

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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GOD'S BLESSING BRINGS THE TRUE RICHES

*"The blessing of Jehovah it maketh rich;
and He addeth no sorrow with it." -- Prov. 10:22.*

HOW CONSOLING and how reasonable the thought that those who become God's friends, and especially those who are adopted into His family as children, should be blessed of Him in multitudinous ways in which others of mankind who are aliens and strangers and foreigners to Him through evil works should not be blessed. We are living in the most highly favored dispensation of man's history since the Advent of our dear Redeemer; in fact, during this time the grandest and most desirable of riches are offered to those who hear the Divine Message and become friends of God. These riches are all summed up in the call to heavenly glory, to high stations of honor of kingship and of priestly ministry in behalf of the world of humanity in the dispensation to follow this.

From a number of Scriptures as well as from our observations in life it is to be seen not only that those who become the Lord's sons are very rarely blessed with temporal riches, but it is seen also that the principle extends still further, and that very few who possess earthly riches in advance of hearing the Truth are very likely to attain the High Calling of the Gospel Age. This is not because God is opposed to riches, for He Himself is rich above all others. It is rather, we might say, the outworking of the natural law or principle which has its force in the fact that all humanity by reason of the fall are selfish. The possession of wealth in combination with selfishness leads to a measure of satisfaction with present circumstances and conditions unfavorable to faith in God's heavenly promises. The wealthy, selfish, satisfied soul says to itself, Eat, drink and be merry; enjoy your advantages; take your pleasure out of these rather than speculate respecting future advantages and future riches which are intangible and which must be accepted by faith. Thus said the Master who Spoke in much wisdom, "How hardly [with what difficulty] shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." -- Mark 10:23

The reason is that our Father in heaven in making selection of those whom He will make very rich in the heavenly heritage, assigning them positions as kings and priests and judges in the next Age, desires that all of these shall successfully meet certain tests or requirements of character and obedience. In meeting these tests it becomes absolutely necessary that each one shall enter into a life of self-sacrifice or cross-bearing in the footsteps of his great Leader; hence all of this class now being selected are Scripturally designated a priesthood -- "a royal priesthood" -- because royalty eventually is to be added to their office, partly as a reward of their faithfulness as priests in sacrificing the present life, and partly to enable them as priests in the future the better to serve and bless all the families of the earth.

For Our Sakes became Poor

It is recalled that the beginning of these tests or conditions of this Age was with our illustrious Leader and Forerunner, our Lord Jesus. In addition to providing the ransom price for the redemption of the world, He must sacrifice ere He could be made the King and have the power and authority to bless. His sacrifice, as we have been well informed, was a comprehensive one; it really began with the sacrifice of His riches and ended with the sacrifice of His life. "He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might [eventually in the Millennial Kingdom be made rich." (2 Cor. 8:9.) His wealth, consisting of heavenly glory and subsequently of human talents and every kind of good possession, was all sacrificed, including even His reputation, so that the Apostle declares, "He made Himself of no reputation." He denied Himself also in the sense of submitting His will, the strongest individual thing that any being can possess ; as He Himself declared, He sought not His own will but the will of the Father who sent Him. His life, the most precious treasure or object to any intelligent creature, was freely laid down a sacrifice, a sin-offering, in harmony with the Divine Plan, on our behalf. -- Phil. 2:5, 8.

But all of these sacrifices led, under Divine providence and promise, to still greater riches, greater honors and greater powers, as the Apostle after reciting how our Lord offered Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, declared, "Wherefore [as a reward for His sacrifice] God hath highly exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above every name." He has been exalted "far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named." He has been given a name more excellent than all others, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. (Phil. 2:9, 11.) It is by virtue of His sacrifice of riches and honor and will and life itself, that our dear Redeemer is now the great and illustrious Royal High Priest, with all power in heaven and in earth, which He soon will take to, Himself. (Rev. 11:17.) Shortly, we believe, He will exercise that mighty power in accomplishing the wonderful work which He already has begun and which it is the Father's good pleasure that He shall complete, namely that of subduing all things and bringing all sin and rebellion against Divine authority, into subjection, rescuing as many as desire to return to harmony with their Creator and His laws, and destroying with an everlasting destruction all who love and practice sin knowingly and willfully.

All of these, our dear Master's experiences, are held up before believers as an example; and so many as desire -- during this favored time and under the High Calling of this dispensation, are permitted to become His followers and to walk in His footsteps, to have fellowship in His sufferings, sharing in His sacrifice, that ultimately they may be sharers with Him in the glorious reward and ministry of the future. None of these followers have anything of value to sacrifice. It cannot be said of them as of their Redeemer that they were rich and became poor ; on the contrary, they are all poor as respects everything that could be considered true riches. Even their own righteousness was as filthy rags, which needed to be replaced with the imputed robe of the Savior's righteousness, justification, ere they could be invited to be His followers.

All for Jesus

But while none called to the under-priesthood possess any real riches, each one possesses something of some value in his own estimation; some possess a little honor amongst men; some possess a little of this world's goods, bringing measurable comfort; some possess talents capable of exercise and development; each one possesses a will more or less weak and imperfect; and each one possesses a little fragment of life which has not yet flickered out. The invitation to each would-be Royal Priest is that being justified by faith through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, he should sacrifice his all and thus be counted in as a joint-sacrificer with the great Redeemer, as having fellowship with Him in His sufferings, that he might also share in His glory. (Rom. 8:17.) This is the particular feature of this highly favored dispensation. It is the Age of sacrifice and self-denial as respects all earthly blessings and privileges and advantages. And the object or hope inspiring such sacrifices of present things is that all such shall be partakers of far greater riches of glory, honor, immortality and eternal life in the Kingdom. Thus we have the key to the difference between God's dealings with His faithful ones in this present time and His dealings with some of His faithful in a preceding Age.

From this standpoint of view, earthly riches of every kind, opulence of money, of influence, of talents, should not be despised by the Lord's people, but on the contrary, should be appreciated -- not after the worldly manner of appreciation, for selfish interests and purposes, but because those who possess riches of any kind have that much more than they otherwise would have to offer upon the Lord's altar as a sacrifice in His service, to glorify His name, to advance His Truth, to bless His people. But the consecrated should ever keep in mind that this is the only value of any kind of riches to them: They are not to seek to keep these riches, but to seek opportunities for dispensing them wisely, spending them all to the very last farthing.

Those Who Hoard Earthly Riches

There are those who are rich in talents and who could, if they would, turn those talents in the service of the Lord and the Truth; such make a serious mistake and lose a precious opportunity if they hold them for themselves in any selfish manner or degree. There are those who have more or less of the money talent, earthly riches, and they make the same mistake if they hoard these; for their only value as respects the Kingdom, its glories, its riches and its honors, is in using them now. If they hold and hoard their earthly riches, they are burying their talent, their opportunity, instead of using it; and such will demonstrate to themselves eventually the meaning of our Lord's words, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom." (Lake 18:25.) He cannot get into the Kingdom at all except as he strips himself of his riches -- sacrifices them, devotes them to the Lord:

However the stripping of one's self of riches, sacrificing riches, does not signify the reckless and wasteful disposition of them; rather, all riches of every kind should be considered as the Lord's at the time their possessor consecrated himself and his all to the Divine service, and henceforth those riches should be used not as his own, but as the Lord's riches, the Lord's talents, to be appropriated according to the steward's understanding of the Divine will. There is no thought here of opposing a reasonable provision

being made for the steward's household, as the Apostle enjoins. (1 Tim. 5:8; Rom. 12:17.) But the Scriptures declare that the natural mind (heart) is exceedingly deceitful and is disposed to mislead the new creature, the new heart, so as to hinder the appropriation of earthly advantages and riches in the Divine service. It is for this reason that God in His Word gives us in so many ways, line upon line, precept upon precept, that we may learn the terms of our calling, that they are terms of sacrifice and not of acquisitiveness as respects earthly things-that knowing this we may make our calling and our election sure by conforming thereto-by becoming copies of the Son of God, "Who was rich [in every sense of the word, far beyond our comprehension] but who for our sakes became poor [sacrificing it all]."

The Deceitfulness of Riches

The Apostle makes mention of the deceitfulness of riches; and on every hand we may witness this deceitfulness. We observe how often earthly wealth deceives and misleads and corrupts reasoning powers and turns aside the force of God's Word to those who possess it. We see the same in respect to the wealth of influence, how those who possess this wealth frequently deceive themselves and hoard it, and refuse to sacrifice it for the Truth, for the Lord. for His cause. The same deception is manifestly operating powerfully in those who possess a wealth of talents in any direction if they feel like keeping all of it for self, or if not all, the larger and choicer part; such are deceived in supposing this is the right course, notwithstanding the Scriptures which so plainly declare that our privileges in connection with these is that of sacrifice. As a whole then, we daily witness as the Scriptures declare, that those who possess any kind of riches, wealth, talents or influence, are rarely amongst the sacrificers. We might almost say, Blessed are those who are poor in this world's goods, and its talents and its influence, for they having practically nothing to sacrifice to the Lord but their wills, find it easier to comply with the conditions; and we presume that the larger proportion of those who will through faith inherit the Kingdom, will consequently be of this poor class, rich in faith only. -- Jas. 2:5.

When we reflect upon that noblest of examples, that of our Lord who was rich in everything and I who gave all, we cannot but rejoice in it and realize that as His sacrifice was so great, His reward also is proportionately great. When we observe the noble example of the Apostle Paul, who possessing some considerable wealth of ability, talent and influence, and possibly of financial means also, laid these all a willing, a glad sacrifice, at the feet of the Lord, laying them all down with joy in God's service, in the service of the Divine Message, in the service of the brethren, it causes our hearts to rejoice and it elicits the deepest admiration; and we feel certain that one so rich, who spent his riches so faithfully, will be one to shine brightly in the Kingdom when it is set up and manifested. Without doubt, it will be so with all the Royal Priesthood -- in proportion as they have sacrificed their present earthly possessions. Those who joyfully endure for the Lord's sake, the Truth's sake, the greatest shame and ignominy, the severest trials and persecutions in this present life, and thus have experiences most like those of the Master and Pattern, we may be sure will in proportion to their faithfulness manifested in such sacrifices, have a future great reward, even as the Apostle has strongly intimated, "Star differeth from star in glory." -- 1 Cor. 15:40-44.

Heavenly Versus Earthly Riches

Evidently the testimony of the Scriptures leads to the conclusion that the heavenly riches are to be finally attained in the resurrection, in connection with the inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom, when the loyal and faithful overcomers by their resurrection change shall be richly endowed with all the good things which God hath in reservation for them that love Him, and who prove their love by present time devotion, sacrifices, etc. But it is important to observe also that there is a foretaste of these heavenly blessings granted to the faithful even in this present life; these heavenly riches granted to us now the Apostle speaks of as "riches of grace" (Eph. 1:7, 18), and these great riches include faith, hope, and joy in the Holy Spirit and an ability to see and appreciate with the eye of faith things actually not seen as yet. Note how the Apostle declares that these treasures of wisdom and grace -- knowledge of Divine good things in reservation, and the fellowship with God which permits us to anticipate and enjoy those blessings in a measure now, are all hid in Christ, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3.) Most evidently it is only those who are really in fellowship with Christ as members of His Body, the true Church, by a covenant of sacrifice, that can have the opportunity of even searching for these hidden treasures, or of finding any of them. And then as we progress faithfully in our sacrificial service as priests, walking in the footsteps of the great High Priest, we find more and more of these true "riches of grace" day by day, and year by year.

