

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Vol. XIII. March 1, 1930 No. 5

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

"Behold, I am with you all the days till the consummation of the Age." -- Matt. 28:20.

VIEWED from one standpoint it appears that the visions of the Apocalypse were specially designed to record the fulfillment of the Master's promise quoted above, to His witnessing, suffering Church. It is indeed a significant fact that we find portrayed in the Apocalypse seven appearances in vision of Christ -- appearances which seem clearly to have their application or fulfillment at different intervals of the Church's history, reaching to the vision describing His manifestation with His Church in glory to the world. Indeed, every important period of the Church's history is prefaced with a vision of Christ. These visions represent Him as filling the various offices that would be required in order to make good this wonderful promise.

Walking Midst the Candlesticks

The first vision in which He is portrayed precedes the seven messages which He gave to St. John to be sent to the seven Churches of Asia. These messages are divinely stated to have their application not only to the seven Asiatic Churches, but to all the members of Christ's Body throughout their earthly pilgrimage. This vision is that of one like a Son of Man, standing in the midst of seven golden Lampstands. Briefly reviewing its import: the vision represents Christ in symbol, in His office of criticizing and judging, comforting and encouraging, directing and supervising His Church throughout her long and eventful history; also that of upholding His chosen stars or ministers in their work of serving the Church during the same period. It is probable also that the vision was designed to impress upon the mind of St. John and all Christ's followers, a sense of the glory and majesty of Christ, and thus prepare the way for them to appreciate the authoritative character and importance of the messages which the Apostle was to receive, and which he was to send to the seven Churches named. The full significance of this symbolic vision of Christ, can be understood only by viewing it in the light of, and in connection with the history of the Church, symbolized by the seven golden Lampstands.

As of a Lamb just Slain

The second vision of Christ in the Apocalyptic scenery is the one recorded in chapter five, and precedes what is divinely stated to be the prophetic portion of the book. The words to this effect are, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things that must be hereafter." (Rev. 4:1.) St. John informs us that he saw a Throne set in heaven and on the Throne is seated One that is evidently designed to represent the Eternal One. In His right hand is seen a Scroll sealed with seven Seals. The Apostle hears an angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the Scroll and loose the seven Seals. After an impressive silence, St. John wept much because no one was able to open and to read the Scroll. At this stage in this remarkable scene, one of the twenty-four Elders, who had previously been seen by him, came and spoke the comforting words, "Weep not, for behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, hath prevailed to open the Book and to loose the seven Seals thereof." Then St. John beheld that which evidently was divinely designed to be the great central transaction of the strange and mystical scene--that of a Lamb as if it had just been slain and yet had been caused to live again. This Lamb is represented in the vision as receiving the sealed Scroll from the hand of the One sitting on the Throne. When this had occurred, St. John beheld the Elders and the Living Ones fall down before the Throne, and give utterance in song to the words: "Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth." Next the Apostle beholds the Lamb loose the Seals one by one, and a series of successive events follow, evidently representing important developments in the Church's history.

The receiving of the Scroll by the Lamb is designed to show that a full, complete knowledge of the Divine purposes for both the Church and the world, as well as all power and authority to carry the Divine Plan to completion, was given to Christ. The breaking of the Seals and the opening of the Scroll by the Lamb reveals the progressive order of the fulfillment of the events symbolized by the four horsemen and the other transactions recorded in that connection. Furthermore, it is manifest that the events represented in this picture of Christ receiving and opening the Scroll occurred after His death and resurrection and before His ascension, and are described in the words: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18-20.) More than this, it is evident that St. John, observing the vision of the breaking of the Seals of the Scroll, represented the Church beholding the fulfillment of the vision, gradually coming to a knowledge of the things pictured as history has unveiled their meaning.

Having much Incense in His Hands

The third picture of Christ, seen and described by the Apostle, is recorded in Rev. 8:3-5. In this vision an angel is seen standing by the golden Altar, having much incense in His hands, which, for the prayers of all the saints, He is to lay upon the golden Altar in front of the Throne. It is further stated that the sweet perfume of the incense for the prayers of the saints went into the presence of God. The angel is next seen to take the censer and fill it with fire from the Altar and cast it on the earth. This vision is seen in connection with the breaking of the seventh Seal, and in it there is presented the most important matter connected with Christ's work for the Church. Those familiar with the typical Atonement-Day services of ancient Israel will recognize at once the very evident correspondence. In those typical services the High Priest alone was permitted to do what this Angel is represented as doing. The High Priest in Israel's arrangement represented Christ. It is designed to picture our Lord Jesus presenting the results or value of His sacrifice before God, which sacrifice was ultimately to effect the redemption of the Church and the world. (1 John 2:2.) The incense represented the actual perfection of the Man Jesus. That sacrifice began at His consecration at Jordan and was completed at the Cross. Its acceptableness was proved by His resurrection from the dead. Its formal presentation and acceptance in behalf of the Church was manifested after His ascension in, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. There may also be seen in this vision of the offering of the "prayers of all saints," that which is taught elsewhere in the Scriptures, namely that Christ as the great High Priest having presented the merit of His sacrifice in behalf of His Body members (Heb. 9:24), their offerings, their humanity, their devotion, their prayers, etc., are made acceptable to the Father. (Rom. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:5.) Hence, Christ the Head having been offered up in the beginning of the Age, He is throughout this dispensation offering up the reckonedly perfect members of His Body. And so it is written, "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2:11, 12.) In the case of Jesus, the Head, His humanity, as a willing sacrifice, was a sweet and acceptable perfume to the Father, attesting at once the completeness of His consecration and the perfection of the sacrifice. The thought evidently to be conveyed by the vision then is that before the prayers of the saints on earth could be answered, and before the saints could be presented as joint-sacrificers, the merit of Christ's sacrifice must be imputed and accepted for them. We thus see that as the prayers, offerings, and devotions of the saints throughout the whole Gospel Age, the antitypical Atonement Day, are offered up to God, the merit of Christ's sacrifice is there to make their offerings, prayers, etc., acceptable. The fragrance of Christ's acceptability gives efficacy to His people's prayers. "And the smoke of the perfumes [incense] went up for the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel, in the presence of God."

His Voice like the Roar of a Lion

The fourth vision of Christ in the Apocalypse is recorded in Rev. 10:1-3, and is that of an Angel surrounded with a cloud of glory and encircled by a rainbow, His face like the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire, having in His hand a small scroll open. His right foot is on the sea and His left foot on the land, and He is represented as crying with a loud voice like the roar of a lion. This most strange and remarkable vision of Christ is located in the order of the Apocalyptic scenery under the seventh Seal, and connected with the sounding of the sixth trumpet. All the symbols associated with and surrounding this vision of Christ, require that we look for its fulfillment in a great movement in the interest of true Christianity—one that was in a very special sense inspired by the great Head of the Church. Furthermore, the symbols all imply that this great movement would be at a time when the Cause of Christ had seemingly met an utter defeat. It is quite generally applied to the movement called the great Reformation, beginning in the sixteenth century. The events which, occurred just previous to this great movement were of that nature that called for such a display of Christ's power operating through specially called and chosen agencies, as are symbolically described in this vision of Christ. The Reformation movement is quite generally understood to have begun in 1517 A.D. The historian describing the condition of the Church immediately prior to this time, has said: "At this date (1514) though the name of Christ was professed everywhere in Europe, nothing existed that could properly be called evangelical. All the confessors of Christ 'worn out' [See Dan. 7:25; Rev. 11:7, 8; Rev. 13:7] by a long series of contentions were reduced to silence." This was the period when the Papal Beast's war on Christ's Witnesses had accomplished the suppression of their testimony. It was a time when there was great need of a lion-like voice to utter a protest against the errors and

blasphemous pretensions of the great Apostasy. Indeed, so urgent was the need, that it became necessary to give to His Church the great foundation truths of the Gospel of Christ again, a second time, and that specially chosen men, clothed with power and divinely protected, should be called to proclaim these truths again. And it is at this period of the Church's history that this glory-enclouded and rainbow-encircled Angel (Christ) suddenly makes His appearance on the stage of Apocalyptic scenery.

The Lamb Standing on Mount Zion

The fifth recorded vision of Christ is found in Rev. 14:1. It follows immediately the visions of chapter thirteen which portray in symbol the full, complete development of the various phases and aspects of the Apostate Christian systems. In this vision of Christ, St. John says, "And I saw, and behold the Lamb standing on Mount Zion." This vision of Christ brings us to the beginning of the most thrilling period in the history of the true Church. A careful examination and study of this vision and its associated symbolical events, cannot fail to produce the conviction that the "Lamb standing on Mount Zion" is a symbolical representation of Christ assuming and exercising kingly authority. The vision doubtless relates to a time when the manifestation of the evil systems is complete: These false systems are described in Rev. 13. It is the earlier aspect or phase of Christ's rulership as king, that in which His true saints are to be gathered to Himself, not into a sect or organization, but to Himself in glory, that is here portrayed. This work of gathering will cover a period of time. The immediate surroundings of the vision all show that it is that period during which He is making known the fact of His Second Presence by giving to His faithful watching ones a knowledge of His wonderful Plan, all the mysterious features of which are described by His holy Apostles and the Old Testament Prophets.

Having in His Hand a Sharp Sickle

The sixth vision of Christ is recorded in Revelation 14:14. In this vision St. John informs us that he saw one like a Son of Man sitting on a white cloud, having in His hand a sharp sickle with which He is called to reap the earth. The time in history when this vision meets its fulfillment is very soon after the vision just described—that of Christ standing on Mount Zion. The symbols that surround the personage of this vision enable us to see that the character of the work to be accomplished in the end of the Age, is that of reaping or gathering the ripe fruitage of the Age. That Christ was to assume the office of Chief Reaper at the Second Advent is plainly taught in several parables in which He is represented as the Lord of the Harvest. (Matt. 13:30.) The vision is designed to describe, in a general way the work of gathering His saints, both those who had died and those who would be living in the end of the Age, and uniting them to Himself as His Bride and Joint-heir.

The Conqueror on the White Horse.

The seventh vision representing Christ is recorded in Rev. 19:11-13. The time when this vision will meet its fulfillment is that immediately following the Marriage of the Lamb, when the harvesting of the saints will have been completed and all the Kingdom class will have passed to their Heavenly reward. This is further proved by the fact that in the vision His saints are shown as associated with Him. The opening words of the vision read: "And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He who sat on him was [called] Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. And His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many diadems; having a name written which no one knows except Himself. And He was invested with a mantle dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God." It seems evident that the vision portrays in highly strong, symbolical language the last momentous scene in connection with the end of this present Gospel Age -- the last scene in that great Armageddon conflict between truth and error. The result of the conflict will be the very speedy destruction of all the systems, civil and ecclesiastical, in operation at that time, as well as those in a state of disintegration that are found in any, measure antagonistic to the reign of righteousness—the Kingdom of Christ and His saints in glory over this earth. The vision describes that second phase of Christ's Advent in which He manifests Himself to the whole world. While the visions of chapter 14, and some that follow, recorded in succeeding chapters, represent Christ as personally present during the whole period from the scene of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion onward, and that His Presence is known and recognized by the "Watchers," yet that Presence does not become known to the world in general until the period when this vision of Christ meets its fulfillment. The "revealing" to the world follows closely the end of the Harvest—that feature of the Harvest that completes the First Resurrection. His Presence, while literal and personal, will be made known to the world in the power displayed in His judgments which will overthrow the present order.

Thus we have recorded seven symbolic appearances or manifestations of Christ in the history of the Age, bringing us to the opening of the Millennial reign, beginning with the binding of Satan. The visions which follow in chapters 20, 21, 22 all have reference to the reign of Christ and His saints during the Millennial "times of restitution."

ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHOWN IN THE MOUNT

"For, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." -- Heb. 8:5.

SHORTLY after the Israelites began their wilderness journey toward the promised land, God gave them His Law inscribed on the two tables of stone. Additionally, through Moses as their mediator, they were instructed in the Law as it pertained to sacrificial offerings, feasts, holy days, etc. All the detail of instruction relating to every phase of their individual and national religious life was imparted to them in this way and at this time. Associated with the giving of the Law there was also a clear setting forth of penalties to follow any infractions of its requirements by priest or people; hence the special caution enjoined upon Moses regarding the care that should be taken in obeying the pattern shown in the mount.

This pattern given to and through Moses was of great importance to even the humblest Israelite, for it would acquaint him with all that would be required of him personally if he would enjoy the blessings promised therein. Its declarations and prohibitions respecting things lawful and things forbidden, its rules of conduct toward brethren and enemies, etc., were all made clear, to the end that each individual might stand on trial before that law. Thus we find that when the Law was read in their hearing, they all readily accepted it, saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." They thus acknowledged their approval of its requirements and their willingness to obligate themselves to keep it, which, however, they failed to do.

Without doubt the statement of our text, "See thou do all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount," applied primarily to the construction of the tabernacle and its order of services; yet since the types and shadows of the Law arrangement are of vital importance to spiritual Israel, might it not have also a broader application than this primary one. We believe that 'it does, in harmony with the Apostle's statement: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Lessons for Spiritual Israel

In numberless ways, correspondencies between the natural and spiritual houses of Israel are furnished us in the Scriptures. These lessons do not always follow in the order of type and antitype, but they may nevertheless be easily gathered by the sincere, careful student, who is intent on ordering his own steps aright. Such careful study will reveal that many of the recorded circumstances, issues, and crisis periods of natural Israel's history are intended to be of inestimable value to spiritual Israelites. This is one of the means, employed to warn the Church of the present Age that God's laws may not be irreverently acknowledged, or carelessly broken, for "he that despised Moses' law [given on the Mount] died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" -- Heb. 10:28, 29.

The Christian may be very familiar with all the historical facts of Sinai, and be quite conversant with the solemn vows and obligations there assumed by the Jew, and feel disposed to criticize him for his failure to keep the promise he had been so ready to make, namely to pattern his conduct according to the law; but rarely does the average Christian professor stop to remember that he himself stands pledged to keep a law proclaimed on a mountain side, even though he be loud in his claim that he finds "enough in the Sermon on the Mount to save any man." How few remember that such endorsement of that sermon's precepts, puts such professing believer in a very responsible position; for "he that knew his Lord's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes."

Thus it is that all believers should remember that this present Gospel Age opened with another Mount as the stage from which a clear-cut proclamation was made that embraces all their duties toward God and man, accompanied with conditions that involve approval or rejection before the judgment seat of Christ; yea, that make the issues of life or death matters of supreme importance. Let

it be remembered that this "Sermon on the Mount" concludes with a statement decidedly similar in import to the unchangeable law requirements given through Moses. To the natural house it was, "See thou do all things according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount," and to the spiritual house it is, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, **and doeth them** [who lives and builds according to these specifications], I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." -- Matt. 7:24.

