kingdom Little Flock; and so let us believe that his labors, toil, and weariness have ceased, and his works nevertheless continue beyond the veil.

We can the rather, then, rejoice with him and hope that soon we too, if faithful, may be ushered into the presence of God and see our dear Redeemer and all the Royal Priesthood and participate in the heavenly service. But meantime it behooves us to remember that our remaining days in the flesh are further opportunities for running toward the mark for the prize, or for the standing fast thereat that no man take our crown.

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

Dear Brethren:

Loving Christian greetings in Jesus.

I have been wanting to write and tell you how blessed and comforting the "Herald" is to me. I am one of the scattered and bewildered sheep, but now I am more reconciled by reading the "Herald." This last one is wonderful, and may God continue His choicest blessings.

When I went to the Toronto Convention of the I.B.S.A., I surely said, The Lord is not here. And on going back home, I tried to be reconciled, but I became more and more confused. I could not accept the things given out there through the "channel" as being pure water of truth. So I found a few of the friends in the same condition I was in and we are meeting together and trusting in the Lord . . .

Now, dear brethren, I thank you for promptly sending me the "Herald." I am past 85 years, and have been in the I.B.S.A. since 1910 -- out of the Roman Catholic Church. I would be glad to have some of your free literature to distribute -- just what you wish to send me.

Your sister by grace,

M.B. -- Wis.

Dear Brethren:

Your kind favor in loaning me "Light After Darkness" has been much appreciated. Am now returning same, thanking you for the loan . . . It is strengthening to our faith to know that you dear brethren have loyally supported the character and work of our late dear Pastor Russell, that servant of the Lord chosen for the work of the Harvest, which seems to be closing in as we reach the end of the Age. It seems that the winds of strife, which have been held back for the purpose, will soon be let loose. The poor world was surely never in such a state of commotion.

Australia is no exception. It is a land of strikes, one after the other in quick succession; the present one being the 'timber workers' strike which has thrown over 20,000 men out of work, with every indication that other unions will be affected. Every effort seems to fail to bring about a settlement. There is here in Australia at the present time a great fear of an open revolution to follow. The great time of trouble seems not far off -- not later I should judge than the time you have predicted, 1933-34.

Our consecration, however, is to be dead with Him, and not to any particular date; so if we are again disappointed, then we must still go on and trust in God's great Plan of the Ages. I am convinced, however, that the Lord will in His own time and way (whether that time be short or long) establish His Kingdom of righteousness and peace for the ultimate blessing of the whole human race. But at present there is still class hatred and treachery among the nations.

A lady (?) here in Melbourne informed a returned, soldier who was canvassing with pictures that she was a German. She said to him, Don't think that Germany will pay millions and millions to the Allies. She stated that the Japs were here, but don't think they were here in love. They took pictures, and those pictures are now in Japan, Russia, and Germany. She informed him that Germany will be at war again in two years If such should occur in the time she stated then there will be but two years left, for a short work will the Lord make on the earth to usher in the Kingdom of righteousness for which we all pray.

May God bless you, dear brethren, and keep us all in the unity Of the faith. I am
Your brother in the Lord,

G. J. L. -- Aus.

Dear Friends:

Some time ago I wrote you stating I hoped to send in subscription due for the "Herald" you so kindly continue to send . . . I have found the "Herald" very helpful. It usually arrives just when I need most a helpful reading. I find the Word and the dear volumes get more dear as the days go by. I realize that your article in the March 15th "Herald" is very true -- many seem to be turning aside from the, truths they used to love -- ready to argue over things of no importance.

I am glad to tell, you that since I first learned "God's wondrous Plan" I have never looked back. Although my coming out of Babylon four years ago practically cost me all I held dear as far as the human is concerned, I have no regrets. As far as I have the light I am daily I dying, proud to be counted worthy to suffer anything for the dear Master and to do my Father's will.

The Heralds I pass on to outside friends and they are being enjoyed much. . . . I was much helped recently by the article that stated that it was not the number of years a tree stood in the orchard that counted but the fruit it yielded. I was 18 years a Salvationist; 6 years ago I first read a volume on the Truth. This was followed by two years' private study, with my Bible and volumes. The I saw the call to come out, and just quietly the Lord helped me to "come out," without a word from any one, and since then have enjoyed a closer walk with my Savior. And best of all I have found my Father, God. My heart is ever full of gratitude, although the earthly Way is harder, the heavenly way gets easier, and I am able to enjoy the beautiful articles, of the "Herald" to the full. God bless you.

Yours sincerely in His service, M.G. -- Eng.

Dear Brethren:

I have pleasure in sending you another small amount from our Class here, to be used for your work. It is not a large amount, but is all that circumstances will allow us to send at present.

We had our Memorial service on the anniversary of our Redeemer's death -- April 23rd. And, as usual, found it very helpful both in the preparation beforehand, and the thinking over it and the events associated with the death and, resurrection of our Lord, afterwards.

We are just going along quietly as usual, striving continually to bring our hearts and lives into complete accord with the Lord's will. As far as our earthly affairs are concerned, things are so difficult just now that it needs continual watching and effort to prevent our being over whelmed by them spiritually, and in connection with this we are finding the "Herald" articles exceedingly helpful, and we thank the Lord continually for the warnings and encouragements contained in them, and for the constant reminders of the great and precious promises they are bringing to us. I feel sure, dear brethren, that this work must be a blessing indeed to yourselves, for no one can truly water others without being watered himself, and the articles themselves are evidence that the Lord is with you in your work. The series of articles by the brother in Britain. on "The Last Hour" Which we have in the latest Heralds received, are very helpful and stimulating

With Christian love from us all, and the assurance that you are still daily remembered in our prayers, I remain

Your brother in Christ,

C. F. M. -- Aus.

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich."

-- Rev. 3:18.

THROUGHOUT the Bible gold is given special prominence as a metal that was considered both precious and beautiful. It has been one of the standards of measuring values from time immemorial, and so continues unto this day. In studying the typical tabernacle, which was a shadow of good things to come, we observe that everything inside the tabernacle was made of gold. The boards of which the tabernacle was constructed were overlaid with gold. The furniture also was of gold. There stood the golden candlestick, the golden table, the golden altar of incense, the golden ark of the testimony and the golden cherubim. Gold was also prominent in the typically glorious robes of the high priest. The fringe upon the upper robe was of golden bells and pomegranates; the texture of the ephod was inter woven with golden threads, and it was fastened on the shoulders with golden clasps; and upon his head was the golden crown, upon which was inscribed, "Holiness to the Lord."

All this was in striking contrast with the metals used elsewhere about the structure, its typical significance here being that all within "the Holy," which

represented the present condition of truly consecrated believers, and within the "Most Holy," which represented the glorious condition of the Church triumphant, pertains to the Divine nature, gold being a symbol of divinity. All who are privileged to enter the antitypical Holy and Most Holy are also to be, as the Apostle Peter tells us, "partakers of the Divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4.) They are members of the Body of the great High Priest, whose Divine nature was symbolized in the gold of the typical high priest's typically glorious garments.

It is in harmony with this same symbolic meaning of gold that the Revelator says of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem: "And the city was pure gold [a Divine institution] . . . and the street of the city was pure gold [all its highways are of Divine appointment]." (Rev. 21:18, 21.) And the Psalmist, referring to the privileged class who, when glorified, shall constitute that heavenly city, government, or kingdom of God-the members of the Body or Bride of Christ, partakers of the Divine nature-says, "Upon Thy right hand did stand the queen, in gold of Ophir. . . . Her clothing is of wrought gold."-Psa. 45:9, 13.

The Treasure Mixed with Alloy

It is to the same apt symbolism that our Lord also refers in addressing His people in the words, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire." These words, be it remembered, are not addressed to the world, but to the Lord's people, justified and consecrated. (Rev. 1:1; 3:14.) This call is an exhortation to them to faithfully fulfil their covenant, to submit themselves fully and unreservedly to the discipline of the Lord, which is necessary for their perfecting in holiness, and for making them ready to reign with Him as His Bride and joint-heir in the glory of the Divine Kingdom.