Riches of the Peace of God

Furthermore, another kind of riches comes to the Royal Priesthood, faithful in performing their self-sacrifices: these are riches of the Holy Spirit. They find as they sacrifice their self-interests, earthly aims, earthly projects, etc., in the service of the Lord and the Truth, that they grow more and more in likeness to their Heavenly Father and to their Lord and that the fruit of the Holy Spirit abounds in them more and more--meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, love.

Additionally, all such find a peace and a joy to which formerly they were strangers, and which the world can neither give nor take away. This peace and joy comes through a realization that having given their all to the Lord, all of His exceeding great and precious promises belong to them. Now their faith can firmly grasp these promises as their own; they can realize that as their justification and call were not of themselves but of the Lord, so all their course of sacrifice, in harmony with that call, is under Divine supervision and care and sure to work out blessings; and that to whatever extent they shall work out earthly hardships, trials and suffering, God will proportionately make them to work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the Kingdom. -- 2 Cor. 4:17.

With this peace of God and confidence in His leading and care they can apply to themselves the prophetic statement, "All the steps of a righteous man are ordered of the Lord; and he [the righteous man] delighteth in His way." (Psa. 37:23.) They can delight in this way, be it ever so thorny and narrow and rugged because of their confidence in God's love and wisdom and that He who began the good work in them is thus completing it and blessing them with experiences which Divine wisdom sees will be to their profit eventually. Thus the Lord's blessing is upon this class; and they realize indeed that, "The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich." How rich it makes their hearts at the present time -- rich in noble sentiments, rich in faith, rich in love, rich in good works to all men as they have opportunity, especially

toward the household of faith; and very rich in God's blessing and under His providential care; which if rightly accepted, will ultimately make those members of the Royal Priesthood, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord in an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them. -- 1 Pet. 1:4.

IN HIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." -- Rom. 8:29.

THE PRIMARY significance of the word character is to make sharp, to cut into furrows, to engrave, thus producing a likeness or image. Time and the processes of growth and development are most important factors in the development of a Christlike character. The tiny rosebud has its beauty, but hope and faith look forward to the perfect, full blown flower; and the bud must swell, develop, and open out its close shut leaves in full blown loveliness, before its grandeur and refreshing fragrance can be realized. Just so it is with character; and therefore, the most beautiful thing on earth, in God's estimation is a tried, disciplined and well developed character. A character which has yielded to the influence of evil is not the development (engraving) of the beautiful tracings found to some extent in every individual in youthful innocence, but a blurring and effacing of those tracings and a substitution of the deformities of evil.

The Value of Developed Character

"There is nothing in the world so beautiful to me as a little child," said one who fondly contemplated the sweet innocence and awakening mentality of a little grandson, very dear to her heart. The remark awakened a train of thought, and led to the consideration, Does God so view it? And is it really so? Let us see. The charm of childhood is its innocence, its purity, as yet uncontaminated with actual sin, its awakening mental and moral powers, and the freshness and beauty of its new physical life. But viewing the matter from God's standpoint, we see there is something more beautiful still -- that disciplined and ripened character whether realized in youth, in middle age, or in ripe old age, is of far greater value and comeliness in His sight. What! is the bent form, the faltering step and the whitened locks of age more beautiful than the freshness, vigor, of youth? No; but under the rude blasts of the present imperfect conditions of human life, which ultimately wreck and ruin the physical structure, in some cases characters have been developed which far surpassed in grandeur and beauty the innocence and simplicity of childhood. It is character that God most admires and loves; and if we take His standpoint, it is what we will most appreciate.

When God originally created man pure and in His own likeness -- "very good" -- doubtless he was worthy of love and admiration; nevertheless, that he and his race might have the greater beauty of matured and disciplined character, and be worthy of still more love, God, during the period of the reign of evil and including the future Age and the reign of Christ, submits them to the rude hand of discipline, with the ultimate design of developing and perfecting character.

While the inner flower of character is developing, the outer leaves that enfolded the bud may be withering and dying; but he who is intent on watching for the flower and waiting for its inner glory and fragrance, has but little regard to the outer fading leaves which in its infancy was all that was to any extent visible. Just so may we regard the infirmities of age, the loss of youthful, vigor and beauty, the silvered hair, the wrinkled brow, the bent form, the halting steps and voice, and the trembling lips, if the fragrance and beauty of the ripened character present their charms. In due time God who greatly values it, will trim off the outer leaves and transplant it to a more congenial soil and clime, where it will bloom in eternal beauty.

From Childhood to Maturity

Let those who would appreciate the developed character mark carefully the features visible even in the infantile tracings. Mark the baby's dignity -- how sober and thoughtful and inquisitive and anxious to learn; note the first evidences of conscience, how he tries to balance the problems of right and wrong. Mark how he expects truth as a matter of course, and is surprised at falsehood and duplicity. See how love springs up and overflows the baby's heart, and how benevolence tries to repay parental affection with smiles and loving caresses; yet each may have its evil counterpart as a possibility, but not as a part of the first tracings of character. These baby graces and charms are but the first tracings of character. Under careful discipline and training and favorable conditions these early traits and features of character would develop uninterruptedly. But such conditions do not generally obtain in the present life, and as evil reigns, character is stunted, dwarfed, and the excrescences of evil appear, to disfigure and mar the beauty and pervert its high and noble faculties to ignoble and base uses.

But, on the other hand, consider the one who has been wrought upon by the Spirit of God; view the rightly developed character of maturity. See how careful study of the principles of righteousness has dignified the whole countenance; observe the easy, quiet grace with which errors are dropped and Truth is gladly and thankfully embraced, because the desire for, and appreciation of Truth has been carefully cultivated. Mark how conscience, skilled in its judgment of right and wrong, and unflinchingly committed to the right, guides the actions with unwavering precision; how truth and equity, love and benevolence, rule and triumph over every temptation to evil. And with such a character, however inferior the physical form, even it is in a measure glorified. The open countenance accompanies the transparent virtues of the soul; quiet dignity and easy grace are the outward expressions of a soul at peace and in delightful communion with God. Studious care in the building of character is expressed in the thoughtful countenance; and the joys of hope and faith add a halo of glory, beautiful in the highest sense to every beholder. The perfume of such ripe and full blown characters, is a blessing to those about them and precious foretastes of the wealth of blessing in store for the whole world when such shall have been exalted to their promised position and privilege of authority and power.

Weak and Strong Characters

A strong character then is one which by continued resistance and overcoming of evil has become established in righteousness. Righteousness has become the uniform habit of life. Apparently some characters develop and strengthen very early in life, some in middle life, and some later, though every added

year will bring its added glory , if properly used. And every one whose own character is developing with energy has a keen appreciation of such development in others. Thus it is that the Body of Christ, every member of which is thus by the Lord's Spirit actively engaged in character building, is knit together in love. They see in each other that which actually calls forth their love, however unlovely they may appear to people of the world, who look not upon the heart but merely upon the outward form and conditions and circumstances.

While every child of God is engaged to a greater or less extent in this work of character building, some grow steadily stronger, while others, through lack of consecrated effort, are weak and vacillating, measurably swayed by the influence of the world, the flesh, or the Devil, yet not entirely so, but still making some effort toward righteousness. Such characters are not willing to be closely identified with the Body of Christ, but would follow "afar off." They are not quite willing to share the reproaches of Christ and so keep at convenient distance. Such have not learned to view character from God's standpoint and to appreciate it and the Truth which develops it. Thus such characters are weak and unworthy of their privileges. If we have taken the Lord's standpoint, which is the only standpoint of actual merit, we should learn to value the Truth and those characters which have been and are being molded and fashioned by it, above all other considerations, and not be in the least ashamed to be identified with it or them.

Blessed is He Who Overcomes

Such strong characters God loves and honors, while He declares that He is ashamed of the weak, vacillating ones who follow Him afar off. He says, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels."

There are many ways of showing ourselves ashamed of Christ. We are ashamed of Him if we are ashamed of any member of His Body, however humble or poor or unlearned; if we are ashamed to be identified as their friend and companion. We are ashamed of Christ if we are ashamed to be recognized by the world and professing Christians as members of His despised Body which they do not recognize, but which they reject and everywhere speak against. We are ashamed of Christ, too, if we are ashamed of His doctrines, either as a whole or in part.

To be ashamed of any of these is only to prove that such a character is weak and vacillating and far short of that full development which the Lord desires, and the possessor of which only He will own and exalt as His Bride and Joint-heir. He would rightly be ashamed to take for His Bride one so inferior to the Truth and its moral excellence. Blessed is he therefore who overcomes these weaknesses and who in humility and teachableness endeavors steadily to cultivate a harmonious and symmetrical character.

Soon Christ's appreciation of those strong, beautiful, symmetrical characters which have followed Him closely in this evil time, from principle, and not for praise of men, will be expressed in their glorious exaltation as His Bride and Joint-heir. These will then shine forth to all the world in the splendor of strong and holy images of Christ.

HALF HOUR MEDITATIONS ON ROMANS

No. 9

"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel." -- 2 Tim. 2:8.

PAUL A servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God (which He had promised afore by His Prophets in the Holy Scriptures), concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name: among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." -- Rom. 1:1-7.

"People, in reading the Bible, are often not conscious of the extreme listlessness with which they pass along the familiar and oft repeated words of Scripture, without the impression of their meaning being at all present with the thoughts-and how, during the mechanical currency of the verses through their lips, the thinking power is often asleep for whole passages together." We may therefore be allowed, at least for the present, first to read over a paragraph; then to seek to fasten the import of certain of its particular phrases upon our attention, even though these phrases may heretofore have been regarded as so intelligible, that we did not think of bestowing an effort or dwelling one moment upon their signification; and then of reading the paragraph over again, in such extended or paraphrased language, as may give us another opportunity of its sense being riveted on our understanding. But while thus to secure such clear understanding of the Apostle's words will be our immediate purpose, and may at times seem to be our only one, yet this can never be more than a means to an end. To see only the point of the Apostle's masterly arguments would indeed well repay us for the "Half-hours" we may spend together in these pages, but we shall fail of our ultimate aim unless they have also the effect of bringing Jesus Himself into ever clearer vision as the altogether lovely One, alone worthy of our heart's devotion (the Father always excepted).

"Beyond the sacred page we seek Thee, Lord,
Our spirits pant for Thee, Thou living Word."

