

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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ONE MASTER OVER ALL THE CHURCH

"One is our Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." -- Matt. 23:8.

THE TEACHINGS of the Scriptures are most explicit that God purposed and called but one Church to be associated with His Son in the heavenly realm -- one Body, the members of which are all called in one hope of their calling. (1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:4.) It is not less definitely established: in the Divine Word that this Church should have but one Head, one Guide, one spiritual Ruler, even Jesus whom God gave "to be Head over all things to the Church which is His Body."

Moreover, we find it clearly set forth also, that this assembly of called out ones throughout the Age is to have a definite order or government in its midst: first of all; under our Master in the beginning of the Age there were appointed twelve Apostles, under spiritual-guides, to serve the Church throughout the Age, and these have been designated the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem, in view of their important positions as spiritual teachers in the Church. (Rev. 21:14.) Thus in the Book of Revelation, the New Jerusalem, the symbol of the new Millennial government, the Church, is shown as the bride united to her Lord and glorified with Him; and in the picture the statement is distinctly made that the twelve foundations of the City are precious, and that in the twelve foundations are the names written of the "twelve Apostles of the Lamb" -- no more, no less. What better proof could we have that there were never more than twelve who were specially designated Apostles of the Lamb, and that their chief mission was that of being Christ's witnesses. From what we gather of the conduct and ministry of these Apostles, their position was that of under-shepherds of the flock, rather than that of lords or masters of the Church.

The beautiful figure which the Apostle gives of the Church in its present condition, well illustrates the Divine order that was to prevail. It is that of the human figure, the head representing the Lord, and the various parts and members representing the Church. In 1 Cor. 12 the subject is grandly elaborated, and with profound simplicity: "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many; are one body; so also is Christ [one body or company composed of many members]. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body." This Apostle continues and calls attention to the fact that as the well being of a human body depends largely upon the unity and harmony and co-operation of all its members, so also it is with the Church, the Body of Christ. If one member suffer, all suffer, etc. He points out that as we seek to cover and hide the weaknesses, blemishes of our natural bodies, and seek to relieve and help them, thus it should be with the Church, the Body of Christ. If one member suffer, all suffer, etc. He thus points to the mantle of charity, love.

Shepherds Who Feed the Flock

It was not in conflict with the foregoing that the Apostles, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, gave instructions to the various companies of the Lord's people that they elect certain of their number as elders and deacons to take the oversight and care of their brethren in spiritual affairs. Neither did it mean that any company of the Lord's people in those days were brought into bondage to those thus elected to serve them in this way; for as a matter of fact, these thus appointed as elders, pastors, etc., must necessarily themselves be subject to the voice of the Church. No intimation whatever is given that any of these thus elected by various of the congregations of the Lord's people were to consider themselves constituted a kind of "authority" or "power" in the Church. To the contrary, the Apostle Peter admonishes those acting in the Church as its servants, that they "feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, shut of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." (1 Pet. 5:2, 3.) The Master's words given to His disciples just before He left them were to be remembered, and to constitute a guide and a strength to His people all through the Age: "One is your Master; even Christ; and all ye are brethren."

It has been, therefore, in violation of the Savior's words and in conflict with the simplicity and order given by the Apostles, that there have arisen and developed from time to time "authorities" and "powers" in the professed Church claiming the right to direct and control its affairs; and claiming to have received from the Lord a kind of special unction constituting them a Divine channel, or government, whose authority and dictates must not be questioned or disobeyed. The true Church has not needed any such authorities and powers in its midst, for invariably when such have appeared the result has been an apostasy, a departure from the primitive conditions which provided that each individual member of the Church should be free to exercise his or her own personal liberty in deciding what should be believed and accepted as truth.

Regarding Successorship to Brother Russell

Sometimes we have been inquired of as to this ministry and association known as The Pastoral Bible Institute, and its relationship to the various Ecclesias of the Lord's people. Explanations have frequently appeared in these columns, setting forth the situation; yet, on account of many new subscribers, some of whom have only of late withdrawn from their former association, we are adding another word of explanation. For example, we are asked if the brethren connected with this ministry consider themselves a kind of successor to Brother Russell and his work, or if they consider that they are constituted to "finish" his work, etc. Our reply is that to our understanding the thought of successorship to Brother Russell is entirely out of order, and such a claim made by ourselves or others would be utterly without foundation or warrant. We know of no reason for believing that Brother Russell's ministry and work in the Church set aside the order established in the primitive Church, nor did our dear Brother claim for himself any kind of special authority contrary to, or different from that which has existed in the Church all down through the Age; Therefore, in keeping with the New Testament order, we are to think of our dear Brother as having been one of the "evangelists, pastors, teachers," etc., for the perfecting of the saints. We know of no reason for believing that there was anything about his ministry

requiring a successorship; neither can we think of his work as having been unfinished at the time of his decease. To the contrary, there is every reason to believe that he himself finished all the work that he was given to do, the same as other teachers in the Church have done through the Age; and he has and needs no successor. Therefore there is no ground for claiming or teaching that there is some kind of special power or authority descending from Brother Russell upon some one or some company of brethren since his decease.

But perceiving that there is a considerable number of the members of the Church still in their earthly pilgrimage since his departure, it is to be recognized that there remains a ministry and a service to be performed amongst the Lord's people. It is, therefore, for the various companies of the Lord's people throughout the world to look for these more or less in their midst, and to accept the direction of the Lord's Spirit in appointing such of their number as their helps and teachers.

"All Ye are Brethren"

Again the question has been recently asked if the brethren who have been appointed to have charge of this ministry, regard themselves as in any special sense, custodians of the Truth to be dispensed to others; further, if the Editorial Committee of the "Herald" consider their utterances in the journal, their expositions, interpretations, etc., as final and the last word upon the subject. In answering these questions we can only say that no thoughts are farther from our minds than those suggested in the question; for it is just this very idea or claim that certain brethren in the Church have been set over others, that we have been combating ever since the publication of the "Herald" began more than eleven years ago. The election of the brethren to serve in various positions in this association does not justify them in assuming any prerogatives above others in the matter of teaching and interpreting the Word of God. Other brethren have the same rights and authority to study the Word of the Lord and to disperse the Truth. As we have repeatedly stated, other brethren of the Lord have equal rights to their views and to promulgate them regardless of how they may differ from those presented in our journal.

It is well to remember always that it is the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord that gives authority and power to handle the holy things and to proclaim the Message of the Lord. We may be safe therefore in saying that in proportion as any teacher in the Church is filled with the Spirit and is studying and ministering in the power of that Spirit, his messages will be correspondingly illuminating and edifying to the Church. It is the duty of the Ecclesias to look for and seek out such brethren of their number as indicate that they have this filling and illumination of the Spirit. The election of certain brethren in the Church to minister to them in holy things does not constitute their anointing or their power to preach the Word; they already have that from the Lord. But their election signifies that they have the Church's approval and endorsement as teachers.

Each Ecclesia Should be its Own Authority

Such was the nature of the Apostolic order in the beginning of the Age. To our understanding the order amongst the Lord's people today should be as it was in the early Church. Their full individual liberty should be exercised and none should be accepted as teachers whose teachings and service are not found in full harmony with the Truth as given in the Bible. Each company of the Lord's people guided by His Spirit, should be its own authority and should control its own affairs. As for the relationship of this association here to the various Ecclesias of the Lord's people, let it be distinctly understood that this arrangement exists merely by virtue of the brethren of the various Classes themselves appointing certain of their number to act in this capacity and to carry forward the ministry in which there may be a general co-operation. This Institute is not authorized by any Class or by any individuals in any Class to exercise any jurisdiction of any kind over any brother or company of brethren whatsoever. We cannot too earnestly urge upon the friends everywhere to maintain their own separate and distinct individuality; to look after their own affairs in every sense of the word apart from the interference that may be attempted to be exercised by any kind of association apart from them. All such entanglements with outside forces, and all such yielding to the power and authority set up by a man or a company of men, invariably leads to a misuse of power and provides occasion for selfish ambition to creep in, resulting in depriving the Lord's people of their liberty, to be followed by general apostasy.

So then the method of operation, of service and ministry of this association is such only as is authorized by and entirely subject to the brethren who have formed this arrangement, and is only such as conforms to their wishes and to what they believe to be spiritually profitable and in accordance with the leading of the Lord's Spirit as they understand it. No claims are made for this ministry except that it is our trust and hope that it is a service of love for one another and an opportunity of laying down life in behalf of fellow-members of the Church. The brethren highly esteem the privilege of rendering this service and rejoice with all fellow members of the Body of Christ in the gifts, honors, and blessings that come as a result of the anointing, which all have in Him; for all the Royal Priesthood is described by the Prophet in the saying: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to comfort all that mourn." -- Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:17-20.

THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY

*"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy;
at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." -- Psa. 16 :11.*

WHEN we consider how much is said in the Scriptures about joy and rejoicing among God's people, we are deeply impressed with the thought that our Heavenly Father is very solicitous for the happiness of His children, even in the present life. The worldly minded cannot see this, they look upon the lot of God's children as a hard and joyless one, and upon God as a hard Master, without concern for the happiness of His children. This, however, is only because the natural man cannot receive the thing of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned. But the spiritually minded have meat

to eat that the world knows not of; and their hearts rejoice, and their joy no man taketh from them.

How strange it seems! says the world. Why, there was Paul, a man of great talent and opportunity who might have been somebody in the world: he wasted his talents, was a poor man all his days, homeless, friendless, knocked about and persecuted, a sort of religious fanatic. But Paul, viewing the matter from the standpoint of his spiritual discernment, said, "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations" (2 Cor. 7:4); for he was one of that anointed Body who, like his Lord and Head, could say, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad." -- Acts 2:25, 26.

So the Psalmist bids all the anointed Body rejoice saying, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the up-right." (Psa. 33:1.) And Isaiah, speaking for the same class, says, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." -- Isa. 61:10.

The grand provision made for the comfort and joy of the Lord's people clearly indicates a necessity for such blessings. Nor is this necessity difficult to understand. The Lord's people are beset on every hand with adverse conditions -- the world, the flesh, the Adversary -- seeking to intimidate or discourage or entrap the new creature, so as to hinder its development in grace, knowledge, and love, and ultimately to hinder it from the attainment of the perfection and glory to follow, which God has promised to the faithful only. What we need, in order to make us sons and daughters of consolation in the Church, is a larger measure of love and sympathy in our hearts. In proportion as sympathy and love come in, they will crowd out the spirit of strife and contention and judging and fault-finding; even as they crowded out at first the spirit of the flesh -- anger, malice, hatred, strife, vain-glory.

As a rule (there probably are exceptions to all rules) those who have the spirit of helpfulness -- ability to impart joy and comfort, and who are able to pour this balm into the wounded hearts of others most liberally, are those who themselves have passed through severe trials, reverses, disciplines, and who have thus been touched with a feeling of the infirmities of our race, and, more than this, have been touched with a feeling of sympathy, for the weaknesses and oppositions which assail the "brethren" in their endeavor to walk after the Spirit -- not after the flesh. Those who have not "bowels of compassion," who have little of sympathy, little of desire to lend a helping hand to the weak or the stumbling or those who are out of the way, have much yet to learn respecting the real meaning of the word love, in its higher senses--perfect love, love for the brethren, yea, love that extends to all mankind, even to enemies, as it has opportunity, but "especially to the household of faith."

Earth's Joys Transitory and Unsatisfactory

This blessed joy, which so wonderfully lifts the soul above all the vicissitudes of the present life, is, as the Prophet expresses it, joy in the Lord, not a joy in earthly possessions, or earthly hopes or ambitions. These earthly things are all so transitory and so changeable that a single blast of adversity

may sweep them all from us; but not so is it with those whose hearts are centered in God and to whom He has shown the path of life. These have learned to estimate the things of this present life according to their true values ; they see that all of its joys are (both transient and unsatisfactory and that the only real value in it is in the opportunities it affords for experience and discipline and education in the things of God and for hearing the call of God and making our calling and election sure. In thus making the proper use of the present life -- walking in the path of life which God shows us through His Word-we have the present joys of hope and faith in the things unseen, but sure and eternal; knowing also that by and by in the immediate presence of God we shall have fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore at His right hand -- the chief place of favor.

But while the fullness of joy in its widest sense is reserved for that blessed time when we shall be like the Lord and see Him as He is (1 John 3:1, 2) and be in His presence at His right hand (in His chief favor), there is a fullness of joy in the presence and favor of God which is the privilege of every Christian now. Our capacity for joy now is not what it will be by and by, but it is possible now to have our little earthen vessels as full as they can hold of the joy of the Lord. And day by day it is our privilege to realize the presence and favor of God, if, by walking in the path of life, the path of obedience and loving service, we draw near to God. "If a man love Me," said our Lord Jesus, "he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." -- John 14:23.

In such company as this, can any Christian fail utterly to realize some measure of joy in the Lord? No, if his faith grasps the promise and holds it, the realization of joy in the Lord is sure to follow, and the more firmly his faith lays hold upon the promise the more will he realize its fulfillment, and the more fully will his joys 'abound; for in the presence of the Lord is fullness of joy, no matter what may be the conditions and circumstances.

In the blessed realization of this experience and the assurance of faith which it gave, in the midst of all his labors, Paul exclaimed, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." -- Rom. 8:33-39.

Cultivate the Lord's Acquaintance

It was this strong persuasion, this confident faith, of the Apostle that gave him such joy in the midst of all his tribulations. His faith laid hold upon the promises of God with a strong and steady grasp, and love and gratitude impelled him to prompt obedience to the will of God and ardent zeal in His service; and evidently the Lord's promise was fulfilled to him in the abiding ;presence of the Father and the Son with him at all times and under all circumstances.

This blessed privilege is ours also, if by faith we enter fully into the Lord's will and favor. And with a blessed realization of the abiding presence of our Heavenly Father, and our Lord Jesus at all times, and of their love and favor, and a faith that lays hold of all the exceeding great and precious promises of

God, what soul may not rejoice and be glad, even in the midst of deep sorrow or great tribulation? In the Lord's presence, no matter where we are, is fullness of joy. Let us cultivate the Lord's acquaintance more, drawing near to Him in prayer, in the study of His precious Word, in meditation upon all His goodness; His providential care, the marked manifestations of His grace in our own individual experiences, and His precious promises which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Thus "draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8); He will manifest Himself to you and take up His abode with you.