The Constitution of the Church

This sermon was doubtless given quite early in our Lord's ministry. It has been termed by some "The Constitution of His Church." Perhaps no better designation could be used respecting it, since it opens with the rather significant statement, "His disciples came unto Him, and He opened His mouth, and taught **them**, saying." Beginning with first principles He sets forth the standard or character of a true disciple. He then proceeds to show the disciple's place and influence in the world, even though he be separate and apart from it. Thereafter He sets forth the law of the New Creation, comprehending its various duties, obligations, privileges, and rewards, which are laid down as the only mold in which approved character can be secured. He concludes the whole with the emphatic statement which makes clear that faith and character must be built on the substantial basis of His teachings, for they will build in vain who neglect the pattern. Therefore, for any one to embrace discipleship under these conditions would be equal to saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," and thereafter the word of admonition should ring in the ears of such= "See thou do all things **according to the pattern** shewed thee in the mount."

Progressive Steps on the Upward Way

Beginning with the Beatitudes we are given nine elements of character, or experience, which constitute the fundamental marks of discipleship. In a general way these are brief, concrete statements regarding essential features of Christian experience, and as we should expect, there is more than an accidental order observed in their arrangement. They begin at the lowest point -- our object poverty and recognized unworthiness--and end--with the riches of our "great reward in heaven."

Poverty of spirit is a beautiful thing in the sight of God, for it opens the door to His forgiving grace, and keeps the heart soil humble and responsive to His continued favors. Indeed, does He not assure us that it is with these He dwells--"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Next in order is mourning--the soul's cry for the Light of life, for full deliverance and ultimate perfection. Then the meekness of mind that may be taught of God. And having tasted and learned that the Lord is good, a hungering and thirsting for His complete righteousness then becomes the evidence of a worship and effort that is "in spirit and in truth." Reaching this advanced step, and having now received so fully of God's favors, the effect or fruitage is properly expected. The test of our appreciation of mercy received, will be our measure of delight in extending mercy to others. We have been forgiven our debts through His mercy, will we prove worthy of this mercy by forgiving our debtors. Henceforth the heart will be searched deeply.. What motives have prompted us thus far? Have our hearts become so fixed with "truth in the inward parts," purity, that we will henceforth demonstrate in life and conduct that we love "righteousness and hate iniquity"? If so, then most certainly the "peaceable fruits of righteousness" will abound in our lives, we will be peace lovers, peacemakers, the peaceable children of God. Then possessing these qualities, and exercising them day by day in our contact with men, and in the faithful discharge of our stewardship, we will surely share the sufferings that have been the lot of righteous men through all ages. But to us is given the additional encouragement, "Rejoice; and be exceeding glad: for **great is YOUR reward in heaven.**" Therefore, it is evident that if all these conditions have been met in our experience, and the Beatitude qualities continue to expand into wider fields as we progress from grace to grace, this will be the sure token of our being builders according to the pattern.

Ye Shall be Witnesses unto Me.

But these Beatitudes are only the Master's text. For the sermon that follows is to reveal how they fit into the various experiences of the Christian's life and character. Our Lord's wonderful words of life are never empty platitudes. They throb with spirit and life. They are possible of the most practical application in daily life--a fact of which we are unmistakably informed by Jesus as He close this all important discourse.

Beginning then with verses 13-16, chapter 5 (Matt. 5:13-16), we note that after the "text" comes the direct application. Without any further preliminary remarks He at once defines the Christian's outstanding character and influence: "Ye are the salt of the earth"; "Ye are the light of the world"; "A city set on a hill cannot be hid"; "Let your light so shine before men," etc. Having set the standard before His disciples in the Beatitudes is He not now saying to them, and to us, You are to be in this world characters such as I have described. Your lives are to bear testimony before men that these principles -end teachings of Mine are possible of the fullest expression in the characters of men wholly obedient thereto. Though the standard be high, yet if you build according to the pattern, your influence will be as potent as preserving salt, as effective as light, and as impossible of eclipse as a city on a hill.

Here we pause to note that these three illustrations of Christian character used by Jesus, all have to do with quiet, yet powerful and effective agencies. Salt is one of the most effective agencies known to preserve from corruption, yet how silently it works. Light is the greatest power in the universe, the most important factor in all animal and vegetable life, and yet it is absolutely silent in its operations. A city set on a hill will not need to blow horns, issue proclamations, fire cannon, or ring bells, to inform the surrounding territory of its existence. Its exalted position will be sufficient to attract attention. In the fitness of the symbols employed by the Master, there is always a deep significance intended. This use of the silent forces as illustrative of His disciples' influence in the world is true to precedent. Bigness is not always greatness. The whirlwind, and earthquake, and fire, were not the vehicles of His presence to Elijah, but He came in the "still small voice." And has He not said that it is "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord." (Zech. 4:6.) He Himself did not "Cry nor lift up His voice in the street," but rather He chose the less conspicuous course.

The Way of True Service

The desire for bigness, to make "a fair show in the flesh," has been the bane of many efforts originally noble and pure. The lesson Jesus teaches by His illustrations is that a single individual in his immediate surroundings, or a congregation in its locality, will, if conformed to His standards, be a greater witness for Him than endless preachings, or the circulation of tons of literature; for such 'are more constantly and critically read than the printed page.

A story is told of a very well known character who lived some years ago, one who had gained for himself international prominence because of his writings, political activities, etc: This man having interested himself in the production of a land plaster that he knew would greatly assist the farmers, endeavored to persuade them of its unquestionable value. By lectures and advertisements he extolled its virtues, but with very meager success. Finally he decided on a practical demonstration.. Choosing a grassy hillside facing a public highway, he took some of his plaster and spread it out in the form of a sentence, and left it to speak for itself. In a little while farmers driving by began to notice that the grass on that particular spot had a freshness and greenness very much in contrast to the rest of the hillside. A week or so later they read in clear outline these words, "This has been plastered." At once the general popularity of his plaster was assured. The silent testimony beheld in the rich green grass was a thousand times more effective than lectures and printer's ink. This is exactly what Jesus meant when He said, "Let your light so shine before men." We are thus to understand that our ministry will be tested by a critical world who know enough about the teachings of Christ to know what a Christian ought to be. And the world can still tell when a man has been with Jesus and learned of Him.

Jesus did not set a lower standard than the Law. Examining briefly verses 17-37 of this same chapter, we note the important fact that Jesus never minimized the stern realities of God's dealings, whether a man be under law or grace. Frequently we hear some speak as though Jesus had recognized the Law as being too severe, and taking it upon Himself to introduce a much less exacting rule of conduct, thus provided an easy way to life. But He immediately disabuses the mind of such a thought by proceeding to make it plain that He was not presenting a lower standard than Moses. God's plans always move upward; therefore He came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it, to prove it just; and right, and good, honorable in every way-yea, to show that the righteousness and spirit of the Law must be approximated in the lives of His disciples, for it would search into the deepest recesses of their hearts. They "of old time" had not been taught that lustful thoughts made one guilty of adultery, or that to call a brother Raca (worthless fellow) was a serious offense, or that to say "thou fool" would endanger one's eternal life; yet this is just what Jesus sets forth in His Sermon on the Mount.

Did the Jew experience difficulty in obeying a law that for the time being concerned itself only with the outward act? Ah, Jesus teaches that the disciple's task is a much more exacting one; for sin in thought on his part will be judged as a flagrant violation of that law. Grace was therefore never intended to give the spiritual Israelite a lower standard of character than that given to natural Israel.

This is why the New Testament continually teaches the death of the carnal mind, the entire subjugation of the flesh, and the development of the spiritual mind—that holy, righteous character which comes only through the individual's appropriation of Christ's atoning sacrifice, and his subsequent cleansing from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, "perfecting holiness in the reverence of the Lord."

Gifts on the Altar will not Expiate Sin

Another point that should not be overlooked in this group of texts is contained in verse 23. This is the second time thus far that Jesus takes occasion to teach that we must be right with our fellows before we can be right with God. Six or more times He makes this clear in this one discourse. See Matthew 5:7, 23, 44, 45; 6:14, 15; 7:1, 12.

Gifts brought to the altar will be utterly rejected if an offense against a brother remains unsettled. Fellowship with God is impossible until reconciliation has been effected with the injured one, through apology, or restitution. This warning is all the more striking when it is observed that it follows immediately after the Lord has pointed out the seriousness of calling brethren uncomplimentary names, such as "Raca" or "thou fool." Are we to conclude that this is purely accidental, or perhaps extreme hyperbole. Let those who will, thus interpret it, and let them continue to indulge in their accustomed freedom of designating brethren by various names and classes, representative of lower orders in Divine favor, but let such know "that heaven and earth may pass away **but My words shall not pass away**"; therefore **"with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."**

The Word of God from beginning to end demands justice as a basic quality or principle before God acts on behalf of men. Furthermore, it invariably demands that in order for the forgiven debtor to remain in his forgiven state, he must show a corresponding mercy toward others. What presumption, therefore, for any one so wholly dependent on God's mercy, to expect that mercy, until he is willing, yea fervently anxious, to extend that same lenient judgment to all others, even the manifestly erring one—"until in God's unerring judgment the sin and the sinner are proven inseparable." Let the full force of these texts be heeded. Until such wrong done to a brother disciple has been repented of, and atoned for, God's face is turned away from any sacrifice we might bring to His altar. This is the only way back to the sunshine of His face, and is a demand on character that is unquestionably a severe one. But such is the requirement which teaches us that all things must be done according to the pattern.

Extreme Tests of Character

Coming now to verses 38 to 48 we are led still upward in the ascending scale of this sermon. If we have passed the test of making right the wrongs which we have committed against others, there still remains the test of our attitude toward those who have been the offenders against us. The Law was satisfied when eye for eye and tooth for tooth squared accounts, and an enemy might properly be dealt with as such, but now the smitten one must turn the other cheek, relinquish both coat and cloak, and willingly accept the compulsion of the extra mile. It would seem as though the requirements of the Law regarding such matters would be much more acceptable to the fallen flesh than this new interpretation introduced by Jesus.

But we are not left to wonder why such great demands are made—upon disciples. The purpose is concisely stated, "that ye may be the children of your Father in heaven." Publicans and sinners easily attain the habit of loving those who love and kindly treat them, but the disciple is to be a positive exception to the general rule of society. He cannot even take a position of aloofness, and in his offended mind decide to have nothing more to do with his enemy. On the contrary, he is required to do him good, and even to pray for him, and all of this in a willing spirit. Truly indeed the gate is narrow, and that way strait that leads to life and Divine approval.

But wherein would there be a likeness to our Father in heaven in all of this? Let the Scriptures answer: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us." (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8.) All this when we were yet sinners through wicked works, and though a wicked world still spurns His love, yet "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." -- Matt. 5:45.

Had God been vindictive, or had He decided that since men were His enemies, He would cease all further dealings 'with them, and leave them entirely alone, what a horrible destiny would have awaited mankind. But God is love, compassion, pity, and His long-suffering has meant salvation to rebellious man. Surely we can see then that God's most wonderful attribute is revealed in all this long-suffering patience; and the reason He desires that we shall copy Him in our conduct is that we might be characters such as He is. It requires little character to give tit for tat, for the intelligence of the dumb brute 'is sufficient for that,; but it requires real character to suffer for righteousness' sake and take it patiently and think sympathetically of our persecutors. And this is the exacting requirement, The Apostles never paraded their persecutions before an unbelieving world to gain sympathy, but bore them patiently, knowing that this was acceptable to God.

Marks of a True Disciple

Neither did they make their trials and tribulations the subject of their ministry, or substitute rehearsals of their experiences with former associates for the glorious message of a sin-forgiving Savior, One who endured patiently great contradiction of sinners, even as a sheep before her shearers is dumb. The Apostles were builders- according to the pattern in this matter, and we do well to follow their example. But some will say, Such an ideal is impossible for us ;'to actually love our enemies thus is beyond our ability. But not so. Think of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem instead of calling for vengeance upon that people. Think of Peter standing in the presence of the murderers of Jesus and saying, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it." Think of Stephen's angelic countenance beaming with the love of Christ within his soul, and then know **that we can reach** this fourth quarter mark of unfeigned love for our enemies, if we will but determine to build according to the pattern shown in the Mount.

No child of God is without abundant opportunity for applying these teachings of Jesus. All should therefore carefully examine their hearts, recall, if need be, the wrongs done 'them by others, any injustice experienced, and then honestly observe whether they have been true to the promise "to do all that the Lord has spoken," or whether there is still a rankling in their hearts against any who have clone them wrong: For said Jesus, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Thus far the pattern has had most to do with our conduct toward our fellows, and as we have observed, its requirements have been decidedly definite and obligatory. But let us hope that every fresh reminder of what the Lord requires of us, will but increase our desire to attain it in full. The deeper our love of holiness, the deeper will be our appreciation of all its demands. Lukewarm, indifferent characters will object to such high aims, but the marks of a true disciple are found in his delight in the Law of God, and his never ceasing hunger for the perfections of complete holiness.

It was appropriate **therefore that before Jesus** proceeded to enlarge upon the deeper features of our intimate fellowship with God, that He spend much time in making it clear that our conduct toward our fellows must be blameless. Hypocrisy is such a hateful thing in God's sight that the severest language of Scripture is used against it, and for one to claim the favor of God while hating or mistreating his brother, whom he hath seen, is an insult to the character of God. Such an, one would be wholly unprepared for the deeper lessons of faith, secret prayer, and the accumulation of heavenly treasures that are yet to follow. Let us then re-examine our building, that we may be sure that thus far obedience to "all that the Lord has spoken" has enabled us to adhere faithfully to the pattern shown in the Mount.

(Continued in next issue)

HALF HOUR MEDITATIONS ON ROMANS - No. 6

"Even as our beloved Brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his Epistles speaking in them of these things." -- 2 Pet. 3:15, 16; "Letters weighty and strong." -- 2 Cor. 10:10. R. V.

IN OUR previous meditations we have reviewed to some extent the life of our Author, and have thought awhile on the Christians in Rome to whom he wrote. Now we confess to a spirit of impatience we trust it is a spirit of "blessed impatience" -- to at once enter "the

Cathedral of our Christian faith" as the Epistle to the Romans has been called. Yet as soon as we have entered, we shall find ourselves handicapped in ability to adequately appreciate "the majesty of the whole or the finish of its details", unless we have previously taken the time to equip our minds with a view of this Epistle in its relation to the rest of the New Testament, and especially to those other Epistles of St. Paul, to which from time to time we shall find it necessary in our study of "Romans" to make reference.

Letter Form of New Testament Providential

The mere fact that so much of God's truth has been revealed to us in the form of letters should give us cause for reflection. "Of all the sacred books which the world has seen there is not one which is composed mainly, or at all, of letters, with, the single exception of the New Testament.