The Address or Greeting

As we read these seven verses which form the address or greeting with which our author commences his letter, we are forcibly reminded of the remarks of R. G. Moulton in discussing the Epistles of St. Paul from the literary standpoint. We quote: "Some writers are obscure through poverty of thought: Paul on the contrary through exuberance. In his writings great ideas, brilliantly worded, come pouring out with a rapidity that leaves appreciative effort lagging behind. Yet this but half describes his exuberance. Paul has a highly relational mind; not content with vivid presentation of a thought; he must guard it in all its aspects, and indicate its connection with all other thoughts." In this passage the interval between the first and seven verses may for all practical purposes be regarded as a series of parentheses, and the first and seventh verses will therefore read very well in succession, thus : "Paul, a

servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, . . . to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." But in verse one at the mere mention of the "Gospel" the mind of Paul seems to catch fire. He cannot hurry on to verse seven without pausing in verse two to mention the fact that the Gospel was promised long ago, and to state in verse three the subject of it. Then again in verse three at the mere mention of our Savior's name, Paul's mind seems to burn and blaze with signal intensity. He cannot go on without asserting in this and the next verse that Jesus, the Son of God whom he announces, is not only the Jewish Messiah who died, but also the Christian's Lord who ever liveth, and to state in the fifth verse that from Him he had received his commission to preach unto all nations, and to instance in the sixth verse the people whom he was addressing as among those nations. And it is not till after he has completed this circle of deviations, but at the same time enriched the whole of its course with the effusions of a mind stored in the truths of revelation, that he resumes in the seventh that rectilinear track, by which the writer who announced himself in the first verse, sends in the seventh his Christian salutations to the correspondents whom he is addressing."

The Gospel is of God

""**The Gospel**': word almost too familiar now, till the thing is too little understood. What is it? In its native meaning, its eternally proper meaning, it is the Divine 'Good Tidings.' It is the announcement of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior of men, in whom God and man meet with joy." True it is that that announcement stands in living relation to a bright chain of precepts and solemn warnings ; we shall see this amply illustrated in this Epistle. But neither precepts nor warnings are properly **The Gospel**. "The Gospel saves from sin and enables for holy conduct. But in itself it is the pure, mere message of redeeming love."

The Gospel is **of God**; that is to say it originated with the Father. He is the Author of it. "God so loved the world." "In this was manifested the love. of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." -- John 3:16; 1 John 4:9.

The Gospel Promised Beforehand

Far from evincing a desire to advance something new the Apostle is at pains to show that "his" Gospel is in entire accord with the Old Testament writings. It was a constant position with him "that he advanced nothing but what was maintained by the best and holiest men of the nation." "Saying none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come," etc. (Acts 26:22, 23.) Though his doctrines might appear to be new, yet he regarded them "as entirely consistent with all that had been declared in the Jewish ;and not only consistent, but as actually promised there." The passages of the Old Testament on which he particularly relied will come before us as we proceed. It is worthy of special notice here, however, that the Apostle had a great respect for the Old Testament. Manifestly he studied it. Nor is he alone in this. Hear the Apostle Peter in Acts 10:43: "To Him [Jesus] give all the Prophets witness." Jesus Himself said, "Ye search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me." (John 5:39.) And again, in verse 46 of the same chapter He

says, "Had. ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me."

"The sunrise of Christ was no abrupt, insulated phenomenon unintelligible because out of relation. 'Since the world began' (Luke 1:70), from the dawn of human history, predictive word and manifold preparing work had gone before The whole east heaved with expectations of a Judean world rule about the time when, as a fact, Jesus came. He came, alike to disappoint every popular hope and to satisfy at once the concrete details and the spiritual significance of the long forecast. And He sent His messengers out into the world carrying as their text . . . that old and multifold literature which is yet one Book; those 'holy writings' (our own Old Testament, from end to end), which were to them nothing less than the voice of God. They always put the Lord, in their preaching, in contact with that prediction." Who else in all history was thus heralded beforehand?

Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord

Above everything else let us ever remember that the Gospel according to Paul, as the Epistle to the Romans has appropriately been called, has to do with a Person. The sum and substance of "his" Gospel is Jesus. Elsewhere he writes: "I know **Whom** I have believed." It is one thing to know certain things about Jesus (even though those things be all true) and another thing altogether to know Him. The Queen of Sheba had heard a, great many things about Solomon, but when she became personally acquainted with him she realized that the half had not been told her. Recently it has been suggested to us to stress still more in these pages the importance of Church Unity. We doubt if there is a better way to do this than by emphasizing the Personality of Jesus.

The Personality of Jesus

Brethren, let us thank God that our faith is not in a creed, not in a statement of belief, however exact or explicit, not in a document, but in a Living Being, our blessed Lord Jesus Himself, whose personality embraces every grace, in loyalty to whom we can all find fellowship and unity; yea, and if it did but know it, a distracted world could find its life. How true is the saying: "**What** We believe divides us; **Whom** we believe unites us." "I" said Jesus, "if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." Brethren, let us lift Him up **now**, in these difficult days; let Him fill our lives. We know that this saying of Jesus will have a grand fulfillment in the next Age, when all shall have their eyes opened to behold our Lord; when He shall indeed be the desire of all nations. But we cannot wait that time. Our souls are panting to see Him lifted up now, and if this cannot yet be in the world, it must be in the Church.

"We would see Jesus! for the shadows lengthen
Across this little landscape of our life
We would see Jesus! our weak faith to strengthen
For the last weariness, the final strife!

"We would see Jesus -- the great Rock Foundation
Whereon our feet were set by sovereign grace;
Not life nor death, with all their agitation
Can thence remove us, if we see His face."

The Seed of David

The Apostle next tells us that Jesus **was made** or as the Greek may literally be rendered, **became** or **was born** of the seed of David. "So the New Testament begins ('The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David,' Matt. 1:1); so it almost closes ('I, Jesus, have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, Rev. 22:16)." St. Paul in later years, recalls the Lord's physical descent again (2 Tim. 2:8) : "Remember that Jesus Christ of the **seed of David** was raised from the dead, according to my Gospel." "The old Apostle in that last passage has entered the shadow of death; he feels with one hand for the rock of history, with the other for the pulse of eternal love. Here was the rock; the Lord of life was the Child of history, Son and Heir of a historical king, and then as such the Child of prophecy too. And this against all surface appearances beforehand. The Davidic 'ground' ('He shall grow up before Him . . . as a root out of a dry ground,' Isa. 53:2) had seemed to be dry as dust for generations, when the Root of endless life sprang up in it."

According to the Flesh . . . According to the Spirit

What does the Apostle intend us to understand by these expressions? Since their proper understanding is essential to a clear grasp of much of what follows in this Epistle, we may well pause a moment in their consideration. Two preliminary questions present themselves: (1) What is man? and (2) What do the Scriptures teach concerning the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ?

What is Man?

"The Scriptures recognize man as composed of two elements, body and spirit. These two produce soul, sentient being, intelligence, the man himself, the being, or soul, The term 'body' applies merely to the physical organism. It neither relates to the life which animates it, nor to the sentient being which is the result of animation. A body is not a man, although there could be no man without a body. The spirit of life is not the man; although there could be no manhood without the spirit of life. The word 'spirit' is, in the Old Testament Scriptures, from the Hebrew word **ruach**. Its signification primarily is **breath**; and hence we have the expression '**breath** of life,' or '**spirit** of life,' because the spark of life once started is supported by breathing.

"The words 'spirit of life,' however, signify more than merely breath; they relate to the spark of life itself, without which breath would be an impossibility. This spark of life we receive from our fathers, it being nourished and developed through our mothers. It is quite untrue that the spark of human life is communicated in a miraculous way, any more than is the spark of brute life. The lower animals, the horse, the dog, cattle, etc., are begotten of the males and born of the females of their respective genera, in precisely the same manner as the human species is produced, nor does anything in Scripture suggest the contrary. It is purely, human invention, designed to uphold a false theory, that claims Divine interposition in the birth of human offspring."

The Nature of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The Scriptural teaching concerning our Redeemer is:

- (1) He existed as a spirit being before He became flesh.
- (2) He underwent a change of nature, the life-principle or spirit of life which formerly animated His spirit body was transferred to Mary's womb, and "though retaining all the purity and perfection of the pre-existent (spirit) state, the transferred germ of being partook . . . of the nature of the mother (human nature) and was made flesh by being born of a woman."
- (3) He was put to death flesh, and thereby ceased to exist in any manner or degree on any plane of existence, until,
- (4) He was raised from the dead. He was, raised spirit, and now enjoys the highest of all natures, the Divine nature.*

* For an exhaustive discussion of these and related subjects we refer all to the masterly work of Brother Russell entitled, "The Atonement between God and Man." See also our special Herald dated March, 1927, free on request.

In the light of the foregoing remarks it will not be difficult to see that the word "flesh" in our text refers to the physical organism or human body of our Lord, but does not include any reference to the life-principle which animated that body. On the other hand, the word "spirit" makes no reference to the spirit nature which was His before He became flesh, nor yet to the Divine nature which He now enjoys, but refers altogether to the life-principle which animated His human body during the days. of His lift on earth.

Declared to be the Son of God

Those who had the inestimable privilege of personal acquaintance with our Lord during the days of His flesh were able to reach the conclusion before His (death and) resurrection that He was the Son of God. The holiness of that life-principle. which animated all His conduct clearly marked Him out as the holy, harmless, undefiled One, separate from sinners. Some men might say that He was John the Baptist, some Elias, other Jeremias or one of the Prophets, but when Jesus asked His disciples "Whom say ye that I am, Simon Peter answered.: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." -- Matt. 16:17.

The Power of His Resurrection

All questions as to the holiness of His spirit or His relationship as Son of God were forever settled by His resurrection from the dead. God grant us more and more to know experimentally "what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe according to the working of His mighty power **which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.**" (Eph. 1:19, 20.) Jesus had claimed to be God's Son. The Father by raising Him from the dead honored that claim in the most decisive manner possible. Thereby Jesus was declared, determined, marked out, designated, proved to be God's Son. Moreover His resurrection not only proved Him to be God's Son, but proved Him also to be holy. "Thou wilt not suffer thine **Holy One** to see corruption." (Acts 2:27.) It would surprise us to learn that one who had

been unholy had been .raised from the dead by the power of the Father. In the case of Jesus, resurrection was the natural corollary of such a life as He had lived. It was **morally** impossible for Him to have remained dead. "Whom God raised up having loosed the pains [Fenton, grip] of death, because **it was not possible** that He should be holden of it." -- Acts 2:24.

Among All Nations

"Among all the nations,' 'all the Gentiles.' The words read easy to us, and pass perhaps half unnoticed, as a phrase of routine. Not so to the ex-Pharisee who dictated them here. A few years before he would have held it highly 'unlawful to keep company with, or come unto, one of another nation.' (Acts 10:2, 8.) Now, in Christ, it is as if he had almost forgotten that it had been so. His whole heart, in Christ, is blent in personal love with hearts belonging to many nations; in spiritual affection. he is ready for contact with all hearts."