It is indeed the will of God that all His children should be happy in Him, that they should be always rejoicing; and if any one lacks this blessing, he is living below his privileges. Beloved, let us not be contented to live beneath our privileges. Let us appreciate the favor of God to the extent of seeking for it more and more diligently, remembering the exhortation, "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." All the riches of Divine favor are ours if in faith and humility we claim them and place ourselves in position to receive them as directed through the Word of God. "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." And your joy can no man take from you, so long as you abide in Him who is our life, our joy, our rest, our hope.

HEAVEN'S HARMONY, UNITY AND LOVE

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is when brethren dwell closely together (in union)." -- Psa. 133:1 Leiser

THE UNIVERSAL desire for fellowship is heaven-born, and heaven itself the grandest illustration of its desirability. God Himself delights in fellowship. From the beginning of creative time He has delighted in the fellowship of the Son, and He has delighted also in the association of all His angelic sons on their respective planes. He even delights in having that intimate fellowship of fatherhood that His grace has made possible with the children of men -- those whom He has redeemed and sanctified. This being true of God as Creator, it is not surprising to find all of His creatures seeking for the companionship of kindred beings. Indeed so general and universal is this desire, even among all the lower orders of creation, that long ago some one put this generally recognized fact into the familiar phrase, "Birds of a feather flock together." The great Creator of all, having planted this desire so deeply that all creation, either by law, or choice, or by instinct, finds its most desirable environment in association with its own kind.

If one desired to do so, it would not be difficult to trace this same law on and on through all the other unnumbered, inanimate, visible and invisible objects, forces, and laws of attraction that control an almost unlimited universe. Are, not all of these so inseparably associated and attracted that their perpetuation depends entirely upon this law of affinity that binds them one to the other. Break that law in regard to a single planet and it becomes at once, a wandering star destined to extinction. Continuance in existence requires that every atom shall keep within the united movement of the whole. There may be an absence amongst these of any intelligent knowledge of this law, but all obey it, and thus in unison with intelligent creations bear testimony to the perfect design and character of God, who, in their creation and ordering, wrote on every page of His creative a unfolding, the eternal beauties, desirability, and necessity of unity -- companionship.

Manifestly then, it is no cause for wonderment that the Holy Spirit, inditing the Word of God, should so constantly direct our minds to this great desideratum -- teaching us that the love and unity that had its beginning in God, and receives its grandest expression among His perfect creatures in heaven, will, in proportion as it may be experienced by us, bring corresponding happiness. In view of this, we can readily understand why Jesus gave it a place of :greatest importance, when in His one, new commandment, He made such close friendship the pivotal center around which His Church would gather, indeed, the test of membership in that Body. Apostles, true to their responsibilities, were emphatic in their teachings on this point, urging upon the Church the all important matter of their relationship one to the other: In every epistle, a spirit of oneness, sympathy, service for one another, patience, brotherhood,, was stressed as being the spirit of the Master. And for all the Church throughout the entire Age they set the standard of a united, frictionless, unctuous co-operation of heart with heart, and hand with hand within the ranks of their brotherhood in Christ. The pity of it all is that this grand and glorious law of God, so universally taught, and so implicitly obeyed by inanimate creation, and, so laden with heaven's blessings of peace and concord, should have been so persistently disregarded, or so imperfectly obeyed, by so many of the special subjects of His grace -- His professing people. Truly, "the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider." -- Isa. 1:3.

God's Glory in the Heavens

The Psalmist David gave utterance to a profound truth in those sublime words of his nineteenth Psalm: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech, there are no words, their voice is, not heard; but their melody extendeth through all the earth, and to the end of the world their words." (Leeser.) What a volume of suggestion and instruction is contained in such a summary of God's creative work! What multiplied lessons have been literally written in the heavens to teach us the beauties of order and unity, of harmony with diversity, as these are exhibited in the wisdom of God, who created and related myriads of extremes and opposites in such marvelous settings, that all are needed to complete the operations and the grandeur of the whole. What a perpetual rebuke to the foolishness of earth, envired as it is in ceaseless strife and discord. Yea, what a daily and nightly voice from heaven, proclaiming the desirability of a diversity that destroys monotony, and makes possible the most pleasing and perfect variety.

As for the unregenerated, it is to be expected that these great lessons will go unheeded, since they have no desire to retain God in their knowledge. But what a powerful influence these things should have on the enlightened believer. His reaction thereto should be a feeling of reverent desire to humble himself before God, and in his own sphere to honor and glorify His name. As David has again so well expressed: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" (Psa. 8:3, 4.) This magnificent pageantry of the heavens should indeed elicit praise and admiration. Such noiseless activity and perfect obedience to Divine law should impress the most wholesome lessons upon our minds, and

stir within us the most ardent desire to emulate them in reflecting the wisdom, love, and power of our Creator.

To Glorify God our Special Privilege

If God is glorified thus in mundane spheres of His creative work by the order, harmony, and co-operation of the separated, yet united worlds comprising His universe, how much more gloriously true this should be in respect to His last and greatest display of creative love and power -- His New Creation. Are not these above all others destined to be "to the praise of the glory of His grace"? (Eph. 1:6.) Aid is this not the thought of all Scripture, namely that all created beings should, in their respective spheres, be constantly contributing to the glory of God. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." "All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord." (Psa. 150:6; 145:10. See also Psa. 148.) Certainly the chief end of the New Creation class is, primarily, to glorify God and, as His children, to reflect His revealed character, that He may shine through them also upon every beholder.

Looking unto Jesus the Head of the New Creation, and noting His main objective in life, we observe that His chief purpose was to thus glorify God on earth, to finish the work the Father had given Him to do whereby He could best reveal and honor God. His great fear was that He might misrepresent the Father by acting contrary to His will. With Him the desire was that "like Father, like Son," should be a reality. This He accomplished so fully that those whose eyes beheld, whose ears heard, and whose hands touched Him, knew that it was also conversely true, "like Son, like Father." As He finished His earthly ministry and looked with desire into the future, the glory of God was still His chief consideration; for thus He prays, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may also glorify Thee; I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." -- John 17:1, 4, 5.

Ye Shall be My Witnesses

It is only as we have God first in all our thoughts and aims, as did our Lord, that we can really appreciate the underlying principles involved in our spiritual sonship. Only the truly spiritual catch the Master's meaning, as by His example He so clearly says, As the Father sent Me into the world **to glorify Him**, a work which I have accomplished by My complete oneness with Him, in love, in spirit, and purpose, so I now send you out among men to **glorify your Father, and to honor Me**. Therefore let your light so shine before men that they may glorify your Father in heaven. Let His glory be the first thought in your ministry, your conduct, and your associations, and men will then glorify God in the day of visitation, and they will know also that He sent Me. Would we inquire of Him how so great a witness could be given by us -- how we could cause an unbelieving world to acknowledge our testimony, and identify us as Christians, what would His answer be? "**By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.**" (John 13:35.) Beautiful, simple, sublime criterion by which a correct judgment would be formed! But after all it is but a repetition of that universal message, prepared and written in shining stars before the foundation of the world, revealing to us the deep lesson of how best we may glorify Him.

Let us, as devout students, lift our eyes once again to those brilliant orbs of light, where God's existence, power and love are constantly proved, and observing how, in their varied sizes, orbits, separateness, varieties, and co-operation, "their melody extendeth through all the earth, and to the end of the world their words," and we will have no difficulty in understanding this simple, but profound statement of Jesus. The witness is not so much in preaching, as in unity, peace, order, and a frictionless cooperation that represents love and attraction. The reason why men will know, by our spirit of love for one another, that we are followers of His, is clear enough. The average man has sufficient knowledge of the purport of Jesus' teaching to know that peace, unity and close sympathetic brotherhood are its legitimate manifestations. He likewise knows that discord, friction, divisions, sects and factions, are all contrary thereto. Men may fail to understand our speech, and certainly so, if controversial definitions of terms, shades of meaning, human inventions, etc., are permitted to obscure the simple Gospel. They will be turned to scoffers by our jargon of sect and party, and fling the taunt, "Behold how these Christians love one another," to our shame. But all men, sincere observing men, will understand us, and as Jesus taught, acknowledge us as belonging to Him, when we speak and act the language of love. They will apprise us correctly when our doctrines have all distilled **upon our own hearts** "as the small rain upon the tender herb, and 'as the showers upon the grass." -- Deut. 32:2.

Bride of the Lamb Thy Charms, O Seek to Wear

Being then, His Epistles, known and read of all, bearing His name and message, it follows that we must, in our conduct, our ministry, and our co-operative fellowship, bear testimony to the effectiveness of His Gospel, and thus discharge our responsibility of glorifying God, just as the star-studded sky must always witness to Him. And as others to whom we should witness read us, this will be their test.

"The wise men say, 'What language did Christ speak?'
They cavil, argue, search, and little prove.
O sages, leave your Syria and your Greek!
Christ spoke the universal language -- love."

Favored Church of Christ, created in Christ Jesus unto good works! Could there be a more laudable work filling our lives than this, to be one with the symphonies of angelic choirs, and the chorus of myriad worlds and created things, as in their sweet accord they glorify the name, wisdom, and power of God. "Behold, how good and how 'pleasant" is such a favor as ours! How exalted and worthy an aim to enlist our fervent zeal to accomplish by dwelling together in unity and love!

If anything more were needed to reinforce our effort toward this goal, surely it would be sufficient to remember that such blessed unity was the subject of our Master's special prayer -- the prayer that particularly represents His earnest desire for us, and its fulfillment in us intended by Him to be the burden of proof to the world that He had not come in vain: "That they all may be one; as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." Does some one say -- An impossible prayer." We answer, No. This prayer was answered! by the "good and pleasant" harmony and oneness of Apostolic associations as witnessed by the Jewish "world." "They acknowledged that they had been with Jesus and learned of Him." It remains for us, who have believed on Him

through their word, to exhibit the same evidences of vital association with Him.

The United Church of Christ

Another important reason why it is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity, is that God has designed that by such association together their own best interests will be served. Assistance that is indispensable will in this way be received; qualities of mind and heart, essential to a place amongst the saints in future glory, can be cultivated and crystallized only in this way. This is plainly illustrated in the natural earthly relationships. The natural man loves and enjoys natural fellowship, and is constantly seeking it, properly recognizing that though he be free to choose the life of a recluse if he so desire, yet his best interests are served by a proper recognition of his need of the assistance and association of others. We properly view the hermit life as being abnormal, and as being a useless life, both to the hermit and to the community at large. Likewise the New Creature craves fellowship, and seeks for it on his higher plane, with even greater realizations of its need. Indeed, this is so important, that if the fellowship of the spiritually minded is not appreciated above all others, is not longed for and sought after, and every opportunity improved to enjoy it, he may well understand that there are unhealthy indications as respects his spiritual condition. If he be deceived with the thought that such association is not conducive to his best interests, and that he can rise to greater things without it, he will find neither example nor precept in the Scriptures to sustain his perverted judgment, but repeated warnings against attempting a thing so unnatural and unspiritual.

Who are to be Recognized as Brethren

But before we proceed to examine the good and pleasant aspects of Christian fellowship, it would seem necessary to again review briefly a question that lies at the foundation of endless difficulties experienced by many, a number of whom we have reason to believe are truly sincere. Their question presented in a variety of forms is -- With whom can we fellowship, and co-labor as brethren in Christ? This is an age-long problem. It appeared very early in the history of the Church, and received much attention from the Apostles, particularly Paul. Extremes of opinion, swinging from a wide open door policy to the narrowest bigotry, fill volumes of Church literature, and even yet the discussion and war of words continues unabated.

Even in this day of greater light and tolerance the same extremes prevail. Indeed comparatively few seem to find the happy medium between liberty and license, between the unity of the Spirit and the jots and tittles of the letter. Shorn of all its accumulations of definitions, and its appendages of Church contradictory precept and practice, and the question left to be answered according to the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus, the problem is simple enough. Concisely and finally, Jesus comprehends the entire brotherhood in His one statement: "One is your Master, even Christ: and all ye are brethren." Could we have any real difficulty in understanding a statement so simple as that, or experience further difficulties in adopting it as a rule for finding the brotherhood? Summarizing the teachings of Jesus, it means that He will recognize as His, any one who will come to the Father in His name. If he come in humble faith seeking forgiveness and cleansing from guilt, he will in no wise be cast out. If his gratitude manifests itself by a full consecration of his heart to God, then he is received into the probationary

membership, of the anointed class. Thereafter, his conduct bearing testimony to a desire to conform life and character to the will of God, he is to be acknowledged by us as a brother in Christ, eligible to the rights, the love, and the assistance due to every member of the Body. Only a repudiation of the atoning blood, or a deliberate course of sinful conduct contrary to righteousness, would exclude him from the number of the Lord's people, **or release us from our obligation to love him, and to do all in our power to lay down life on his behalf.** Not until God lets him go, are we free from our responsibility toward him.

Love Produces Unity

A people who have professed disapproval of manmade creeds, and protested against limiting Christian fellowship to requirements not Apostolic, should, by reason of such a protest, be prepared to follow this Scriptural rule. Furthermore, a people who invite "all believers in the Ransom," to share with them their feasts of love at the Master's table, should be well informed regarding the liberties enjoyed in Christ Jesus. A clear working distinction should by this time, be easily made between doctrines more or less important, between the vital essentials of Christian unity and service; otherwise we are still in need "that one teach us again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are ;become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." -- Heb. 5:12.

Granted of course that the questions of leadership, etc., are also involved, we will consider it sufficient to remark here, that wherever the simple rules of Apostolic order are followed, and their true broad, standard maintained, there will be comparatively little difficulty in maintaining primitive simplicity. If this be not true, the Apostolic instructions are misleading and worthless! But of a certainty, they will produce a unity, where the brotherhood will be properly led into a fellowship and service that will function true to Scriptural ideals throughout the entire Body. When love, which is the fulfilling of the law, pervades the Church, everything will adjust itself to that rule, for "love suffereth long, and is kind: love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things." (1 Cor. 13:4-7.) Let the leaders be examples to the flock in these things and there will be little schism in the Body.

Blest be the Tie that Binds Us Together

The Lord never intended that man-made creeds written or unwritten, should be the vital bond that would hold us together. Such cords are too external and cold, and usually fail in times of strain and stress. "The love of Christ constraineth us," holds us together and makes our fellowship a heavenly association. Many have been the grateful hearts, touched by that spirit of Divine love, that have experienced the uniting influence of, the old familiar hymn:

"Blest be the tie that binds,
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds,
Is like to that above."