Not until we lay hold by faith upon the exceeding great and precious promises-of joint-heirship with Christ in His coming Kingdom and glory-which promises lead us to fulfil their conditions of consecration and self-sacrifice even unto death, is there any of the "gold" of the "Divine nature" in us. This treasure can be purchased only at the cost of entire consecration or sacrifice of all that we have to Christ. Thus the treasure of the new Divine nature, the gold, is given us. Thus we "buy" the gold.

But we have this treasure in the earthen vessels, and there is consequently much of alloy mixed with it. Hence the necessity that the gold be cast into the crucible for refining. And if we would purchase the "gold tried in the fire," it must be at the cost of faithful and constant submission to the discipline of the Lord in the fiery trials which are necessary to consume our dross and refine our gold. Wherefore the Apostle says: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. (1 Pet. 4:12.) And Paul reminds us of the counsel of wisdom (Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:5-8), "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him, for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."

The Refining Process by Fire

The Apostle Peter also reminds us that the trial of our faith is much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, and that the end sought through such trial is that we may be "found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:7.) It would be idle for any of the Lord's consecrated people to hope to be made meet for the glorious inheritance of the saints without the refining processes of fiery trial; for St. Paul tells us that "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." "If ye receive not chastisement [discipline,

fiery trial], whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (1 Cor. 3:13 ; Heb. 12:6-8.) And through the Prophet Isaiah the Lord tells His spiritual Israel, as well as His typical fleshly Israel, "I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin." (Isa. 1:25.) The Prophet Malachi, making special reference to this Age and especially the last days of this Age, the days of the Lord's Presence, and the great refining work to be accomplished then, says: "Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier, of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver." -- Mal. 3:2, 3.

Fiery trials are therefore to be expected by all of the Lord's people, especially in this day of the Lord. As surely as we are sons of God we shall have them; and when they come we should promptly recognize their mission to us and see that we are exercised by them unto godliness, sobriety and deep and fervent piety. "Now no chastening [discipline] for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." -- Heb. 12:11.

As Many as I Love I Rebuke and Chasten

Sometimes these experiences are in the nature of correctives or rebukes from the Lord to keep us from wandering from the path of obedience. In this connection another has observed that "In that wonderful story by Bunyan of the Pilgrim's progress heavenward; we are told concerning Christian and Hopeful, that at one time they wandered out of the right path, and became entangled in a net that they could not escape. Thus they lay bewailing themselves in the net. At last they espied a shining one coming towards them with a whip of small cords in his hand Then he said to them, "Follow me, that I may set you in your way again:" so he led them back to the way that they had left Then I saw in my dream that he commanded them to lie down: which when they did, he chastised them sore, to teach them the good way wherein they should walk; and as he chastised them he said, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent." This done, he bids them go their way and take good heed to the other directions of the shepherds. So they thanked him for all his goodness and kindness, and went softly along the right way singing.'

"Trouble and sorrow, therefore, are not our curse, but one of our most cherished rights. We are like statues, 'hewn in the rough,' which can be perfectly shaped only by means of the chisel's blows; and these blows are surely the statue's right. This then is the meaning of trouble. It is to make us good. And we have a right to be made good, for it is God's purpose concerning us. Let us therefore accept our trials as a part of our birthright, and give thanks to the Divine Potter that He has set His wheel whirring, and is casting out, with 'a fine separating hand,' all the chips and stones and sand that mar the perfect purity of our clay.

"Besides this blessed chastening and refining work of sorrow and trouble I believe it has often another purpose, and that is to thwart us in a course that our Heavenly Father knows would be disastrous, and to turn us into safer and more successful paths. Disappointments are often direct gateways to prosperity in the very things we have thought they were going to ruin for ever. Joseph's story is an illustration of this. He had the promise of a kingdom, but instead he received slavery and cruel treachery, and imprisonment, and it looked as if all hope of a kingdom was over for ever. But these very trial's were the gateway into his kingdom, and in no other way could he have reached it. God's thwartings are often our grandest opportunities. We start in a pathway that we think is going to

lead us to a desired end, but God in His providence thwarts us, and then we rashly conclude that all is over, and are in despair. But after awhile we find that that very thwarting has been the Divine opportunity for the success we desired; or if not just that, for a better thing that we would infinitely rather have. He changes the very thing we thought was our sorrow into our crown of joy."

When the Cross Grew Heaviest

It is in the school of experience that we learn our most valuable lessons; and the ripest saints, in whom we find the deepest sympathy, the most patient forbearance, and the most tender helpfulness and consideration, are those who have been through the fire of affliction, and who have been rightly exercised thereby. It was when the cross grew heaviest and the clouds were darkest, and when the tempest was highest, that the Master's presence was most sensibly realized, and the blessed lessons of faith and trust and of the Lord's tender, personal love were sealed upon the hearts of the disciples.

Loving submission and a mellowing of the soul are the results of such wholesome discipline, and the language of such tried ones is, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Who can question that such souls become even dearer to the Master as the gold of the new nature becomes more and more manifest and the dross of the old nature is gradually consumed. According to the promise of the Master, in all their afflictions He is near with His sustaining Spirit and with His grace to defend and to deliver.

Whenever a new trial is presented to the Christian, if he will but call to mind the precept of the Lord, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire," it will stimulate courage, nerve to patient endurance and quicken to self-sacrifice. "Gold tried in the fire!" How can it be tried without the crucible and the flame! How otherwise can the dross be eliminated? There is no other way. "Wherefore, think it not strange." Let the fire burn, the dross be consumed, and see to it, beloved, that in the heat of the flame you remove not the "living sacrifice" from the altar. Let us remember that the eye of the great Refiner is upon us; and as the refiner of gold watches the metal in the crucible to see his image reflected in it, so the Lord, the great Refiner, is exercising a vigilance over His own. The gold of our characters will reflect His image and likeness in proportion as the dross has been separated and removed. As this process goes on, our Master is observing to note what are the purposes of our hearts -- whether our proceedings and activities in life are from earthly, selfish and personal considerations, or as a result of our consecration to Him alone, our love for His will; and whether we are determined to be faithful and obedient to Him at all hazards.

Through Storm and Calm

Those who are thus minded, reflect the Master's image. Like Him they are loyal to God, loyal to the principles of truth and righteousness, brave, obedient, faithful. These are the overcomers. They overcome by faith; for without a strong reliant faith they could not thus endure hardness as good soldiers, and pursue to the end a course which is continually against the current of the old human nature. Faith buckles on the armor of God and goes forth to the battle with firm and steady tread, quickened by the inspiring melody

"Awake my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigor on;
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown."

The Christian course of self-sacrifice cannot be one of ease and continuous smooth sailing and peace. There may be a calm now and then, but storms and battles are the rule; and he who courts ease and peace at the expense of the principles of truth and righteousness, or who is so indifferent to the value of those principles as not to study to discern them in order to defend them, is not a faithful, overcoming soldier of the cross.

"Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor once at ease sit down;
Thine arduous work will not be done,
Till thou hast gained thy crown."

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me." "If any man come to Me and hate not [love Me not more than] his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." -- Matt. 10:34-38; Luke 14:26, 33, 35.

Oh, how necessary is the hearing of faith to the victory of faith -- to that victory which makes every other love subservient to the love of God, which makes every other interest bend to the interests of His great work, and which cheerfully sacrifices every other interest to the interests which center in Christ and in His coming Kingdom. The ear of faith must be attuned to the melodies of Divine truth if the soul would catch its blessed inspiration; and the eye of faith must discern the symmetry of truth and the beauty of holiness, if the soul would be filled with a burning zeal for God -- for His truth and His righteousness.

But let the soul be thus inspired with deep and abiding love for the melody of truth and the beauty of holiness, and filled with a holy zeal for God, then everything else takes a secondary place, and we have the victory by faith in every encounter with the enemy. The soul thus stayed upon God can always trustfully sing:

"If on a quiet sea
Toward home I calmly sail,
With grateful heart, O God, to thee,
I'll own the favoring gale.

"But when the surges rise,
And rest delay to come,
Blest be the tempest, kind the storm,
Which drives me nearer home."

"Soon shall the waves and storms
All yield to Thy control;
Thy love will banish all alarms,
And darkness from my soul.

"Teach me, in every state,
To make Thy will my own;
And while the joys of sense depart,
To live by faith alone."

ESTABLISHED, STRENGTHENED, SETTLED

"The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." -- 1 Pet. 5:10.