For His Name's Sake

"He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." (Acts 9:15, 16.) "Paul had indeed come to know that name, and to pass it on was now his very life. He existed only to win for it more insight, more adoration, more love. 'The name' deserved that great soul's entire devotion. Does it not deserve our equally entire devotion now? Our lives shall be transfigured, in their measure, by taking for their motto also, 'For His Name's Sake.'

"It means so much to me, that, when He came,
They called Him 'Jesus!' 'Tis a gripping name
That takes a saving hold on one like me,
Who lifts new-visioned eyes that now would see
All false lights fade in presence of the true
What does it mean to you?"

Review

Let us briefly review the ground we have covered. "Notice the beauty and symmetry of Paul's opening sentence. It is a crystal arch spanning the gulf between the Jew of Tarsus and the Christians at Rome. Paul begins by giving his name: he rises to the dignity of his office, and then to the Gospel he proclaims. From the Gospel he ascends to its great subject to Him who is Son of David and Son of God. From this summit of his arch he passes on to the apostleship again; and to the nations for whose good he received it. Among these nations he finds the Christians at Rome. He began to build by laying down his own claims: he finishes by acknowledging theirs. The gulf is spanned. Across the waters of national separation Paul has flung an arch whose firmly knit segments are living truths, and whose keystone is the . . . Son of God. Over this arch he hastens with words of greeting from his Father and their Father, from his Master and their Master.

"Every word increases the writer's claim upon the attention of his readers. He writes to them as one doing the work of the promised Messiah, who lived at Nazareth and died at Jerusalem. Among the servants of Christ he occupies no mean place, but has been solemnly called to the first rank. He has been set apart by God for the proclamation of those joyful tidings, whose echoes from afar were heard by the ancient Prophets, and still resound in the words of the sacred books. The Divine mission of the Prophets, and the sacredness of their

writings, claim attention for one who announces as present what they foretold as future. This claim is strengthened by mention of Him who is the great matter of the good news. Paul proclaims the advent of a scion of the house to which eternal royalty was promised; of One who, by Divine power, by victory over the grave, has been separated from all others as the Son of God. This Son of David and of God is Paul's Master and theirs. By His personal call, Paul has received the rank of an apostle. The office receives luster from the grandeur of Him by whom it was conferred. The purpose of Paul's mission is that men in all nations may obey faith. A further purpose is that the name of Christ, written in these verses in characters so splendid, may be revered and loved by all. Among these nations are Paul's readers. But he does not write to lead them to faith. Christ has already made them His own by a Divine call. They are objects of God's love, and men whom God has claimed for Himself. Paul desires for them the smile of God, and the rest of spirit which only that smile can give. May it come to them from its only source, the common Father and the common Master.

"In these words there is no mere rambling among sacred topics; no running away after some great thought; no mere desire to put Christ's name into every sentence. But there is everywhere order and purpose. In verse 5, we find Paul standing as an apostle on the level on which he stood in verse 1. But how great an advance he had made. The long-foretold Gospel has given importance to the man set apart to proclaim it. The Apostle has been into the presence of the Son of God, and the glory of that presence now irradiates the office received from One so great. He comes forth as an ambassador claiming for his Master the allegiance of all nations."

We conclude with the following paraphrase:

"Paul, a devoted servant of Jesus Christ, an Apostle called by Divine summons as much as any member of the original Twelve, solemnly set apart for the work of delivering God's message of salvation; Paul, so authorized and commissioned, gives greeting to the whole body of Roman Christians (whether Jewish or Gentile), who as Christians are special objects of the Divine love, called out of the mass of mankind into the inner society of the Church, consecrated by God, like Israel of old, as His own peculiar people. May the free unmerited favor of God and, the peace which comes from reconciliation with Him be yours! May God Himself, the Heavenly Father, and the Lord Jesus Messiah, grant them to you!

"The message which I am commissioned to proclaim is no startling novelty, launched upon the world without preparation, but rather the direct fulfillment of promises which God had inspired the prophets of Israel to set down in Holy Writ. It relates to none other than His Son, whom it presents in a twofold aspect; on the one hand by physical descent tracing His lineage to David, as the Messiah was to do, and on the other hand, in virtue of the Holiness inherent in His spirit, visibly designated or declared to be Son of God by the miracle of the Resurrection. He, I say, is the sum and substance of my message, -- Jesus, the Jew's Messiah, and the Christian's Lord. And it was through Him that I, like the rest of the Apostles, received both the general tokens of God's favor in that I was called to be a Christian and also the special gifts of an Apostle. My duty as an Apostle is among all Gentile peoples, and therefore among you too at Rome, to win men over to the willing service of loyalty to Him; and the end to which all my labors are directed is the honor of His Holy Name."

A VISIT TO THE LAND OF PROMISE

TRAVELS IN THE HOLY LAND

SERIES IV

Jerusalem

JERUSALEM IS looking up. It is awakening from the dry dust of unprogressive: centuries and a new life is manifesting itself in that section outside the walls. One who has been here before, feels at once that things are changing; in the last two years especially has this been so. No more must the traveler be taken to unclean and uncomfortable hotels. In the past year two new ones have been opened -- the Palace Hotel, as imposing in architecture and brass buttoned attendants as many of our modern cities afford, and Hotel Fast, a block farther up the wide open street, smaller and less pretentious; but homelike and clean under its German management and with the added attraction of a Swiss cook. A little further up and across from it stands a partly finished and most imposing building already named King David's Hotel. This is being erected by the famous Shepherd's Hotel people of Cairo and with its 200 rooms, each with private bath, greater luxury still will be offered. Work has also been started in the same block on a fine structure for the Y. M. C. A., and a new bank nearby employs a night shift of workers for a hurried completion. But here, as elsewhere, all business is lamenting the financial crash in the United States, for any hindering effect upon the tourist trade is a severe blow to these lands across the sea. All feel it keenly from the business man down to the humblest porter, and none is at all backward in voicing his disappointment.

Entering the Holy City

Starting out for a walk soon after our arrival, our attention is arrested by the strains of martial music and the measured tramp of many feet. We reach the street leading to Jaffa Gate, the main portal to the old walled city, in time to see the British soldiers marching to their barracks in the old citadel, or, Tower of David, as it is called, but they do not need to enter through the narrow, right-angled turn of Jaffa Gate, for beside it is the wide opening made in the western wall by the former German Kaiser that he might ride into Jerusalem in state. Again the ominous feeling of impending and forcibly held back trouble weighs heavily and it seems good to know the soldiers are here. Our Arab guide confidentially informs me that every Arab man is armed with a gun and nothing but the aeroplanes held in readiness at Beirut restrains him. Yesterday on the road leading to the city our own car was stopped at certain points for the inspection of its occupants; Arabs with no good reason may not go up, even by twos and threes, to congregate in Jerusalem.

The street we enter as we step inside the walls is David Street, the principal business street of the old city. It runs east and west, and with Damascus, which runs north and south, divides the city into four quarters, Armenian, Christian, Mohammedan, and Jewish. It is widened for a block along the Tower of David (it may be of interest to mention here that this old citadel stands where, according to scholars, Herod's great palace once stood), then, becoming its own self, narrows to a descending stairway about four feet in

width of wide, stone-paved steps walled in with the tall, old buildings on either side, whose poor, little recesses are by courtesy called shops. Here passes perhaps the most interesting and varied crowd in all the world, and it seems one could not tire watching it as it comes through the gate, spreading loosely and comfortably in this first wide space, then, drawing together into a narrow ribbon of congested humanity, threads its way down the easterly, descending course of the street.

Peasant women are here, clad in dresses of dark blue with large cotton squares of white tied over their hair, bearing upon their heads round platters filled with great cauliflowers; there are white-sheeted Arabs, turbaned negroes, black-veiled Mohammedan women and their white-veiled Christian sisters, nuns, priests, rabbis: Clothes of all descriptions are seen, some eastern, soiree western, often a happy combination of both on the same individual. Anything or any ensemble of things is in style on this, the Broadway of old Jerusalem.

Heavy are the burdens hung across the backs of the patient, little donkeys and the awkward camels who more than take up their share of these crowded lanes of traffic, but heavier still, it seems, are the great loads carried upon the bent backs of men. Great wooden packing cases that bend them nearly to the earth; freight of any kind that can be strapped to submissive shoulders, moves slowly here and there, often with little of the creature visible but the painfully plodding limbs under the bulk and weight of the load. How it all illuminates the Master's words as we look about us, and how much we realize from our own poorer pity the great earthly compassion underlying the spiritual force of that tender invitation, its imagery caught, as always, from the simple, every-day life about Him -- "Come unto Me, all ye that **labor** and are **heavy laden**, and I will give you **rest**. Take My yoke upon you . . . for My **yoke** is easy, and My **burden** is light."

Via Dolorosa and Church of the Holy Sepulchre

On the sight seeing trips within this city one is usually taken first to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. We walk a few blocks along David Street and then making a sharp, right-angled turn, are in Christian Street, so named because, until about twenty years ago, it was lined on either side by Christian shops, and no Jew dared show himself along this way which leads to the famous church. Today these shops are entirely occupied by Jews.

If you are most credulous and also devout, you will walk to the church by way of the Via Dolorosa, or, "Way of Pain," pausing at the first nine stations of the Cross which are along the street, the other five being inside the church. At certain points along the way are numbers carved or painted over some building or on the side of a wall; "Here the crown of thorns was placed upon His head" and "Here the cross was laid upon His shoulders" the guide recites. Considering that the Jerusalem of Christ's day is buried under the debris and rubbish of centuries, except the Temple Area, one can see the absurdity of the claims of the Via Dolorosa, yet the faithful pilgrims of the centuries by thousands have walked and still walk this fictitious way of the Cross, pausing with thrilled hearts and unquestioning minds here and there along the crowded, unclean, uninspiring street.

We have now reached the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Armed Mohammedan guards are here on duty, and especially are their services needed on Holy Days, for bitterly do the five Christian sects who

worship here contend at times for the rights and privileges they consider theirs. Inside the door, on a conveniently built bench is seated the Mohammedan keeper of the key; this office being a hereditary one in an old Moslem family.

A marvelous history of nearly sixteen centuries belongs to this church and the desire to wrest it from the grasp of the Turk, once united warring nations. Constantine having decided upon this site as being that of the Lord's burial place (or, his mother Queen Helena having so decided, the credit being usually given to her) erected here between 327-336 a series of fine buildings; when the Crusaders obtained possession of the country in 1099 they erected the present building including in it all the various shrines that had before been under separate roofs. Though the inside has suffered many changes through fire, the outside is much the same except for the wear of the centuries.

Tradition's Sacred Spots

At Easter time this courtyard on which we stand is a mass of pilgrims. At night, they cover the entire floors of the building and overflow the outside in congestion and discomfort. Through all the years they have come, from Russia and other countries, traveling on foot by day, lying, weary and often hungry, under the stars at night, sometimes leaving their dead behind them in shallow graves.