Under the mellowing effect of that hymn, when sung in the spirit of sincerity, it is easy to feel the Spirit at work destroying all bitterness, and preparing the heart for a more generous expression of Christian sympathy. At such times it is not so difficult to strike a proper balance of mind regarding the things that differ, and to put the weight of love on the right side -- on the side that really matters for time and eternity. And this is just the influence our opening text declares is that good and pleasant atmosphere, so conducive to the loftiest degree of spiritual fellowship, where the Lord gathers us in His farewell prayer, and spreads over us His banner of love.

Fenton, in his modern English gives us this translation:

"See how good and sweet it is, when brothers rest as friends. 'Tis like the sweet oil from his head, that flowed down to the beard. And from the beard of Aaron ran down to his garment's hem: Like Hermon's dew that falls upon the height of Zion's Hill, for there the Lord His blessing gives, and life for evermore."

The Letter and the Spirit

Under this anointing, what a blessing He has given us! What a feast is ours! Sufficient surely to supply all our needs and equip us for both fellowship and service: God's plan of redeeming love unfolded before us to rejoice our hearts; His great high-calling invitation presented to us in so many that our trembling faith may lay hold with confidence; our grand future work and its glorious outcome reaffirmed by the testimony of all the holy Prophets and Apostles, with "Ages to come" of untold blessings awaiting us -- all this set before us as a joy, for which we are willing, yea, glad, to suffer for now, that we may share therein with Christ. Under such a banner "how happy are we, who in Jesus agree." Let us "rest as friends" on this foundation, and henceforth dwell "where the Lord His blessing gives." Thus "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love: endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of, peace," we shall "love as brethren," and know thereby that we have truly experienced a passing from death unto life.

Our text supposes, by inferred contrast, two classes of brethren, those who dwell closely together in union, and those who do not. Let us note the characters of these two classes as they are presented to us in the Scriptures. Paul's teaching and example will serve to illustrate the pleasant aspect of the first class. First of all, he was wholly enslaved to Jesus, the Head of the Church. That of course accounts for his devotion to the Church, and incidentally it also explains why the Church has always had so few real pastors; though surfeited with orators and preachers. No man can, in the very nature of things, be a true under-shepherd of the flock., until he shares the love and sympathy of the great Shepherd for all the sheep. Secondly, Paul was a strong advocate of correct doctrine, and he is therefore a fitting example to follow in respect to the place of doctrine in the associations of the brethren. He delighted to see the Church reach proficiency in the understanding of doctrine, and to become sound in the faith. But above all he longed to see them exhibit maturity of character as a result of the truth

received. Thirdly, Paul knew where to put the emphasis as respects the vital issues of faith and practice. He knew the coldness of the letter would chill and dwarf any Church, but that the "spirit of the truth" would warm and unite bond and free, Jew and Gentile, in a brotherhood of love.

Let Your Moderation be Known unto All

As we have observed, Paul was, "sound on doctrine," but have we been careful to also observe that in all his ministry, he is ever on guard against making his own opinions, pro or con, on any subject aside from the fundamentals of the faith, a part of the doctrine that must be necessarily accepted as essential to fellowship. This is important, for let it be remembered that conflicting "opinions" have given the Christian Church a thousand times more trouble than basic doctrines. Furthermore, have we been careful to note that even on some points seemingly quite closely related to vital doctrines, Paul was an example of tolerance in his demands of others, willing to let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, asking only that nothing be permitted to obscure the believer's vision of the all-sufficiency of the blood of Christ. But perhaps even more important still, have we been observant enough to note that on points where Paul "had the truth" and his brother was in error, he had the greatest respect for his brother's conscience, and was more afraid of his "liberty" stumbling that brother than he was worried about his brother's brother than he was worried about his brother's standing with the Lord. Finally, have we yet learned that Paul repeatedly taught and warned that the "strong" brother "in the truth" was in as much danger of the Lord's adverse judgment, because of his lack of sympathetic consideration and love, or his contentiousness, as was the less enlightened brother, and possible in more danger, because of his greater knowledge. Search and see, for this is a decidedly important matter in these days when "what we are" may be of greater moment than "what we know" if that knowledge be just knowledge of all mysteries without love. More often what "we know" never permits us to receive our brother, except "to doubtful disputations" and to harass him with our opinions, but what "we are" -- if we be Christlike -- will warm our greeting, modify our judgments, control our fellowship, demanding unity only on the same foundation as our noble example -- Paul. Then like Paul, our greatest interest in our brother's standing will be in respect to his spiritual relationship to the Head of the Church.

Seeing "eye to eye" on doctrine is admittedly important and earnestly to be sought by all, but it is not a whit less important that we feel "heart to heart" on the many, many vital matters that search the very depths of our characters, perhaps revealing that many need yet to learn that the Kingdom of Heaven is not "meats and drinks and holy days" but "peace' and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Behold how good and how pleasant it would be for brethren to dwell closely together, around, and with Christ, as Paul taught and practiced. If like him they made "the end of the commandment love out of a pure heart," and put spirituality, bearing each other's burdens, essential doctrine, and practice in the forefront always, there would then be in many communities where the witness has well nigh ceased "a city set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid." For "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Blessed are the Peacemakers

In view of our Lord's statement, that peacemakers would in a special sense be identified as children of God, how earnestly we should seek to bear that stamp of identification. The qualities of a peacemaker are beautiful wherever found; but like every other virtue it is made even more beautiful when found as an adornment of Christian character. A true peacemaker is one who is capable of seeing the merits or demerits on both sides of a question. He is one who possesses a sound, calm judgment, unaffected by personalities, and who can give advice and counsel impartially. His is in truth "the spirit of a sound mind." Most judgments being naturally and easily biased, others hopelessly prejudiced, and some impossible of anything but snap judgment, makes the sound judgment of the brother who is a peacemaker most surely a boon to the Church. It occasions no surprise then to learn that such brethren are greatly loved of the Lord, when we acknowledge their rarity and the urgent need of such service.

Doubtless, there frequently are developments in the Church locally or at large, that are serious, involving principles that cannot be ignored, and requiring courageous, drastic treatment. There are times when peace at any price would be decidedly wrong, and would manifest a deplorable lack of character. But, we are just now lamenting the fact that so many conflicts are wholly unnecessary. Perhaps they may be defended as "contending for the faith," or "standing for the truth," but perhaps we need to go back and visit with Paul in his Epistles to the Ephesians, Galatians, or Corinthians for a little while and get a better view of things. "If the mists were rolled away" or "If we only understand, we would often find it (better than we thought we would," for we have been told, yes and we know it is true, that "most of our Church troubles are due to misunderstandings." Years ago, an observing commentator, thinking of just such regrettable conditions, gave us these words:

"But what they fought each other for,
I could not well make out,
But, everybody said, quoth he,
It was a famous victory."

Brethren, have there not been some "victories" in the past over which we were disposed to feel elated, that today seem rather questionable? As with maturer and kindlier judgment we now consider all the circumstances, are we not ready to confess that much of our feelings and conduct under those tests represented a large measure of defeat? Surely so! Then let us now covet that wisdom, patience, and justice, that will put us henceforth among the blessed peacemakers, the children of God. "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden; and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not [margin, "lie or deceive"] and they that be of thee, shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; [the age-long fundamentals] and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in." -- Isa. 58:11, 12.

We have also suggested that there were Scriptures intimating that some are not disposed to peace and constructive fellowship. May we not dismiss this unfortunate and much to be regretted fact, from our present discussion, with but one very descriptive quotation:

"These six things doth the Lord hate : yea, seven are an abomination with Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood. An

heart that deviseth **wicked imaginations**, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and **he that soweth discord among brethren.**" -- Prov. 6:16-19.

Fenton renders verse 16 thus: "There are six things the Lord Himself hates and **a seventh is abhorred by His soul.**" He gives the seventh particularly hateful thing as "the sender of strife among friends."

We are Laborers together with God

Workers together with God ! What a suggestion of condescending grace this is! God engaged in creative work of the most stupendous importance and yet condescending to invite our co-operation with Him in that work! And what is this work of God in which we are privileged to engage? Let the Scriptures answer: "Ye are God's building," His New Creation, "His workmanship created in Christ Jesus" -- "In whom **all the building** fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are **build together** for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:10, 21, 22.) Building together with God, and **all the building** being **build together** for His habitation -- what oneness and co-operation is here revealed! With what fervent hearts we should pray that we might in all our labors be truly working "together with God," for there is the ever present danger of our working apart from Him, on buildings, and with materials of our own preference.

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell closely together in union in a work so grand as this work of God! With the foundation laid by Paul "as a wise master builder," and the "gold, silver, and precious stones," put in our hands for a work so wonderful, will we not meditate deeply upon its real; eternal verities. The most unskilled laborer may pull down and destroy the most costly building, but it requires skill, intelligence, patience, and conscientiousness to erect such a structure. So it has been in the Church. This was the lament of Paul that there were so few like-minded as his co-laborer Timothy, zealous for the deeper, spiritual side of Church life, while he wept many tears over the destructive influences of the greater number of concisionists, traditionalists, factionists, and ritualists, who made much of the letter, but were strangers to the spirit. It was ever the effort of Paul to urge the brethren on in the work of building one another up in their most holy faith, the faith once delivered, to provoke them to love and good works, assuring them that in this, their labor would not be in vain in the Lord. How repeatedly he thought of a well organized human body as illustrating the unity of the Church under Christ its Head. "From whom the whole Body, being fitly joined and united, by means of **every assisting joint**, according to the proportionate energy of each single part, effects the growth of the Body for the building up of itself in love." (Eph. 4:16, Diaglott.) The hand cannot say to the foot, or the foot to the hand, I have no need of thee, for neither can dispense with the services of the other. In this Body the sympathies are so acute, that the suffering or joy of one is felt by all. Surely this is the thought of the Holy Spirit's "together" in the texts we have quoted, and we cannot ignore their solemn import. God is building only one Church, one building, and the Pattern He has given us, as well as the materials indispensable to such a building, forbid that any part of its construction should be subcontracted to any builders, who would attempt to build after the style of "us four and no more." When God's building is complete, it will stand without a flaw, a "thing of beauty and a joy forever." But what a

grotesque structure it would be, if built sectionally by "many men of many minds" at war amongst themselves, as to who are members in particular of the Church of Christ.

Out unto the Higher Levels

But, beloved brethren, all who stand "together" on Christ the solid Rock, how good and pleasant and profitable it is to step out into the full maturity of manhood in Christ -- to step out unto the higher levels -- of a truly sanctified spiritual life, and to see with clearer vision the thoughts and ways of God; to stand where we get a true perspective of the futility of our own little limited schemes, and receive instead the needed revelation, that as the heavens are high above the earth, so are God's plans transcendently more lofty than ours. This is a most salutary lesson to learn. Let us for the sake of our present joy learn it. As we value the joys to come let us not forget it. An abundant entrance, or a bitter disappointment, awaits us at the end of the way. "Together with God" and "being builded together" now, will mean "together" there in that abundant entrance.

If we are obedient to the Lord in this, and we work "together" with Him, how blessed it will be. His is the building of a temple that will yet be filled with His glory, and endure forever. If we build alone, apart from Him, our structure will be a tower of Babel filled with confusion here and now. If we build "lawfully" with Him, He builds a Church, against which the gates of Hades shall not prevail. If we prefer to build on our own plan, we build a sect, a faction, destined to rejection and overthrow. If we love to build "together" in Him, we have a unity that is "good and pleasant" and encouraging, for then "they helped every one his neighbor: and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage." (Isa. 41 :7.) If we prefer to build according to a multitude of personal preferences, then let us not be surprised, to find "every man's hand against his neighbor" and no peace within or without. If we build "together" in the deep fellowship of heavenly places, we will be occupied with things of "gold, silver and precious stones." If we reject the commonwealth of a united Israel, we will be occupied with "wood, hay and stubble" human tests, theories, channels, etc., and we may be preparing ourselves for an experience which, though a merciful deliverance, will mean being "saved so as by fire."

Send Thy Beauty upon Us

Ere long we shall enter in to that fellowship above, of which the present good and pleasant associations, have been but a little foretaste. May "the little while between in its golden light be seen," and may the prayer of every saint be henceforth in unison with our Lord for the oneness of soul that means our greatest peace. May our work be in full accord with His work, our hands so occupied that we may further pray, "Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants," give us a knowledge of Thy great purposes; let us see with a single eye Thy gracious favors. "Send Thy beauty upon us"; order and harmonize our devoted labors according to Thy great wisdom; and establish Thou the work of our hands; graciously take the little stones, the little things that we can bring, and build these stones which we have gathered and polished, into Thy great building, so that they too may endure forever. "Yea, the work of our hands, establish Thou it." And in so far as God may yet give us opportunity to witness to His Plan, let us be prepared for these responsibilities, by keeping in remembrance the wise counsel :of the Apostle,

"Only behave yourselves worthily of the glad tidings of the Anointed One, so that whether coming and seeing you, or being absent, I may hear concerning your affairs, that **you stand firm in One Spirit, with one soul vigorously co-operating for the faith of the glad tidings.**" -- Phil. 1:27, Diaglott.

HALF HOUR MEDITATIONS ON ROMANS

No. 5

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, . . . , to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." -- Rom: 1: 1, 7.

Separated Unto the Gospel

IF THERE is one thing more than another in the Apostle Paul's life which calls for our respect and admiration, and which provokes us in the only way we should ever allow ourselves to be provoked, namely unto love and good works (Heb. 10:24), it is the fact, manifest again and again in the sacred records, that he was, in deed and in truth as well as in word, **separated** unto the Gospel of God. What that Gospel is, in all the fullness that Paul preached it, we shall see when we come to the study of the Epistle proper. At this time our attention is drawn more especially to the fact that to these Good Tidings of God he was **set apart**. With him the preaching of the Gospel was not incidental to other matters more important. It was not even one important thing among others that held place in his life. No! it was **the** business of his life to which all else was incidental, and to which all else was held subservient. And in this, in the complete, wholehearted abandonment to the Gospel, to which from his conversion and call he devoted his life, his strength lay. If when we see him publicly rebuking Peter for dissembling (Gal. 2:11), we find ourselves asking where he got the strength to speak against one whom he dearly loved, we shall know; for we shall remember that to the Gospel of God he has been **set apart**, yes, apart from Peter if needs be, and we shall understand how he was able to perform that duty which must have been agony itself to one of so tender a heart. When we see him on another occasion separating from his close friend over the question of John Mark (Acts 15:37-40) and we are tempted to wonder at his ability to reconcile himself to the absence of one who had proved to be such a son of consolation and comfort as had Barnabas, we shall remember what he now tells us, and understand. We shall remember that to the Good Tidings of God his life is **devoted**. To the Gospel he has been **set apart**. Not for any consideration can he consent to what may put its progress, in the slightest degree, in jeopardy. In the words of another: "Such is the sole essential work and purpose of his life. He is **separated to the Gospel of God**; isolated from all other ruling aims to this. In some respects he is the least isolated of men; he is in contact all round with human life. Yet he is '**separated**.' In Christ, and for Christ, he lives apart from even the worthiest personal ambitions. Richer than ever, since he 'was in Christ' (16:7), in all that makes man's nature wealthy, in power to know, to will, to love, he uses all his riches always for 'this one thing,' to make men understand 'the Gospel of God.' -- Moule.