The New Testament is entirely composed of a collection of letters, together with five historical books and one Apocalyptic vision In this, as in all other respects, the ways of God's providence differ from man's expectations. We may thank God that we derive some of the deepest truths of our belief from documents so simple, so individual, so full of human interest and love-written, most of them, 'in a style the most personal that ever existed.'

"Yet it may perhaps be doubted whether there are ever many persons in an ordinary congregation who, if asked to explain what is the special scope and outline-the characteristic meaning and tenor -of any one of those deeply important letters, would be able to do so with any definiteness. But surely it is necessary for an intelligent acquaintance with 'the oracles of God' -- for a real knowledge of, and reverence for the Bible, and a power to read aright -- that we should know something of its books as well as of those isolated fragments which we call 'texts.'

"As to . . . the epistolary form of the New Testament, it might perhaps strike us as strange that the deepest truths and the highest arguments of our religion should have been conveyed to us in casual letters. For casual, humanly speaking, they were Every Christian will feel that they were preserved by a special Divine providence; but it is none the less true that their preservation was owing to causes which, in ordinary language, might be called accidental. Nor, again, were they predetermined letters, but they rose, for the most part, out of the circumstances of the day And this, so far from being a matter of regret, was a happy circumstance Christian theology would have been immeasurably less effective if it had been conveyed to the world in canons, or articles, or liturgies, or scholastic treatises.

"The epistolary form of Christian instruction was, then, a providential arrangement, first of all, because that form of writing is essentially unsystematic The method of the Bible is alien from the spirit of elaborate, technical, all-explaining theological systems The technical terminology, the rigid systematization of Divine mysteries is due to exigencies caused by human error-sometimes even to the pride of human reason-far more than to the initiative set us by the sacred writers."-FARRAR.

Letter Form Specially Adapted to Individuality of Apostle Paul

Again, the letter form "permitted of a freedom of expression far more vigorous, and far more natural to the Apostle Paul, than the regular syllogisms and rounded periods of a formal book. It admitted something of the tenderness and something of the familiarity of personal intercourse. Into no other literary form could have been infused that intensity of feeling . . . which made Luther compare his words to living creatures with hands and feet. A letter is eminently personal, flexible, spontaneous; it is like 'a stenographed conversation.' It best enabled Paul to be himself, and to recall most vividly to the minds of his spiritual children the tender, suffering, inspired, . . . impassioned, humble, uncompromising teacher who, in courage and in trembling, in zeal and weakness, in close reasonings and strong, appeals, had first taught them to be imitators of himself and of the Lord. His Epistles came fresh and burning from the heart, and therefore they go fresh and burning to the heart. Take away from them the traces of individual feeling, the warmth, the invective, the yearning affection, the vehement denunciations, the bitter sarcasms, the distressed boasting, the rapid interrogatives, the frank colloquialisms, the private details, the impassioned personal appeals-all that has been absurdly called their 'intense egotism'-and they would never have been as they are, next to the Psalms of David, anal for something of the same reason, the dearest treasures of Christian devotion -next to the four Gospels, the most cherished textbooks of Christian faith. -- St. Paul was eminently and

emphatically a man; a man who had known much of life; a man who, like the legendary Ulysses, had seen many cities and knew the minds of Men. He was no narrow scribe, no formalizing Pharisee, no stunted ascetic, no dreaming recluse, no scholastic theologian, no priestly externalist, who could suppose that the world depended on the right burning of the two kidneys and the fat—he was a man, full of strength and weakness, full of force and fire. He was not a man to mistake words for things, or outward scrupulosity for true service, or verbal formulae for real knowledge What can be more free, and buoyant, and varied than St. Paul's letters? Brilliant, broken, impetuous as the mountain torrent freshly filled; never smooth and calm, but on the eve of some bold leap; never vehement, but to fill some pool of clearest peace; they present everywhere the image of a vigorous joy. Beneath their reasonings and their philosophy there may ever be heard a secret lyric strain of glorious praise, bursting at times into open utterance and asking others to join the chorus. His life was a battle, from which, in intervals of the good fight, his words arose as the song of victory.

Chronological Order Important to Remember

"For any one who desires to gain a real historical conception of their meaning, and of the vast part which they play in the development of Christian doctrine, the first thing necessary is to ascertain and remember their chronological order No one doubts that we best understand the mind, the character, the teachings of any author when we study his writings with some reference to the age at which, and the order in which he wrote them. Most of all is this desirable in the case of one who was always growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as was St. Paul, whose thoughts under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, went on deepening and expanding even to his death And yet we continue to place first the Epistle to the Romans, and we arrange even the Epistles to Ephesus and Colossae before those to the Thessalonians which were written at least ten years earlier.

"Many years of the Apostle's ministry elapsed before he wrote a single line that has come down to us. He was converted probably about the age of thirty. His first letter (the First to the Thessalonians) was not written till his second great missionary journey, when he was forty-six years old. All his letters fall into four distinct groups, separated from each other roughly by a period of four or five years each, and covering a space in his life from the age of forty-six to the age of sixty-one. Those four groups are the letters of his second missionary journey, namely the two to Thessalonica; those of the third missionary journey, the Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans; those of the first imprisonment at Rome—namely the four to Philippi, Ephesus, Colossae, and Philemon; and those between his liberation and his martyrdom, namely the letter to Titus, and the two to Timothy, of which the last was written in his last Roman imprisonment and when he was expecting, almost daily, the stroke of death.*

*As is well known, the authorship of the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews is not established. While recognizing it to be "Pauline in its general tone" and its teaching "fundamentally the same as St. Paul's" this writer did not regard it as the work of St. Paul, and consequently limits his discussion to the thirteen mentioned.

The First Group

"The first group, those to Thessalonica, are the **Eschatological** Epistles; those, that is, which bear on the last things; the Epistles, as they may be called, of the Second Advent; of Christ's personal return to glorify the saints and to judge His foes.

"A glance at St. Paul's life will show how natural it was that, at the period in which the Apostle wrote them, such thoughts should fill the entire horizon of his mind. Consider what he had endured! Beginning as a Pharisee and a persecutor -- appearing first on the scene as the young man at whose feet the witnesses laid their clothes while they were stoning St. Stephen -- he had been grasped by a resistless hand as he went to Damascus to hale Christian men and women to prison, and, by one flash of Christ's light into his erring but noble heart, he had been made 'a fusile Apostle.' Thenceforth, with the exception of brief retirements in Arabia and Tarsus, his life had been one long martyrdom. In a basket, by night, down the wall, he had escaped from a plot to murder him at Damascus; another such plot had driven him from Jerusalem; another from Antioch in Pisidia; another from Iconium. At Lystra he had been actually stoned and left for dead. Then, not to mention all his troubles, from enemies without and false brethren within; and all the agitating scenes which he had gone through at the Syrian Antioch and Jerusalem in his defense of the liberty of the Gentiles -- in his second mission tour he had been seized with illness in Galatia; had been worn with long journeys over the wild, cold hills and glaring uplands of Asia; had been scourged, and imprisoned, and shamefully entreated at Philippi; had nearly fallen a victim to mob violence at Thessalonica; had been hunted from Berea; had been derided at Athens; had been arrested at Corinth. And all this, besides insults, and

controversies, and anxieties, and perils from murderers and brigands, from shipwreck and river floods, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea. Can you wonder that after, and in the midst of, scenes like these, the one thought prominent in his mind—the sole thought that inspired and sustained him—was this—'All this is but for a little time. Soon shall the Lord return again'; and that, when he reached Corinth from Athens, this -- the near coming of Christ—was the thought which filled his first two extant letters, the two to his beloved Thessalonians? There could be no more natural topic of consolation in letters from the persecuted Apostle to his persecuted converts.

The Second Group

"Yet, hard as had been his lot hitherto, a still more troubled phase of his life was to begin—a phase when he was burdened beyond measure; when he 'fought with beasts' at Ephesus; when he seemed to be dying daily, amid fightings without and fears within. If his delicate, nervous frame had been torn by Jewish thongs, and Roman rods, and crushing stones, his sensitive and shrinking soul had to endure an equal or perhaps severer martyrdom from anathema, and calumny, and the oppression of a perpetual hissing . . . He was already despised by the Gentiles as an enthusiast; detested by the Jews as an apostate; but now he had to accept the additional burden of hatred and suspicion even from many Jewish Christians. They organized something like a counter-mission against him; they led back the foolish Galatians to rites and ceremonies; they maligned his name and undermined his authority among the restless, conceited, and turbulent, Corinthians; they even tried to poison against him the minds of the Christians at Rome. Hence the second group of letters, written, during his third journey, at Ephesus and Corinth, are St. Paul's four most powerful, most argumentative, most impassioned Epistles. They were wrung from him at the period of most vehement storm and stress in his life, under great mental anxiety and physical suffering. This second group consists of the letters to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans. They may be characterized as the letters of controversy with Judaism—Judaism from within and from without—whether as disturbing the Churches, impugning his authority, enjoining circumcision, or insisting on Mosaic ordinances, which did but nullify the effects of the death of Christ. The first three are marked by all the vehemence and agony of eager warfare; the last is a calmer and more comprehensive review and statement of the results 'attained. The doctrinal and universal importance of these four Epistles can hardly be exaggerated. The particular details of the controversy are obsolete. The then 'burning questions' have 'burnt themselves out.' The flames of heated discussion about circumcision and 'tongues' are now not even as the tails of smoking firebrands. But the principles developed are eternal. In them St. Paul fought out and won, for all time, the battle of full and free salvation; of faith, as against works; of mercy, as against sacrifice; of the obsolescence not only of Levitism itself, but of the whole sacerdotal spirit. He showed forever that the true worship of the Christian consists in spirituality, not in ceremonialism; in heart service, not in outward ritual; in the religion of the life, not in forms of service; in being, not in doing; in love, not in orthodox formulae, or rubrical niceties, or sacrificial vestments, or sacramental theories. In these letters we have the grandest phase of the struggle of the teachings of the Prophets against the usurpation of the priests; the proofs of the groundlessness and nullity of all those persecuting tyrannies and of all that theological intolerance which spring from the pride and ambition of the human heart.

The Third Group

"After the Epistle to the Romans, which was the last of this great group, nearly five years elapse before we come to the third group. Again escaping from a plot to murder him at Corinth, he made his way to Jerusalem in the voyage so graphically described for us in the Acts of the Apostles. He went overland to Macedonia, spent Easter at Philippi, restored Eutyclus in the memorable midnight service at Troas, made that touching farewell speech to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, and then we trace his barque over the blue waters of the Aegean . . . till he reached the kind friends with whom he knelt in tears and prayer on the seashore of Tyre. Then he stayed for some days in the house of Philip at Caesarea, with the virgin prophetesses, his daughters, and, amid warnings of peril and imprisonment, continued dauntlessly on his journey to Jerusalem. Nearly torn to pieces by the mob in the Temple, nearly flagellated by the hasty but honest Lysias, rescued from the rage of the Sanhedrin, and the murderous plot of the Sicarri, he was hurried in the night by an armed escort to Caesarea. There he was imprisoned for two dreary years. He was tried before Felix, tried before Festus, tried before Agrippa. Agitated by these scenes, in which the fury and pertinacity of his assailants had become more and more clear, he appealed to Caesar, hoping to find some protection from provincial bribery and injustice in the stern majesty of Roman law. In consequence of this appeal he was forced to journey amid months of storm and shipwreck to Rome. There, chained by the wrist to a soldier day and night, he remained in custody for two years more, and there he wrote his third group of letters. They also are four in number: the two to the Philippians and Philemon, dictated by personal affection and special incidents—and the two great Christological Epistles—those to Ephesus and Colossae -- in which, to counteract a dreamy, subtle, incipient heresy, he develops and expands, in all its splendor, the doctrine of the pre-existence, the Headship and Supremacy of our Risen and Ascended Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Fourth Group

"Some four years again elapse during which he wrote his fourth and last group of letters-the three Pastoral Epistles. Liberated just in time to escape martyrdom in the Neronian persecution, he again traveled to Asia Minor and Western Greece. It was at some time during the wanderings which followed-wanderings which, unhappily, no Luke has recorded for us-that he wrote his letter to Titus whom he had left to govern (guide), the Church of Crete; and the first to Timothy, who was acting as his delegate at Ephesus. Then, once more arrested, and sent to a second Roman imprisonment-aged, lonely, worn-out, forsaken, daily expecting death-he penned his last brave, bright words to his dearest convert and companion, the beloved and gentle Timotheus. Almost immediately afterwards he was put to death. He was, in all probability, led out along the Ostian Road, and there, in a scene so lonely and so obscure, that scarcely even the faintest gleam of tradition has fallen on it-there, at the close of a life which the world would have called a hopeless and disastrous failure, but which has been crowned by the Lord, whose cross he bore, with everlasting victory, and the love of all generations-the sword flashed, and the life of one of the noblest of the sons of God was shorn away.

Summary

"Such then are the four groups of Epistles: the first two mainly Eschatological; the next four mainly controversial; of the next four, two occasional, and two Christological; the last three Pastoral.

"But, further, every one of these thirteen Epistles, of which we have thus seen the order, has its own special characteristic, its prominent idea-generally its central passage, often even its dominant word or key-note.

"The first group-those to the Thessalonians were, we said, the Eschatological group-the Epistles of the Second Advent.

"The first is characterized by its extreme sweetness; both are eminently full of consolation. The whole idea of the first is-look to Christ as a comfort in tribulation. Maranatha -- the Lord is near.

"The second was written to correct the error that Christ's coming would be instantaneous, and to obviate the neglect of daily earthly duties which sprang from that exciting expectation. Its most characteristic, and indeed all but unique, section is that in the second chapter about the Apostasy and the Man of Sin.

"The second group is the Anti-Judaic group-the group of controversy-written in the great period of distress and conflict. The First to the Corinthians is the Epistle of Church Discipline. It decides by great principles the little details of life and worship. Its fundamental idea is Christian unity; and its chief passages-the unparalleled 13th and 15th chapters-in one of which the Apostle develops his magnificent argument for the Resurrection, and in the other, like some great poet, 'with leis garland and singing robes about him,' pours forth his inspired, impassioned paean to the glory of Christian love.

"The Second to the Corinthians falls into two main divisions. The key-note of the first nine chapters is consolation in sorrow; that of the other chapters is boasting-the boasting of his adversaries which drove him into a 'boasting' which would have been abhorrent to him had it not been that his boast was in his infirmities and in the Cross of Christ his Lord. The Epistle is specially marked by its intense emotion; it is full of haunting words -now 'tribulation,' now 'commendation,' now 'boast.' It is the Epistle of personal details.