At the side of this courtyard is a Greek Convent which boasts a carefully walled-in olive tree remarkable in that, according to the Greek Orthodox legend, it is the one in whose branches the ram was fastened that was provided for Abraham. The Abyssinian Catholics on the contrary, claim they have the correct tree in their convent nearby.

The central dome of the church was damaged greatly in the earthquake of several years ago and repairs have been hindered by the poverty of the Greek Catholic sect, whose property it is, and their refusal to accept help from any of their sister worshipers. We are informed though that the present government is taking it in hand and restoring it.

The first thing one notices after stepping inside is a long slab of rose-colored limestone lying across the floor. This is the Stone of Unction on which the body of Christ is said to have been laid for the anointing for burial. Over it hangs a number of brass lamps, the property of the various sects who worship here, each in its respective shrine -- Latin, Greek, Syrian, Armenian, Abyssinian and Copt. In this Church of the Holy Sepulchre you may see the traditional tomb of Melchizedec; the burial place of the skull of Adam; the rent in the rock from the earthquake of the Crucifixion; the spot where the women stood to behold the Crucifixion, and where, later, the Virgin Mary watched the anointing of the Lord's body, a circular marble slab in the floor covered with a metal cage marking this spot; the place where the Lord was nailed to the cross; a fragment of the very stone rolled from the door of the tomb, etc., etc. Worn shiny and smooth by the kisses and tears of pilgrims these traditional places still receive the reverence and worship of the unenlightened.

The tomb itself for which the church was named stands on the floor, a tiny building in itself; 26 by 18 feet, of rose-colored, native limestone. Before its door, which we must stoop to enter, is a marble pedestal upon which is inset a piece of the stone said to be the one upon which the angel sat after our Lord

had risen. Inside is a marble bench over which are hung 43 fine lamps, fed with olive oil, and burning constantly. The tiny room is so narrow that only three or four people at a time have room to enter and kneel at the marble bench, discolored by the touch of worshipping lips. This small tomb-chapel was constructed in 1810 and is, therefore, quite modern. The site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is not only within the present walls of Jerusalem but it is believed by scholars to have been within the walls in the time of Christ; this, proven, would discount all its claim as the site of Calvary and the tomb, but Jerusalem, twenty times besieged, some seven or eight times rebuilt, and desolate for long years, discloses few of its deeper secrets.

St. Helena

Under the church are the remains of the ancient Church of St. Helena, a few old pillars and walls still remaining. Here we see the grotto where the three crosses were found buried, curiously enough, in the solid rock. The very seat where Helena sat as she superintended the work is shown here by the altar dedicated to her; a second altar being dedicated to the penitent thief. In the wall is a plastered-up opening leading down to Purgatory, but the sighs, groans, and cries which such unhappy occupants would quite naturally emit were too much for sensitive ears and so it was mercifully all shut out.

When the three crosses were uncovered, the problem that next confronted Constantine's mother was how to detect the true cross; the site of the tomb and the exact spot where to dig for the crosses had been revealed to her in dreams and visions, but now she was left to her own resourcefulness. This she seemed to have, or perhaps as some say, the bishop with her was resourceful. The three crosses were carried to a dying woman; she was touched by first one and then another with no change; at the touch of the third she was instantly healed and thus the true cross was found, and pieces of it today are cherished throughout the world by many Catholic churches. Does all this sound too idolatrous and grotesque? Then there is nothing to relate of old Jerusalem, for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has been its living heart to the so-called Christian world since the time of Constantine. Some one well remarked that in Jerusalem there is for the Moslem the Dome of the Rock, for the Christian the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, as for the rest it is nothing but dirty streets, and unclean hordes.

Empress Helena reached Jerusalem some three centuries after Christ. The earliest Christians in their evangelical purity, no doubt, did not render any undue homage to earthly things and places, and this with the desolating years that followed would completely blot out and make it impossible to determine with any certainty the identical spots where the scenes of earth's greatest and most blessed drama were staged. Even the scientific and scholarly investigators of recent times are not able to give out with certainty very many of their best decisions. -- G. M. H.

(To be continued)

LEAVES FROM A CHRISTIAN DIARY

THE PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS

(Received from a brother and sister in Great Britain)

*"Tribulation worketh patience; awed patience, experience;
and experience, hope." -- Rom. 5:3,4*

"When the storms of life are raging
Tempests wild on land and sea."

WITHOUT the storm winds blow; within are conflicts and struggles. We are threatened, driven and tossed like frail skiffs upon a boisterous sea. Around, the dear ones struggle, half-fainting with the effort to steer their frail earthly craft, amidst over whelming sorrows, difficulties, and temptations, toward the heavenly shore. Comes the question, What is man? At our very bravest and best, we are frail human fragments. Tired, faulty, yet striving; not merely against flesh and blood but against the unseen forces of darkness.

"Weak and weary in the conflict,
'Wrestling not with flesh and blood,'
Help us, Lord, as faint we falter;
O revive us by Thy Word!"

Above the strife and tumult, rings the sweetness of assurance: "My grace is sufficient for thee." Fainting hearts revive and ears become more alert to catch each word. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you." Faltering steps are spurred forward again. It is no strange thing to pass through the furnace. We laid our gold upon the altar to be purged of its dross, and the cleansing flames we said we would bear. Once more we turn with patient zeal to the narrow tortuous way. Come storm or tempest, we will continue on to the end, but how we wish the end were in view.

."Be thou faithful unto death." Like a sweet clarion call, sounding above the din of conflict, the words of a risen, glorious Savior, rouse us to activity. Gone is all the lassitude and weakness. Clothed in His strength, we continue to fight the good fight -- just for today.

Conscious of Failings

And what of today? Each day is so nearly like yesterday we become dismayed by our examination of the hours. We seem to have such a struggle with the simplest of things. The days are filled with common tasks. It seems an effort to do these tasks at times, we get so tired, so beset by weaknesses. To get a little time for study or private meditation is well nigh impossible some days. When we do get it, we are so tired it is a mental effort to concentrate upon whatever we want to read or think about.

And when it comes to the evening hour and we look back across that gap from dawn to setting sun, how disappointed we often feel. What an ordinary, empty, unsatisfactory day it has been. We cannot recount our victories, we cannot revel in opportunities we have had to tell the Good Tidings to some questioning soul. There has been little time to think or study, and worst of all we are conscious of failings-thoughts, words, action perhaps, not quite all of that sweet, pure gentleness which becometh "His very own."

We cannot go to our Father and tell Him of joys; we have only a story of rush and bustle, of failings and regrets to relate. We feel poor and mean, dissatisfied, and restless, longing with all our heart for better things.

"God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith." Hence the dear ones of His choice need to work hard and long under present conditions for their

temporal sustenance. To those who have given their lives wholly to His service, the every-day routine, the constant jar and fret of little things, seems at times, scarcely understandable. Why should we have to live such ordinary work-a-day lives, with so little opportunity to do the things we want, when we long so much to do them?

Tribulation Worketh Patience

So many earnest children of God question thus, forgetful of the full import of the Apostle's words, "tribulation worketh patience." Tribulation is a state of affliction, oppression, pain and misery. We are oppressed by the daily round. All these ordinary, mundane tasks filling up consecrated hours which we long to use for other things, become at times an oppressive burden.

We grow discontented and tired. Then little things begin to go wrong. An unkind thought may creep in. Perhaps we are unjustly dealt with and a sharp word is spoken. Some mean action may be, done to us in the course of the day. We may retaliate, become awkward, or refuse to do something outside our province, because we find that others only take advantage of our kindly efforts.

Reviewing the day we experience a sense of pain, because the good we would do, we have not done, and the wrong we would not do, we have done. Then do we say to ourselves as did the Apostle Paul: "O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of flesh."

Truly did the poet write --

"The daily round and common task,
Will furnish all we need to ask."

God knows our needs; He is much too wise to err. In the daily round are the very experiences which will develop patience, that sweet virtue, without which no Christian character will be complete.

"We long to do good in the after while,
But what are we doing today?"

Today we are in the school of Christ. Today there are lessons to learn from our common tasks. Those little ordinary things we tripped over were the tests; the thwarted longings were the disciplinary measures good for our wayward hearts. Passing through troubled times, enduring reproaches, or standing up valiantly for truth, brings keen cutting pain. These larger experiences of our Christian warfare are often borne more valiantly and with more fortitude than the lesser trials.

They are so evidently a test, we school ourselves to patient endurance. We know our feet are planted upon a rock. The clash and din of conflict, though hurtful and wearisome, does not bear our courage down. Right nobly we keep the banner of truth flying. Brightly burns our faith in the darkest hour. These sharp conflicts have always brought a measure of joy to God's people. Exultant faith, triumphant through His grace, has poured forth eloquent testimony to His praise. But what of the little everyday things? How many have falteringly and tearfully confessed to failure in the daily round and common task.

It is the little things which count. Seldom do we conquer trifles as we conquer great things.

God Chooses a Man of Stammering Tongue

We know that it has been God's eternal purpose to have with Him a royal family-children who would reflect the beauty of His character; children whom He could love with all the fullness of His Divine nature; children who would be all love, even as He is love, who could and would fully reciprocate His love bestowed upon them.

When we stop to consider this we see something of the importance of the daily round. Out of the fallen race He has chosen this family which shall be His future joy. His creative works have required long ages for their accomplishment, but in the space of our short life time, His grace is sufficient to transform the sin-stained worldlings of His choice, into vessels of praise to His own glory.

"I know this stained tablet must first be washed white,
And there Thy bright features be drawn."

If some other way would have been better for the imprinting of that sweet image of Christ upon our hearts, then surely the wisdom of God would have chosen it. But since most of us are left to live these ordinary work-a-day lives, then that must be the very best way in which to develop those sweet graces of the Spirit which will enable us to reach the mark, and win the prize, of eternal life with Jesus Christ.

Nothing is more remarkable than some of the means which God has chosen in times past for the carrying out of His purposes. As if to teach us to trust in nothing and in none but Himself, He selects means that seem the worse fitted to accomplish His ends.

Does He choose an ambassador to Pharaoh? -- it is a man of stammering tongue. Are the streams of Jericho to be sweetened? -- salt is cast into the spring. Are the battlements of a city to be thrown down? -- no explosive is employed, but simply the breath of an empty trumpet. Is a rock to be riven? -- neither earthquake nor lightning is employed, but a simple rod. Leaving schools, halls and colleges, God summoned His preachers from the shores of Galilee. The helm of the Church is entrusted to hands which have never steered ought but fishing boats. By the mouth of one who had been His bitterest persecutor, Christ pleaded His cause before the philosophers of Athens, and in the palaces of Rome.