The Heavenly Calling comes First

That we may not lose the practical application of this lesson to our own lives, this writer goes on to say: "Such isolation, behind a thousand contacts, is the Lord's call for His true followers still." And with this we are in very hearty agreement. Yet even here, it may be well to add a word of caution. As Brother Russell has so wisely observed: "The 'spirit of a sound mind' is to govern the Lord's people in all of their affairs, both temporal and spiritual . . . With many of us, as the Apostle explains, it is the Lord's will that we should abide in the vocation in which we were when the message of grace first reached us. (1 Cor. 7:20-22.) Not all are called to an open, public ministry, devoting all of time, talent, effort and interest to the Gospel message. The majority of the called the Lord evidently intends to instruct as His disciples while they are about their ordinary business, the duties and responsibilities of life.

"With these, however, it is necessary .that there be a forsaking of boats and fishing tackle, etc., in the heart from the moment that a full consecration is made to. the Lord. We cannot serve God and Mammon. We cannot have two objects in life, both equally prominent to our attention. The Lord will not have it so with those who are to be His joint-heirs in the Kingdom. This class must appreciate the privilege oaf fellowship in His labor, sufferings, and hopes of glory to such an extent that their hearts will no longer The in the ordinary affairs of life; their ambitions wild no longer The for wealth or name or fame from the world's standpoint. All such ambitions and hopes we must 'forsake' if we would be His disciples. He must be first, joint-heirship with Him must be our ambition; otherwise our hearts would not be in a condition that would be pleasing to the Lord or that would be single for His service; we would be of the kind described. as double minded, unstable in all our works and ways. (Jas. 1:8.) Undoubtedly this is a difficulty with a large number of those who have named the name of Christ and professed consecration to Him and His service.

That We do not Look Back

"It is high time that we learn that we cannot serve God and Mammon, and that we choose as between these. If we do not choose the Lard and His service and place these first before our hearts' affections, we will be counted as ,placing the others first, the interests of the natural man; and the Lord's appreciation of us and the reward He will give us will correspond. He has indeed blessings for all the families of the earth, but, the special blessing presented in the exceeding great and precious promises of glory, honor and immortality are for those who love Him supremely, more than they love houses or lands, business or wealth, family or kindred or self.

"Our exhortation to all who have forsaken all to follow the Lord is that we do not look back, that we estimate that we have made the grandest bargain imaginable, that we are in the way for obtaining the grandest prize imaginable, together with association with our Lord in His wonderful work and with the Divine approval.

"This seems to be the thought of the Apostle when he urges us to lay aside every weight and entanglement that we may run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author of our faith, until He shall have become its finisher. Let us as promptly as possible, at the beginning of our Christian experience settle once for all the matter of surrendering our wills to be followers of the Lamb; let us once for all arrange as wisely as possible our temporal affairs and interests in accordance with the reasonable demands of

others respecting the same, and let us then faithfully persevere to the end of the race course."

Three great Missionary Journeys

But to return to the author of our Epistle. In our last "meditation" we saw the Lord going before him to, Antioch of Syria. He whose interest in His own Gospel of mercy and love never flags or falters had not only prepared, with wondrous patience and skill a "choice" vessel, but had prepared the sphere of influence in which that vessel was to labor "a whole year." (Acts 11:26.) For this purpose the Lord had used some brethren whose names have not been preserved to us. All we know of them is that they were men of Cyprus and Cyrene. (Acts 11:20.) Little did these humble followers of Jesus realize the "increase" which should follow their faithful "planting." Jerusalem had indeed, been 'the cradle of Christianity,' but our Lord did not intend that it should also be its grave. And, as the sequel shows, from the testimony which these humble unknown brethren planted in Antioch of Syria, watered as it was by the rich teaching of the Apostle Paul and Barnabas, there arose a new capital of Christianity. To quote from Godet:

"After the martyrdom of Stephen, a number of believers from Jerusalem, from among the Greek speaking Jews (the Hellenists), fleeing from the persecution which raged in Palestine, had emigrated to Antioch, the capital of Syria. In their missionary zeal they had overstepped the limit which had been hitherto observed by the preachers of the Gospel, and addressed themselves to, the Greek population. It was the first time that Christian effort made way for itself among Gentiles properly so called. Divine grace accompanied the decisive step. A numerous and lively church, in which a majority of Greek converts were associated with Christians of Jewish origin, arose in the capital of Syria. In the account given of the founding of this important Church by the author of the Acts (11:20-24), there is a charm, a fascination, a freshness, which are to be found only in pictures drawn from nature,

The Apostles and the Church of Jerusalem, taken by surprise, sent Barnabas to the spot to examine more closely this unprecedented movement, and give needed direction. Then Barnabas, remembering Saul, whom he had previously introduced to the Apostles at Jerusalem, went in search of him to Tarsus, and brought him to this field of action, worthy as it was of such a laborer. Between the Church of Antioch and Paul the Apostle there was formed from that hour a close union, the magnificent fruit of which was the evangelization of the world."

Never Loses Its Inspiration

It would be beyond the scope of this series to trace in detail the steps of our Author during the (perhaps fourteen) years which intervened until he came to pen the immortal chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. Perhaps in the Lord's providence it may be our privilege at another time to meet together in these pages for that purpose -- to accompany the Apostle in spirit, as he undertakes those three great missionary journeys which have been so marvelously blessed in their results. Familiar as we all must be with the history of this period of the Apostle's life, the story of those eventful years never seems to lose its inspiration in the retelling. If we who today find ourselves living in the closing days of the Gospel Age are sometimes betrayed into a mood of discouragement, we have only to **take time** to review the grand "sowing" time to become animated anew with zeal and courage. Just to read: the story

.of those early days is enough to make the heart !beat faster. But our present purpose will have been accomplished if we come to the study of the letter .to the Romans with a lively sense not alone of undying gratitude to "our beloved 'brother Paul," but also of appreciation of the fact that he was one to whom as unto a faithful steward God entrusted the Gospel. Coming thus we shall find ourselves not merely sitting at the feet of a Master in Israel, though that were enough to elicit our most .respectful attention, 'but we -shall find also the Spirit of the Lord speaking peace to our souls through Jesus Christ, to whom he was faithful unto death, and whom in this Epistle he will preach to us in words which notwithstanding all the centuries are yet aflame with all the passionate earnestness of which his heart of loving faithfulness was capable.

How was the Church at Rome Founded?

Thus far in these meditations we have sought to picture before our minds the author of our Epistle. Before examining the Epistle itself it will be proper for us to make inquiry concerning those to whom the letter was addressed. Much has (been written by many minds on this question, but it remains true that "The name of the original founder of the Roman Church has not been preserved to us by history nor even celebrated by tradition. This is a remarkable fact, when we consider how soon the Church, of Rome attained great eminence in the Christian world, both from its ,numbers, and from the influence of its metropolitan rank. Had any of the Apostles laid its first foundation, the fact :could scarcely fail to have been recorded." -- CONYBEARE AND HOWSON.

Barnes has summed up his conclusions as follows:

"At what time, or by whom, the Gospel was first preached at Rome has been a matter of controversy. The Roman Catholic Church have maintained that it was founded by Peter, and have thence drawn an argument for their high claims and infallibility. On this subject they make a confident appeal to some of the fathers. There is strong evidence to be derived from this Epistle itself, and from the Acts, that Paul did not regard Peter as having any such primacy and ascendancy in the Roman Church as are claimed for him by the Papists.

"(1) In this whole Epistle there is no mention of Peter at all. It is not suggested that he had been, or was then at Rome. If he had been, and the Church had been founded by him, it is incredible that Paul did not make mention of that fact. This is the more striking, as it was done in other cases where churches had been founded by other men; see 1 Cor, 1:12-15. Especially is Peter, or Cephas, mentioned repeatedly by the Apostle Paul in his other epistles; 1 Cor. 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Gal. 2:9; 1:18; 2:7, 8, 14. In these places Peter is mentioned in connection with the Churches at Corinth and Galatia, yet never there as appealing to his authority, but in, regard to the, latter, expressly calling it in question. Now, it is incredible that if Peter had been then at Rome, and had founded the Church there, and was regarded as invested with any peculiar authority over it, that Paul should never once have even suggested his name.

"(2) It is clear that Peter was not there when Paul. wrote this epistle. If he had been, he could not have failed to have sent him a salutation, amid the numbers that he saluted in the 16th chapter.

"(3) In the Acts of the Apostles there is no mention of Peter's having been at Rome, but the presumption, from that history is almost conclusive that he

had not been. In Acts 12:3, 4, we have an account of his having been imprisoned by Herod Agrippa near the close of his reign. (Comp. 5:23.) This occurred about the third or fourth year of the reign of Claudius, who began to reign A. D. 41. It is altogether improbable that he had been at Rome before this. Claudius had not reigned more than three years, and all the testimony that the fathers give is that Peter came to Rome in his reign.

"(4) Peter was at Jerusalem still in the ninth or tenth year of the reign of Claudius; Acts 16:6, etc. Nor is there any mention made then of his having been at Rome.

"(5) Paul went to Rome about A. D. 60. There is no mention made then of Peter's being with him or being there. If he had been, it could hardly have failed of being recorded. Especially is this remarkable when Paul's meeting with the brethren is expressly mentioned (Acts 28:14, 15), and when it is recorded that he met the Jews; and abode with them, and spent at Rome no less than two years. If Peter had been there, such a fact could not fail to have been recorded or alluded to, either in the Acts or the Epistle to the Romans.

"(6) The Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, to Philemon, and the second Epistle to Timothy were written from Rome during the residence of Paul as a prisoner; and the Epistle to the Hebrews probably also while he was still in Italy. In none of these epistles is there any hint that Peter was then or had been at Rome; a fact that cannot be accounted for if he was regarded as the founder of that Church, and especially if he was then in that city. Yet in those epistles there are the salutations of a number to those churches. In particular, Epaphras, Luke the beloved physician' (Col. 9:12, 14), and the saints of the household of Caesar are mentioned; Phil. 4:22. In 2 Tim. 4:11, Paul expressly affirms that Luke only was with him, a declaration utterly irreconcilable with the supposition that Peter was then at Rome.

"(7) If Peter was ever at Rome, therefore, of which indeed there is no reason to doubt, he must have come there after Paul; at what time is unknown. That he was there cannot be doubted without calling in question the truth of all history.

"When, or by whom, the Gospel was preached first at Rome, it is not easy, perhaps not possible, to determine. In the account of the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10); we find, among others, that there were present strangers of Rome, and it is not improbably that they carried back the (knowledge of Jesus Christ, and became the founders of the Roman Church. One design and effect of that miracle was doubtless to spread the knowledge of the Savior among all nations. In the list of persons who are mentioned in Rom. 16, it is not improbable that some of those early converts are included; and that Paul thus intended to showy honor to their early conversion and zeal in the cause of Christianity. Thus, 16:7, he designated Andronicus and Junia his kinsmen and fellow prisoners, who were distinguished among the Apostles, and who had been converted before himself, i. e., before A. D. 34, at least eight years before it was ever pretended that Peter was at Rome. Other persons are mentioned also as distinguished, and it is not improbable that they were the early founders of the Church at Rome.-- Chap. 16:12, 13, etc."

To All who in Rome are God's Beloved Ones

"Wonderful collocation, wonderful possibility!" writes Moule " **Beloved ones of God,**' as close to the eternal heart as it is possible to be, because 'in the Beloved'; that is one side. **In Rome,**' in the capital of universal paganism,

material power, iron empire, immeasurable worldliness, flagrant and indescribable sin; that is the other side. 'I know where thou dwellest,' said the glorified Savior to much tried disciples at a later, day; 'even where Satan has his throne.' (Rev. 11 :13.) That throne was conspicuously present in the Rome of Nero. Yet faith, hope, and love could breathe there, when the Lord 'called.' They could much more than breathe. This whole Epistle shows that a deep and developed faith, a glorious hope, and the mighty love of a holy life were matters of fact in men and women who every day of the year, saw the world as it went by in forum and basilica, in Suburra and Velabrum, in slave-chambers and in the halls of pleasure where they had to serve or to meet company The atmosphere of heaven was carried down into that dark pool by the believing souls who were bidden to live there. They lived the heavenly life in Rome What a deadly air for the regenerate soul -- deadly not only in its vice, but in its magnificence, and in its thought! But nothing is deadly to the Lord Jesus Christ. The soul's regeneration means not only new ideas and likings, but an eternal Presence, the indwelling of the Life itself.

That Life could live at Rome; and therefore '**God's beloved ones in Rome**' could live there also, while it was His will they should be there. The argument comes **a fortiori** to ourselves."

Shall we not, both writer and reader, take these words to heart? Would the writer prefer other circumstances in which he feels that he could labor better in the service of the Lord? Does the reader chafe sometimes and fret perhaps at his or her lot?" Do we think that in almost any other place than our "Rome" we could do better than we do, that elsewhere than where we find ourselves our progress in the Christian way would be assured? Let us remember the lilies, how **they** grow; let us remember about them if we forget. all else that they do indeed **grow**, and let us allow the argument to come **a fortiori** to ourselves. Let us determine that His grace not only can be, nor yet alone that in the days to come it will be, but that here and now it is sufficient for us. Thus we shall each in our several spheres of influence prove to be more than conquerors through Christ who strengthens us: Amen.

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Dear ones in Christ:

I am sorry to be a little late on account of moving and changing my address. I am sending the money to pay for another year's subscription for your precious message sage, which I do need so much to cheer me; for I am a shut-in most of the time, suffering with a poor worn out body and nerves; But I do thank God every hour for all the blessings He sends me, and that He gives me grace and strength each hour and day through all the many trials. Were it not that I know God is all-sufficient for every trial I would have sunk beneath my cross long ago.