IN common with all our Lord's disciples the Apostle Peter had much to bear from without, in the way of reproach and sometimes of persecution for the Truth's sake. But he had probably much more to contend against from within; his disposition was naturally impulsive, wavering, and difficult to bring under restraint, even when the Truth was clear to his mind and when his affections were fastened upon the Lord.

It should be the aim of every truly consecrated saint to reach this desirable state of strength and settled establishment in the faith. This condition cannot be reached at a single leap; it is gained by a gradual, steady growth under the discipline of suffering -- as the Apostle says, "after that ye have suffered a while." "Now," as St. Paul remarks (Heb. 12:11, 12), "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." "Wherefore," with him we would add, "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way."

Are you weary and disheartened in the journey, discouraged at your slow progress, and almost overwhelmed with the cares and various besetments of this life? Is a lethargy and indifference creeping over you, cooling your ardor for the Master's service, relaxing your energies in that direction, and enlisting your interest more and more in other matters? Then beware! It is high time to wake up. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Sometimes he goes about as a roaring lion, and sometimes as a skulking serpent in the grass.

Our only Safety

Sometimes, lion-like, when we are off guard he springs upon us unawares, stirs up the evil of the old nature, and unless desperately resisted he will take full control and drive us on to ruin. Or he will endeavor at least to turn us off the track of the Narrow Way. And sometimes, serpent-like (2 Cor. 11:3), he assumes a pleasing and seemingly reasonable aspect, and endeavors to beguile us from the way. If we permit ourselves to be so off guard either by neglect to feed upon the Truth, or by indifference to the reception and cultivation of its spirit, we may be sure that our ever vigilant adversary will gain an advantage over us which we may not be able to resist.

Our only safety, then, is in giving earnest heed to the Apostle's counsel. Be sober, be steadfast in the faith, be vigilant, and resist the Adversary. We find foes within as well as foes without which we must not deal too gently with. The human nature, which we covenanted to crucify, must not be too sensitively regarded by ourselves, though we should be careful and thoughtful in our dealings with others. We must let the human nature die, and rejoice to see the new nature triumph over it. We must look our old nature squarely in the face, anxious to see all its deformity, and thankful for a brother's or a sister's kindly showing of the same; and even the heartless rebuke of an enemy, or the impatient criticism of an unwise but well meaning friend, should be soberly considered and profited by, though it may severely wound the sensitive, quivering flesh. All this is a part of the crucifying process, a part of the humbling under the mighty hand of God -- under the discipline of His Truth. If we study it carefully and cultivate its spirit day by day, seeking constantly to purge out all that is contrary to it, our characters will mature, ripen, and grow more and more like the glorious model given for our imitation.

Growing Strong in the Lord

Our convictions of the Truth will become more settled and clear; our faith in God and in the power of His love and grace will be more and more established; and our constant effort to learn and to do, the will of God will harden into habit, and thus we will grow strong in the Lord and be able to strengthen and to confirm the faith of others.

If we have cares, we are invited to cast all our cares upon the Lord, knowing that He careth for us. And we have the encouraging assurance in the midst of present trials that we shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, if in steadfast sobriety and humility we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, having been first redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, and thus through faith having gained the privilege of working it out. And we are comforted in the midst of trials with the blessed assurance that while God resisteth the proud, and they also resist Him, He giveth grace to the humble. Let us humble ourselves, therefore, dear fellow members of the called and anointed Body, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us, in due time. And let us bear in mind that not all of the suffering and cross-bearing comes from the world's opposition to the Truth, but that much of it must necessarily come from our faithfulness, not in excusing and cultivating, but in humbling and subduing the evil propensities of our fallen nature. "If any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." -- James 1:23-25.

"Oh, to be nothing, nothing,
Painful the humbling may be;
Yet low in the dust I'd lay me
That the world my Savior might see."

THE TEST OF OBEDIENCE

*"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."
---1 Sam. 15:22.*

THE keynote of the Bible is obedience to the great Creator. Disobedience is responsible for all human ills, suffering, and death. The Divine Plan provides that the present life shall furnish mankind with abundant opportunity to learn deeply the lesson of disobedience -- that disobedience, sin, is undesirable; and that the course of wisdom is to render implicit obedience to God and thus secure His favor and everlasting life.

The Presumptuous Sin

As the mariner guides the course of his ship by certain charts which show hidden rocks and shoals, and by the stars in their courses, so the Christian is furnished with a chart which shows him the course which he should pursue, and the things which would be displeasing to God and injurious to himself. That chart is the Bible, and whoever would be in harmony with God must not only hearken for His message but keep track also of the hidden dangers which beset his course. Each one of us is on trial. This Gospel Age is our Day of judgment, of testing. The Lord Himself is scrutinizing the course we are taking. It is not sufficient to Him that we shall have zeal. The zeal which He will approve is that which operates from love and along the lines of His instruction. The zeal which disregards the Divine instruction is not approved; it leads to shipwreck.

The Apostle gives some suggestions along this line, saying that every member of the Body of Christ is necessary (1 Cor. 12:12-26) ; none is to be despised or hindered from having his part in the general work of building up the Body in the most holy faith. The Apostle illustrates that the eye cannot say to the hand or the foot, "I have no need of you," and contrariwise the hand or the foot cannot say that it has no need of the eye nor of the ear. Every member is necessary; and above all, every member of the Body is to move only in accord with the will of the Head. And that will is to be sought for in every incident of life, great or small. We are not to think of the Lord's cause as being wholly dependent upon us. We are to remember the mistake which Uzzah made when he saw the ark of the Lord jostled in the road, he put forth his hand to steady it, and died because of his disobedience. It was not in his province to steady the ark. The Lord had that matter under His own supervision, and only the priest might even touch it. Let us all then be zealous, not only to serve the Lord, but also to know the way in which He would have us render that service. Let us be sure that service rendered in any other way than as divinely directed will not be acceptable and will not bring blessing upon us, but on the contrary bring us the Lord's proportionate disfavor. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

The Example of King Saul

Many are the lessons of obedience and disobedience recorded in Holy Writ, and none are more striking, impressive, and forceful than that which we observe in the history of Saul, Israel's first king. Surely his is amongst the outstanding characters which furnish the most solemn examples of disobedience. The lesson of his testing, of his failure to stand the test, and of the consequent rejection of his family and himself from the kingdom, we do well to consider.

An able commentator has observed that "Saul's is a long history of self-will gradually asserting itself, bursting out at times into passionate outbreak of the nature of demoniacal possession, until when self had broken with God and hedged around man with jealous suspicion, it settled at last into habitual gloom, and Saul in the loneliness of his own heart seeks in witchcraft for a voice from the other world; he who once was among the prophets, with a soul stirred by the

breath of God. It is a sad picture of a misused vocation, of a man called to work together with God, who worked outside Him and without Him."

Another has said, "Saul was an unspoiled, valiant, and devout man, a born leader, the very man, and the only man who could hold the forming nation in his hand. If Saul failed, if he made shipwreck of his life, charge it not to Samuel, charge it not to God. His was the failure of a strong but willful man, who started right, but went astray."

Mr. Spurgeon remarks to good effect in this connection that "there are some men who seem to have India rubber hearts. If you do but touch them, there is an impression made at once; but then it is of no use, it soon restores itself to its original character. You may press them whichever way you wish; they are so elastic you can always effect your purpose; but then they are not fixed in their character, and soon return to be what they were before."

Saul's history may be divided into four parts: (1) The favorable opportunities of his youth-energetic, fine looking, modest, his choice as the king of Israel was generally conceded to be an excellent one. (2) In the earlier years of his reign he was a successful general and an able organizer of his kingdom. (3) In his testing time he failed and was rejected, partially at first, more thoroughly subsequently. (4) The decline of his manhood, his almost loss of reason, and finally the tragic death of himself and his sons. In the present discussion we are dealing specially with the third of these epochs his testing.