A Little While

What wonder then, that looking for a grindstone upon which to trim and polish the living stones for His eternal temple and dwelling place, He uses the apparently simple daily round of common tasks. The very fact that the daily routine is so unsatisfactory, so full of struggles and failures, makes us long for that day when we might leave it all behind, and enter into the bright realms of Immanuel's land. In these imperfect bodies we do so much we dislike, and only the sweet promise that "Christ shall change our vile body and fashion it like unto His own glorious body," keeps us patient; keeps us still striving:

Daily tribulation cultivates patience -- patience to strive continually to make today better than yesterday, and tomorrow better than today. It develops in us experience, or character -- the character of Christ. With the knowledge that by His grace we are getting ever nearer to the mark for the prize, comes sweet hope. The hope of seeing Him face to face and being made like Him.

" 'A little while;' with patience Lord,
I fain would ask, 'How long?'
For how, can I, with such a hope
Of glory and of home,
With such a joy awaiting me,
Not wish the hour were come?
How can I keep the longing back,
And how suppress the groan."

As the Apostle Paul says, "We ourselves groan within ourselves," longing for an end of strife, and an entrance into the joys of our Lord. So often the heart, tired by the ceaseless battle with the little things, whispers its longing to Him with the ever-open ear. In sweet assurance comes the answer,

"Not now, My child, a little more rough tossing,
A little longer on the billows' foam,
A few more journeys through the darkened wilderness,
And then the sunshine of thy Father's Home."

"Let patience have her perfect work," in the little things. Once more through the furnace, once more to the battle, once more that lonely walk in the dark, with only the touch of His hand, once more round that slowly turning grindstone of dally little things, and then -- Oh the sweetness of **then!** That blessed after-while of rest, peace, and joys for evermore.

In the Hands of the Great Sculptor

It is not so many years ago since one we dearly love, said, "As the sun sinks at the close of each day and the shadows gather around us, how sweet to sing, 'I'm one day nearer Home.' We have nearly reached the mountain top, and every day multiplies the evidences that the journey is nearing its end. Just how long it will be we cannot know; probably it is best we do not know. But we believe that it will not be very long."

"Herein is the patience of the saints," to keep on day after day, week after week, year after year, if it please Him in whom we trust, until He shall call us Home. "This day the noise of conflict, the next the victor's song," should be the inspiration of those oppressed by the daily littleness. Being girt about by patience, strong in experience and inspired by hope, such can never fail. In the sweet hereafter, looking back on those little things, when each succeeding day was "twin sister of the last," they will see that nothing could have been a better instrument in the hands of the Great Sculptor, by which to fashion in them, beauty which would stand the eternal years.

"Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."-Jas. 1:3.

"Ah, believe me, when the Day breaks, and we know as we are known,
In the sunlight of the glory that surrounds our Father's Throne,
He will tell us how He led us: we shall see the pathway clear,
The way we trod that led to God through failing, fault and fear.
And we'll see those guardian angels who were veiled from our sight,
We shall understand the workings of the Power put forth in might:
Yea, And with those guardian angels who were veiled from our sight,
We shall see our Savior, and our God, in Heaven's Eternal Light."

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS

*"When He shall come to be glorified in His saints,
and in all them that believe." -- 2 Thess. 1:10*

IN the beginning of our spiritual life we find it comparatively easy to understand that Christians are to be a "peculiar people" unto the Lord, a people chosen to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Nothing appears more reasonable to our newly begotten minds in their early stages of development than that we should glorify our Father in heaven, and that whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do we should do as unto Him and for His glory. But it represents an advanced lesson to fully appreciate that God Himself really glories in His people, that He actually glories in them as His very special treasure, a royal diadem in His hand, eventually to be exhibited to all His creatures as the crowning glory of His own handiwork and grace.

The Old Testament contains many statements suggestive of God's delight in His people, and of His jealous love for them, but it required the deeper revelation of the Gospels and Epistles to reveal that He could thus "glory in His saints." The most devout servant of former dispensations could never have imagined so great a possibility. It required the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to clearly show how believers are made the special inheritance of the Lord Himself, and how they become the crowning feature of all His creative work, therefore the special treasure in which He glories.

There has recently been brought to our attention the luminous, comments of a writer who has enlarged upon this delightful theme in a most helpful manner, and we are passing them on for the profitable consideration of others, believing that all will appreciate the writer's pleasing presentation of a subject so precious to our hearts in these days.

A People for Himself

"In a descriptive allusion to the redemption work of Christ -- redemption 'from all iniquity,' and much beside -- the Apostle Paul declares that this gracious operation, purifying, and sanctifying, and glorifying, not only proceeds from the Lord Himself, but is likewise unto Himself -- 'a people for His own possession.' (Thus 2:14.) Did not the Master prepare His immediate disciples, for some such issue, when, in His great intercessory prayer, He said: 'All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine: and I am glorified in them'? -- John 17:10.

"That the Lord is glorified, and will be glorified, carries the immediate assent of Christian people, but that He should reach a peculiar glory, realize a distinctive splendor, in them-through them, and by means of them -- this is still more wonderful. Yet, as we believe the Lord, and accept His Word, we must acknowledge this majestic truth. And the great Apostle enlarges our vision in this regard. In a famous passage in which he encourages faith, love, and patience on the part of the Thessalonians, he forecasts the day when the Lord shall come to manifest His power, yes, but more than that 'to be

glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believe.' -- 2 Thess. 1:10.

"In days when interest in soul-uplift tends to the crowding out of leisure for the contemplation of saintship in the light of the glory of Christ, it is well to recognize the greatness of the destiny that awaits the people of God. We may think of 'things to come,' and in large degree overlook Christ's interest in His saints. We may appreciate much that engaged the hearts of prophets in ancient days, and yet pass by the fact that by one Offering the Lord Jesus 'perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Heb. 10:14.) But why pass by this sublime truth? Thankful for the offering, should we not reinforce that its perfecting will tell effectually and finally the glory of His redeemed people? Yet, not only will they be glorified by Him, but, and how shall we say it, **He will be glorified in them!** Like the perfect peace of God, so also will it be with the consummating glory of God, to be conferred upon the saints.

"As it were with bowed heads and unshod feet we dwell upon things that are Divine in origin and issue from heaven and not from men. Here is nothing of human achievement; we are in the presence of the work of Christ -- calling, foreordaining, justifying, sanctifying, glorifying. Here are words that are shunned nowadays under the influence of forms of thought that explain operations of grace in terms that are human rather than Divine. But why be shy in presence of familiar categories of inspired truth? When we accept the outlook of glory, in fullness of experience-glory, honor, and immortality -- why not make room for the Apostolic teaching that the glory not only comes from Christ, but that, when at length it shall be the blazing possession of His people, it will, of set design and purpose, tell for the enhanced glory of the Son of God Himself?

Without Spot or Wrinkle or any Such Thing

"As the sufferings of the saints go to 'fill up' the sufferings of Christ, so the glorifying of the saints will have part and place in the manifestation of the greater glory of Christ. Going from strength to strength, and becoming radiant with the forthshining of their Lord, the risen saints will know what it is to be 'transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.'

"Under every sky today there are men and women who look for the Lord's Return. Whatever their avocation and estate in life and its activities, they anticipate the coming of the Day of God. Reading the Old Testament, they are impressed with the fact that at His coming Christ will establish righteousness in the earth; and reading the New Testament, they find joy in the assurance that God will accomplish the number of His elect, and bring them each and all to His presence, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. True . . . the future may yield days of darkness that shall cry aloud for the manifestation of the light of heaven, as it were in living flame. Notwithstanding, there is joy in the thought that He that will come shall come, and will not tarry, to the glory of His people and His own proper praise.

"This is all wonderful, and mighty in its appeal to those whose hearts are set in love upon the Lord Himself. In, the regeneration, when Christ shall sit upon the throne of His glory, when He shall judge and rule, not only will good come to the world of humanity, but to those that now await Him, the while accepting His cross, doing His will, possibly being persecuted for

righteousness' sake-to these there will come still greater blessing, with a part in ripening stages of the mighty Plan which brought the Son from heaven to earth, a Plan which will gather a new majesty when 'this same Jesus' comes 'to be glorified in His saints and to' be marveled at in all them that believe.'

"What is your calling, brethren?' The question may well engage all who name the name of Christ. Called unto holiness? Yes, beyond dispute, and whatever of finality there may be in holiness, is embodied in the Divine design for the people of God. In a passage already quoted, we found that the Lord's purpose for His people is that they shall be with Him where He is. Will He be content with less? Will the future fall short of heavenly comfort and companionship? Nay, indeed, the days of weakness and deficiency will once for all reach an end when Christ shall be 'glorified in His people.' We have His word for it, and what He has promised He will surely bring to pass.

" We may trust Him fully
All for us to do;
They who trust Him wholly
Find Him wholly true."

"The final glory of the people of God will realize the desire of the glorified Son of God. If in one sphere He will bring forth judgment unto victory, so in another sphere He will, by a mighty endowment, realize in His people an issue in harmony with His own effulgent nature. Therein we reach a worthy conception of conformity unto the image of Christ. A people peculiar **unto Himself** ,cannot come short of 'the glory that excelleth.' And this is not something to be earned, something to be attained by striving, the fruition of personal ambition and human attainment. Rather, it is an outcome of the forthshining of Christ, revealed from heaven with a purpose at once gracious and majestic. In the words of the Apostle -- 'Glorified in His saints, and marveled at in all them that believe.'

Through Grace

"The words that arrest us are beyond our power of comprehension. Here are depths that we may not fathom, but we may assuredly conclude that, in the time of His grand Apocalypse, the essential glory of our Lord and the derived glory of His people will mysteriously coalesce. The time having arrived -- the fullness of time -- for the Lord to receive His people -- called, chosen, and faithful -- unto Himself, an accession of glory envelops Him, and as never before He will be the object of admiration and wonder. At length the Lord Jesus and His people are one in the beauty and grandeur of completed communion -- Head and Body, Sanctifier and Sanctified.

"Through grace the Church partakes of the glory of the Lord; through more grace the Lord, in Divine condescension, will receive back upon Himself the luster which the glorified Church will reflect. To accept the suggestion of Dean Alford, 'the saints and believers are the **element** in which the enhanced glory, the 'effulgent marvel. are manifested.' Now at length, rejoicing in His triumph, disciples enter into their Master's joy, and behold His glory; and He on His part realizes the joy that was set before Him when He endured the-cross. Further, as never before -- at least in a unique sense -- there is demonstration before angels and men of the fact that the Church which is His Body is 'the fullness of Him **that filleth all in all.**'"

THE MARKS OF A TRUE BELIEVER

*"Test yourselves to discover whether you are true believers:
put your own selves under examination." -- 2 Cor. 13:5, Weymouth.*

THIS timely admonition of the Apostle is characteristic of his faithful personal solicitude for the brethren of his day. All the marks of a true teacher were surely possessed in large measure by our beloved Brother Paul, and chief among such traits was the earnestness with which he sought to divert the minds of the brethren from himself to the Lord Jesus Christ. He severely protested against any community of brethren attempting to call themselves by his name and then proceed to found a church of Paulites. He knew of only one church, and only one name given under heaven whereby men might be saved. It were a carnal thing, dishonoring alike to his Lord and to himself, that any should make his name synonymous with that of Christ. Additionally, as a true teacher, he persistently discouraged the ever present human tendency to make the office he filled, the ground for an unquestioning acceptance of his teachings. Not once in all his long and peculiarly responsible position did he ever discourage the most earnest investigation of his own message. On the contrary, the highest commendation was given those who were disposed to prove all things. Had he been seeking a following for himself his writings must have revealed his secret ambition. Constant reference would have been made to himself, reiterations of stock arguments supposedly Scriptural, but plainly sophistical would have appeared repeatedly in every sermon or Epistle. Guarded, or bold assertions would be frequent, calculated to give the impression that since he was in this office, obedience to him would be reckoned of the Lord as obedience to Himself. Such are the ways of man's wisdom and pride of heart, but the record of the Apostle is one of total self-abnegation and of bringing into captivity every thought and ambition to the obedience of Christ.