May God bless you all and give you strength and grace for all the trials He may see best you shall have in these dark days that Daniel told us we might expect now at the end of this Age -- the end of the Devil's reign on this earth.

I was so glad to see our dear Pastor Russell so grandly thought of at your grand Convention. I wished I could be there, but I am too old now to travel

any more. I am hoping soon to take the last journey and see my dear Master face to face, -- with you all, and be parted .no more.

I wish you all a very blessed Christmas. Love and greetings to you all in His dear name. Remember me at the throne of heavenly grace, where we can all meet together this side the veil. Thank God for this great privilege of praying for each other. Although miles separate us, we can meet in spirit and pray for one another.

Hoping to get your precious message of comfort, I remain

Your loving sister in Christ,

Mrs. F. H. -- Ohio.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

I cannot find words to express my appreciation of the articles that have appeared in the "Herald" since I became a reader. They are all good. I mention two that were to me "a feast of fat things": "The Hidden Life in Christ," and "The Life of Separation."

In reading the report in the "Herald" of the Pittsburgh Convention, my heart was glad. It brought back memories of days gone by, when we did not need any introduction; there was no formality, but love was welling up in every heart and speaking of the gracious things the Lord had done for them. I had the privilege of meeting and hearing Brother Russell the first time he visited Canada, and was a reader of the Watch Tower for forty years -- until the first of the present year. It was then that the words of the Prophet came to me so forcibly: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not." To me there was nothing to sustain or to develop the new creature, or to build one up in the most holy faith

My experience from 1922 to June of 1927 is something I would not wish to pass through again, as I think of the sleepless nights and of the long heart-rending days, with a bondage I cannot find words to describe. . . . Perhaps it was needful to pass through these experiences and feel to the utmost the evil effects of such teaching and bondage that I might more fully appreciate the "perfect law of liberty," the "liberty wherewith Christ bath made us free." I did not know that I was in such bondage, nor did I know there was any passing through this experience but myself. I did not know there was such a journal as the "Herald." . . . I prayed earnestly for guidance and was making plans, when . . . a sister in Toronto sent me a double number of the "Herald." I believe this was the answer to my prayer. The Lord will provide those who hunger and thirst for the Truth with the needed food. He also "takes the wise in their own craftiness."

"Precious is the night of sorrow
Needful is its gloom;
There will be a glad tomorrow,
Of eternal bloom."

Your brother in Christ, "by grace,"

J. E. -- Ohio

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS !

"But lest we should offend them, go to the lake, throw a hook, and take the first fish coming up, and opening its mouth, thou wilt find a stater; take that, and give it to them, for Me and thee." -- Matt. 17:27, Diaglott.

IN the earlier days of our Lord's ministry, following His rejection by His own townspeople of Nazareth, He seems to have resided for some considerable time in Capernaum. According to Matthew's order of events it would appear that very shortly after His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had made His way to Capernaum, and had there attracted much attention to Himself by healing the servant of the Centurion and also restoring Peter's mother-in-law to health. Days of popularity followed, until Jesus found it expedient to depart to amore quiet place. But this popularity which at first promised so much, had sadly waned when in after days our Lord again visits this greatly privileged city. The hatred of the religious leaders had grown in volume, and they had succeeded in influencing many of the people against Jesus and His work. The incident recorded in Matthew 17, and from which our text is chosen, was a very manifest evidence of this changed attitude on the part of the people of Capernaum.

Jesus had been absent with His disciples for some time, but now returns once more to this scene of many of His early activities. Shortly after their arrival, the tax collectors had encountered Peter with the challenge, "Doth not your Master pay tribute?" This tribute was a voluntary tax imposed only upon the Jews for the upkeep of the temple services, etc., having had its beginning in the days of Moses. By general consent it was understood that religious teachers were exempt from this tax, and in former days this courtesy seems to have been given to Jesus also. Now, however, He had lost caste, and was no longer thought worthy of this exemption. Hence the demand made upon Peter.

As the narrative shows, Peter entertained no doubt about Jesus being prepared to pay such a tax, and therefore in his usual impulsive way virtually promised it. By this promise he obligated both himself and his Master. We may judge therefore his surprise when he found himself being questioned

by Jesus as to the propriety of His paying such tribute. Surely the hasty promise was scarcely consistent with the confession he had made but a few days before, when he had confessed his Mater "the Son of the living God."

Jesus did not contest the payment of the tax, and recognizing that no principle was involved, He provided for its payment. Peter is sent down to the lake with the instructions contained in our text, and of course returns with the coin the Master had promised. As to how the money came to be in the mouth of the fish, a reasonable suggestion is that the bright coin had been thrown or had dropped into the water from a passing boat and was quickly seized by this particular fish, lodging in its throat in such a way as to prevent its getting rid of it. Doubtless in some such way, in the unlimited, overruling power of God, the matter was properly timed; the special feature of the miracle being in our Lord's power to find it there at the appropriate time.

Jesus Pays the Debt of His Disciple

This is the historical narrative as it pertains to the little incident itself, but like so many other things in our Lord's intimate associations with His immediate disciples, this incident with Peter is replete with suggestive lessons possible of present and personal application -- lessons that are surely calculated to draw us close to Him in a deeper appreciation of His love.

It should be observed that the fish did not provide two half shekels, but only one, a stater, which was in value equivalent to the one shekel needed -- "for Me and thee." Thus Jesus linked Himself in the payment of this demand in the most intimate way with His disciple. That little word "and" should not be overlooked, for it is laden with significance, not only to the weak and impoverished Peter, but full of encouragement to us -- to you and to me. Our blessed Master still pays the charges for all His penniless disciples, who like Peter have become indebted beyond their ability to pay, and who also in their extremities rejoice to hear Him say, "That take, and give for Me and thee."

"Let our debts be what they may,
However great or small,
So soon as we have naught to pay
Our Lord forgives us all;

"Tis perfect poverty alone
That sets the soul at large,
While we can call one mite our own,
We have no full discharge."

At the call of Jesus, Peter had left all to follow Him. His fishing business had been abandoned, at least in so far as giving attention to it might go. No income would therefore be forthcoming from that source. In common with his fellow disciples he had "forsaken all to follow" the Lord in His ministry, and apparently is now without funds. When, therefore, he finds himself face to face with this demand for the tax, he makes his appeal to Jesus. His extremity, however, becomes the Lord's opportunity to teach him how graciously "the Lord will provide" for every need. To us also the lesson is taught that when we too can truthfully say, "Lord I have left all to follow Thee," I am therefore,

"Not my own, my time, my talent,
Freely all to Christ I bring,"

that He is ever ready to become our surety for demands made upon us for His name's sake, or because we have given up all for His cause.

Casting all Our Care upon Him

As in the days of His earthly ministry, when three years of absence from home and business had passed over the heads of His disciples, He could turn to them with the inquiry, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?" and they could promptly reply, "Nothing" (Luke 22:35), so it has been with all the long line of His faithful followers. With one voice all would say with Paul, "I have all and abound." All things needful and best have been supplied according to His riches in glory, for "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content," fully assured that "He knows and loves and cares." If all has been given up for Him, He cannot fail to meet our needs, for His acceptance of our gift becomes His pledge that all our needs are now His special care. As a devoted life-long disciple has well expressed it, "Whenever you give yourself absolutely to

Christ and His service, not at your whim, but by His direct invitation, you may reckon absolutely on His thoughtful provision, and even if your faith should give out, He will remain faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."

Let us note that when Peter found himself involved by his promise, he did not attempt to carry the burden alone. He took it to the Lord for His attention. By His summons to leave all, and Peter's acceptance of that call, Jesus had now become his burden bearer. As Peter might interpret it, this experience was traceable to the fact that he was so vitally associated with Jesus that their experiences were one. What a relief it must then have been to him, when he found that the need had already been anticipated and provided for. And what a lasting impression must have been left on his mind to strengthen his faith in after days. He could always remember that no emergency could arise in the Lord's service that could not be met by Divine help. Jesus, by this act, had shown him, that even before he had any realization of his own need, ample provision had already been made for it, by One who makes the burden of His disciples first of all His own, before it touches those who have become the objects of His special love and care.

O that by some means our patient, loving Master might teach us this lesson also. What fully consecrated heart does. not long for a deeper realization of "What a friend we have in Jesus"-One who really does "stick closer than a brother" to every sincere disciple, One who in every experience of burden or trial never fails to assure and encourage by reminding us that this also is shared by Him. The trial is for our discipline and instruction in righteousness, and for Him, wherein He shows Himself gracious, sympathetic, and strong on behalf of those who flee to Him in every time of need. Like Peter, we may often be unmindful of the fact that before we found ourselves in the trial, He had already provided a way of escape; but oh, if we could only emulate Peter in our unquestioning confidence in His abundant provision, and roll our burdens on Him, then what a blessed afterward of joy would come into our experience. How wonderful it would be if we could only truthfully say: "I will neither murmur nor repine at what the Lord's providence may permit, because 'faith can firmly trust Him, come what may.'" His method of sharing our burdens may not be in some miraculous way, as in Peter's case, yet, though heaven and earth pass away, His word of promise can never fail. He will meet the need of His weakest and most impoverished, devoted disciple. None that put their trust in Him can ever be forsaken, or overburdened with a trial too great to bear. The **tax gatherer** may be ever at our door in many forms, but if we take his demands to Jesus, and lay them at His feet, we will be able to face every demand with His "grace sufficient" in our possession, and inexpressible joy in our hearts, for to us He will have also said, "That take, and give for **Me** and **thee**."

Our Master links Himself to Sinful Men

How often Peter must have recalled that memorable day, when Jesus first took him into partnership, and filled his boat to the brim, giving evidence of His power to assist those who obey Him. How often the same impulse that threw him at the Master's feet on that occasion, must have moved him again and again to acknowledge his unworthiness -- "depart from Me, for I am a sinful man." Beloved Peter, impetuous, yes, aggressive sometimes beyond discretion, yes, presumptuous, to the point of rebuking his Master, yes, but indeed, Peter with a heart of gold, and a power of affection sensitive to the slightest hint of its possible insincerity. "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou

knowest that I love Thee." Now once more his heart is thrilled, for again Jesus has linked him with Himself in words that must have been music to his soul -- "For Me and thee." Again the lesson comes to us, for this also is our blessed privilege today. We too have enjoyed the privilege of turning our boats over to the Lord, and because we did so there are now hallowed memories deep down in our hearts, too sacred to parade before others who might not understand. Precious moments, when the very abundance of His blessings overwhelmed us with a sense of our utter unprofitableness, and, like Peter, we too have realized at such times more deeply than ever the depth of that condescending love that bridged the gulf between ourselves and the Blessed One who had so graciously accepted us into fellowship.

God's Love Broader than the Measure of Man's Mind

Surely this is the greatest wonder of all the "wideness in God's mercy" that we, unworthy mortals, should be called into such partnership. But even partnership was too cold a word for Jesus to convey His meaning to us, and to call us servants was unthinkable, for there were some confidences He sought that could not be enjoyed by servants, so He chose to call us friends. But He delights in even a more intimate term than that, for "He is not ashamed to call us brethren." And does He not like that term best, for the Prophet has Him saying, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee." (Heb. 2:12.) And not alone in the house of our pilgrimage will He rejoice with us, but He is yearning to have us drink with Him in deeper joys in the place He has gone to prepare. As His brethren He fervently desires to have us share with Him in His glory before the Father and all His holy angels. He invites our participation with Him in His triumphant reign of a thousand years. And He has not left us without the fullest assurance that "in the Ages to come" we are to share with Him the unfolding glories of endless eternities. In all of this we may hear Him say, Though eye hath not seen, nor ear heard what My Father hath in reservation for those that love Him, yet in His love and wisdom it waits in reservation "for Me and thee." How incredible it seems! Yet it was all determined for us in the counsels of God before the foundation of the world.

How much of the Divine Plan the Father may have revealed to the Son in His pre-human existence, we may not be too sure, but that He was well informed that the redemption of mankind would involve the greatest test of His own devotion to God, and His love for man, is beyond doubt. He would surely know that His obedience would secure for Him the right to be the great Deliverer of the race. He must also have known that a class of called out ones, developed under similar tests of fidelity, would share with Him those exceptional privileges of Kingdom rulership. Therefore as He endured the cross, despising the shame, and remembered that the future for Himself and His Bride was all bound up in the issues of His own sacrificial life, He could address us again and again from those crisis periods, in the words addressed to Peter, "This is for Me and thee."

He gave Himself for Me

From His conflict with Satan, alone in the solitude of the wilderness, He emerges triumphant, having gained for Himself a victory over that Prince of Darkness that meant everything to Him and us. How fierce that conflict was we do not know, but this we do know, that the great issues before His mind were obedience to God, and the salvation of fallen man. Therefore in His victory He is saying to us again, "This is for Me and thee."

Again we are with Him in the deep, recesses of the Garden of His agony. We see the cup the Father has put into His hands, and how with an anguish of soul too deep for our comprehension, He falters in the extremity of His sorrow, and pleads its removal. But He overcame! His "Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done," proclaims once more His triumph and He comes to us again to calm and rejoice our hearts with the same sweet message -- "This is for Me and thee."

We see Him at last when "Lifted up was He to die," as Moses had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. The anguish of the Garden has been surpassed by the heart-breaking cry of the Godforsaken, Sin-bearer. The temple veil has been rent in twain and all seems over, and lost. But no, ere He utters His final word, "It is finished," He sees us, like the beloved John and the faithful women looking on with our tears of sympathy, and again we hear Him assure us that this bitterness also was necessary to fulfil His delight in the Father's will, necessary also to redeem unto Himself a Church out of every nation and kindred-therefore, this also is "for Me and thee."

Finally we stand with Him as He emerges from the tomb, a conqueror over death and the grave. We listen to His words of hope and comfort -- words that make our hearts burn within us while He opens to us the Scriptures: It must needs be that Christ should suffer before entering into His glory. Such is the testimony of all the Prophets, beginning with Moses. But My beloved disciples, as the Father has appointed unto Me a Kingdom, so I now appoint unto you that glorious Kingdom wherein I shall see the travail of My soul and be satisfied; that blessed day when the earth shall resound with glory to God, and good will to men; that delightful time when the glory of God shall cover the earth, and sin and death shall be no more; that Kingdom, I now go to receive for Myself, yes and for you. This also is "for Me and thee." Thus He links Himself to sinful men in redeeming love, and who shall separate us from this One who has loved us and bought us with His own precious blood, and made us sharers with Himself in all the Father has given to Him?