Importance of Waiting upon the Lord

The Philistines exercised a kind of overlordship in Palestine, presumably collecting taxes as the consideration for permitting the people to have a measure of peace and possession of the country. Apparently they had fortified cities in various parts of Israel's territory, and from their representatives in these the word came that the Israelites had anointed Saul to be their king, a circumstance which was understood to imply the throwing off of the Philistine yoke, a declaration of independence. At once the Philistines assembled an army wherewith to overthrow the new kingdom. The record that they had thirty thousand chariots is supposed to have been a copyist's error for three thousand; for the number of horsemen, two to each chariot, is given as six thousand. This considerable army marched into Palestine; and a battle ensued between them and the Israelites. King Saul evidently desired to be in harmony with the Lord, and realized still that without Divine interposition he would be powerless to repel an invader of such strength. The Prophet Samuel was communicated with, and he promised to come within seven days to offer sacrifice to God on Israel's behalf, that the Lord's blessing might attend His people and bring them the victory, in harmony with the Divine covenant.

King Saul waited for six days, and meantime saw his army melting from desertion, for the Israelites were poorly armed and greatly in fear. They had practically no weapons, merely their agricultural implements for weapons of war. Apparently the Philistines had previously deprived them of fighting weapons, and in some manner had hindered the Kenites, who were the smiths of the time, from serving them in the manufacture of swords and spears. When the seventh day had come, King Saul, wearied of waiting for Samuel, offered the sacrifice himself, contrary to the Divine order. Immediately Samuel appeared, and, pointing out to Saul his failure, stated that obedience to God would have been more appreciated by the Almighty than were the sacrifices. Samuel also pointed out that the sacrifice under the circumstances was a sin, and that the result of this

disobedience was that God would not permit Saul and his kingdom to be perpetuated, though he promised that the battle immediately before them would be successful for Israel's sake and for the furtherance of God's own cause.

The difficulty was Saul's failure to respect the Divine arrangement, his presumption in undertaking to do what had not been committed to his care, but was under the charge of another. The Lord's cause was not hindered; but King Saul's own prosperity was interfered with by his neglect of the Divine arrangement.

The Lesson for Spiritual Israelites

What lesson may we draw from this incident? If for the moment we think of Saul as representing those who have been favored of, God, and called to jointheirship with Jesus in His Kingdom and anointed with the Holy Spirit, we may see in his early victories a picture of our good beginning, when we trusted God implicitly, and sought to do merely as He directed, and to wait patiently and trustfully for Him to guide in all of our affairs. As Saul should have made progress and become stronger in his faith and patience and obedience, so should our earliest experiences as the Lord's servants bring to us increasing patience, perseverance, faith, confidence, implicit obedience. But as this was not the case with King Saul, so it is not the case with many of those who have been anointed for joint-heirship with the Lord in His Kingdom. Many of these have similar experiences to that of Saul. Instead of their growing more dependent upon the Lord, the favors received at His hand make them less particular to know and to do His will. They will reverence the Lord; they still recognize that without Him they could do nothing; but they are not sufficiently careful to note just what He would have there to do. Sometimes they undertake to do the work of others, and to that extent are "busybodies in other men's matters," as King Saul busy-bodied and sinned in attempting to do the work that belonged to the Prophet.

We should see that in the Divine mind obedience is one of the most important elements of character. The Lord has us in training in the School of Christ for a great work in the future; and the first prerequisite for future honors and opportunities very properly must be our obedience to the opportunities and directions of the Lord in the present time. This our Lord explained clearly in His parables, saying that to some of His servants He had entrusted more talents than to others; that each would be called upon to give an account for the proper exercise of the talents, responsibilities and commands that had been put upon him, and that each would be rewarded in proportion as he used the talents given to him. Our Lord's expression on the subject is, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." -- Luke 16:10.

Here, then, is our lesson, "Obedience is better than sacrifice" in God's sight. He will not either approve or reward carelessness on our part in this matter. On the contrary, inattention to His direct will would mark us as proportionately unfit for His direct service, either here or hereafter. This implies on our part such a loyalty to the Lord, such a carefulness in respect to His service, such a recognition of each other in respect to the Lord and His service, that we would go about very carefully in our endeavors to serve His cause. So the Apostle exhorts, "Let us walk circumspectly," carefully, scrutinizingly. -- Eph. 5:15.

King Saul's Second Test

That a good many years had passed, and that King Saul had made good use of his opportunities as an organizer of the kingdom, is evidenced by the fact that a large

army was assembled in harmony with the Lord's command to the Prophet: "Two hundred thousand footmen and ten thousand men of Judah." This army was evidently so disposed of as to intercept any of the Amalekites who might flee. Meantime word was sent to the Kenites, who dwelt amongst the Amalekites, advising them to leave, that they might not suffer in the punishment of the Amalekites; and the explanation made was that as the Kenites had favored the Lord's people, they were spared in recognition of this fact; for the destruction of the Amalekites was in harmony with the Divine decree, because of their opposition to Israel.

The people were all slaughtered except the king, whom King Saul spared, keeping him as a kind of trophy. The animals also were all destroyed, except the choicest of the flocks and herds, which additionally was contrary to the Divine command.

When the Prophet Samuel came to the king, the latter saluted him as God's representative and reported that he had done according to the Divine command. Then came the inquiry, "If so, what means the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle?" Saul's answer was probably a prevarication; that these were kept in order to be offered to the Lord in sacrifice. Then Samuel reproved him, pointing out that he had violated the command of the Lord in preserving any of them. The king, however, protested that the people had kept them; that Israel had desired them; and we can readily suppose that there would have been amongst the Israelites quite an opposition to the waste of the good things of the Amalekites, so accustomed were people of that time, as well as of today, to desire valuables. Saul might have indeed complied with the Divine decree by rendering obedience to the Lord and thus put himself in disfavor with the people; but he would have maintained the Divine approval thereby. As it was, the Prophet expressed the Divine disapproval, saying, "Hast the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken [better] than the fat of rams."

Tests of the Royal Priesthood

Are there not corresponding tests upon the royal priesthood? We believe there are. Frequently tests come to this class after they have been a long while in the School of Christ. Speaking to some such, the Apostle says, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers ye have need that one teach you again what be the first principles of the oracles of God," the doctrines (teachings) of Christ. (Heb. 5:12.) We are sometimes surprised at others, sometimes at ourselves, that we have been so slow in making progress; that we have apparently gained so little victory in character building and appreciation of the principles which should govern amongst those who are the Lord's anointed and in preparation for the throne. Saul's difficulty and tests may represent some of ours.

1. A selfish spirit, a desire for some of the best of the things which the Lord has condemned; a willingness to spare these because they appeal to us from a selfish viewpoint, the fleshly viewpoint.
2. A man-fearing spirit. As Saul feared to bring upon himself the reproaches of the people, fearing to be thought too narrow on the one hand and too wasteful on the other, so a temptation comes to the Lord's people to guide their course not entirely by the Word of the Lord, but with a deference to the sentiments of others. This is the fear of man that brings a snare. (Prov. 29:25.) We are ensnared by the spirit of the world.

Of such the Lord says, "How can ye believe [continue in proper discipleship] which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh .from God only?" -- John 5:44.

3. Saul's third difficulty was that he had too slack an appreciation of the Lord's Word; and this is the difficulty which specially besets nearly every one of the Lord's followers who stray away into error of doctrine or of conduct. With what care ought we to guard ourselves, lest having become partakers of so great a blessing as our anointing implies, any of us should seem to come short of its glorious realization in the Kingdom. Let us see to it that we put away all love of sin in its every form, and that we esteem the Lord's favor so highly that the consideration of human friendships would not have a particle of weight or influence with us, except as the same should be in full accord with the Divine Program ;and in order to the maintenance of, these proper relationships, let us take heed to His Word.

It is important to remember the Apostle's words that we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in high positions. (Eph. 6:12.) Let us remember that these wicked spirits have the power in some degree to favor in us wrong sentiments; that in proportion as we would give our minds into any selfish, sinful or ignoble channel, in that same proportion these unseen adversaries of the saints would have power over them. Let us remember, on the contrary, that in proportion as our hearts are loyal to the Lord and His Word and to the spirit of the truth, the spirit of love, in that same proportion we are surrounded by a halo of influence which would protect us, so that of such it may be written, "The wicked one toucheth him not." -- 1 John 5:18.