"In the Epistle to the Galatians we find him again in a far different mood. It is the Epistle of indignant warning; the only Epistle which he wrote throughout with his own hand. It is his gage of defiance to the Judaists; ; his triumphant note of exultation over abrogated ordinances and freedom perfected. Here, more than in all the rest, as Luther said, 'he speaks mere flames!'

"In the Epistle to the Romans, the same theme -justification by faith and not by works; the universality of sin and the universality of grace -- is again developed in its positive rather than its antithetic aspect. The theme is handled doctrinally and systematically, not, as in the Galatians, with impassioned controversy, but with irresistible logic and calm and sympathetic strength.

"St. Paul had gone through much by the time we come to the third group. It is the Christological group. In personal force he was a shattered man. He was calmer, he was sadder, he was yet wiser; he sat thinking and praying in his lonely prison. Yet the key-note of the Philippians is joy. There is one little outburst of anger in it, but its one leading thought-the leading thought of the poor, suffering prisoner, so full of gratitude for the pecuniary help which the Philippians had sent to him is=Rejoice in the Lord alway; again I will say, Rejoice.'

"The key-note of the Colossians is Christ all in all; Christ Head over all.

"The magnificent Epistle to the Ephesians is rich in many leading thoughts. It is the great. Epistle of the Church-the Church in Christ. It is . . . the Epistle of the Heavens ; the Epistle: of the 'mystery' and 'riches' of the Gospel. Its keynote is grace.

"The letter to Philemon is a little satellite and. annex to the planet of the Colossians. It is a letter to a private Christian gentleman, to ask pardon for a runaway Laodicean slave.

"In the, last group, the Pastoral Epistles, again we see a change. The thunderstorms of continuous controversy seem to have rolled far into the distance. The foundations of Christian truths have been laid for ever. St. Paul is writing to Timothy and Titus how they should govern (guide) the Churches of Ephesus and Crete. Though here and there we find a grand and pregnant summary of doctrine, the main theme is duty not doctrine, ethics not theology, the holy and wise walk of a Christian pastor in the guidance of the flock.

"Lastly, in the Second to Timothy, we have, as it were, the last will and testament of Paul-'the song of the dying swan'-and through it though there runs the old man's wailing undertone to his beloved disciple-'Come to me;' 'Come quickly;' 'Come before winter;' 'Come and cheer me a little ere I die'-yet, drowning this low chord of sorrow, rings the paean of quenchless hope and undaunted trust, as to the dear but timid racer he hands the torch of the Gospel, which in his own brave grasp no cowardice had hidden, no carelessness had dimmed, no storms had quenched.

"What an inexhaustible treasure have we here! The First and Second to the Thessalonians, Epistles of the Second Coming; the First to the Corinthians, the Epistle of Christian unity and love; the Second, the Epistle of consolation, and a glimpse into the Apostle's very heart; the Galatians, the Epistle of Christian liberty; the Romans, of justification by faith; Philippians, the Epistle of joy in sorrow; Colossians, of Christ all in all; Ephesians,

of Christ in His Church; Philemon, the Magna Charta of emancipation; the First to Timothy and Titus, the Pastor's Manual; the Second to Timothy, the Epistle of courage, and exultation, and triumph in deep, apparent failure-of victory in the defeat of lonely death. Again, I say, what a treasure have we here! May we go to it to learn humility, to learn tolerance, to learn duty, to learn charity, to learn that man is our brother, to learn that God is love, to learn that Christ died for our worst enemies no less than for ourselves. If we fail to learn such lessons from -the Epistles we might as well shut them up forever. If God will enlighten the eyes of our hearts by His Holy Spirit, then indeed shall we know His Word; find in it a Urim and Thummim, ardent with precious stones, and every gem of it, under the mystic glory, bright with the oracles of God. "- FARRAR.

AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC

"Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." -- Psa. 110:4.

A PRIEST, in the only true sense, is a mediator between God and fallen creatures, the object -of such mediation being to restore and establish harmony. To accomplish this work the mediator must be one who is acceptable to both parties; otherwise the work of reconciliation cannot be accomplished.

The office of the priest or mediator between God and man is to restore to perfection and consequent harmony with God, a whole race of beings condemned to death, and already dead or dying. Hence this priest must of necessity be "mighty to save." (Psa. 89:19.) He must have both right and power to recall the dead to life, and ability to instruct and discipline, and thus to lead every willing subject back to the perfect state from which Adam, and the race through him, fell. To secure this right, he must first satisfy the demands of Justice, which required the extinction of the human race; and these demands of Justice could be met only by a sacrifice of equivalent value a human life for a human life. The life of Adam, and all represented in him, might be redeemed only by another perfect human being. And so it was—"Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead." (1 Cor. 15:21.) By the sacrifice of a perfect human existence, then, the right of the priest to restore is secured.

But beyond the right, or privilege, of restoring, the priest must have the power, and power would of necessity presuppose his own everlasting existence. He must have power to create, since to restore to being that which had completely lost existence, is to re-create it, and is a greater work even than the first creation; he must also have perfect knowledge, both of God's requirements and of human necessities, as well as perfect ability, to guide a race so destitute, back to the glorious heights of perfection and blessed harmony and communion with God.

What an office! Who would presume to assume such a title? It belongs really and only to Jehovah's Anointed. Even Jesus, "the Anointed One, did not glorify Himself to become a High Priest," but He has "been declared by God a High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. 5:5, 10, Diaglott.) "Jehovah honored Him by inviting Him to that position, and giving Him all power to fill it. In harmony with God's Plan, not only has Jesus, His Anointed One, been chosen as the Chief or High Priest, but the "little flock" who follow Him in sacrifice now are called to be "joint-heirs" with Him in the same honor. If we suffer with Him we shall also be glorified together.

Jesus alone is the Priest, but when redeemed by His death and associated with Him in sacrifice now, and in Divine power hereafter, we are counted in with Him, and together with Him constitute the seed of promise--the great Prophet, Priest, and King promised to bless the groaning creation.

"A Priest upon His Throne"

From these considerations it should be plain to all that the real priest is just as truly a king, in whose hand absolute power is vested. And in looking back to the types or illustrations God has given us, we find just such an illustration in Melchisedec, who was "a priest upon his throne." Other illustrations of Christ as a Priest are given in the Aaronic priesthood, where the special features of the redemptive -sacrifice are shadowed forth--its perfection, its completeness, its acceptableness, as also the share which the little flock has with Him in that sacrifice.

Christ was not constituted a priest after the Aaronic order. The Aaronic priesthood sprung from the tribe of Levi, while "our Lord [according to the flesh sprung from the tribe of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood"; and the members of His Body are chiefly chosen from among the Gentiles. As a man, Jesus was not a priest, neither as men are the saints members of the royal priesthood, but as "new creatures" they shall hold and execute their office. Jesus as a "new creature," "partaker of the Divine nature" (which He was from the time of His baptism) was the Priest, and as a priest He offered up His perfect human nature an acceptable sacrifice to God. He consecrated or offered Himself in sacrifice before He became the priest, but the anointing was necessary to enable Him to accomplish the sacrifice as well as to apply its benefits to men. The human nature when sacrificed, could do nothing more; it must remain a sacrifice forever; but the new creature, fully developed in the resurrection, has "all power in heaven and in earth." -- Matt. 28:18.

The new creature (the priest) is not of the Aaronic order; it does not trace its lineage to any human source. This fact is strikingly typified in the priesthood of Melchisedec, whose lineage is not recorded, and thus is typified the endless life of Christ. In this type the work of sacrifice is not shown, as He represents the Christ glorified and reigning after the work of sacrifice has been completed, and the Divine nature fully perfected.

In Heb. 7, this Melchisedec is declared to be greater than Abraham, thus showing that the Divine Christ will be greater, and therefore able to bless the "friends of God" on the human plane.

"Wherefore He [Christ] is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens"(Of the Divine nature). (Heb. 7:25, 26.) And this blessed assurance of such a priest, so mighty to save, is confirmed unto us by the oath of Jehovah. (Heb. 7:21; Psa. 110:4.) What strong consolation then may those have, who have fled to Jehovah's Anointed for refuge: "Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a

priest forever after the order [or manner]of Melchisedec." What believer, then, may not read his title clear to the promised restitution? and what justified one who has offered himself as a living sacrifice may not read his title clear to joint-heirship with .the Head in that glorious anointed Body.

"Wherefore, holy [justified brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus For we have become associates of the Anointed if indeed we hold fast the beginning of our confidence, firm to the end:'-Heb. 3:1, 14, Diaglott.

We conclude, then, that while the Aaronic priesthood furnishes typical illustrations of the sacrifices and sufferings of Christ and the blessing to follow, yet, as a system, it does not completely illustrate the glorious, everlasting and unchangeable character of His priesthood during the Millennial Age; and for this cause Melchisedec was presented that thus might be shown His glorious office of Priest while King-a priest upon His Throne. Here, too, the Body of Christ is no longer shown as separate individuals, but in the One, complete. In the work of sacrifice we have seen the Head or Chief Priest and the under priests, but in the future glory, all will be united as represented in Melchizedek alone.

NOTICE IN RE ANNUAL MEETING

Due to be Held June 7, 1930

(P. L. Read drafted this.)

Members of the Pastoral Bible Institute are hereby reminded of the privilege which is theirs of nominating in the pages of this journal the brethren they wish to elect as directors for the fiscal year 1930-1931. While the attention of new members is especially drawn to this matter, we desire to emphasize in the minds of old members also, not only the privilege, but also the responsibility which continued association with this ministry brings.

All should be aware of the fact that the affairs of this Institute are in the hands of seven brethren who are elected from the Institute's membership to serve for a period of one year or until their successors are elected. The seven brethren whose term of service will expire next June are the following named:

BLACKBURN, J. J., Toronto, Ont.

BOULTER, B., Plainfield, N. J.

GREINER, P. L., Ulster Park, N. Y.

HOSKINS, I. F., Brooklyn, N. Y.

MARGESON, I. L., Westwood, Mass.

PARKES, B. A., Philadelphia, Pa.

READ, P. L., Indianapolis, Ind.

The above named brethren are pleased to report that a spirit of Christian love ,and harmony exists in their midst, and they have reason to believe that the Lord has seen fit to bless their association in this ministry. It is not to be wondered therefore, that they are willing to serve again, and have so expressed themselves. The wonder would be if they were not willing.

However, while having this willingness to serve again to the extent of their ability, they do wish to emphasize to the members, new and old alike, that they by no means consider it essential for each or any one of them to be re-elected. Joy in the Lord's service they must and do confess. But they would not be selfish even in this. They realize too, that often those in charge of any work, which has been carried on for some time in a certain manner, and with some degree of success, fail to see opportunities for improvement and expansion apparent to others not charged with such

responsibility. For this reason changes in office not infrequently have beneficent results. They desire above all things that the work of the Lord (for the furtherance of which this Institute was formed) be prosecuted with the greatest possible efficiency, and to this end are always ready cheerfully to step aside for others whom the membership might believe were better fitted for the work. They therefore urge upon all the members of our Institute to make this a special matter of prayer. If after prayerful meditation you are led of the Lord to nominate other brethren and will forward the names and addresses of such brethren so as to reach this office on or before April 7, 1930 such names will be published in the May 1, 1930 issue of the "Herald" so that all members will have an opportunity of knowing what brethren in addition to those now serving are candidates for election, and may vote for them if led of the Lord to do so.

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Dear Brethren:

Sister M.----- and I wish to express our thanks and appreciation to you for sending Brother Zink to us. Our dear Sister Bastian died on the 13th, trusting in her Lord and hoping to be found worthy to share in the First Resurrection. She used to worry about not having a brother with us-feared that no brother would be here to lay her away . . . We got the address of Brother M.-and I wrote him for her; asking if he would come if we needed him. He wrote a beautiful letter to her, saying that he had consecrated to do the Lord's will and to His service, and was ready to serve us when called upon. When the Sister's family knew that the end was near, they sent word to him, but he was away and would not be back until the 18th. Now the Lord had already arranged everything for us. We expected Brother Zink on the 18th and 19th, but his plans were changed, and he came on the 13th instead-just two hours and fifteen minutes after Sister had died. Surely this was a most marked evidence of our loving Father's care and provision. for the needs of His children. How can we ever for one moment doubt His love and care for us!

Brother Zink's talk at the funeral was fine; -it made a deep impression on several. One of them, a Catholic lady, said she had never heard such things before. We enjoyed two meetings with our brother. . . . Sister M.and I are the only ones in our Class now. With our Lord's help and strength we will keep faithful to the end. We will miss our dear Sister: She had a wonderful mind, and was such a strong character. She could not tolerate the least shadow of hypocrisy-a thing was right or wrong, no turning one way or the other.

Enclosed is \$----- to be used in the Lord's service Sister M.- and I send Christian love. I remain,

Your sister in Christ,

A. U. C. - La.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

I have, just finished, reading the two volumes of the Revelation and I am very thankful to our God for having led me to a reading of them. During the last thirty years of my pilgrim journey I have noticed a providential selection of the books that I have read. Surely it is true with all who are His, "I will teach thee in the way." -Psa. 25.

There have been many points cleared up for me in these volumes. It seem-s often that it is not so much a question of what is right or what is wrong in interpretation, as of what is good, what is better, and what is best.

Only the Divine Spirit who indited the Revelation can make it known, and then only to those to whom He' is pleased to reveal it. "Many" have desired to see these things and have not seen them. We must bow before the Wisdom and Sovereignty which decrees that His mysteries shall be hidden from the wise and prudent and, revealed unto babes-as in the words of our Master we exclaim, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." In our helplessness' we must supplicate the same Love and Power which has made known these things to us, for grace to make proper use of the knowledge of them for His glory:

Naturally there are always some points that one cannot see in harmony with a writer. These have been wonderfully reduced to almost nothing in the case of- these two volumes. I have struggled long with the placing of the seventh seal in relation to the seven trumpets. This presentation is not only most satisfying, but I have additional proof outside of the writings that assures me that it is the true solution to this very common problem. I might mention just what this proof consists of.

You are well aware of how. there is often a return and a going over the same ground again 'by the revealing angel. Now it came to my notice the other day that preceding a new return for the purpose of going over the same ground so far as the time element is concerned, we have a new vision of

our Lord Jesus in the immediate foreground of this new vision, and the vision of Him is always in harmony with the future subject matter; for example

Before the seven churches we have Him revealed in chapter 1:13-16.

Before the seven seals we have Him revealed in chapters 5 and 6.

Before the seven trumpets we have Him revealed in chapter 8:3-5.

Before the seven thunders we have Him revealed in chapter 10:1-3.

Before the seven vials. we have Him revealed in chapter 14:

Before the destruction of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet we have Him revealed in chapter 19:11-13.

And in each case it seems the revelation of His Person is designed to show the nature of the events about to be made known. Truly, it is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The progressive nature of the Revelation all through the Age seems so like Ezekiel's temple waters first ankle deep, then knee deep, then a river that one can swim in. May this also be true of our praise and thanksgiving to Him who has showed us all these things.