Freely Ye have received, Freely give

As the unworthy recipients of such matchless grace, we cannot have overlooked the repeated lessons the Master has taught us respecting our blessings. Too often He has shown by precept and example that blessings received are largely vitiated if not spread out to others. He would have us therefore view our blessings as a stewardship of that which will enrich us by giving, and bless others in receiving. "He has received gifts for, men, and yearns to bestow them; but for this purpose He requires almoners to distribute to the crowd, as of old His Apostles took from His hands the bread and fish, and gave to the five thousand men, together with women and children. He might have addressed these same words to them: 'Take and give.' . . .

"Is not this the law of Christ's own life? Having received of the Father the promise of the Paraclete He shed Him forth with both hands on the waiting Church. It pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and of that fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. If we may dare put it so, our Lord has received His inheritance from the Father, and has given it all away for us, as co-heirs with Himself. He has taken and given. From the storehouse of eternity He has received the, First-born share, in ingots of gold, but has changed them into common coin, that we in turn may 'take and give.' 'Being enriched in everything unto all liberality, which worketh thanksgiving to God.'

"The flowers are always taking from sunshine, dew, and air, what they give forth in color, fragrance, and beauty. In the carboniferous age the gigantic vegetable growths took out of the unstinting sun-power the forces that coal gives back in our hearths and furnaces. The dumb animals are ever taking from the herbage of the mountains or the grass lands of the valleys the nutriment, which they impart to us by the sacrifice of life. Great scientists are constantly engaged in studying how to get more help from the mysterious forces which surround us. They cut channels which we call machinery, and which tap the great rivers of energy as they flow through the highways of the universe; that ordinary folk may talk through the telephone, speak down rays of light, and fill the highways with their motors. The law of all discovery is 'take and give.'"

More Blessed to Give than to Receive

But must we not confess that the great failure of many Christians lies in their disregard of this law of taking and giving. With many the failure is due to a serious absence of gratitude for, benefits enjoyed. But doubtless there are others whose difficulty is not ingratitude, but solely a failure to understand how to enrich themselves by giving liberally to others. They have not learned to take, and therefore cannot give. Some there are who pray earnestly that they might be a source of blessing to others, but never seem to realize this power to receive and give. It is a matter of receiving in simple faith what He has promised, as Peter did. "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," is the promise of Jesus. How we need to ask Him to teach us that understanding of prayer that will enable us to properly distinguish between importunity and accepting.

"Before we can take we must be sure that we are not prompted by personal ambition, but are acting in the name (that is; according to the nature) of our Lord, and are standing on the distinct warrant of a promise. When these conditions are fulfilled, we hear our Father's voice, as we stand in His holy presence, saying, 'Child, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine; take, and go thy way to give.' We may not feel to have received. Ours is the reckoning of a naked faith on the unfailing faithfulness of God. We go forth to act on the assurance that. we have received, that our supplies are ample and inexhaustible, that whatever demands may knock at our door, our Master will adequately meet them all.

"We cannot give unless we have learned to take; and we cannot take unless we are prepared to give. If we endeavor to take with no plan or intention of giving, we shall find that our hand falls paralyzed by our side. The faithful servant who received the talent, and buried it, . . . forfeited it.

"Let us go forth to give. There are aching hearts, marred lives, dumb, outstretched, open hands on all sides. Let us be channels through which God may answer prayers, and almoners to whom -- He shall be able to make all grace abound, because He knows that we shall abound to every good work. He will feel the stream from inexhaustible fountains. He will minister seed for sowing, and will provide bread for the sower. His angels shall minister to us. All our needs will be met according to His riches in glory. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall Christ give unto your bosom, for with what measure you mete, He will measure to you again. Wherefore "Take and give."

"COPYING BUT A FRAGMENT"

"We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." -- 2 Cor. 3:18, R. V.

"Heaven whispers wisdom to the wayside flower,
Bidding it use its own peculiar dower,
And bloom its best within its little span.
We must each do not what we will, but can,
Nor have we duty to exceed our power."

NOTHING is more striking to a close observer of human life than the almost infinite variety of character which exists among those who profess to be Christians. No two are alike. Even those who are alike revered for their saintliness; who alike seem to wear the image of their Lord, whose lives are alike attractive in their beauty, show the widest diversity in individual traits, and in the cast and mould of their character. Yet all are sitting before the same model; all are striving after the same ideal; all are imitators of the same blessed life. There is but one standard of true Christian character -- the likeness of Christ. It is into His image that we are all in the end to be transformed, and it is toward His holy beauty that we are always to strive. We are to live as He lived; we are to copy His features into our lives. Wherever, in all the world, the disciples of Christ are found, they are trying to reproduce in themselves the likeness of their Master.

Why This Diversity

Why is it, then, that there is such variety of character and disposition among those who aim to follow the same example? Why are not all just alike? If a thousand artists were to paint the picture of the same person, their pictures, if faithful, would show the same features. But a thousand persons seek to copy into their own lives the likeness of Christ, and the result is a thousand different representations of that likeness, no two the same. Why is there this strange diversity in Christian lives, when all have before them the same original type?

One reason for this is that God does not bestow upon all His children the same gifts, the same natural qualities. The Creator loves variety, as all His works attest: no two animals are precisely alike in every feature; no two plants are exactly similar in their structure; no two human lives in all the race are identical in all respects; and Divine grace does not recast all dispositions in the same mould. When gold is minted, each coin of a kind is stamped by

the same die; and a million coins of the same value will all be precisely alike. But life is not tainted as gold is. Grace does not transform Peter into a John, nor Paul into a Barnabas, nor Luther into a Melancthon. Regeneration does not make busy, bustling Martha quiet and reposeful, like her sister Mary; nor does it change Mary's calm, restful spirit into the anxious and distracted activity of Martha. It makes them both friends of Jesus, devoted to Him in love and loyalty and service; but it leaves each of them herself in all her individual characteristics. It makes them both like Christ in holiness, in consecration, in heavenly longings; but it does not touch those features which give to each one her personal identity.

His Character so Majestic and Glorious

You drop twenty different seeds in the same garden and they spring up into twenty different kinds of plants, from the delicate migronette to the flaunting sunflower. No skill of gardening can make all the plants alike. The fuchsia will always be a fuchsia, the rose will always be a rose, the geranium will always be a geranium. In the same soil, with the same sunshine and rain and the same culture, each grows up after its kind. In like manner Divine grace does not make all Christian women either Marys or Marthas or Dorcases or Priscillas, nor all Christian men, either Johns or Peters, or Barnabases or Aquilas; but each believer grows up into his own peculiar self. Regeneration neither adds to nor takes from our natural gifts; and since there is infinite variety in the endowments and qualities originally bestowed upon different individuals, there is the same variety in the company of Christ's followers.

Another reason for this diversity among Christians is that even the best and holiest saints realize but a little of the image of Christ, have only one little fraction and fragment of His likeness in their souls. In one of His followers, there is some one feature of Christ's blessed life that appears; in another, there is another feature; in a third, still a different feature. One seeks to copy Christ's gentleness, another His patience, another His sympathy, another His meekness. A thousand-believers may all, in a certain sense, be like Christ, and yet no two of them have, or consciously strive after, just the same features of Christ in their souls. The reason is, that the character of Christ is so great, so majestic, so glorious, that it is impossible to copy all of it into any one little human life; and again, each human character is so imperfect and limited, that it cannot reach out in all directions after the boundless and infinite character of Christ.

An Apt Illustration

It is as if a great company of artists were sent to paint each one a picture of the Alps. Each chooses his own point of observation, and selects the particular feature of the Alps he desires to paint. They all bring back their pictures; but lo! no two of them are alike. One canvas presents a sweet valley scene, with its quiet stream and bright flowers; another has for its central figure a wild crag among the clouds; another a snow-crowned peak, glittering in the sunshine; another a rushing torrent leaping over the rocks; another a mighty glacier. Yet no one of the artists can say that the pictures of the others are not true. They are probably as true as his own, but there is not one of them all that has painted the whole Alps. Each one has put upon his canvas only the little part of the magnificent scene which he saw.

So it is with those who are striving to reproduce the likeness of Christ in their own lives. A thousand Christians, earnest and sincere, begin to follow Him

and to imitate Him. One seizes upon one feature which to him seems to be the central beauty of Christ's character; another, looking upon the same glorious person with different eyes, or from the viewpoint of different experiences, sees another feature altogether, and calls it Christ; each one strives to copy the particular elements of Christly character which he sees. No two reproductions are precisely the same ; no two have the same conception of Christlikeness. Yet no one can say that the others are not true Christians, that they have not also seen the Lord, and have not faithfully copied into their own lives what they saw of Him.

The truth is, the Alps as a whole are too varied, too vast, for any one artist to take into his perspective, and paint upon his canvas. The best he can do is to portray some one or two features-the features his eye call see from where he stands. And Christ is too great in His infinite perfections, ill the majestic sweep of His character, in the many-sidedness of His beauty, for any one of His finite followers to copy the whole of His image into his own little life. The most that any of us can do is to get into our own soul one little fragment of the wonderful likeness of our Lord.

This Lesson Forbids Spirit of Criticism

Thus it is that there a is such variety in the individual dispositions of Christians, while all seek to follow the salve copy, and while all may be equally faithful in their noble endeavors. The practical lesson from this fact is, that no one follower of Christ should condemn another because the other's spiritual life is not of the same stamp as his own. Let not Martha, busied with her much serving, running everywhere to missionary meetings, or to visit the sick and the poor, find fault with Mary in her quiet devotion, peaceful, thoughtful, gentle, loving, because she does not abound in the same activities, Nor let Mary in her turn judge Martha, and call her piety superficial. Let her honor it rather as the copy of another feature of the infinite loveliness of Christ.

There is the greatest diversity in the modes of service rendered by different followers of Christ. All may be alike loyal and acceptable, and yet no two be the same. Each follows Christ along his own path, and does His work in his own way. Whatever we may say about the sweetness and beauty of Mary, as we see her sitting in such peaceful attitude at the feet of her Lord, we must not forget that it was not Martha's service which Jesus reproved, but her anxious, fretful worry. Her service was important, was even essential to our Lord's own comfort, and to tier true and hospitable entertainment of him in tier home. The Marys are very lovely; and every woman should have the Mary-spirit of peace, and should sit much, Mary-like, at the Master's feet to hear His words, in order to be fitted for the best service. But Martha's work must be clone too: no true Christian woman will neglect her duties of service in her privileges of devotion.

"Yea, Lord. Yet some must serve.
Not all with tranquil heart,
Even at Thy dear feet,
Wrapped in devotion sweet,
May sit apart.

"Yea, Lord. Yet some must bear
The burden of the day,
Its labor and its heat,
While others at Thy feet
May muse and pray.

"Yea, Lord. Yet some must do
Life's daily task-work: some
Who fain would sing, must toil
Amid earth's dust and moil,
While lips are dumb.

"Yea, Lord. Yet man must earn,
And woman bake the bread;
And some must watch and wake
Early for others' sake,
Who pray instead.

"Yea, Lord. Yet even Thou
Hast need of earthly care.
I bring the bread and wine
To Thee, O Guest Divine!
Be this my prayer."

Let Each Serve God Where Best Fitted

Let each of these good women follow the Master closely, see as much as possible of the infinite loveliness of His character, and copy into her own life all she can see; yet let her not imagine that she has seen or copied all of Christ, but let her look at every other Christian woman's life with reverence, as bearing another little fragment of the same Divine likeness. Let every man do earnestly and well the particular work which he is fitted and called to do, but let him not imagine that he is doing the only kind of work which God wants to have done in this world; rather let him look upon every faithful servant who does a different work as doing a part equally important and equally acceptable to the Master.

The bird praises God by singing; the flower pays its tribute in fragrant incense as its censer swings in the breeze; the tree shakes down fruits from its bending boughs; the stars pour out their silver beams to gladden the earth; the clouds give their blessing in gentle rain; yet all with equal faithfulness fulfil their mission. So among Christ's redeemed servants, one serves by incessant toil in the home, caring for a large family; another by silent example as a sufferer, patient and uncomplaining; another with the pen, sending forth words that inspire, help, cheer, and bless; another by the living voice, whose eloquence moves men, and starts impulses to better, grander living; another by the ministry of sweet song; another by sitting in quiet peace at Jesus' feet, drinking in His spirit, and then shining as a gentle and silent light, or pouring out the fragrance of love like a lowly and unconscious flower; yet each and all of these may be serving Christ acceptably, hearing at the close of each day the whispered word, "Well done." -- SELECTED.

A SEASONABLE WORD CONCERNING THE MINISTRY

THE OPENING of the new year is an opportune time for reviewing the outlook and prospects of our Master's vineyard. Remembering the prophecy, "Gather My saints together unto Me," it is recognized that for nearly nineteen centuries this word has been in process of fulfillment, the call, selection, and gathering has been from every language, nation, people, and tongue, of such as should ultimately be constituted joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom -- blessers of the world in the coming Age.

We behold how the Lord has used the testimony of His faithful followers to do this calling and to impart the word of instruction. Thus Jesus, on leaving His followers, instructed them: Go ye into all the world and bear the message of truth and grace. The disciples were obedient to the Divine admonition for the record tells us that they went everywhere preaching "Jesus and the resurrection."

Ambassadors for Christ

St. Paul, referring to his own privilege in the ministry, says: "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." He reminds the Church that they likewise share in that great commission: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." -- 2 Cor. 5:18-20.

Looking back now, over the long centuries of the Age, and viewing our day in the light of prophecy, it is recognized that the Church has about fulfilled her commission -- we are without doubt approximately at the conclusion of the Age. Yet, there was to be no cessation of the testimony so far as the Church was concerned, during her sojourn in the flesh. Not only so, but we have strong evidence that the Church is now living in the gathering time, termed by the Master the Harvest, which He said was the end of the Age. It is a time when a testimony embodying a clear unfolding of the Truth has been going forth to all the watchers, enlightening, strengthening; comforting and sustaining faithful believers in the midst of the distressing circumstances and conditions attending the Day of the Lord, and enabling them to persevere in their onward journey, thus fitting them for the final entrance into the presence of the Heavenly Bridegroom.

And who is there of us that can say that this work is not still in order and going on? We firmly believe that it is. There are a goodly number of enlightened ones today the world over, who have been realizing the special keeping power of the Truth in the latter days; and still others there are who in the midst of siftings and testiness and trials of faith are being helped by a clearer vision of just what the present days mean, and the present circumstances existing amongst the Lord's people.