In Understanding be Men

Alert, mature, quick understanding minds, able to discern between good and evil, error and truth, and capable of weighing correctly all matters involving the principles of honesty and obedience, in harmony with the inflexible rules of righteousness, was the blessed condition Paul coveted for his brethren. Like a mother he would nurse the babes with the most patient care. As they eagerly took hold of the "sincere milk of the Word" their apparent appreciation would fill him with great expectations as regards their future. But what keen disappointment he experienced when the promising babe suffered some factional paralysis, or became dwarfed in development by some binding hindrance, creedal or otherwise, that effectively retarded its growth into full grown manhood in Christ. We can enter into his disappointment fully, when we ponder on the proficiency, maturity, and stability of faith and character, that he yearned to find in all under his influence. He had little confidence in any individual, described in present day language, as a yes, yes, man, readily consenting to whatever he might set forth, without careful consideration: But the one who had his full confidence was the individual so rooted and grounded in the faith, that even if the Apostle himself should weary of the truth and proceed to substitute theories of his own, such an one would immediately discern it. Yes, even if it were an angel from heaven with a contrary message the imposture would be quickly detected. An honest teacher encourages such investigation. A dishonest, self-appointed teacher will follow the beaten path of the arch apostate,

Roman Catholicism. She would **pretend to urge** individual investigation, and so gives her dupes the Bible, but with the warning and the threat, that individual thought is a dangerous thing. Her example is still followed by many who cry against her sins.

Jesus Defines Qualities of a True Believer

With this setting before our minds, we may enter intelligently into the spirit and purpose of the advice contained in our text: The translation given us by Weymouth of this particular text seems most appropriately rendered. Knowing Paul as we do, we feel assured that such was the real thought in his mind, for as we have seen he urged just such careful examination of all teaching, and certainly he would urge the hearers of the Word to scrutinize themselves to observe the effect of doctrines on their own hearts. He would have plenty of precedents by which he might show them the need of such judging of themselves to discover whether they were true believers. He need only remind them that Jesus Himself made a clear cut distinction between true believers and others. Our Lord's classification of certain characters of His own day illustrates the principle. Had the Jews of that day been asked regarding the certainty of their relationship to Abraham, they would have claimed the fullest relationship. If further questioned about their belief in God's promise to Abraham, again they would affirm their faith. If it were inquired, "Do you believe that eventually Abraham's seed will bless all the families of the earth?" without a doubt they would have expressed themselves as being strong believers in that great promise. Surely then they were believers. But notwithstanding this, Jesus designates them children of the devil. We of course understand why they were so classified. Jesus was holding Abraham up as a true believer. Had he been present at that time he would have accepted Jesus, for he had looked down the stream of time and rejoiced in just such things, whereas they were rejecting Him. Thus Jesus defines a true believer as one who by a process of reasoning and a consequent intellectual assurance has grasped the facts, and who in a full heart reliance, conforms his conduct and effort in harmony therewith. It is for this reason that in all dispensations the great underlying principles of true faith and conduct, have usually been hidden below the surface, and always overlooked by the superficial.

No Sadder Page of Church History

Among other solemn reminders that have come down to us, upon whom the ends of the Ages have come, are the facts connected with Israel's experiences. Of all that called out nation only two of the adults leaving Egypt entered the promised land. Out of all that favored people- only a very small remnant were ready to accept Jesus, therefore only a few thousand at most entered the Church. We may well remember also the days of sweeping reformation a few centuries ago, and recall the pain and disappointment we have experienced as we have read the history of repeated apostasies that depleted the ranks of the enlightened. Indeed, no sadder page of Church history need be looked for than that of recent years; history made while the Great Refiner has been separating the gold and silver of true believers from the dross and, encumbrances of the mixed condition of "all sorts and conditions of men," who for one reason or another are unprepared to bear up under the real tests of character now being applied. Again and again the results have been so startling that anxious disciples have repeatedly turned to the Master with the earnest inquiry, "Lord, are there few that be saved?"

Doubtless the experiences of the Lord's faithful people of today have helped all to recognize the need of a correct understanding of what it means to keep the faith as true believers. If in days gone by holding "the faith once delivered to the saints" meant chiefly an intelligent grasp of Scripture rightly divided, and a determination to hold fast to that system of Bible interpretation, mature minds are now well aware that a spiritual dwarf might proclaim such as his creed and defy all attempts to shake his faith therein. Paul writes of some who have denied the faith, **not by rejecting it**, but by conduct wholly unbecoming to such as profess it. Hearers of the Word have been legion, doers of the Word -- living examples of the power of the Truth -- have been rare indeed. Well has the Master said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye **do them**," happy indeed if proven true believers.

Put Yourselves under Examination

How then shall we examine ourselves? There are two methods that might be followed. We might examine the doctrines one by one, and carefully check up our present attitude of mind regarding each of them. If at the end of such examination we found our minds as fully in harmony as heretofore, we might conclude that we had passed with honors, and at once feel that we belonged to such as were true believers.

In the elementary stages of our spiritual enlightenment this would have been very proper, but at this late date, it would seem that another method would be more in order, that of giving earnest attention to the practical results, within ourselves, and thus ask, Have we in fact appropriated the living truth to our lives and assimilated the faith that we received years ago, so that there is to be clearly observed in us now the image of our Master, and can those around us recognize the ripe fruitage of mature Christian character? This therefore is the method of examination we now employ. In following this method however we are remembering that not until perfect knowledge is ours beyond the veil may we hope for a complete unity of thought on all the details of even Scripturally supported teachings, and this method of examination may not appeal to some minds as definitely as to others, but regardless of differences of opinion as respects details, the principle suggested, will we trust, be of practical application and benefit to all.

Though Ye be Established in the Present Truth

By common consent we answer to the designation "Truth People." Such qualifying terms therefore as "Present Truth," "Harvest Truth," "Dispensational Truth," etc., are familiar and meaningful expressions to us. By such terms we differentiate between the great doctrinal truths that have always been Present, Truth; and such unfoldings of Truth as should properly be expected in the harvest or end of the Age. As each succeeding Age has closed, there has been some special unfolding of God's progressive Plan, some message peculiar to that particular time, which automatically served to separate that present generation into two distinct classes, the faithful and the unfaithful. Thus true to precedent, this Age also closes with certain features of, Truth shining more brilliantly, in "due time" than they had previously done. The Lord has kept His own promise, and that of His Apostle, namely to "guide us into all truth and show us things to come," so that "that day should not overtake us as a thief in the night."

Let us then examine ourselves as "Truth people," giving special thought to what we have become as a result -- of the knowledge we have received

through these "due time" unfoldings. We have received much of knowledge, therefore much of character will be required of us.

For the purpose of illustrating how we may put ourselves under examination in regard to all truth, we will now select about four features of "Present Truth" quite generally accepted by Bible Students. The four selected will be, The Presence of Christ, the Harvest ingathering, the First Resurrection participants, the Restitution conditions. Inasmuch as this is not primarily a discussion concerned with proving doctrine, but chiefly relating to a practical application of what is accepted by many as Scriptural truth, in taking up the matter of the Presence of Christ let it be remembered that we are not directly interesting ourselves here with dates, etc. A very wise observation of Brother Russell's in reference to the First Advent illustrates our present purpose: "It is of less importance that we discover the exact moment of His arrival than that we discern the fact of His Presence when He has arrived, even as at the First Advent it was important to be able to recognize His Presence, and the sooner the better, but much less important to know the exact date of His birth."

The Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven

That He would be present for a period of time at the end of the Age, in some manner materially different from His promised Presence throughout the Age, seems well established by a careful examination of many of His own statements. When inquired of (Matt. 24:3) regarding the sign, not of His coming but of His Presence (see Diaglott), His reply was such as to leave no room for doubt about the invisibility of His Presence, and that a period of time would be involved. In a prophetic survey He covers the entire Age; warns the watchers against premature announcements of His Second Presence in some localized spot. Then in a more direct reply to the question He had been asked regarding the signs indicative of His Presence, He proceeds to forewarn and forearm the Elect. When the tribulations of the past Age are over, and the darkened sun and moon fulfill the prophecy of Christendom's apostasy, "then shall appear the sign [indication] of the Son of Man in heaven," which at that stage of His Presence will be observed only by the watchers. Then as a result of His Presence and the development of troublous times, all tribes of the earth shall mourn which in turn will ultimately cause men in general to see or discern the coming (Presence) of the Son of Man in the clouds of trouble. In that same connection the Master mentions the sounding of the trumpet (the seventh trumpet), and the resultant gathering of the Elect from the four winds. These features were to have already commenced when His Presence became a reality.

But lest any should hastily conclude that a visible appearance, and an immediate consummation were to be intended, a very suggestive caution is again given. The tender leaves on the fig tree do not necessarily prove that summer is fully ushered in, but they do serve as a sure indication that it is near. "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things [in advance], know that it [the full revelation and Kingdom] is near, even at the doors."

As every Bible student knows, the Scriptures everywhere consistently teach that the entire world will be in, darkness .regarding the real meaning of present events. None but the saints are to be enlightened; yet here we are distinctly told, that for a longer or shorter period before the Kingdom is actually established, all the tribes of the earth will have seen the evidences of His Presence in the clouds of trouble, but as yet will not have clearly comprehended their meaning. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that

day should overtake you as a thief" in the night. You shall see and understand the sign of His Presence, and of the end of the Age. Again the days of Noah's testimony, and the days or Presence of the Son of Man testify to the same great truth. A period of time fraught with great and solemn issues, but intelligently interpreted only by the faithful.

Ultimate Gathering in Glory

If space permitted, we might review the repeated assurances that our Lord's various illustrations furnish us, that the gathering of His Elect from one end of heaven to the other does not mean their instantaneous assembling beyond the veil, though that is the ultimate goal. That they will be gathered there eventually we know, but a careful consideration of all Scripture bearing on the subject must be embraced in our study. By agencies of His own appointment they will be gathered. The gathering is a process and covers some length of time; in other words, it is the harvest time. In one sense the true people of God are at this time invited and gathered to a place of feasting prior to their assembling or gathering beyond the veil. If we should inquire, "Where, Lord?" the reply would not be a rebuke for asking a foolish unnecessary question, but a reply made luminous by other statements. "Where the carcass is there will the eagles be gathered." Feasting is to be a .marked feature of this ingathering. Yea, so important a part of it, that it is further promised that the Lord will then, at that time, "Come forth and serve us" Himself. -- Luke 12:37.