Yours in Him, J. C.-Idaho. .

Dear Brethren:

Find enclosed check for another year's subscription to the "Herald." I am sorry I have neglected sending it so long. I have often wanted to write and tell you of the help the "Herald" has been to me, for so many times some problem or question that troubled me has been answered in the very next issue; but it would have been just a repetition of many you receive, for our experiences seem to be much the same. I know that all the readers of the "Herald" must love and appreciate it, but surely it cannot mean so much to those who are blessed with fellowship as to us who are isolated. I have no fellowship, and, have never heard a discourse on the Truth, though it is almost three years since I consecrated. It is only through your work that I can have any intercourse with others of like precious faith, and I am so thankful that the Lord has commissioned you to feed the flock of God and to give us lonely ones some knowledge of the progress of the work '

Your sister by His grace,

Mrs. R. J. J.-Ark.

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XIII. March 15, 1950 No. 6

THE CLOSING OF THE DOOR

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."-Matt. 25:10.

THUS did Jesus cause His disciples to cast their mental eyes forward to the conclusion of this Age when the work He was then inaugurating would be concluded, and all the faithful enter into the joys of the Kingdom.

Today a considerable number of Bible students are agreed, that the door mentioned by Jesus does not pertain to the opportunity that mankind will have of entering into life in the Millennial Age, but has specific reference to the opportunity or the opening of the way into the Kingdom; the way whereby the faithful few during this Gospel Age may make their calling and election sure to joint-heirship with Christ in the Kingdom. That Jesus opened this way is confirmed by a number of plain Bible statements. His own words are, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The Apostle's words likewise are, that Christ brought "life and immortality to light through the Gospel." He, Christ, opened up for us the "new and living way." And this way the Master again referred to when He said, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life" (immortality).

The Narrow Way of Self-Sacrifice

For nearly nineteen centuries justified believers have been invited to walk the Narrow Way by making a full consecration to God-denying themselves, taking up the cross and walking in their Master's footsteps. Neither has God expressed any threats in connection with this heavenly calling, nor endeavored to coerce any to enter and walk the Narrow Way; rather it is set before such as have ears to hear, as a privilege and opportunity: "If any man will come after Me." All such are enjoined to so run as to obtain the heavenly prize, to be given to all who are faithful in the end of the Age. The entire life time of each individual is required in the process of making ready. At no particular time in advance of his departing this life, is he promised that the fight will be over and that he can cease his efforts and struggles in the Narrow Way and consider that his calling and election have been mad-sure. The strongest proof of this is found in our Master's loving words, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." All Bible students who carefully discriminate and weigh all the messages of our Father's Word, well know that the faithful few who successfully walk the Narrow Way unto the end are promised the reward of the Kingdom at the end of the Age, and that such final entrance into the Kingdom in glory by the First Resurrection is undoubtedly the door referred to by Jesus which will be closed with the passing beyond the veil of the last member of the Church in the end of this Age.-Matt. 25:1-13; Rev. 20:4, 6.

We cannot therefore avoid the conclusion that our Lord's words, "And the door was shut," most explicitly assure us that a time comes when the, full number designed of God to compose the Royal Priesthood of the coming dispensation, will pass in, and that then no more can enter because the door will immediately be shut. Moreover, this is the only door mentioned by our Lord or the Apostles as having to do with the conclusion of the work of this Age.

But some are asking at this time if there is not, what might be properly called, the door into the Narrow Way? and inasmuch as a time comes when the door into the Kingdom, the glorified state, is shut, must we not believe that the door or entrance into the Narrow Way also closes, and that this is at least a brief space in advance of the closing of the door into the Kingdom?

In many respects this supposition is altogether a reasonable one. It is entirely proper to regard the entrance into the Narrow Way as closing in connection with the shutting of the door into the Kingdom; for surely God would not invite into the Narrow Way of self-sacrifice and self-denial any who could not enter into the Kingdom on account of the door being shut. It is therefore proper to speak of the privilege of entering the Narrow Way as the door of opportunity; and this is in full line with the view expressed by Brother Russell, as it is remembered that frequently in his writings he spoke of the "door of opportunity." Thus we read from his pen:

The Door of Opportunity

"An open 'door' symbolizes -- an opportunity of entrance to certain conditions and privileges; a shut door represents the termination of such privilege of opportunity. The privilege, invitation or opportunity of the Gospel Age, granting, under restrictive conditions, to believers in Christ, entrance into joint-heirship with Him in the Heavenly Kingdom and to the Divine nature, is the 'door' by which we 'have access into this grace [favor] wherein we stand,' namely into the hope of sharing the glory of God. (Rom. 5:2.) This door, which has stood open throughout the entire Age, is sometime to be closed,; and the door in the parable of the virgins marks this close-the termination of all such opportunities and privileges. This parable of the virgins merely portrays the events in the close of this Age among those of the true Church living at that time." -- Vol. III, p. 206.

But still the point is raised: Is not the Harvest in, the past? and in view of all the circumstances of our day, are we not to conclude that the door into the Narrow Way has already closed? -- that all who are in the Narrow Way **must** make their calling and election sure, and that therefore no more can fall out by the way? In view of the fact that almost sixteen years have passed since October, 1914, such conclusions as these need to be carefully considered. We still regard the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the tares as a most reasonable one, namely that as our Lord said, "The Harvest is the end of the Age"; that all the circumstances indicate that we have approached unto the Harvest period; that the "Harvest" is a general time, during which the members of the Church in its last stage, the Laodicean period, will be sealed in their foreheads and will be gathered as the wheat class into the Kingdom garner. There are strong and convincing evidences that this sealing and gathering work is still going on; nor are there any circumstances at this time that indicate or constitute any proof that the door or opportunity of entering this class has closed.

Relative to the sealing of the servants of the Lord as recorded in Rev. 7:1-3, we read that the four winds (of strife) are restrained from injuring the earth and sea (the social earth, society, representing the governments; and the "sea," the anarchistic masses of the people) until the elect are sealed in their foreheads. The "four winds" have not yet come together to form the whirlwind; the governments and the anarchistic masses of mankind have not thus far been injured or destroyed by the world's greatest war. Evidently the sealing of the servants of God is continuing on, and even if the full number had been sealed (given an intellectual appreciation of the Divine Truths due at this time) this would not prove that no more could enter into the Narrow Way for the reason that various Scriptures indicate that it is in every way possible for those who have experienced the sealing and who have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, to, lose this precious gift and to lose the blessing of the sealing. (Heb: 6:4-6; 10:26-29.) We believe that the words of our Brother again throw further light on this subject:

"In view of its glorious termination, the opportunity to walk in this Narrow Way of self-sacrifice for the Truth's sake is the grandest privilege that was ever offered to any creature. The privilege of suffering with- Christ and in His cause, after first recognizing Him as our Redeemer, is therefore the door, and the only door of opportunity, by which the glory to follow, as the bride and joint-heir of Christ, can be reached." -- Vol. III, p. 207.

Let us note carefully, what is here called to our attention, namely that the door into the Narrow Way is represented in the privilege of "self-sacrifice in the interest of the Lord's Plan and work," and that "the privilege of suffering with Christ and in His cause . . . is therefore the door, and the only door of opportunity, by which the glory to follow, as the bride and joint-heir of Christ, can be reached." We quote again"

"Bible Does not Give Exact Date"

"There are three ways in which the closing of this door might be indicated: first, by a definite Bible statement of the exact date; second, by such a reversal of public sentiment with reference to the Truth, that fidelity and zeal in its service would no longer meet with opposition, and when suffering with Christ for the Truth's sake (Rom. 8:17) would be no longer possible; or third, by such a condition of affairs obtaining in the world that all opportunity for such service would be effectually obstructed, thus leaving no opportunities for candidates to enter into the work and to develop and prove their love and faithfulness by their activity and endurance."

Concerning the first way above mentioned Brother Russell says:

"The Bible does not give the exact date. But we have a clear intimation that the door will be shut in the manner last named; for, before the Millennial day breaks, we are forewarned of a dark night, wherein no man can labor-'The morning cometh, and also the night.' -- Isa. 21:12.

"The Narrow Way opened to us is the privilege and opportunity of co-operating with our Lord now, when to manifest His spirit of meekness and zeal and loyalty to God and His Truth will be at the cost of earthly advantage; when to champion His cause and the truths which He advanced will make us, to say the least, very unpopular; and when our endeavors to honor His name and bless our fellowmen with the Truth, by letting our light shine, bring upon us reproach, misrepresentation and persecution in some form. And if, as we have seen the Narrow Gateway, opened means the privilege of thus sacrificing, faithfully, unto death, at whatever cost, it

follows that the closing of all such opportunity for such fellowship of service and suffering would be the closing of the door, the barring of the Narrow Way to the future glory and joint-heirship; our reign with Christ being conditioned on our faithfulness in His service, which now means suffering with Him. -- Rom. 8:17; 6:8." -- Vol.III, p. 208.

We believe this language sets forth the only proper logical deduction to be drawn from the various Scriptures bearing upon the subject. We might delve deeply into the various types and symbols of both the Old and New Testaments and enter into various ramifications involving a labyrinth of fine spun thought and multiply texts of Scripture, and ultimately work out a theory, but it would be only a theory-mere conjecture and speculation. But, dear brethren, would such a course be wise and bring to us happy results? We believe that all will agree that it would not. Let us remember that our Lord has not left us to do any guessing or theorizing upon this or any other subject. The Blaster, Himself, did not do any guessing, nor did any of His Apostles. What they gave out as Truth was set before the early Christians as being their positive knowledge upon the subject and they cautioned against everything in the nature of theorizing or speculation. (1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Pet. 1:16-17.) We believe Brother Russell stated the truth when he said; "The Bible does not give the exact date."

Let us not fail to get the meaning of his words, quoted above. Let us note the other two ways that he suggests by which the closing of the door into the Narrow Way might be indicated: "By such a reversal of public sentiment with reference to the Truth" that loyalty to it would no longer meet with opposition, "and suffering with Christ for the Truth's sake would no longer be possible"; or, "by such a condition of affairs obtaining in the world that all opportunity, for such service would be effectually obstructed, thus leaving no opportunities for candidates to enter into the work." We believe that all will agree that neither one, of these two conditions at the present time exists. There is yet no such reversal of public sentiment favorable to the Truth, but on the contrary all who are zealous in bearing the message continue to realize the promised consequences-the contempt, disesteem, and odium of the world. Neither can any claim that the condition has obtained that obstructs all opportunity for service. On the contrary, all about us there are wonderful opportunities yet of bearing the message orally and by the printed page; and yet Brother Russell stated as his view that the "door would be shut in the manner last named," that is by all opportunities being obstructed. Let us read again:

"Thus the door of opportunity to engage, with Christ our Lord, in the work of the Gospel Age, will be closed when 'the night cometh wherein no man can work.

"The closing in of this night will evidently put a stop to any further labor to disseminate the Truth, which, misunderstood by the public generally, will probably be accused of being the cause of much of the anarchy and confusion then prevailing.

Nor should we expect that the coming of night and the closing of the door will be sudden, but rather that it will be a gradual obstructing and closing down of the Harvest work.

"Observe that, when this night cometh. when the reapers must cease their labors, it will prove that this final work of the Gospel Age, is accomplished; that the elect number of the Bride of Christ have all been 'sealed' and 'gathered' into a condition of separateness from the worldly-into the barn condition (Matt. 13:30) ; for God will not permit anything to put an end to His work until it is finished. Then, all the true and faithful servants of God will have been sealed in their foreheads; and, the work of the Gospel Age being finished, no more can enter into that work or reap its rich reward, foretold in the 'exceeding great and precious promises' as the reward of the faithful who enter while the 'door' is open. -- 2 Pet. 1:4." -- Vol. III, pp. 210, 211, 212.

If We Suffer With Him We Shall Reign With Him

The teaching of the above language very clearly is that the door into the Narrow Way should not be considered as closed as long as there are opportunities for service-sacrificing for Christ's sake., and of having fellowship in His suffering. The question is, Are there still opportunities of sacrificing for the Truth's sake and for Christ's sake, and of suffering as a result of walking in His footsteps? Are there still opportunities of bearing the cross after Him? Most assuredly there are abundant opportunities of entering into all the above experiences. Here, then, we have the strongest evidences that the door is still open, as this is the logic both of the above argument and that of the Scriptures.

These conclusions of Brother Russell's seem to suggest that the wiser position to take is that it is not within the province of any to fix anything definite with regard to the shutting of the door into the Narrow Way. The Scriptures assure us that it is the Master Himself who will shut the door. For us to enter therefore into a system of speculation upon the subject and thus divert both the attention of ourselves and others away from the great matter of making our calling and election sure would certainly work injury to us as new creatures, and might ultimately result in the loss of our crowns completely.

Let us, then, not be ourselves alarmed, nor try to alarm others with regard to the door being closed, and thus have our attention diverted from the great purpose to which we have dedicated our lives; let us not think to be "wise above what is written." In view of the fact that, as Brother Russell says, "the Bible does not give the exact date," we do well to leave the entire matter in the hands of the Lord; and whether the door is closed or not closed, let us, dear brethren, labor on in the work of the ministry to which the saints all down through the Age have consecrated their lives, namely that of bearing testimony to the Truth of gracious heavenly love, of proclaiming the message of the risen Savior, and of His presence now as earth's new King; let us not grow weary in the prosecution of this our Divine commission; and thus by pointing the hungering and thirsting to the better way, and by seeking to comfort all that mourn, we shall indeed prove true to the Divine vision which certainly applies to the last members of the Body of Christ.

"HOLD FAST TILL I COME"

*"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth."
-- 2 Pet. 1:12.*

THE SCRIPTURES have left us with no uncertainty with regard to the character of the closing days of the present dispensation. "Perilous times," is the signal and solemn description of the period marking the close of the reign of evil and the introduction of the reign of righteousness. Associated with this period is the idea of a harvest, when the results of the Age will be manifest, in the sense that throughout the Age there has been a general growing and commingling together of true and imitation Christians. This period in the end of the Age is to make manifest these classes, and finally the Lord's approval and disapproval revealed to all. According to the Apostle's description (2 Tim. 3:4) as well as other inspired writings, there will be a general manifestation of selfishness, "Men will be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." And the state of things described which fits our own day, makes it a perilous time for the true Church. Some might ask, Would not the Church under these circumstances on the contrary be more than ever led to love God? -- and would this not make all more vigilant, and put them on guard and keep them from danger? The reply is that present conditions have not resulted that way to all the Lord's professing children. Having the privilege of being in touch with many of the brethren through the mails and mingling with them here and there, we recognize that it is becoming more and more manifest that we are in the midst of the perilous days described in Holy Writ. It is to be observed that some of God's people are becoming increasingly overcharged and immersed in the world, in its pleasures and schemes. The spirit of the world surges all around them and it is with more or less difficulty that they realize that the world is astray and altogether abnormal in its ideas and ways. The tendency of all such is to receive considerable of the, mind of the world, even though they are Spirit-begotten.