Ministering to the Body of Christ

While the Master was with His followers at His First Advent, and gathering the fruitage of the Jewish Age, He admonished His disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth more laborers into His vineyard.

In consideration of the fact that there are brethren throughout the world scattered, isolated; discouraged, and some of them confused; and believing that there is for them a message of cheer and comfort, and that they can be assisted, shall we not realize the Voice of the Master indicating to us our privileges of ministering to these in such a way as to enable them to become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Is it not to the pleasing of our Master today that all His faithful disciples shall exercise great concern for their brethren in need, and not-only pray that more laborers and more assistance may be supplied on behalf of His faithful children, but that each one who clearly discerns the present situation shall increasingly have it upon his heart .to seek by every reasonable means to co-operate for the advancement of the cause of the Lord and the brethren?

In these remarks it is not our thought to encourage any one in a propaganda work. Ours is not the work of the propagandist, as that term is generally used; for we have no personal designs to work out, nor any man-made system or scheme to publish or advertise ; nor have we any system or church organization to foster and build up. We have none of these things in our midst, but recognize merely and solely, the simplicity and order of the primitive Church -- "One is your Master, and all ye are brethren." As ambassadors for Christ, we are merely calling attention to the privileges of the ministry of the true evangelist -- that it is that of building up the brethren in Christ in Christian character and encouraging them in the development of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and otherwise imparting comfort as the Lord may direct.

Perhaps we should add a word further in this connection: We do not find anything in the Word of the Lord about a great witness that the true Church is to give to the world in these very last days. True enough, we have the prophetic outline concerning the ministry of the last members of the Church tai the words, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; . . . that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" But nothing in this language signifies that they are giving a testimony or witness that is specially in behalf of the world, for we observe that it is said that they say unto Zion, "Thy God reigneth"; that is, their message is evidently intended more particularly for some of the members of the Church itself.

The Prophet is evidently setting forth the Lord's viewpoint of matters at this time. These faithful witnesses are seen of the Lord to be beautiful as, upon the mountains -- that is, above all the kingdoms and institutions of the world, He recognizes their faithfulness in continuing to herald the Message of the Kingdom at hand, in the 'midst of troublous and perilous times. It is another way of saying "Behold the, Bridegroom." It is in behalf of the consecrated, members of the feet class, that they are announcing important truths. And so the faithful are still engaged today in doing with their might what their hands find to do, in comforting the brethren, and in doing everything possible to enable them to remain steadfast, loyal, to the end of their course.

Assisting Those in Perplexity and Distress

It has been with heartfelt interest that we have observed the Lord's blessing upon what from one standpoint seems the feeble efforts of the brethren associated in this ministry. The visits of "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom" to brethren in various parts of the world have without doubt resulted in greatly strengthening the brethren, and in enabling them to see their way more clearly. But from what we gather, there is a considerable number yet who likewise may be assisted. We learn of various recent awakenings here and there, of brethren with whom we were more or less associated in former years-brethren who by reason of peculiar conditions and tests of this day, find themselves sorely perplexed and distressed, and who need to hear more distinctly the Voice of the Good Shepherd saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it."

As a means of further encouraging the ministry, we suggested in the January 15th issue of the "Herald," that we would be pleased to include free, an extra copy of each issue of the "Herald" to each of our regular subscribers who will promise to pass on the extra copy to some one whose interest in the Truth might be aroused and who might be led to subscribe to the journal. In other words, each regular subscriber, whether on the paid list, or the free or credit list, who will notify us of his desire to co-operate in the service, will receive two copies of the "Herald" instead of one. We have already realized very encouraging results from this suggestion, as a goodly number of the friends have so advised us that they desire the extra copy and will pass it on as specified. We emphasize the suggestion here further, believing that this method of uniting our efforts will be productive of much good, not only in the hearts of those ministered to, but also in those who thus minister.

Besides the above suggestion let all keep in mind the opportunity of sending us names and addresses of those who are thought to be in a favorable attitude to receive the message and to whom some special issues of the "Herald" or tracts might be mailed. Additionally, extra copies of any issue will be mailed to those who are in a position to place them to good advantage.

"Shall come again Rejoicing"

We merely call attention to the opportunities for service and the privileges connected with these, and to the advantages and blessings which accrue to those who embrace them. We can, however, speak confidently of a fact that experience has demonstrated, and to which many of the Lord's people can testify, namely that the Lord specially blesses those who, having received the light, and help themselves, do not put their light under a bushel, but let it shine, fearlessly and wisely, for the benefit of others. No doubt there are ways in which all who are filled with loving zeal to serve the Master may have a part in encouraging the Cause that is so near to our hearts.

Finally, we are not unmindful of the fact that primarily the responsibilities of caring for the Lord's sheep is with the Great Shepherd Himself, and we know that He could increase the facilities for protecting, guiding, and helping His people if He so chose to do. We can rest assured that none of the worthy ones, none of the faithful who are minding the things of the Lord, will be left without due shelter and providential care. The Lord will perfect His people.

THE GIFT OF PEACE DIVINE

*"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." --
John 14:27.*

WITH what earnest and all-consuming love did the Master love those to whom He ministered in His last hours! Yet, it was but an exemplification of that love that He has had for the entire Church; as He said in His prayer: "Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." How the hearts of those dear disciples must have burned within them as their Master thus pronounced His benediction. He truly realized that the wrath of man was to break over His head and theirs, and that it would mean a most crucial trial of their faith. A few hours later the Master was crushed in death, themselves apparently forgotten, forsaken of God, victims of Jewish hate and cruelty; as Jesus was seen upon the cross, a gazing-stock, scorned and ridiculed, of what value was a legacy of peace from such an one then? Can we wonder at their utter chagrin and despair amidst the darkness of that awful hour!

But alas, this tragic scene was not in vain; for the story does not end with the cross. The Christ of prophecy was not to be holden of death; their risen Lord once more in their midst, the disciples were assured that their faith had not been misplaced. And they began to realize the blessing of His peace. Then, a few days later, when the spirit of truth, the spirit of the Highest, descended upon them, what changed men and changed conditions we find! This Holy Spirit, enlightening, helping, and healing, became the means of these early believers entering more abundantly into, the possession of the peace of Christ that passeth human understanding. And what joy may the faithful in Christ Jesus realize still as this blessed and sacred unction continues to reach the members of His Body, as pictured in the holy anointing oil poured upon Aaron's head and flowing down to the hem of his garments, thus suggesting the anointing of the entire Christ -- Head and Body.

Supreme Peace in Heart of Great Eternal

Priceless indeed is the portion, the inheritance, bequeathed to the children of God -- the peace of Christ and of God! No greater blessing, no richer legacy could the Master have left His followers! This rest in God, this peace of God, has been the stay and support of the faithful all along through the dark and stormy centuries since the Savior's Advent.

The word "peace" is significant of that which is tranquil, quiet, composed, and free from disturbing influences. The thought conveyed is that of a state of rest. Looking abroad over the world, how manifest it is that humanity does not possess this blessing. Restlessness, uneasiness, a feverish, disturbed state of mind exists everywhere and in every avenue of life, secular and religious, throughout the whole earth. The reason for this state of affairs is, as explained by the Apostle, "the whole world lieth in the wicked one"; and as stated by Jesus, humanity being shorn of this peace themselves cannot give it to others, nor can they take it from those to whom Christ imparts it.

The elements of calmness, tranquility, repose, etc., which are summed up in the word "peace" are found in their fullness in God, and that is why we have the expression, "the peace of God." These qualities in our Heavenly Father are not the result of indifference as to what is transpiring amongst men, nor

clue to a lack of love for humanity, for God is love in all its fullness. The Divine calmness and composure on the part of the great Jehovah is due to His supreme confidence in Himself and the successful working out of His grand and glorious purpose.

Thus our Father in heaven has throughout all ages possessed Himself in perfect peace in spite of all the long reign of turmoil and confusion amongst the children of men. But while supreme peace reigns in the heart of the great Eternal, we know on the other hand, that it is with unspeakable sympathy and kindness that He regards suffering humanity; and so He is likened to a human father in this respect: "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." (Psa. 103:13.) This fatherly, loving sympathy and pity it is that has prompted Him to exercise His power in the direction of man's redemption, and the restoration to life and peace of all the willing and obedient of the human family.

How This Legacy is Secured

As children of God it is our blessed privilege to inquire into and to understand increasingly the meaning of the peace of God, and to seek to possess more abundantly of this unspeakable gift. It is indeed to our profit, therefore, that we consider repeatedly the process by which we reach that condition which places us among those who are heirs to this legacy -- the peace of Christ and of God.

St. Paul very forcefully and pointedly takes up this matter in his letter to the Colossians, particularly in the third chapter, verses 1-15. His expression in the preceding chapter, "If ye be dead with Christ" (ver. 20), surely conveys the thought that all who have made a full consecration to God have given up their wills to Him, which means that they have renounced self-will, and have become dead to self, dead indeed to sin and to the world, and have become new creatures in Christ Jesus; for such have now the will of Christ only, having become members of His Body and having accepted the will of their Head. Coming into this relationship brings them indeed in possession, and makes them beneficiaries of Christ's legacy of peace, for they are figuratively spoken of as risen with Christ: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

How we should seek the things above, he explains thus: "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." This places the burden of this accomplishment upon the seeker, for the Apostle sets this task for us. Speaking elsewhere, he says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." God has provided the way and it is our privilege to make our calling and election sure. Another commenting on this passage remarks "that comparatively few realize to what extent we have the forming of our own characters, to what extent our minds, our affections, are gardens in which we may plant the thorns and thistles of sin, or plant the merely moral and practical qualities corresponding to the useful vegetables, or plant those seeds which will produce the beautiful and fragrant flowers, which more particularly would represent the heavenly and spiritual graces. That which a man soweth he shall also reap in kind, whether he sow to the flesh or to the spirit. Whoever, therefore, seeks for the heavenly things, joint-heirship in the Kingdom, etc., must plant or set out in his mind, in his affection, those qualities and graces which the Lord marked out as essential to the development of character, such as will be 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.'"

Must Give First Place to God

How important it is that the Lord's children shall look upon the task set before them as indeed an unspeakable privilege, and as one not to be undertaken in a spirit of depression, discouragement, and despair; for we are to be keenly alive to the fact that not in our own strength, but in the grace and strength of God will we achieve the glorious end in view, and finally reach the blessed goal. By faith we see the path that leads thither to glory, and none but spirit enlightened ones discern it. The world knoweth us not; our hopes, our desires, our aspirations are not known of men, for we are dead, and our lives are hid with Christ.

Thus does the Apostle admonish us, as to our duty and privilege: "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth"; so that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." Then follows a list of the things which we must overcome. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," that is, rid yourselves of inordinate affection and desire for the things of this life, for "to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life eternal."

The Apostle concludes this list by calling our attention to covetousness, which he designates idolatry. Evidently he saw the danger to Christ's followers of clinging to the things of this world. We would not be guilty of gross idolatry, but our affections may be divided, so that the things of this life, its pleasures, its honors or preferments, prestige, position, or what not, engage our time and thought to the neglect of the spiritual things, and so we fall short of the mark of the prize of the High Calling.

Our Lord has warned us that whosoever loves father or mother, houses or lands, or other things more than they love Him are not worthy of Him; and so we see by the Apostle's statement that any thing which supplants the Lord in our affections is idolatry. How difficult it seems at times to relinquish some of the things of earth; but this is because the Lord is not-temporarily at least=given His full possession of the heart; the natural man clings to the things of the earth. So let us in this war of the flesh against the, spirit cling still more closely to the promises of God, for He who has promised is able to deliver us out of our weaknesses.

In verse 6 the Apostle briefly states that upon those who fail to so mortify their members cometh the wrath of God. He does not here refer to the world as the children of disobedience, but to those of the consecrated who fail to keep the vows which they. have made; those who are lukewarm in His service, and who fail to maintain that standing which assures to them the peace of God. He mentions certain traits of character in particular which must be put off, namely anger, wrath, malice, etc.; "putting off the old man with his deeds" and "putting on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.

Thus all of the new creation become one in Him. Now he says, "as the elect of God, holy and beloved," put on in place of the things put off, "generosity, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Having done all of this, we are able to put on love, which is the bond of perfectness, In this word love, is summed up the whole law, and having thus developed a character which shall merit God's "well done," we attain to that peace of God which rules in our hearts as long as we maintain our standing, before Him.

This is the peace of God which the Body of Christ now possess, and the peace which is possible only to those whose faith is firmly fixed in the power, the wisdom, and the love of God. He gave this peace not as the world gives, in a selfish manner, and in a small measure; it is not the peace conferred by wealth, or power, or friends, or position or pleasure; but an abiding peace, a peace which fits us to face the world with calmness and composure; and a peace that will abide with us even unto death itself, because it is based upon faith, a belief in God, a belief that God is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently search for Him. The Master had known the Father and had confidence; the Apostles knew the Master and had confidence; we know our Master and the Apostles and have confidence in the messages they have left us.

It was this faith which enabled David to pen the twenty-third Psalm, in which he expressed that confidence that "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me." Sometimes we hear Christians say, "My faith is weak," or "I have but little faith," or "I find it difficult to exercise faith." Logically that one cannot enjoy the peace of God so abundantly, because lack of faith is unbelief. Such should strive for more faith and should pray, "Lord increase my faith."

Conceptions of Some Based on Wrong Impressions

The conception of faith that many have is based upon a wrong impression; they are expecting something tangible, something which they can feel. Their peace of mind is dependent upon their emotions or feelings; they think that they have faith so long as they are conscious of certain feelings; but when their feelings change, through some untoward circumstance, they wonder where is the faith which they thought they had; where is the peace of God which was theirs. It is gone, because it was based upon a wrong premise. Now faith is not a thing that comes to us in this manner; for, says the Apostle, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

We believe that God controls the universe; we have faith that He does. We believe by faith that the sun will shine tomorrow. We believe when we plant the seeds that they will grow. We believe that, since creation, day and night, summer and winter have always been and always will be; just so, we have faith in God's unfailing wisdom and power; and this becomes a strong foundation for the true peace of mind.

The same principle holds true of the things of our religious experiences. God has blessed us many times in the past, and we can rest assured that He will again. We know that He has provided a great Plan for the salvation of man; a Plan which is working out before our very eyes. It is almost like walking by sight instead of faith, in many ways today. These things being so, why should we doubt Him in regard to our spiritual life? Why can we not then simply believe? For when we doubt concerning these things we are in effect making God untrue.