The Test of Perfect Love

The Scriptures clearly indicate a great trial and testing for the Church in the last days. It will determine with very many what Saul's testing determined for him, whether or not God's favor will continue, with its Kingdom privileges and opportunities. To the faithful the Lord says, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." The others will be answered as was Saul: "Obedience is better than sacrifice"; thou art rejected. Through the Revelator the Lord tells us how the Philadelphian stage of the Church would be saved from the great "hour of trial that is to come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Rev. 3:10.) There are trials now upon the Laodicean Church, living at the time of the presence of the Son of Man, when He stands at the door and knocks. (Rev. 3:20.) In that trial, we are told, that a thousand shall fall at the side and ten thousand at the right hand of the one Body, the true Church, of which Jesus is the Head. The Apostle Peter, in figurative language, describes the heavens as being on fire (2 Pet. 3:12), symbolically picturing the ecclesiastical influence of our day; and St. Paul tells of the "fire that shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (1 Cor. 3 :13.) We are assured that only the gold, silver, and precious stones of the Divine character and doctrine will abide the fiery ordeal. Surely none of the Lord's people can afford to ignore such testings as these; particularly none of those who with us believe that we are now in that trial period; and that the next few years will be pre-eminently a testing time.

If the test of character approved of God, is love -- perfect love for God, for the brethren, yea, also for our enemies-then let that thought be continually before all of our minds to the intent that we be not overtaken, that we be not deceived by the great Adversary, who still would fain put darkness for light and light for darkness, on this as upon every other subject. Our understanding is that the great

conflict which will ultimately reach the world, and eventuate in the anarchy that will overthrow all law and order, has begun with the Church, the consecrated, the sanctified, the enlightened. Does not the Lord forewarn us that in all things judgment must begin at the house of God. (1 Pet. 4:17.) Necessarily it must begin with those who are highest up in that house as respects light, knowledge, and privileges.

Are we prepared for these tests, of which we read that they would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect? We still believe that these tests will be along the lines of perfect love. Love and selfishness are the two great powers that are moving the world and each individual therein. We have already seen that the selfishness, which will overwhelm the world shortly, will mean lovelessness to the extent that the Scriptures declare, Every man's hand shall be against his neighbor, and no peace to him that goeth out nor to him that cometh in. (Zech. 8:10; 11:6.) Is that same condition of things to be expected in the Church -- every man's hand against his neighbor, the tongue of every brother against every other brother in the Lord? Are anger, malice, hatred, envy, and strife to be permitted to overwhelm the Church of Christ? Could such things have any place or power or influence against those who have knowledge of the Truth? We are of the opinion that this is just what we are to expect.

We are in the habit of supposing that our Lord's words "Brother shall deliver up brother to death," applies merely to our Lord's time and during the Dark Ages. Do we forget that similar conditions may be expected in the end of this Age? The delivering up may not be physical, however; the crucifying, the scourging, and the roasting may not be literal; but we believe that very much the same things may be expected with only such limits as our civilization will compel. Apparently it is not enough of a test to us to be "hated of all men for My Name's sake." We must be tested by the hatred, the malice, the evil speaking and evil surmising, of those who dipped with us in the dish, of those who partook with us of the present things of Divine bounty at the table of the Lord, the spiritual food. Ali! If this be so, then we may indeed expect for the closing days of the Church, the Body of Christ, experiences not dissimilar to those which came to the Master in Gethsemane, one of the most trying of which must have been the Judas kiss.

Brethren, What Shall We Do?

When some of those who heard the Apostle on Pentecost came to an understanding of what was the real situation of affairs, and that they and their rulers had crucified the Prince of Life -- some of them actually and some of them by failing to protest -- those who were right-minded were cut to the heart and cried out, "What must we do?" The Apostle assured them of forgiveness -- because they did it ignorantly. And so with us. If any of us find that under any snare, or delusion of the Adversary, we have been entrapped into wrongdoing toward a brother, we should immediately feel cut to the heart, and should go to the Lord for Divine forgiveness and to those whom we have wronged, for their part of it, that thus we might turn defeat in the hands of the Adversary into victory.

Undoubtedly just such a storm is upon the Lord's people; and as the Prophet expresses it, the question is not, Who shall fall, but "Who shall be able to stand?" (Mal. 3:2.) A thousand shall fall to one who will stand. The "very elect" will not be deceived, but the question is, Are we of the "very elect"? and our answer, must be that the Lord will decide this matter according to the manner in which we decide when under the test. It is impossible for us to surmise what may be the various apparent grounds for unbrotherliness, for the loss of a brother's love. If

we give heed to the Adversary, he will make us think it proper to break away from the regular rule of procedure, and, if we are willing, make us to feel that we are fully justified in violating all the various directions which the Lord our God has given us. It will require of all of us loving faithfulness to the Lord and to the brethren to enable us to withstand the trials of this day.

Let us remember, also, that the loveless condition of the heart, the hypercritical spirit, does not come in suddenly; it develops gradually. Hence every day each of the Lord's people should have a searching of his heart to see whether or not he can find there toward anybody, saint or sinner, any of the spirit of malice which the Lord figuratively represented as leaven, contaminating in its influence. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (1 Cor. 5:6.) A little envy, a little malice, a little anger, a little hatred, and a little strife, may leaven our hearts completely, and in a comparatively short time turn the sweets of our new nature, the spirit of love, into acid bitterness. Moreover, the leaven is not likely to be confined to one, but spreads to others; and thus many may be defiled. The poet has said:

"We are not worst at once;
The course of evil begins so slowly, and from such slight sources,
An infant's hand might stem its breach with clay;
But let the stream get deeper, and philosophy,
Ah! and religion, too, shall strive in vain
To turn the headlong current."

EZEKIEL'S VISION OF HOPE

*"Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end."
-- Isa. 9:7.*

THE name Ezekiel signifies "God strengthens" or "God is strong" -- a very fitting name for a true prophet. Of Ezekiel's father, Buzi, we know nothing except that he was a priest; the inference is that he fulfilled his office in a consistent manner and that Ezekiel therefore was reared in a godly home and received a proper religious education. His familiarity with the temple and its services appears throughout his Book. His home in exile was "by the river Chebar"; one of the best conjectures is that this river was one of the large irrigating ditches of Babylonia, located probably not far south from the city of Babylon.

"Visions of God"

Ezekiel's call to be a prophet came as so many of his revelations came, in the form of a vision. He saw the heavens opened, and such glorious sights burst upon his enraptured gaze that he called them "visions of God." He seemed to be deeply conscious that the visions were personal to himself, and that they came "expressly" to him, inaugurating a new life for him. He realized with a solemn joy that "the hand of Jehovah was there upon him." This is an expression which comes up repeatedly in the writings of Ezekiel, signifying an ecstatic sense of God's presence and power. Such a feeling must have been closely akin to that which St. Paul experienced when he said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" -- 1 Cor. 9:16.

Ezekiel saw first of all what every man of God must by faith see, who would fulfil the duties and responsibilities of a minister acceptably to God: he saw the Almighty Jehovah sitting upon the throne of the universe and ruling all things according to His will. How important to the success of a true ministry, is a vivid

conception of the living God and an implicit faith and trust in Him. Too often is the great reality of the personal existence of Jehovah lost sight of; few know what it means to be conscious of God's presence and to know inwardly that His eye is ever upon them. But not so Ezekiel: if God is his Sovereign, it follows that he must obey the Divine will.

The Lord's testimony through the Prophet Ezekiel was undoubtedly intended to cheer and comfort those of His people in Babylon who were Israelites indeed, and to fan the spark of faith which still remained in their hearts -- to lead them as in the case of Daniel, to hope for the return of God's favor at the end of their captivity, with the end of the appointed seventy years.

Incidentally and by way of refreshing the memory, it is recalled that Ezekiel was one of the captives of Judah taken to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar on the occasion of his second invasion, when he placed Zedekiah on the throne, about eleven years before the final invasion, when the city was destroyed, approximately 588 B.C. The captives taken on the second invasion included many of the chief men of the Jewish nation, princes and nobles, the brightest and the best. The object of the king of Babylon in taking these seems to have been to strengthen his own empire, for the captives were not treated as slaves, but were granted great liberty, some of them, as in the case of Daniel, rising to positions of very high honor in the kingdom. Ezekiel had great liberty, and his standpoint no doubt in prophesying was in behalf of the Jews of the Babylonian captivity -- exiles.