The Love of Many Waxes Cold

There is no question that the worldly spirit, as the Apostle suggests, has seriously affected the Church. Some of the Lord's people would consequently come into special peril at this time, because of their neglect of their covenant with the Lord. Others would solemnly remember that covenant and would watch and pray and so make progress. The Lord's faithful people will keep their word and be firm for principle and true to their contract, even when these prove disadvantageous to them. This attitude is pleasing to the Lord and it is manifest that such as are living close to Him are for this reason developing in mind and heart. But alas; they are few.

The thought that large numbers today have grown cold and are disposed to drift back again into worldly and social life, and to measurably forget their covenant with the Lord, seems at first, most disappointing; especially as we realize how heart satisfying should be the revelation of the Divine plans and purposes. Indeed as the call to mind the glorious character of the new Age now

dawning, and remember what it is to mean in the way of the revelation to all humanity of the love of God; and added to that, "that blessed hope" of exaltation and joint-heirship with Christ, we cannot but wonder that any whose eyes have been opened, could be enticed or drawn away by any of the charms or allurements of the -present time: May we not indeed hear our Master making inquiry of His disciples today as He did long ago "Will ye also go away?" And shall we not answer with the beloved Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." To what source indeed can we look for a message so sweet, so soul-satisfying, and a message so well founded and established as that which has come to God's people in modern times, represented in the great Divine Plan of the Ages? How could we desire or conceive of a grander and more sublime message than that which we have heard? All who are familiar with the life-work of Brother Russell, well know that he was greatly used of God it. assisting His children in modern times, in these last days, to a clear conception of the Divine Plan and the great consummation of all things. All such well know that he clearly sensed the peril of these last times. Possessing as he did large spiritual vision, and, faithful to his trust as a great and loyal servant of God, he ceased not to put the brethren in remembrance; and like the great Apostle Paul he warned them night and day respecting their solemn duties and responsibilities in connection with the present circumstances in the world. Though the readers of this journal in a general way are familiar with much that Brother Russell has given us, it seems well at this time to review a number of his writings-selections that are pertinent to the circumstances and conditions while he was with us, but especially to those that have come about since his decease. We therefore earnestly commend to the careful consideration of all, the following selections from Brother Russell's pen.

TIMELY GLEANINGS FROM BROTHER RUSSELL'S WRITINGS

Many are perplexed as to why false doctrines are permitted to annoy and confuse God's people. On receiving the truth and rejoicing in it they seem to think they, have at last come to the end of all controversy, and have entered the Beulah land of rest and peace, thenceforth never again to be disturbed. But this is quite a mistake: our great Adversary Satan, is not disposed to let the children of light walk on undisturbed, into the heavenly Kingdom. Against that Kingdom and its establishment, and against all its prospective probationary heirs, he is an inveterate enemy, and his power is not yet bound. The children of light, the heirs of the Kingdom, are, therefore, the special targets against which his fiery darts are aimed. As soon as they escape from the kingdom of darkness and begin to walk in the light, they may therefore expect to find snares spread for their feet and stumbling blocks placed in their way. The work is done with subtlety, too, that, if possible, the escaped bird may be deceived and caught unawares. And as a matter of fact, thousands have, been so caught, and the Scriptures assure us, that only a comparatively few will escape the "strong delusions" of this "evil day" of Satanic wrath and power.

It is a fair and reasonable question, therefore, Why does the Lord permit the strong delusions and trials of faith of this evil day, when they actually do overthrow the faith of many and severely test all? To this inquiry the Apostle Paul makes answer, saying, "For this cause, God shall send them [whom? -- those "Who received not the love of the Truth that they might be saved"] strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be condemned who believed not the Truth, **but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**" Thus plainly we are told that God not only permits, but that He also desires, that the faith of His professed people should be severely tried. And if the thousands fall by these fiery darts of the enemy, it is because they are unworthy of the Truth, not having received it in the love of it. Many indeed have received the Truth very much as a child might receive a new toy. It is a curiosity, something new, to be enjoyed for a season and then laid aside to be superseded by something else that temporarily pleases the fancy. Or it is valued as a cudgel wherewith to gain the honors of victory in argument with disputing opponents. Or, again, it affords relief to some from a long imposed bondage of fear of eternal torment, and for this alone it is chiefly valued. They never did enjoy such a prospect, and often feared that they were not quite good enough to escape torment and get inside the door of heaven.

Truth only for the Honest-hearted

All who have thus lightly esteemed the Truth., merely to minister to their selfishness, are unworthy of it; and it is the will of God that all such should lose it. Hence the divinely permitted and desired testing of faith-the strong delusions, which, "if it were possible, would deceive the very elect,"-those who have received the Truth in the love of it, and not in any mean, selfish spirit. The Truth was never intended for the listless, nor for the wicked. The former are unworthy of it and the latter are better without it until taught to use and not abuse the liberty it brings. "Light [truth] is sown for the righteous, and joy [the joys of the Truth] for the upright in heart." It is just as well that others, especially the wicked, should remain under the bondage of errors which to some extent control them until the strong power of Christ's Kingdom is due to take the control of the world. For this reason God has permitted the superstitions of the past to fetter men's minds, and only in the present close proximity to the Kingdom is He allowing some of the shackles of error to be

loosened; and in the great time of trouble this will be seen to be the unchaining of the tiger of human passions, which would be disastrous in the extreme, were it not for the strong rule of the iron rod which will shortly command order, and say to the warring elements, "Peace, be still!" To the listless and selfish who are not grossly wicked, the Truth is only made to minister to pride and selfishness, and hence it is the will of God that all such should lose it, as they do in pursuance of their natural dispositions with reference to it. But the true children of God love the truth because they have an affinity for it. They love righteousness, they love their fellowmen, and desire to bless and help them. They have large benevolence and brotherly kindness. They are meek, too, and not anxious to make a show of self and to glory over their fellows in argument; nor are they mere curiosity-hunters. When they found the Truth they recognized its value, they prized it and meditated upon it; they viewed it as a grand and systematic embodiment of the highest ideal of righteousness, love and benevolence. They therefore rejoice not only in the gracious provisions for the elect joint-heirs with Christ, but also for - all mankind, as well as the merciful dealings of God with the finally incorrigibly wicked whom He will mercifully destroy, but not torment. They say, It is just like God: it is the manifestation of His glorious goodness, the reflection of His loving, benevolent, wise and just character. And therefore they love the Truth and the God who gave it: they treasure it up in their hearts and con it over again and again; and as they look into it, and admire all its symmetry and beauty, they strive more and more to conform their own characters to the same lines of beauty and seek to commend it by word and conduct to others, that they also may be blessed by it.

He will not Suffer Our Feet to be Moved

This is what it is to receive the Truth into good and honest hearts. For such the Truth was intended; and it is not possible for them to be deceived by the sophistries of error. They know a good thing when they have it, and therefore hold it fast. They cling to it just as steel filings cling to a magnet, because they have an affinity for it. If you run a magnet through a box of sawdust and steel filings it will come out covered with the steel filings.

A little sawdust may rest lightly on it, too, just as some people associate themselves with the Truth and with those who hold it very dear; but the sawdust is easily blown off, while the steel filings hold fast. Just so multitudes of those who associate themselves with the Lord's people are easily carried away with a little wind of new false doctrine. And though they do not all disappear with the first breeze, a few more breezes will carry them all away. But the true ones God will not permit to be tempted above what they are able to bear; for He has given His angels a charge concerning them, and, in their hands they shall bear them up lest at any time they should dash their feet against a stone.

The angel or messenger thus commissioned may be some well-instructed brother who has studied to show himself approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, and ever ready to feed the flock of God, or some faithful sister, ever watchful with motherly interest over the lambs of the flock. Albeit, the Lord will always provide for His own elect, and they shall not stumble nor fall.

The one thing for all the called to look to first is that they have received, and that they still hold, the Truth in the love of it-freely imbibe of its blessed spirit 'and live in its hallowed atmosphere; "for, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." "Through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth" you are chosen to the great salvation now shortly to be revealed. (2 Thess. 2:13.) But the belief of the Truth will avail nothing if it be not permitted to produce its legitimate fruit in a good and honest heart, namely sanctification of the Spirit, a complete setting apart to the Divine will and service. Let us lay this lesson well to heart, and so run as to obtain the prize of our high calling. "Buy the Truth" at any cost of self-sacrifice, "and sell it not" for any paltry present advantage.

Could Ye not Watch with Me one Hour

Never in all the history of the Church, has there been a day of such privilege and blessing-such increase of knowledge and general intelligence, such facilities for the general diffusion of knowledge, and such breadth of individual liberty-of conscience, of speech, and of action as today. The spirit of liberty is abroad in the earth, and though the wily enemies that once fettered and handcuffed and imprisoned it still live, and would fain imprison it again, they regretfully realize that the soaring eagle is on the wing and may never be pinioned again. But hand in hand with all these advantages, strange to say, comes the Church's greatest peril. True, there is little peril

to physical life, or earthly property; but these to the true saints are of minor importance, for they count not their earthly life dear unto them, if by any means they may attain to the Divine nature and glory to which they are called.

The peril of these times is to the spiritual nature of the saints and to their valuable property in the exceeding great and precious promises of God, which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Subtle influences are now at work seeking to dwarf and extinguish the spiritual life and to rob the saints of their glorious hope, to sap stealthily the very foundations, of Christianity, and thus effectually to over-, throw the whole superstructure of the Christian faith in the minds of many, causing them thus to stumble and lose their glorious inheritance as joint-heirs with Christ. The present besetments, being of this subtle character, are .the more calculated to delude and ensnare, so that if one allows himself to be for a moment off his guard, the agencies of the Adversary will gain an advantage and use it to entrap the unwary one. And God will permit such snares because those only .who are loyal and faithful, and therefore ever watchful, are counted worthy to escape their strong delusion. "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be." accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." -- Luke 21:36.

The Truth is God's Gift

But, beloved, our advice to you in these perilous times, when error is taking on its most baneful forms, and when it is finding its most active agents amongst false brethren and sisters in your very midst, and when fidelity to truth, therefore, occasions the severing of some of the tenderest social ties you have ever known, even among those with whom you once held sweet converse as you walked together to the house of God, yes, in these times let us again urge the counsel of Paul= "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of, whom thou hast learned them," for it is written (John 6:45), "They shall be all taught of God."

Whoever the human agent may be that God has made use of to bring you to a knowledge of the Truth, he was simply an index finger to help you trace it for yourself on the sacred page; and in humility and faithfulness he made no greater claim than this, assuring you that the holy Scriptures to which he ever and continually pointed are indeed "able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"; and that "all Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Therefore, dearly beloved, what you have learned concerning God's glorious Plan of the Ages, and concerning your privileged place in that Plan, as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, His Son, and concerning the conditions upon which you hold this precious promise and may finally realize it, and concerning that great foundation doctrine of our redemption from sin and death through the precious blood of the Man Christ Jesus who gave Himself, a ransom for all, upon which fact rests the whole superstructure of the wonderful and glorious Plan, hold fast these things, knowing of whom you have learned them.

This precious Truth is God's message to you, not man's. No such high and glorious hope could ever have entered the mind of mortal man, had not God revealed it by His Spirit, as He has done through faith in His Word, in His own due time. It is all in that Word. Search and see for yourselves; and be not faithless but believing. It comes not to you on the miserable authority of vain imagination, or dreams,- or doubtful visions, but on the authority of God's most holy and authentic Word. True, it is almost too good to believe, but is it not just like our God? Does it not gloriously illustrate the breadth of His mighty mind, the scope of His marvelous wisdom and power, and the depth of His love and grace. Who is on the Lord's side? let them rally around the Lord's standard. All told, they will be only a "little flock." Like Gideon's band, the company no-,v gathered by the proclamation of the harvest message of truth must be tested and sifted until only the loyal, faithful, true-hearted, brave and valiant soldiers of the cross remain; and to these. though their number be small, will the laurels of victory belong, when truth and righteousness finally prevail. Let no man boast of numbers now when the highest interests of the elect of God are all bound up with the faithful few, to whom it will be the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom.

Call to Mind His Message to the Church

No other creature in heaven or in earth will receive from Him those marks of special favor which are, and ever will be, the chief joy of His beloved Bride. Though "the whole family of God in heaven and in earth" will be blessed through Him, His wife co-operating with Him in the work, she alone will be **His companion, His confidant, His treasure**. This close relationship of the Church to Christ was set forth in the Lord's words to His typical people (Dent. 14:2), which the Apostle Peter (1 Pet. 2:9) shows belonged not to them, but to their antitypes, the elect Church. To them He said, "For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." And the Apostle, after showing that the typical people of God stumbled and proved themselves unworthy of such special favor, applies the promise to the Gospel Church, saying, But ye are the chosen generation, the Royal Priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; which in time past were not a people; but are now the people of God. -- 1 Pet. 2:9.

And to us God has made exceeding great and precious promises-promises; not only of redemption and deliverance from sin and death, and recognition as sons and heirs of God through Christ to the inheritance of eternal life, but more; He has called us by His grace to be the Bride of His only Son and Heir-the Heir "of all things"; to be His intimate and eternal companion in all things; to be "joint-heirs" with Him of all His possessions, so that "all things are ours" also, "If we are Christ's"; to be "partakers," too, of the "Divine nature" and glory and Kingdom; even to sit with Him in His throne, and with Him to constitute a "royal priest hood" in whom all the world shall be blessed.

Ye have not Chosen Me but I have Chosen You

Hear the invitation (Psa. 45:10, 11), "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father's house [the world and its ambitions, hopes and aims] so shall the King [Jehovah's Anointed] greatly desire thy beauty; for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." What wonder is it if, when we receive such a message, we hesitate and feel that we are unworthy; that in our imperfection there can be no beauty in us that He should desire us, passing by even the angels in their purity and glory. Surely there must be some mistake! Has not the invitation come like the vision of a dream to be dispelled when sound judgment has awakened to realities? Ah, no! hearken again, and be reassured of the voice of Jehovah, our God; for long ago He led His inspired Prophet to pen these lines for us, and now by His Spirit He unseals our understanding and brings the matter to us with all the freshness of His own personality. But what "beauty" have I? I know that I have not all the graces of the Spirit in their glory and perfection; but then, as I reflect, I realize that I wear the robe of Christ's righteousness; then have I not "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit?" And have I not that faith wherewith it is possible to please God? Therefore I lay hold, with exceeding joy and gratitude, of even this gracious invitation, and, without presumption, I accept the blessed hope and press toward the mark of my high calling which is of God in Christ Jesus, humbly trusting that He who has begun the good work of grace in me will perfect it against that day when He would have me appear before Him "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

Hear again, as the Lord lifts His voice in prayer to His Father, and our Father, to His God and our God (John 17:20), "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory. I pray for them which Thou hast given Me: for they are Thine, and all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine and I am glorified in them." -- John 17:24, 9, 10.