When we fail to take advantage of the helps and assistance offered us, when through lack of faith we resist the Holy Spirit in its guidance, we are turning from God Himself; and are endangering our eternal welfare, as well as losing that peace of God, which is so abundantly promised in His Word, as a result of faith. The Apostle informs us that in times past faith has "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, waxed

valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." How the peace of God must have filled the hearts of those Ancient Worthies, those favored ones of God, in their day! And so we believe faith can do wonderful things today, with the same happy results to those who exercise it.

Our Wills Important Factor

Our wills have much to do with laying hold by faith of the things leading to that peace of God; and He permits difficulties to arise in the way of faith. Some one has said that pure religion resides in the will alone. By this is not meant the mere wish or desire to do God's will, but the deliberate and positive choice or determination to do so and so; all things else in the new life come little by little, step by step into harmony with this determination, and the peace of God enters more and more into our lives, as is evidenced by our increasing ability to rise above the joys and prospects of this life, and to regard them as loss and dross, and to look forward with earnest expectation to receiving that crown which is laid up for us and for all them that love His appearing.

There are obstacles indeed in the life of faith; for there are often natural desires and longings that run counter to the new will. The spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind enables the truly consecrated to discern and know what God's will is concerning them. This, He has assured us, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, would do. The conflicts of the natural tendencies and emotions, with the new will, may cause us to doubt or to feel sometimes hypocritical, or dishonest, until we see that the will of God as revealed to us by His Spirit constitutes the center of our consecrated life, and should be obeyed. Thus yielded to, we can understand how the peace of God may be with us even in the midst of conflict and confusion of emotions. Let us then see to it that we have no self-will, but that our will is the will of our God. This is what is meant by laying down our own wills and knowing only the will of God, as did our Master, who said, "Not My will but Thine be done." Thus we become lost in Christ: and He will work out in us that which is well pleasing in His sight. Then can we say,

"Thy will be done, I will not fear,
The fate provided by Thy love,
Though clouds and darkness shroud me here,
I know that all is bright above."

Clouds that Come from Unbelief

The poet here refers to clouds and darkness which encircle us here. Let us be sure that the clouds and darkness be not within us as well as around us. And what are some of the clouds which might obscure our constant vision of the spiritual things and cause us to question our relationship with God cause us to wonder just where we stand? The greatest of these clouds possibly is doubt, which creeps into our minds and obscures the bright sunlight of God's countenance. Doubt comes to us concerning our personal standing: Are we still in the condition of justification? Do we still find ourselves in a position to claim the precious promises? Are we daily expressing, by our lives and conduct, that perfect faith and trust in God, which are ours as our Christian inheritance, the legacy of Christ? We find ourselves in the plight of Bunyan's Pilgrim, when he was lured into Doubting Castle, and under the dominion of the Giant Despair. Our hope is the same as his. After some time, during which Christian grows more and more despondent, he suddenly remembers

that the key to the castle he had in his possession; and this key was the promises of God. And so, dearly beloved, will we find deliverance by the use of this same key.

Doubts in a Christian indicate spiritual illness, a kind of spiritual hysteria; and it is apparently experienced by many, as are the imaginary physical ailments by certain neurasthenic individuals. They enjoy telling about their ailments, which form the most interesting topic of conversation whenever we meet them. And so it is evident that there is such a thing as spiritual neurasthenia; asthenia meaning without vigor or health. The proper treatment of these cases, is the prompt and persistent exercise of faith and the use of a good strong will-boldly coming to the Throne of Grace and laying hold of the precious promises. Let us not yield to our doubts. We cannot prevent their being suggested to us at times, but we can refuse to entertain them. They are not ours until we take hold of them and make them so. Should we find ourselves enshrouded by clouds of doubt, let us remember that God has promised to keep us, that we are sons by adoption, that we are factors in His great Plan; that the Body of Christ has required two thousand years for its selection, and that much that has come to pass in the world's history during that time, stands more or less related to this purpose of selecting and testing those who go to make up that Body. Let us remember that He is faithful who hath promised.

WHAT SHALL WE REAP?

[Contributed]

*"Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap,
if we faint not." -- Gal. 6:9.*

IN THESE words of the Apostle Paul we have a fine example of things written aforetime for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. It is good to realize that he, as did others of old, wrote and spoke as he was moved by God's Holy Spirit; hence the confident expression, like all of similar character, brings comfort, and more than comfort, to those who accept it as a message from the great "Father which art in heaven."

When we were alienated from God by wicked works, we trod the Broad Way which leads to destruction, but by God's grace we have been privileged to enter upon the only Way of escape therefrom which has yet been opened up. We need to remind ourselves that it was Jehovah Himself who ordained the Narrow Way as the path for His beloved children to tread. "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous." O happy day when it was revealed to us, each in turn, that we could be rid of the condemnation which came upon us, through original sin, and that we might follow Jesus, taking up our cross to tread the "new and living way" He opened for us. What a revelation this meant! what a joy it was! How delightedly we entered upon it, the heart filled with gratitude to God for the privilege and the honor it brought us. At that time we made our covenant of sacrifice with God. (Psa. 50:5.) There was nothing wearisome about it, but a joy, a privilege indeed.

Does the joy increase as we draw nearer to the goal? Or are we growing weary of it all? The Apostle knew something of the testings, sufferings, disappointments, temptations, and trials of the way, yet he could say, "Our

light afflictions, which are but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." So then let us not be weary in doing well, knowing what results will follow if we are faithful.

If We Faint not

But what can we do? What does the Apostle refer to when he speaks of well doing? On reflection it is evident that the well doing has to do with the reaping: by continuance in well doing we shall reap: and that which we reap will depend upon our well doing. Elsewhere the Apostle says, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." (quite naturally we all desire to reap something good; consequently so much depends upon what we sow; the thing reaped will not be better than the thing sown. This thought appears to be one of the important matters, for us to take note of; if we would reap something good at resurrection, we must sow something good at death. This "something" is character.

Therefore, let us not be weary in developing a desirable character, one like unto the Lord, for in due season we shall reap the same if we faint not. It would appear that the answer to the question, "What shall we reap?" depends entirely upon whether we become weary or not, in the difficult undertaking of building an acceptable character.

To build up character as nearly as possible conformed to that of Jesus is to perform the one thing God has given us all to do. It involves so much: the more we strive for it the more we perceive its magnitude, and its many ramifications. It is our one way of showing forth the praises of God, and of gaining His approval and blessing. It is our one way by which we can demonstrate that we are the disciples of Jesus: members of the Body of Christ. In this way, and in this way only, can we make our calling and election sure, and gain an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In this way also we can hope to make ourselves ready to become the Bride of Christ, and thus hasten the blessing of mankind. Is it any wonder, therefore, that the Apostle says, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Oh yes, all this is true enough, but after all, is it possible to follow after this thing and never to feel weary? Well no, we must admit that it is a weary way for the flesh: there is so much the flesh is called upon to suffer, no wonder it is weary: it is seldom anything else but weary, if the will of God is fully being done. Jesus found this so, and all who have striven to faithfully follow Him have likewise found it so. It is the same today; it will remain the same until the Bride has made herself ready.

Not Weary as New Creatures

This being so how can this thought be harmonized with the Apostle's exhortation, "Let us not be weary in well doing"? Would it not appear to conflict? If it may appear so, it is not really so. The injunction, "Let us not be weary in well doing" is addressed to God's new creation, Spirit beings in embryo, dwelling in earthen vessels and striving to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son -- He who was put to death flesh, and Himself sowed that which He, later on, reaped by God's own power

the same power which will enable us also to reap in due season, if we faint not. So then, beloved, let us through much weariness of the flesh, be not weary as new creatures in well doing, doing well the will of God for us, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

We are not ignorant of the character of the clays ire which we live; neither are we ignorant of the devices of the Enemy. It is a question whether the Church of God has at any time been called upon to pass through a more serious, and subtle, and testing time. For our part we think it never has, and are not astonished, therefore, at the falling away on the part of some who have been followers of the Lord; nor at the weariness in well doing to be observed in others. We cannot fail to see that some who have been teachers, are no longer concerned to "hold fast to the things we have been taught," but seem to find satisfaction in things which differ -- not strictly in harmony with the details of God's Plan of Salvation, as revealed to His people in this favored time. Almost invariably the deviation is, slight at its commencement, but eventually it leads to a condition in which they retain but little of doctrine, if any, in harmony with present Truth. How sad it all seems! Yet nothing can be clone to help them we fear, beyond bearing them up at the Throne of Grace and setting a good example of constancy. For our part we must find our rest in the Good Shepherd's words: "My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me." After all we are aware that the Lord knoweth them that are His, and none can pluck them out of His hand, nor separate them from His love in Christ. Through it all, and in it all, dearly beloved brethren, "let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

Present Truth, given us for our sanctification, our edification, also, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have (the) hope, is intended to teach us to hate the things of the flesh, envy, malice, strife, etc., which things, being unrighteous and unworthy of God's' people, do but alienate us from the Lord, and from fellow members of His Body, until we lose our place in that Body, if we retain these unworthy characteristics, Obviously we cannot develop two characters at one and the same time. The question, "What shall we reap?" must be faced now with determination, and without delay. After all it is a personal question for each of us. May God help us to be wise, vigilant, earnest, faithful, gracious and loving, to the end that His will be done in our mortal bodies. Let us faint not.

"MY ONWARD PATH"

"And so I take mine onward path, alone,
And yet not quite alone if God decree;

The way my Lord hath trod shall be mine own,
And so my strength shall be!

"What though it lead through tangled brake and brier,
And sharpest stones shall pierce my wounded feet?
Unto that height if my faint soul aspire
These words mine ear might greet:

"If thou but follow Me through toil and pain,
If thou but take thy cross and follow Me,
I will reward thee, when I come again,
For all eternity.

"But if thou wilt not bear thy cross with Me,
Thou canst not hope to win the victor's prize;
No martyr's crown, no saint's green palm shall be
Thy share in Paradise!"

"And so I Pain would take mine onward way
In humble imitation of my Lord.
This hope to bear me in .it day by day,
His never-failing word!"

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Dear Brethren:

Enclosed find money order for \$2.50 to pay for one first volume of the treatise on Revelation mailed to me about ten days ago; and in addition to pay for another first volume for another brother. I desire also if agreeable to you that you mail a third copy of the first volume and also one of Volume II I will pay for these volumes in a week or two, and will sell them, or keep them moving as a loan in any event.

I tell you, dear brethren; the volume I have is certainly wonderful, and has the spiritual musical ring I have so deeply longed for. I have long been so hungry for satisfying food and have found Brother Streeter's book to do so much to fill the aching void. Surely it contains a message presented in a lovely spirit that any one who loves the Master might wish to pass on to other hungry hearts.

In addition to the books I would like about six copies of the last "Herald" containing a letter from Brother Paul M. Ellis of Cincinnati. Please send the above at your earliest convenience. I desire to have them working as soon as possible here.

In accord with your request Re visits of traveling brethren -- I desire to say that at least three or four of the brethren here, and it is quite possible there will be more later, will be much pleased to have any of the brethren call on us with the Lord's Message. When you are laying out an itinerary this way, please remember us, and may the Lord add His blessing.

Yours in the one Hope,

H. D. W. -- Wis.

Brethren in Christ:

You will find one dollar for the "Herald" for one year. I am so happy to start out the new year with getting back to a stronger foothold on the "Holy Word." I have been in deep doubt and distress for some time,, as I felt we were not getting. the real spiritual food we should have. I could not enter into the work of putting out the Kingdom work as given to us. I have read several copies of the "Herald," and this morning received the January 1st copy, and have determined to re-consecrate myself to the Lord and His work

There is only one dear brother and sister near here that I can go to for real Christian fellowship, and that after there has been quite a large Class of Bible Students in this town, all of whom are scattered and gone into the world. But I thank the Lord that I have held fast the real things, and I am going to be more zealous and earnest. I am so thankful that the dear Lord will not let us go into wrong paths if we truly love him. So thankful for His using you, dear brethren, to help us on our way.

I will endeavor to lay by each week as the Lord prospers me, to help in the work. I have the two volumes on the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and praise them highly. How it does rejoice my heart to know that we are built on the sure foundation, and these wonderful truths are always truth.

Please give me prices of the two volumes, also "Plan of the Ages," as I will try to sell some. May the dear Lord bless you in your efforts to uphold the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours in the service of the Master,

L. P. -- Ohio.

Dear Brethren:

I am sending enclosed \$_____ for which you will please extend my subscription to the "Herald" for one year, and use the balance in the service as you deem best.

The past year has been sweet in fellowship with the Lord and His people; and my heart is filled with thanksgiving to my Father for the great deliverance that has been wrought on my behalf in bringing me out, of the terrible bondage in which I had allowed myself to get. Those years seem now like a horrible nightmare; but the past year like a beautiful dream. Like David I can say, "He led me forth. into a large place; He delivered me because He delighted in me."

We have a fine little Class here, and we rejoice each Sunday as we see new faces come to our services. We are holding public services and God is showing us that we are doing some real service, as we meet those who come in to hear the Message and tell us how they enjoy it. Our hearts go out to the

dear ones associated with the Institute and our prayers are raised on your behalf.

With much Christian love to you all, I am

Yours in the love and service of our King,

C. P. B. -- Mass.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

I am writing to say that Brother L. F. Zink called on us and I enjoyed his visit very much. He is the first brother I have ever met. He gave a lecture to about 16, and it was the best we have ever heard. The people want to hear more of it, and if it is ever the Lord's will to have another brother call, please let me know in time so I can secure a place for a meeting and let the people know.

I never expected I would ever meet any of the brethren, but always felt like they would manifest the same beautiful spirit we love so well; and so it is. We know all the brethren even though we may never have seen them

Your brother in Christ,

J. H. O. -- Okla.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in Christ.

I am privileged again to enclose my "Good Hopes" for the last quarter of the year. May the Lord use the mite for the honor and glory of His great Name.

At this time one feels like the Psalmist when he said, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" and to answer with him, "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord:" This seems truly to express our blessed condition in this day of grace. When we are in an attitude of mind and heart to render and surrender our all to Him for all His benefits, He opens our eyes to the exceeding abundance of His grace toward us, and while in some humble way we strive to reciprocate His great love in a living obedience to His will, yet His gifts are continuous and go from grace to grace. Oh that we all may possess by His Spirit that attitude of mind and heart which in, humility and sincerity is able to accept and appropriate our loving Father's gifts as He reveals them unto us.

With sincere love in .our Lord as always, and wishing you all, peace and joy at this sacred season, I am

Your brother in Him, J. L. G. --Eng.