Symbolic Prophecies

Ezekiel's prophecy, is full of symbolisms; to such an extent is this true that it has been termed by some the Apocalypse of the Old Testament. "The Book divides itself naturally into three parts: the arraignment of Jerusalem, chapters 1 to 24; denunciation of foreign enemies, chapters 25 to 37; consolatory construction of the future, chapters 38 to 48."

In the early part of chapter 47, verses 1 to 12, there occurs that section of his prophecy that is of special interest to prophetic students in general, inasmuch as Ezekiel here in common with all the other Prophets portrays the revelation of Divine goodness as it is to be displayed in the new dispensation when the knowledge of the Lord shall become world-wide and when sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The Prophet has just previously pictured the new temple which he sees rising on the ruins of Solomon's temple, chapters 40 to 42; the new temple service suited to the new conditions, chapters 43 to 46; and then the newly consecrated land in which God's people are to dwell safely. All of this is presented in the form of a vision, the Prophet being transported "in the visions of God," from Babylonia to Palestine, and conducted through the series of visions by a man who shone as burnished brass, and who bore in his hand a line of flax and a measuring reed. This supernatural being had been conducting Ezekiel through the temple in order to show him a varied ministry, and now, that task being completed, he ushers him to the door of the house of God, the sanctuary with its two divisions, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place: "And behold waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward."

The matter of this vision as reported to the Jews in exile undoubtedly was pictured as referring to earthly Jerusalem, and the blessings as appertaining to the Jews as a nation. The restoration of Jerusalem and the temple are clearly and explicitly foretold, and no doubt the hearts of the captives leaped with joy as they thought of the future blessings, and no doubt also their faith and hope were

encouraged. But so surely as Ezekiel's prophecy was the Word of the Lord, so surely the prophecy did not relate to blessings to be conferred upon that people at the time of their restoration from the land of Babylon, for the predictions of Ezekiel's prophecy were never fulfilled. Just so surely they belong to the future. Spiritual Israelites may realize that the prophecy not only related to natural Israel but also to spiritual Israel, not only to a deliverance from literal Babylon, but also to a deliverance from mystic Babylon, "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots," whose power is soon to be completely overthrown as precedent to a full deliverance of all who are Israelites indeed and the establishment of the Kingdom. -- Rev. 18.

The River of Life

Thus this portion of Ezekiel's visions portrays the springing into existence of a wonderful river whose waters would bring to the land of Palestine and to the Dead Sea, verdure and life instead of drouth, desolation, and death. The ordinary interpretation of this vision is that the Gospel is represented in this river, which now for a considerable time has been flowing onward and bringing life. We cannot accept this interpretation, for several reasons: First, the description is in such close agreement with the Millennial Age blessings of Revelation 21 and 22 as to leave no doubt that the same thing is referred to. In Revelation we see that the Church is the Bride, and the Church glorified is symbolized by the heavenly Jerusalem and the river of the water of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations and whose fruit is for their sustenance and whose water is the water of life, living water. There can be no doubt that the two rivers are identical. And since the Church is not yet complete, and has therefore not yet been glorified, the river of life has not yet proceeded from the glorified Church, and hence the whole matter must be future.

The same thought is in this lesson as Ezekiel gives it. He first sees the temple and then beholds the glory of the Lord entering the temple through the eastern gate, and that gate closed after the Lord. This represents the closing of the door at the end of this Age, as our Lord portrayed it in the parable of the ten virgins. The door will be shut, the glory of the Lord will have entered into the temple. It is subsequent to this shutting of the door that the Prophet is shown the issuing of the water from under the threshold. The lesson, therefore, is clear and explicit to the effect that not until the glory of the Lord shall have entered His temple, not until the Church shall be glorified, not until that door shall be forever shut, will the water of life issue forth.

The stream is shown as rapidly increasing. Issuing as a rivulet it speedily becomes ankle deep, a little further along waist deep, and a little further, beyond a man's depth to ford. Thus is indicated the rapid increase of the blessings of the Lord as soon as His time shall have come; but, as we have heretofore pointed out, there is no such river of life now, our Master Himself being authority for this in His statement respecting His disciples, saying, "The water I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life." Ours is not an invitation to drink of a river of life, but an invitation to have a wellspring of water of life started in our hearts by the impartation of the Holy Spirit. As already pointed out it will be after the river of, the water of life flows from the glorified Church that the Spirit and the Bride will say to the world of mankind, Come. Then whosoever will may come, whereas now no man can come "except the Father which sent Me draw him."

A Refreshing Picture

Thus seen, God has rich blessings in store for mankind in general in the day when His Kingdom shall be established amongst men, in Immanuel's day. The restitution of that time is pictured in the leaves of the trees; the abundance of instruction and nourishment, mental, moral, and physical, is represented in the fruit of the trees. More than this, wherever the water of this river went, life resulted, until finally it emptied itself into the Dead Sea with the effect that the waters of the latter were healed. Fishes thrive well in sea water, but the water of the Dead Sea is about five times as strongly pregnated with salts, and as a consequence fish taken from the Mediterranean and put into the Dead Sea die in a few minutes, hence its name, Dead Sea.

It would not at all surprise us, if in the beginning of the Millennial Age, not only the nation of Israel would receive the blessing of the Lord lost at the beginning of this Gospel Age and become His representative people in the world-the Church having been taken from the world, glorified spirit beings-but also if, in the Lord's providence, some miracle were wrought by which the Dead Sea would become connected with the Mediterranean, possibly refreshed also by some such river as is here described by Ezekiel, a picture of the symbolical river of life flowing from the New Jerusalem. But however interested we might be in the thought of such a literal fulfillment of this prophecy, our interest is still greater in the fulfillment of it as a symbol in accord with the river of Revelation. From this symbolical standpoint the Dead Sea represents the dead world, and the coming of life-giving waters would represent the resurrection power of the Lord and the Church exercised amongst men during the Millennial Age. As the Apostle expresses it, it would mean, for the Gentiles, life from the dead.

But while it is refreshing and exhilarating to look down into the future and think of the blessings to come, it is important that we draw practical lessons and apply them to ourselves, and see to it that we do all in our power now to make our calling and our election sure, that we may be of that New Jerusalem class, the Bride glorified, from whom the river of the water of life will issue. There is no doubt that it will all be accomplished, because the Word as the Lord has spoken it. The whole question for us is whether we or others will be the Lord's ministers, servants, honored agents in causing the blessing of the Lord to fill the whole earth. The more we love the glorious prospects set before us in the Word, the more we will strive for present participation in the sufferings of Christ, in laying down our lives for the brethren, and for future participation in the glories of Christ in the blessing of all the families of the earth.

THE GREAT UNSELFISHNESS

"For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth." -- John 17:19, R. V.

CHRIST'S great unselfishness and the super abounding power of His love, impress and inspire the true disciple perhaps above everything else to be found in the sacred narrative of the Savior's life. Throughout His ministry He was constantly giving the most convincing evidences of His own self-renunciation and of His love for men. "I came not to be ministered unto," He said, "but to minister unto others and to give My life a ransom for many." He made use of the closing hours of His life, not in bemoaning the fact of the seeming misfortune and defeat that were so soon to overtake Him, but, in deep and compassionate consideration for His disciples and their welfare. In His prayer to the Father He affirms again and again His harmony with the Divine will and His solicitude for

those whom the Father had given Him. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth." Some one has declared this to be "the most precious fragment of the past."

"The R. V. margin substitutes the word consecrate for sanctify; and it probably conveys a better meaning, because devotion to the will of God is prominent, rather than the holiness of personal character. Devotion to God's will is the primary thought suggested by the word; but of course it involves a blameless and spotless character. Thus we might read the words, 'For their sakes I consecrate Myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth.' Through the dim twilight the Lord clearly foresaw what was awaiting Him—the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion, the forsakenness and travail of His soul. The cross with outstretched arms waited to receive Him; the midnight darkness to engulf Him; the murderous band to wreak their hate on the unresisting Lamb—and yet He flinched not but went right forward, consecrating Himself.

"'Twas thus He suffered, though a Son,
Foreknowing, choosing, tasting all;
Until the dreadful work was done,
And drank the bitter cup of gall."

The Subjects of Christ's Solitude

"In the earlier verses the Lord speaks of Himself, of His finished work, of the glory which He had left, of that to which He went; asking only that He might be able to glorify the Father in every movement of His coming sorrow (1-5).