Precious words! Con them over again and again, beloved of the Lord, that all their sweetness may permeate your souls and reinforce your waning powers with new vigor, courage and zeal to press along the narrow way until your eyes shall "see the King in His beauty."

How Vain is All beneath the Skies

Oh, how precious will be the heavenly treasures when we view them in the light of the new dispensation -- as glorious realities uncorrupted and incorruptible! With what joy shall the faithful begin to realize them when first they hear the Master's welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Then will follow the welcome of all the glorified fellow-members of the anointed Body; and if the jubilant songs of the angels, hailed the advent of our Lord in the flesh, can we imagine them to be silent when the anointed "Body" is received into glory, their work in the flesh having been finished? Surely not: if "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" the glad notes

of jubilee will be raised very high when the Church shall have finished her course and entered into her reward. And as the tidings spread to earth, through the established earthly phase of the Kingdom, all creatures in heaven and in earth will be rejoicing together. -- Rev. 5:11-13.

Who indeed can estimate the value of the heavenly treasures? Their value is past our present powers of reckoning; yet, with an approximate appreciation of them, let us keep our eye upon them and diligently lay up in heaven many of them, assured that there moth and rust can not corrupt, nor thieves break through nor steal. Let our hearts glory in the heavenly treasures, esteeming all things else as of minor importance. If our hearts are set upon the heavenly treasures only, then indeed the disappointment and trials of, the present life cannot overwhelm us, though they may cause us pain and sorrow. The heavenly treasures include all that is pure and good and noble and true. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are worthy of the aspirations of the spiritual sons of God, these are our real treasures; and let our hearts glory in them more and more.

"Let us touch lightly the things of this earth,

Esteeming them only of trifling worth."

And let our treasures be laid up in heaven and our hearts dwell there.

Precious Lessons Learned of God's Plan for the World

Under Messiah's glorious reign that last thousand years of restitution work will bring earth to the condition originally designed by God! It will complete the creation of earth, and of mankind as a race of godlike rulers of earth's affairs. Man, having tasted of both good and evil, and having chosen good, will be granted life everlasting. The disobedient lovers of evil will be destroyed in the Second Death. It is not in the power of human tongue or pen to portray the glorious perfection of the earthly Paradise condition. The most glorious qualities of mind and heart known amongst men must of necessity be imperfect as compared with the perfection of God's image as it will be restored in all the willing and obedient.

The human race are God's children by creation -- the work of His hands -- and His Plan in reference to them is clearly revealed in His Word. Paul says that the first man (who was a sample of what the race will be when perfected) was of the earth, earthy; and his posterity, with the exception of the Gospel Church, will in the resurrection still be earthy, human, adapted to the earth. (1 Cor. 15:38, 44.) David declares that man was made only a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory, honor, dominion, etc. (Psa. 8:4-8.) And Peter, our Lord, and all the Prophets since the world began, declare that the human race is to be restored to that glorious perfection, and is again to have dominion over earth, as its representative, Adam, had. -- Acts 3:19-21.

It is this portion that God has elected to give to the human race, and what a glorious portion! Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth. Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay-not even the fear of such things. Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance. Such will earth's society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when they thus realize the resurrection work complete. -- Rev. 21:4.

Earth Restored, Perfected, Complete

And this is the change in human society only. We call to mind that the earth, which was "made to be inhabited" by such a race of beings, is to be a fit and pleasing abode for them, as represented in the Edenic paradise, in which the representative man was at first placed. Paradise shall be restored. The earth shall no more bring forth thorns and briars, and require the sweat of man's face to yield his bread, but "the earth shall [easily and naturally yield her increase." "The desert shall blossom as the rose"; the lower animal creation will be perfect, willing and obedient servants; nature with all its pleasing variety will call to man from every direction to seek and know the glory and power and love of God; and mind and heart will rejoice in Him.

Those who have been teaching errors will soon be ashamed (Isa. 66:5), while the fire of this day will only manifest the truth to all. No power, no tongue, no pen can successfully contradict the Truth, the great Divine Plan of the Ages. It is strong before its enemies and before all who make assaults upon it, and ere long the folly of its foes shall be made known to the whole world.

ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHOWN IN THE MOUNT

Continued from last issue from the text, Heb. 8:5

IN OUR previous study of this wonderful sermon we have given special attention to what Jesus taught respecting our effectual witness-bearing; observing that He taught that we could be true witnesses to the power of, His Gospel only when our lives were a living example of the beatitude qualities. If His precepts were to be of any practical value, worthy of acceptance and possible of attainment, then certainly His disciples must constitute the exhibits, and thus demonstrate that He was no mere visionary enthusiast, occupied with meaningless platitudes.

With the long centuries of the Gospel Age behind us, during which time the Gospel of Jesus has laid hold of a few wholly receptive hearts, what an accumulation of evidence we have today that fully substantiates these claims of Jesus. Church history has made us acquainted with some such characters, and personal contact with one or more outstanding servants of God in our own* experience has shown us that some may yet say with Paul, "Thanks be to that God, who always leads us forth to triumph with the Anointed One, and who diffuses by us the fragrance of the knowledge of Him, in every place." (2 Cor. 2:14.) Then let us remember that Jesus makes the attainment of such a character possible to one and all by His all-inclusive statement, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them" may have such a character, and thus "show forth the praises, of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."

God Searches the Motive

We further observed the emphasis Jesus put on the need of a conscience void of offense not only toward God, but also toward men. How emphatic He was in teaching that an effectual barrier was raised between God and any worshiper who had failed in his duty toward his brother. Whether such an one be the injured or the offending party, his gift at the altar will be received or rejected on the basis of justice, mercy, and love revealed in his dealings with others. It was on the strength of what he had thus learned from Jesus that John later wrote, "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20.) And this hatred need not necessarily imply a malicious enmity. To deny the faith and prove himself "worse than an infidel" lie need only shut up his bowels of compassion from the crying needs of others—the same violation of the principles of justice, love, and mercy, that will send the goats on the left hand into the Second Death. -- Matt. 25:40.

Let us now proceed to examine the remainder of this perfect pattern, with the fervent prayer in our hearts that whatever reproof, correction, or instruction in righteousness we may specially need, may be gratefully received. As we have previously noted, the balance of the sermon has to do very largely with our proper relationship to and our worship of God. Thus in Chapter 6 the very first lesson brought to our attention is that God is a searcher of the motives that prompt all our religious exercises, and that unless the worship be "in spirit and in truth" there can be no approach to God. "Beware, that you perform not your religious duties before men, in order to be observed by them; otherwise, you will obtain no reward from that Father of yours, in the heavens." The acid test of all worship and service will be the underlying motive that prompts it. If it be tainted in any way with self-exaltation or pride, the Divine jealousy that burns against all idolatry must reject it, and the fickle approbation of men, like apples of Sodom, will be the only reward therefore.

Let us get the picture in its proper setting. As we read verses 1 to 7 and 16 to 18 of this sixth chapter, we think of a spectacle often seen contemporaneous with the time of Jesus' ministry. We think of a time-serving scribe or Pharisee selecting the street corner for his hour of prayer, or with languid, disfigured face; courting approval for his pious fasting, or it may be, distributing his alms with a trumpet-like ostentation designed to advertise his philanthropy, and we do not wonder at the severity of our Lord's condemnation of such hypocrisy.

Of all the idols before which men have bowed themselves the most absurd has been the idol of self-worship. Thousands of people, professedly worshipers of God, will look with condescending eye upon the poor benighted heathen, prostrate before his images of mythical gods, or departed ancestors, and turn away like the Pharisee to thank God that they are not as other men. But as the sharp two-edged sword, the Word of God, cuts through the heart of their own religious life, too often it discovers that these words of Jesus need to be most carefully noted.

Spiritual Pride in the True Church

It was probably in answer to some question that our Lord on another occasion propounded the parable of the guests bidden to the marriage feast, as a warning against the custom of seeking the most prominent place at the table. He had noted this mark of pride and selfishness in those who were privileged to sit at the table with Him, and very properly made use of the opportunity to bring home the lesson of how God will deal with those whom He invites to the antitypical marriage-feast. Over and over again He reiterated this solemn warning, setting forth God's unchanging law as respects places in the Heavenly Kingdom. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased."

But strange to say, the special danger does not lie in the ambition for highest position in the Kingdom itself, rather it is an ambition as respects the present life—a seeking who shall be greatest on this side the veil. And how often have the eternal honors of the Kingdom glories been sold for some present, transitory position of pre-eminence and notoriety! What warning both Scripture and history afford us against "high looks" and the pride that goeth before destruction, and the haughty spirit that precedeth a fall. There is no possible escape from the final results of such a course. If in pride of heart or unholy ambition any go about to establish their own ways, inevitably they become self-deceived, and consequently are actually carried away by the error of the wicked. God will give them over to the error they preferred, which will surely and shortly end in complete alienation from God, and then after a few short years of this self-worship, enjoying the mess of pottage represented in the little honor received from men, all that remains is the reward of the self-serving hypocrite: Verily I say unto you, you have your reward.

The love of power is a snare of the Devil, and to whatever degree it influences us, to that degree we are guilty of that hateful spiritual pride that glories in being seen of men. As one writer has well said, "Again and again in Holy Writ the men who gave out their own worthiness, soon evidenced their utter unworthiness, the whitewash of self-assertion generally hides the corruption which is in the sepulchre of their own carnal nature. It is one thing to be a channel of the Spirit's communications [all sects of Babylon communicate more or less truth, and all have in some measure influenced civilization], and it is another thing to be the subject of its operations. Balaam was the former. Stephen was the latter."

This lesson strikes at the very root of our individual actions, and urges upon us the most critical analysis of the motives that prompt our public religious acts. Do we preach, or pray, or give of our time and means; do we covet chief places in service, or preferment in honors amongst the brethren, to any degree, because we feel a thrill of exaltation.

If so, the portrait we need to study is the one Jesus holds before us here of a most reprehensible hypocrisy. Do we glory in organization, and assume an attitude of ownership of the Truth and sole custodian of the secrets of the Lord? Do we boast in numbers and glory in our works? Then, because we are "rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing" the pattern shown in the mount once more 'speaks in final warning: "Ye have your reward."

Jesus Teaches Us to Pray

Let us again remember that we are now reviewing the pattern given us by our blessed Master. Let us not think of these admonitions on prayer as having to do, only, with reproofing improper praying, and assume that they have no special reproof or correction in righteousness for us. The neglect of prayer on the part of a Christian, is surely as serious in its consequences as the misuse of this exercise by the one who hopes to be heard for his much speaking. Of the latter He says, "They have their reward"; but to the former He has taught by precept and example that only by much sincere prayer and fasting can they hope to gain their Kingdom reward. Jesus is here teaching us to pray, as well as showing us how and where to pray. Furthermore He is teaching us that our spiritual life depends on the habit of secret prayer and of quiet meditation on the Word of God. In all His instructions to His disciples Jesus spoke more often to them of their praying, than of their preaching, and this is a most important feature of the precepts and example of Jesus Himself. There is no substitute for prayer. There is no other source of supplies wherewith we may replenish our powers or receive equipment for service save the secret place where the Father seeth in secret.

Like a Tree Planted by the Rivers

"We are prone to think for example that converse with Christian brethren, and the general round of Christian activity, especially when we are much busied with preaching the Word and visits to inquiring and- needy souls, make up for the loss of aloneness with God in the secret place. Three times in the Word of God we find a Divine prescription for a true prosperity. God says to Joshua, 'This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.' (Josh. 1:8.) Five hundred years later the inspired .writer of the first Psalm repeats the promise in unmistakable terms. The Spirit there says of him whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who in His law doth meditate day and night, that 'he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.'

"Here the devout meditative student of the blessed Book of God is likened to an evergreen tree planted beside unfailing streams of moisture; his fruit is perennial, and so is his verdure-and whatsoever he doeth prospers. More than a thousand years pass away, and, before the New Testament is sealed up as complete, once more the Spirit bears essentially the same blessed witness: 'Whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth [continues looking -- meditating on what he there beholds, lest he forget the impression received through the mirror of the Word], this man shall be blessed in his deed.' -- Jas. 1:25.

"Here then we have a threefold witness to the secret of true prosperity and unmingled blessing: devout meditation and reflection upon the Scriptures, which are at once a book of law, a river of life, and a mirror of self-fitted to convey the will of God,-the life of God, and the transforming power of God. That believer makes a fatal mistake who for any cause neglects the prayerful study of the Word of God. To read God's holy Book, by it search one's self, and turn it into prayer and so into holy living, is the one great secret of growth in grace and godliness. The worker for God must first be a worker with God; he must have power with God and must prevail with Him in preaching or in any form of witnessing and serving. At all costs let us make sure of that highest preparation for our work-the preparation of our own souls; and for this we must take time to be alone with His Word and His Spirit."

"Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." "Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Has prosperity or failure followed our efforts? Have we been manifestly and openly rewarded with success- -,ranted the unmistakable evidences of Divine approval? The answer to such questions depends entirely on the frequency of our visits to the secret place. The failure of all pseudo plans, and the diminishing evidences of real spiritual fruitage will all testify against us. But growth in grace, effectual service, and the power of the Spirit manifest in labor and conduct, will openly testify that we are following the pattern shown us in the mount, and that we have . learned how to pray.

We Cannot Have Both Worlds

Nowhere is Jesus more emphatic than in His teaching on the separated life. Always, in all His explanations of the conditions of discipleship, He employs language that by no means minimizes the exacting requirements involved. Indeed, were it not our privilege to compare Scripture with Scripture and thereby understand all Scripture, we must gather from some statements of Jesus that absolute poverty, and the complete severance of all family ties were the imperative conditions of such discipleship. But our greatest danger in

the interpretation of such statements, has not been, in applying them too literally, but rather in the general tendency to so modify them that they are robbed of their emphatic character. We speak of the claims of God, and repeat again and again in connection therewith, that "we are not under law, but under grace." The Jew by law was obligated to give his tenth, but we claim to give all. Is there not a danger that in admitting this general claim, that all is God's, that we have actually shortened His claim on everything, until not even a tenth is actually laid aside for Him. If we -had lived in the days of Malachi and given as little as we do now, would we have escaped his charge of robbing God of his rightful portion?

It is therefore the emphatic character of our Lord's words in the remainder of chapter six that we now desire to group together and carefully note. Therein He sets before us the urgency of a singleness of vision and purpose, and the impossibility of having our treasure in both worlds. God and Mammon cannot share our services, for love for one implies hatred for the other. Let us be attentive also to what He teaches us of God's care over the fowls of the air and the grass of the field. For if we do not, we forfeit all right to the claim that we are really different from the world about us, and we will have none of those marks that constitute the distinction between a real disciple of Jesus, and the Gentile who lives daily in the anxious care of what he shall eat or wear.

Uncertainty of All Earthly Treasures

Moth and rust **will** corrupt earthly treasure; thieves; not only may, but **will** break through and steal, is what Jesus says. And Solomon, who knew it by experience, testified that after all is gained, only vanity and vexation of spirit is found.

A treasure is something in which we take special pleasure and delight-anything that absorbs our affections and becomes the inspiration of our lives, whether it be wealth, fame, position, home or family, or any other thing that has become the center of our hopes. All of these are subject to change and decay, and sooner or later pass away. Then if our hearts are centered in them, we are plunged into sorrow and disappointment.

"The wealth laboriously gathered and husbanded with much care may vanish in an hour; the fame, so dearly won, may change to censure at the caprice of fickle public sentiment; the social distinction, which once bade you to the uppermost seat, may by and by relegate you to the lowest seat, as one despised and forsaken; houses and lands may disappear under the sheriff's hammer; friends long trusted may' suddenly turn the cold shoulder and prove untrue and even treacherous; the home you love must sooner or later break up; the family will be scattered, or death will invade it, or even the love that glowed on the home-altar may flicker and become uncertain or extinct. So the high hopes of earthly life, centered in the earthly treasures, may in a few short years turn to ashes. How many have found it so! the moth of wear and the rust of time corrupt the fair earthly blessings; and thieves break through and steal the treasures of our possessions and our hearts, and desolation and gloom are the painful results, but it is not so with those whose treasure is laid up in heaven."

Surely then it is a short-sighted policy that attempts to play at separation from earthly treasures, or that makes a gesture only at laying up treasures in heaven. How much better it is to note these words of Jesus and not attempt the impossible. Why barter the eternal treasures for a few short years of transitory pleasures, when it is so clearly taught that by so doing we must eventually suffer the loss of both? Esau made a serious mistake in selling his birthright for a mess of Jacob's savory pottage, but how much more foolish is the one who forgets the emphatic nature of Jesus' words, and thinks to hold his title clear to the heavenly treasures, while an inventory of his time and means, his affections and aspirations, will show a serious neglect of spiritual things.

The Pattern of Faithful Trust and Submission

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin." When Jesus admonishes us to avoid anxious care in respect to the necessities of life, He is not by any means encouraging idleness, or a proper ambition in respect to earthly things. He is not forgetting the words of wisdom, "Go to the ant thou sluggard, learn of her ways and be wise"; nor is He unmindful of the Apostle's conclusion that "if any would not work, neither should he eat." He did not mean that the birds do not toil, nor that the flowers of the field do riot exert themselves, for they must do so if they would live. Rather He is teaching us that they are free from

anxious care, and being dependent upon God are never neglected. We are to realize that the power that brings the flowers forth in their beauty, and that discerns the sparrow's fall, cannot be less mindful of us.

Such a realization of the Father's care can of course be realized only by one who is truly spiritual, and well developed in faith according to the pattern. Note the reference to the conduct of the Gentiles here. Usually we think of Gentiles and their ungodly walk, or other hateful characteristics, but here we are shown that we are not better than they, if we have a similar anxious care about temporal things. Under this test where do we stand? Have we been building up a faith that can "firmly trust Him come what may" knowing that our Father understands our need of these things? This is the lesson Jesus uses the birds and flowers to teach us.

But Jesus is always practical, and in order to understand these statements it is important that we note what constitutes the main feature of this general lesson. In all of His ministry our Lord keeps one thought constantly before our minds, namely that everything in life is made subservient to our one great purpose—the gaining of the Kingdom of God. It is this that we are to seek first and foremost ourselves, and to remember that our abundant entrance into that Kingdom is the greatest desire of our Lord's heart for us. With this point clearly in mind, we will not understand anything in the verses we are now considering as a promise that every individual follower of Jesus shall be abundantly clothed and fed. To have made such a promise would not be compatible with the principles of Scripture, and the facts of Christian experience. Neither is it a guarantee that good character, developed faith, and submissive obedience, will assure abundant material things. The thought is that we are to make the heavenly treasures the great object of life. If we are seeking the Kingdom in the spirit that Jesus is urging upon us here, we shall be so filled and thrilled by that high and all-absorbing purpose, that we shall be triumphant over fretting anxiety. Truly that is victory.

Surely if any one ever approximated in their experience the high ideals of this pattern, the Apostle Paul could be thought of as having done so. He did not learn therefrom to specially think of material things, yet he realized these promises all fulfilled to him. Listen to his testimony: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound everywhere and in all things **I am instructed** both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." -- Phil. 4:11-13.

No other spirit is in conformity to the pattern shown us—food and raiment and all material needs are wanted only as they serve our highest good. To realize blessedness in foregoing what Divine love and wisdom denies, is to have the Spirit's witness within that we are building according to the pattern.

(Continued in next issue)

PLEASING OTHERS, NOT OURSELVES

"We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification; for even Christ pleased not Himself." -- Rom.15:1-3

AS CHILDREN of God each one of us should use care that others are not injured by our liberty in Christ; for this would be condemned by the Law of Love. The Apostle clearly emphasizes this thought in this Epistle to the Church at Rome. He points out that all the Lord's children are not alike "strong in the faith." Some, weak in the faith, can see that Jesus is our Redeemer, but cannot realize as yet the liberty which we as sons have in Christ. One realizes that he is at liberty to eat whatever agrees with him; while another, who is weak, eats vegetables only, lest he violate some law under which he thinks himself. Some Christians condemn their brethren who eat meat, seeming to forget that our Lord ate flesh. We should learn to grant each other full liberty of conscience; the stronger should not despise the weaker, nor should the weaker judge others by himself. It should be sufficient for each of us to know that God accepts the others as well as ourselves, and manifests His acceptance by blessing them in His service.

It is the same with reference to observance of days. One esteems one day above another, as the Apostle says; while another esteems every day alike. Let each carry out fully the conviction of his own mind—whatever he believes to be the will of God for himself. When St. Paul urges that each "be fully persuaded in his own mind," he does not mean that each should make up his mind what is the will of God for all His children, and then stick to his opinion, whether right or wrong, and be unwilling to listen to or consider the thought of

any others of the brethren on the subject. On the contrary, he urges growth into the full liberty of Christ, counseling patience and consideration on the part of the stronger for the weaker. He approves the stronger, and plainly states that the brother who thinks himself under bondage regarding the eating of meat, the observance of Sabbath, etc., is the weak brother.

Love and Consideration for the Weaker

The Apostle, however, counsels that if the weak brother observes such a bondage, not as an attempt to "keep the law," and to justify himself thus before God, ignoring Christ's redemption-sacrifice, but because he thinks that our Redeemer wishes him to be bound by such ordinances and observances, then the stronger ones should not rail at his conscientious weakness, or make light of it, but should receive him as a brother, trusting that discipline, experience, and growth in grace and knowledge will gradually bring him to the liberty which others of the brethren reach more quickly.

Those strong ones who enter fully into the spirit of the Apostle's statement, "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak," and deny themselves what their consciences permit, have the greater blessing. They can realize in an additional degree that they are following in the Master's steps; "for even Christ pleased not Himself." But if the stronger brethren by sarcasm and influence should try to force the weaker ones to use a liberty which they do not realize, it would be forcing them into sin. Therefore the weaker brethren should be left to the liberty of their own consciences. The influences of love and truth alone should be brought to bear upon them, in the hope of gradually educating them to an appreciation of their full privileges as free men in Christ.

Thus the Body of Christ may be full of charity and unity, each member carrying out the convictions of his own mind as to the Lord's will, and each seeking to grow in grace and in knowledge, out of childhood's weakness into manhood's strength, as rapidly as possible, being developed as he feeds upon God's Word.

The Apostle refers especially to the observance of days as a lack of development, saying (Gal. 4:10,11), "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am anxious on your behalf, lest my labor for you has been in vain." He here addresses those who had once known the liberty of sons of God, but who were now going again into bondage through false teaching. He recognized in them an evidence that they were not growing into 'the liberty of sons of God, but going backward toward the servant condition; and he was fearful that this weakness and failure to maintain the liberty of sonship might lead them even to reject the Gospel-that Christ gave Himself for our sins-and accept as a gospel a hopeless substitute-that Christ would save them if they kept the Law.

But glorious is the liberty of the sons of God! Let us stand fast in it, as the Lord enables us to grasp it in its fulness, yet at the same time extending sympathy and love to those who have not yet reached the high vantage-ground where they can get a broad, comprehensive view of our blessed standing in Christ. Thus we bear the infirmities of the weak brethren, our companions in the Way, and thus we are in harmony with the Law of Love.

The Beauty of Self-Abnegation

Thus the lesson to be drawn from the Apostle's admonition is that selfishness is the predominating principle of the world. People are seeking generally to please themselves-often unjustly, sometimes justly, but simply ignoring others. He is pointing out that the Christian is to take a different course. We are enlisted under the banner of Christ, which is the banner of Love. We are to look well to the rules which belong to this new order of things of which we have become members. The followers of Christ, instead of seeking their own selfish interests, are to consider the interests of others. Instead of seeking their own pleasure, they are to seek the pleasure of others, where this will not conflict with their vow of consecration.

This does not mean that the disciples of Christ are to seek their own misery. But they are to give their thought and time to pleasing others rather than themselves. The Apostle tells us that this is the example set before us by our Leader, our Pattern -"For even Christ pleased not Himself." He was not in the world to seek to do the things pleasing to His own flesh. Quite to the contrary, He renounced

His own fleshly interests and gratification for the benefit of mankind. So we covenant to do when we essay to walk in His steps. The denial of self, the taking up of the cross, means the renouncing of self will and the leading of an unselfish life, in accord with the Divine Pattern and the Divine Plan.

Our Brethren Our Neighbors in Closest Sense

With this light upon the Apostle's words, our thought is that the primary meaning of the word neighbors as used by St. Paul is, those closest to us. That is to say, in the Church of Christ, our brethren are our neighbors; they are the ones nearest, closest to our hearts. All the children of God are our brethren; they are particularly our neighbors because they are on our own plane. We should especially seek to please these to their edification. This does not mean that we should necessarily please them according to the flesh; for this would in many cases, be quite the reverse of their edification. If we please the brethren rightly, we shall rather "stir up their pure minds," their spiritual minds, to love and faith and zeal, to good works. This implies that the word "please" is used here in a limited sense.

It is not possible for us to please all people. The direction of our energies should be for their good as we have opportunity. Even though they be not saints, we should "provoke" them -- rouse them "to love and good works" as far as possible, and not to anger or malice or sin or anything unworthy. We may not always be successful in pleasing people to their edification. There may be times when even the brethren will feel aggrieved rather than pleased at our efforts to serve them.

Pleasing the brethren, therefore, and not ourselves, relates to foregoing our own preferences and conveniences when there is no principle at stake and when the Lord's Word and the interests of the Truth are not concerned. When the Apostle said that "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth," he was speaking of a matter that involved merely his own personal preference and appetite; no principle or command of the Lord was concerned. It is well known that in St. Paul's day there were brethren who did not agree with the Apostle in some of his teachings, but the Apostle did not cease preaching these things, nor did he change his teachings any whatever to please any one. His first duty was toward the Lord.

The admonition to please others, then, does not mean that if some of the brethren have an aversion to the study of certain portions of the Bible, such as the prophecies, that we are to cease studying these to please others, or that we are to cease explaining or teaching what we find to be the truth along such lines; for the Lord has given clear and explicit directions to the effect that prophetic portions of the Holy Testimony contain most valuable aid to all those journeying toward the Heavenly City. We must first of all, therefore, hearken to the Lord and please Him in these matters, in which His cause and the spiritual prosperity of His people are concerned. If we seek to please the brethren to edification, striving to exercise the spirit of a sound mind, our course will have the Lord's approval and blessing, whether it has the approval of others---even the brethren-or not.

For Their Edification

So let every one of us endeavor to "please his neighbor for his good to edification." This matter of neighborhood, the condition of nearness, extends next to our own families. Of course; as relates to earthly obligations and temporal needs, our family would have the first claim, and would be our neighbors, very near, according to the flesh. We should seek to please them for their edification-should seek to do them good, as here suggested. The same principle would extend, as we can readily see, to all with whom we mingle. We are not to please any of these to their injury, or in any way that would not be for their edification. We are not to descend to the world's methods. If we cannot please them by that which is good, we are to avoid unnecessary contact: We are to do good and to edify only.

We should endeavor to be as pleasing as possible to all of our neighbors. If we rebuke in a rude way, it would not be pleasing to them, nor would it be likely to edify them. There is a way in which we can give proper reproof even to-very worldly people. The world has a higher standard morally and religiously than they would be willing to acknowledge. Even if they sneer outwardly, in their hearts they recognize that which is good. We often find people who are impure in their own lives, who like the society of the pure. They have some appreciation of the good, even though, being defiled themselves, they are likely to defile whatever they touch.

It would not be proper for us to expect that we can do a great deal of good to worldly people - at least that much fruitage will generally be manifested-at present. Our aim should always be to please as far as possible, as far as loyalty to God and the Truth will permit. We should not be of that: "grouchy" sort, always going through the world with a quarrel. Rather we should let our light shine, that they may see our good works, and thus "glorify God in the day of their visitation." A sweet, kindly spirit is the, very best recommendation we can give the world now of the power of the Truth. The Lord's people should be kindly disposed toward all men -- in the, Church especially, but also toward all with whom we come in contact.

ANNOUNCEMENT IN RE ANNUAL MEETING, JUNE 7, 1930

At the eleventh annual meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute, held June 1, 1929, the following 'resolution, after being, regularly moved and seconded, was unanimously adopted:

Resolved:

(1) In writing the report of this Annual Meeting in the pages of the "Herald" emphasis be given to the privilege and responsibility of the members to nominate brethren to serve as directors and have the names, of such nominees published iii the "Herald" previous to the Annual Meeting.

(2) That three months previous to the next Annual Meeting emphasis be given to this matter in the pages of the "Herald."

(3) That a further emphasis be given in the pages of the "Herald" two months previous to the next Annual Meeting.

In harmony with the above this resolution appeared prominently in the Report of the Annual Meeting published' in the June 15, 1929 issue of the "Herald."

Attention is again drawn to the Special Notice which appeared in our last (March. 1st) issue, and the hope is expressed that the membership is being stirred up .to their privilege and duty of seeking the mind of the Lord on such an important matter.