"Then He launches Himself on the full current of intercession, and pleads for those who had been given to Him, as distinguished from the world of men out of which they had come. Evidently the same thought was in His mind as inspired His words in John 10, when He spoke of the sheep whom the Father had given to Him, that He might give them eternal life (27-29). And it may be that each of these two utterances was inspired by older words yet, that Zechariah had addressed to the poor of the flock when he cut asunder his two staves, Beauty and Bands (Zech. 11:7-14).

"The underlying conception in all these passages seems to be that the Father has entrusted to the special keeping of Jesus certain elect spirits having an affinity to His nature, and who should stand in the inner circle to Him because associated with Him from high redemptive purpose. All souls are God's by right of creation, and all are included in the redemption wrought on the cross; but not all had been included in the Divine gift of which Jesus speaks, 'Throe they were, and Thou gayest them Me.' . . .

"What are the marks, then, that we belong to the inner circle of the given ones? They are these --

- "1. That we have come to Him (John 6:37).
- "2. That we hear His voice, listening for the slightest indication of His will (John 10:27).
- "3. That we follow His steps through the world.
- "4. That we receive His words and believe that the Father sent the Son to be our Savior.
- "5. That the world hates us (Ver. 14).

"Wheresoever these marks are present, they indicate the hand of the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls; and though we be amongst the most timid and worthless of the flock, He is pledged to keep us so that none shall snatch us from His hand, and to conduct us through the valley of the shadow to those dewy upland lawns over which He will lead us for evermore."

That They Might Be Consecrated

And what was the burden of the Master's great solicitude? Not that they should be spared the pains, sorrows, and distresses of the present life; not that their way shall be made easy and free from adversity now. All consideration for temporalities "pales in the presence of His intense desire that they should be consecrated, that is, inspired by the same consuming passion as was burning in His heart. He knew that He was no more in the world. High business connected with its interests summoned Him to the far country, whither He went to receive the Kingdom and return. But He desired that the passion which filled His soul, His tears, His prayers, and, to some degree, His sufferings, might always be represented amongst the sons of men, might be embodied in human lives, might find utterance through human lips. He could not Himself perpetuate His corporeal, visible ministry among men; and therefore desired with a great desire that those whom the Father had given Him should evermore 'show the Lord's death till He come'-not simply by gathering at His table, but by going forth to live His life, and to fill up that which is behind of His suffering

"For all those whom the Father had given Him He pleaded with His dying breath that they should be consecrated; and if you are not consecrated -- if there are extensive reserves in your life, if you are holding back part of the price, if you are saying of aught that you have, It is my own, I shall do as I choose -- then understand that you are in direct conflict with Christ's purpose and prayer. He asked that you might be consecrated; and you have chosen to regard consecration as the craze of the fervid enthusiast:"

The method employed by the Savior to secure the complete consecration of His servants was that of the constraining power of His own example -- "Leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps." "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." Earlier in His ministry the unselfishness and simplicity of the Master's prayers had deeply impressed the disciples and appealed to them. They longed to be able to pray as He prayed and so made the request, "Lord, teach us to pray." The example of the Great Teacher had its constraining influence. "They had come within the powerful attraction of His Spirit. Like a swift current it had caught them, and they were eager to emulate Him.

The Father Had Consecrated the Son

"It is impossible for the saint to gaze long on the stigmata without becoming branded with the marks of Jesus; impossible to see Him hastening to the cross without being stirred to follow Him; impossible to behold the intensity of His purpose for a world's redemption without becoming imbued with it; impossible to see Him in love with the cross ;without feeling a similar infatuation. And it is impossible to behold Him plunging into the dark floods of death that He might emerge in the sunlit ocean, without the consciousness of the uprising of an insatiable desire to be like Him, to drink of His cup, and be baptized with His baptism, to fall into the ground to die that He may not abide alone, to know the fellowship of His sufferings and conformity to His death, that He may appoint unto us a Kingdom, as the Father hath appointed to Him

"Consider for a moment a remarkable expression that casts light on this whole subject. In that memorable discussion with the Jews in Solomon's porch, which practically closed our Lord's public ministry, He said that the Father had sanctified and consecrated Him and sent Him into the world (John 10:36) Was it the same moment, think you, as that in which Jesus said, 'Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body Thou hast prepared Me [or, Mine ears hast Thou pierced]. I delight to do Thy will, O My God'? If so, what an august scene that must have been when, in the presence of the assembled hierarchies of heaven, the Father solemnly set apart the Son for His redemption work; consecrating Him to bring in everlasting salvation, to destroy the works of the Devil, and to bring together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad!

All the Members Included

"In that solemn consecration of the Head all the members were included. The King stood for His Kingdom; the Shepherd for His flock. Any who refuse to be consecrated contravene and contradict that momentous decision.

"When Christ approached His death, in these words [John 17:19] He renewed His act of consecration, and again implicated those who belong to Him; bearing us with Him, He went to the cross; involving us by His actions, He yielded Himself up to death. In His holy purpose we were quickened together with Him, and raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places; and by the same emphasis with which we declare ourselves to be His; we confess that we are amongst those who are bound to a life of. consecration: We are pledged to it by union with our Lord. We cannot draw back from the door-post to which He was nailed without proving that we are deficient in appreciating the purpose which brought Him to our world, the surrender that withheld not His face from spitting, His soul from the shadow of death."

Finally, back of the Master's great solicitude for the consecration of His followers, was the deep desire that they might secure the imperishable riches of the heavenly court and that they might be ultimately fitted to be the bearers of unspeakable mercy and grace to the multitudes of men. If Jesus thought, cared, and prayed so much for those whom the Father had given Him, His deep and ulterior thought was that the world might believe that the Father had sent Him and that it might also share, though to a lesser degree, in the results and benefits that center in the great redemptive purpose that He came to work out.

"THE PEACE OF CHRIST"

"My peace I give unto you." -- John 14:27.

"Sweet gift of Christ! O blessed thought!
The peace of mind that God hath wrought
No earthly passion's half so sweet,
No joy on earth is so complete,
As that the loving Father gives
To those in whom the Spirit lives --
The peace of Christ.

"O weary one upon life's sea,
That hast no Christ to comfort thee,
Remember when the billows roll,
Surge upon surge, about thy soul,

That there's a harbor safe and sure,
Wherein thy heart may rest secure --
The peace of Christ.

"O loving heart that trembles yet,
Half fearful that it may forget;
Afraid that it may miss the way,
Doubting, wavering, all the day
Remember that it is to thee
This gift of gifts is offered free --
The peace of Christ.

"O Christian with the brow severe,
With eyes that seldom drop a tear,
With lips that smiling have forgot,
Remember that it is thy lot
To have within a joy Divine;
Open thy heart and make it thine --
The peace of Christ.

"The love of God! How its dimensions
Reaches above our comprehension
And who of us can understand
The workings of His mighty hand?
But rest, my soul, and quiet be,
Thou knowest this He giveth thee --
The peace of Christ,

"So then, my soul, upon His breast
Thy troubles cast, and be at rest,
Though sorrow wrings the heart, and pain
Saps life and strength with steady drain,
O'er all these griefs and cares of thine
God pours the healing balm Divine
The peace of Christ."

"CONSIDER HIM"

*"For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself,
lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." -- Heb. 12:3.*

IN these peculiar days, crowded so full of rushing about and hurrying on, how easy it is for us to neglect to properly heed the great Apostle's advice as given above! In order to rightly consider and deliberate upon any subject or theme, we must of necessity, for the time being, empty our minds and dismiss from them all other objects and determinably focus our thoughts and concentrate them upon the subject in hand. Indeed, with what holy and solemn carefulness should we prepare our hearts and minds to quietly and earnestly meditate when our subject is none other than our great Example, the Son of God!

Evidently the Apostle was endeavoring to strengthen and encourage the brethren as they were called upon to face certain severe tests and trials incident to their profession as Christians. They should attentively reflect upon the great example of Christ in order that they might be enabled to bear their trials in a proper and patient manner. The Apostle points out that this great One whom we are exhorted

to consider, endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself. Evidently the reference is to the Jews of the time of the Savior, who opposed His plans, perverted His sayings and ridiculed His claims. Yet regardless of their opposition, He persevered in the course which He had marked out and went patiently forward in the execution of His plans. The idea is that we are to pursue the path of duty and follow the dictates of conscience, let others say what they will about it. In doing this, how encouraging the example of our Savior! No opposition of sinners ever turned Him from the way which He regarded as right; no ridicule ever caused Him to abandon any of His plans; no argument or expression of scorn ever caused Him for a moment to deviate from His course. Indeed, He was opposed, misunderstood, contradicted -- "the darkness hateth the light," but He endured, and endured faithfully. What a noble and inspiring example to have before us and to contemplate!

Lest Ye Be Weary and Faint

Truly Jesus warned His disciples that they would be hated of all men for His name's sake, that as He endured persecution and opposition they might expect the same also, "for the servant is not greater than His lord." How necessary and important that we ponder well His enduring faithfulness and draw deeply of His strength, in order that we may not "become weary" and faint in our minds when the tests come upon us.

"Weary and faint" -- how easily we may become so! The meaning evidently is that there is great danger of being disheartened and wearied out by the opposition with which we meet. The opposition of Satan and of our own fallen nature, the contradiction and misunderstanding of the many around us may so soon cause us to lose heart; the hope which is as an anchor both sure and steadfast may become dimmed; the zeal with which we started out upon our journey may become cool. How necessary then that we should keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and that we feed our minds with thoughts of Him, inasmuch as we are in such danger of becoming weary and faint. We must, as another has expressed it, find time to employ the ministry of meditation. "If we cannot find a corner of each day for meditation in the school of Christ, then we must take something out and make room for it." We must be willing to sacrifice the pearl of inferior value for the pearl of transcendent worth. We must be ready to sacrifice our all that we may "know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable unto His death." With the bright example of One who was never disheartened and who never became weary in doing the will of God, we may persevere. The best means of leading a faithful, Christian life amid the oppositions which we may encounter, is to keep the eyes steadily fixed upon the Savior.

Let us then consider those sufferings of Christ in whose fellowship we are to find our consolation, for "as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so our comfort also aboundeth through Christ." Another has beautifully expressed this point: "When we suffer with Christ we come to know Him, we come face to face with reality and the idle superfluities drop away, and our comfort also aboundeth through Christ; our fellowship in His battles makes us receptive of His peace. 'My peace I give unto you.' There is no surer way of becoming sure of Christ than to follow the way of sacrificial life and service; it may bring us into a fiery furnace of suffering, but in the midst of the fire there shall be One like unto the Son of God."

How He Overcame

Nor should we merely meditate upon His sufferings; we should see to it that our minds dwell upon the glorious outcome, the exalted station to which He has now been raised; the marvelous work which He is to accomplish in the earth and in which He has invited us to join; and the most wonderful privilege of sharing in His throne, "for if we suffer we shall also reign with Him." "Because He lives we shall live also."

How did our blessed Lord overcome and remain faithful to the end of His trial and sufferings? What weapons did He make use of in His battle with the world and the Adversary? The answer is that the Man Christ Jesus overcame by a whole-hearted faith in His Father and by absolute obedience to His Word. He came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him. The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, was His only weapon, and by it He was enabled to quench all the fiery darts of the Adversary. What a sacred and precious lesson He has left for us who are still in the midst of our conflict! Let us consider these things and remember that our Master has left us an example, that we should follow in His steps, that we are called to walk even as He walked.

The Apostle uses the word "consider" in his last chapter to the Hebrews, where he admonishes the brethren to "remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and for ever." We must then look constantly and earnestly to Christ as our great Example and Model in all things. He is our life, our righteousness, our object, and our all. Our daily practical life is to be purely and simply Christ reproduced in us more and more perfectly by the power of the Holy Spirit. Enforced regulations will not make us Christlike in our spirit, manner, and ways. We must drink deeply of His Spirit, walk faithfully in His footsteps, and dwell more profoundly upon His marvelous character and moral glory that we may be changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Let us then more and more "consider Him."

TRIBUTES TO HIS MEMORY

The brethren will be interested in reading some further items bearing upon the passing of our dear Brother McKechnie and the funeral service. An extract from a letter received from Brother McKechnie's wife, written the day he passed away, read as follows:

"He loved the little Classes, and amid his suffering last night he said, 'Say Good-bye for me, and tell them all I love them.' Gladly would he have laid down his life for the friends. I cannot speak too highly of my beloved partner. His life was most consistent, and he loved his Bible and never tired pondering its pages. . . . For the past four or five weeks he has been serving the Class very acceptably, never more so than last Sunday. We have all lost a *loved* one, but we mourn not as those having no hope. It is only 'Till He come.'

Again, following the funeral service, Brother McKechnie's wife wrote the following letter:

Dear Brethren in Christ

Your letter of kind sympathy was highly appreciated by me. I also desire to thank you for the beautiful floral tribute you were responsible for, as a token of your esteem for my dear husband. It took the form of an anchor, and I was reminded

very forcibly of that Scripture which says, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul." (Heb. 6:19.) One was also reminded that the storm tossed craft was now anchored safe in the harbor. John was much loved by all who knew him and it is only the Divine Supervisor who can see meanwhile why such a valuable servant has been called Home. He longed to go himself, however, and that Scripture in 1 Kings 11:21, 22, so seems to explain the position, I feel I must pass it on. Brother Blackburn spoke, as John desired, at the funeral, and the service seemed to be much appreciated by many. He spoke very highly of our beloved one

Thanking you all once more for your kind expressions of love and sympathy,

Yours in the Coming One, E. C. McKechnie

Dear Brethren

Greetings in our Savior's name.

We thought it would be appropriate at this time to give you some of the details concerning the passing away of our dear Brother McKechnie which occurred here at his home in the early morning of June 15. As you know, our Brother had been seriously ill since last November when he was stricken while in Kansas City on a Pilgrim tour. He had been confined to bed since then until about two months ago he recovered sufficiently to give us all a surprise when we got to the meeting to find him there. Since then he has been ministering to us each Sunday, giving us a discourse on timely subjects and exhorting us to be faithful to the Lord and His precious Word. He certainly was an inspiration to us all, so weak in body but strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Sunday a week ago, June 9, he had to stop till he recovered from an attack of the heart, while we sang a hymn. Then he finished his discourse. He gave us a fine talk on restitution and had expected to continue yesterday, June 16.

We have had a double bereavement here this week as Sister Gitten passed away on Thursday, June 13, and Brother McKechnie was preparing to take the funeral service on Saturday, but the Lord willed otherwise, as he was called to his reward early that morning and we believe he has heard the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant"

We feel a great personal loss as he was such a help to us all, always encouraging us to hold fast unto the end. But we sorrow not as others who have no hope, realizing that blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; and we have that sure, certain hope of a resurrection from the dead through our Lord Jesus Christ

Praying that our dear Brother's faithfulness unto death might be an incentive to us all to be faithful, and praying the Lord's richest blessing might be with you all as you seek to serve Him and His people,

Yours by His grace, The Montreal Class.

Dear Brother

We have just returned from the cemetery where we left the body of our dear Brother McKechnie. I am giving some items that I thought would be of interest. A pleasing observation worthy of note was the high esteem in which he was held by friends and relatives. All seemed deeply impressed with his sterling Christian character, freely admitting that his precious hope had truly sanctified his life and conduct. His love for the Lord and his devotion to His Word has left a sweet influence behind. Though suffering much, he persisted in using up his last fragments of physical strength in serving the brethren. In the Lord's providence

he experienced some relief from the effects of the two hospital operations of last winter and as soon as able to get out, began attending the meetings, and in a passionate way urging the brethren on to continued faithfulness. After attending a Wednesday evening prayer meeting last week and suffering a severe illness afterward, he was preparing to take part in the funeral services of a sister on Saturday, but in the early hours of that morning the Lord called him home instead.

This afternoon we laid his mortal remains away in a quiet nook in Mount Royal Cemetery where everything speaks of rest from toil, and the peace secured to those who have died in Christ. The name of his resting place brought back memories of his inspiring ministry and fellowship which was ever calculated to lift our minds to the Mount Zion, where he truly visualized the royalty of our present and future inheritance by grace through Christ. May we emulate his devotion and join him yonder with the redeemed and glorified in God's due time.

With sincere love in Him,

Your brother by grace, J. J. B. -- Can.