To the faithful of Laodicea (our own position in Church history, and therefore the chronological setting of the promise) the assurance is that having aroused us by His prophetic knock He will come in and sup with us and .we with Him. (Rev. 3:20.) Furthermore, blessed is that faithful, wise servant, whom He finds (at His coming) diligent and faithful, for rewards are there to be given to such an one. But what will such reward be? Not an immediate translation, or a change to spirit body and heavenly estate, but further exalted privileges of service in the interests of his fellow-servants, the faithful watchers. Blessed privileges of sharing in the work comprehended in the command that will at that time be given: "Gather the wheat into My barn." Beyond these few suggestive outlines of study we cannot go at the present time. Supplementary proofs will occur to the mind of the reader, we feel assured.

Now the test our text suggests must be here considered. Let each believer make the inquiry a personal one: "In view of my profession of being a believer in these things, have I today the marks of a true believer?" To have experienced a real desire for the return of Jesus, would be to realize a thrill of joy at the faintest suggestion that such an event were now a blessed possibility.

Effect of this Truth on a Real Believer

Under such circumstances for some one to break in upon us with the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom, go ye out to meet Him," would be to make true believers leap for joy. When investigation demonstrates that the announcement was no premature alarm, but the blessed truth, O the blessedness! When the testimony of Prophets and the voice of current events meet in clear fulfillment; when the signs of the times reflected in the religious and daily Press, in the infidelity of the pulpit, and the moral corruption of society, fear and perplexity filling men's hearts with apprehension, in clear fulfillment of our Lord's prophecy; when the sign of the Son of Man in heaven is plainly seen by a waiting Church, and the Elect are being gathered out, what then will a true believer do? He will be found lifting up his head rejoicing. The Millennial joy will have dawned upon him, and he will be "happy for 'tis morning." A true believer will be full of joy.

Then again "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." No truth or revelation can be more conducive to purity than this blessed truth received into a good, honest heart. Is this not the meaning of Peter's words, "Beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Pet. 3:14.) A true believer will give evidence of the most earnest desire for holiness, for the adornment of the fruit and graces of the Holy Spirit, for the character-likeness of the beloved Bridegroom. When he prays it will be for a "conscience keen, quick as the apple of an eye." When he sings, his song will be,

"If I in thy likeness, Oh Lord may awake,
And shine a pure image of Thee."

When he meditates, it will be of sweet recollection and grateful praise for the grace that makes the vilest clean, and furnishes a robe of spotless white. When he speaks, it will be of the inheritance of glory and perfection of character to be enjoyed, when made meet for "the inheritance of the saints in light." If such has been the influence of this blessed hope on a waiting Church in the darkness of the long night, of a certainty, they must in a special manner constitute the marks of a true believer living in these most blessed days, the days of the Son of Man.

Again, what soberness of mind will characterize these faithful ones. Well will they remember that "unto us it has been given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him but also to suffer for His sake." (Phil. 1:29.) And again, "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2:12.) Now, there must be a careful review of the use of time, and means, and opportunities. Have these been faithfully used? Has the offering been fully consumed by devoted service? Can there be a substantial basis for believing that ere long His sweet "Well done" may be heard. These are the questions that will occupy the mind of a true believer, for well he knows, that duties left undone, talents buried in any earthly pursuit, or allowed to remain unused, a flickering lamp and an absence of oil, will most certainly testify of a deplorable lack of appreciation of the light enjoyed, especially so, since he has lived in days when all about him were the trumpet-voices proclaiming the Presence of the Master. Brethren, are we true believers in His Presence, demonstrated as such by a faith and conduct that comport with such a profession?

Gather the Wheat into My Barn

We come now to a consideration of our second feature of Present Truth, the harvest ingathering. This feature is of course directly related to the one we have just considered. Our Lord's own words clearly show that the end of the Age would witness a marked change in the order of service entrusted to His servants. "Let both grow together until the harvest," forbade any separation until the appointed time, but "in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, gather the wheat into My barn." (Matt. 13:30.) It would seem that the evidences of such a harvest have been so manifest that it would be superfluous to rehearse the matter here. Had these things been done in a corner, doubt might be justifiable, but when the entire field, which is the world, has been brought under the same harvest influence, both as respects the period of the general harvest under Brother Russell, and under the same identical tests in the last thirteen years, well styled by some, the harvest of the harvest, there seems no room for reasonable doubt or question.

Without reference therefore to dates or to the exact length of such a period, we proceed with the examination of ourselves as true believers. To many the answer on this point would have to do with the external things, but once again it seems necessary to repeat that the most accurate understanding of chronological data, or the most devoted clinging to a system of deduction, would constitute no guarantee of one's being gathered into the Heavenly Garner with the true wheat. What our present Lord is particularly interested in now is quality, not quantity. Wheat suitable for the Heavenly Garner must be of the highest grade.

Character therefore is the test. Searching the Scriptures for the qualities of fully matured wheat, we would remember that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord"; that we are to "be transformed by the renewing of our minds," to "behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord," and be changed thereby into His likeness. The qualities of character enumerated by Peter must be in us and abound, ere we experience an abundant entrance into the Kingdom. Thus we are plainly taught the essentials of mature character. But again and again we are made painfully aware of the fact that many must fail under this test. A survey of the factional conditions of the present time is sufficient proof of immaturity somewhere. The shibboleths of tradition and partisan separations prove the need of a harvest of the harvest.

The Separating Process

Our Lord's illustrations of the harvesting of the wheat are very simple, yet very suggestive. The methods of separating wheat from accumulations of chaff or foreign matter may vary in different countries, but our Lord's illustration is plain to all peoples. The preparation of wheat for market as a general rule is done by first a threshing and then a cleaning process. The general harvest ends by threshing the wheat to separate it from the straw, etc. The fanning mill process further separates the undeveloped, deformed, and immature grains from the fully developed kernels. As most readers will know, a fanning mill is an arrangement of screens, one above the other. The first with large meshes and each succeeding screen with smaller and smaller meshes. Each of these plays its part in the separating work, but the real test of the wheat is connected with the last screen, the one with the smallest mesh of all. The farmer is looking for number one grade wheat. When the mixed quantities of wheat reach this screen, then small, immature, inferior kernels, will of course drop through those little holes, while the fully developed grains, being too large, will roll off the screen into the waiting sacks, and be

forever separated from the undeveloped, It will be quite unnecessary for us to carry the illustration further, the reader will have already seen the point.

It is a perfectly safe prophecy to make, that ere long, when the final separation is complete, many will have occasion to look back over present experiences, and with weeping and gnashing of teeth, view with shame the little hole through which they so easily fell into the discard, in so far as the membership in the Little Flock is concerned. A true believer in the harvest separation will never forget that **full character development** is the test. He will never deceive himself with the thought that agreement with a system of teaching respecting such a period, etc., will be the real test. God is not mocked, and He does not mock us, therefore when He has told us again and again what we must be in character, to be numbered among the one hundred and forty-four thousand elect ones, let this lesson be ever on our mind, and by faithful compliance therewith, we will once again demonstrate that we are true believers.

They Who Have Part in the First Resurrection

The subject of the First Resurrection is one of special interest to the waiting Church. Participation in that resurrection was one of the most inspiring hopes in the mind of Paul. All things were loss and dross to him as he visualized the possibilities of that blessed consummation. In our study of the Word, and in our converse with one another today, how much we have loved to talk of this feature of truth. But like the most precious jewels of Present Truth, it has been the subject of unfortunate controversy regarding the time of its beginning and ending and in the heat of argument the weightier things are often forgotten. A moment's reflection will reveal the foolishness of dogmatism here. In the first place, no definite statement of Scripture gives the exact date of this event. At best the time is approximated by a process of deduction.

Again, let it be true, that a period of time is involved, forty years more or less. To those already awakened, time is reckoned on the dial, a thousand years one day. It would be inconceivable to imagine a dispute developing over there regarding the importance of the infinitesimal fraction of that day, by which they had preceded others. It is just as foolish for us to do so on this side.

As true believers, with minds exercised by sober thought, and an intense desire to pass this test successfully, let us again search out the underlying principles involved. The superficial mind runs to the mere surface of things, and to such, participation in the First Resurrection is associated solely with an awakening beyond death, or the end of present life. But as a matter of fact, a true believer discovers that sharing this blessed resurrection is also a thing of the present moment. He will have pondered deeply the text that prove this to be so. He will have observed the Paul teaches that we begin to experience this resurrection at the hour of our consecration, for says the Apostle, "We are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness of life,**" the new resurrection life. Again, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in you." If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." (Rom. 6:4; 8:11; Col. 3:1). The question therefore is, are these statements true in our experience.

The Blessed and Holy

As we accept the Bible standards of the new life as being yea and amen to the true believer, it is of the utmost importance that we find unmistakable evidence in ourselves that this resurrection power has been at work. Have we been victorious over the flesh, gaining triumphs over the old weaknesses and habits of life? Have we been cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit and energized to the perfecting of holiness in the reverence of the Lord? Have we felt the Spirit's power to produce the spirit of a sound mind, to mature our judgments, to mellow our characters, and to more deeply engrave the Master's Spirit upon us? This then will be the token of true belief and practice, for such is the first and foremost assurance that we shall finally awake in His likeness.

Coming now to other Scriptures dealing with this question, let us consider two in Revelation, the last one first. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." (Rev. 20:6.) Here is meant the consummation of the resurrection. That which began with the begetting, and which has progressed through growth to full development, is now completed by the **awakening** beyond the veil. This is the final reminder in the Word, to all those who aspire to that great reward. From end to end that Word has taught that only holy characters will find an entrance there.

In His manifesto, by which He opened up the good news of discipleship, our Lord laid down this rule, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8.) Now John is closing the record with one last solemn reiteration of that law. No alibi of works, no substitution of service for sanctification, no counterfeit zeal in lieu of obedience, will be acceptable here. No mixed multitude may pass this portal, for only the holy may experience this blessedness. Blessed indeed will those favored ones be who have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, who have proven by such love of righteousness a character so fixed and established, that they may be forever entrusted with immortality beyond all possibility of deflection. Let us look to ourselves again in search of these marks of a true believer, made meet for such unspeakable glory.

Their Works do Follow with Them

But yet another text awaits us, one equally searching in its practical application. This is a text admittedly difficult to interpret, except from the standpoint of having a very special significance chronologically. We quote: "From this time blessed are those dead who die in the Lord. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow after them." (Rev. 14:13, Diaglott.) We call the readers attention to the word for word translation of the last three words of this text: "follow with them." What a sharp two-edged sword this portion of the Word will now become; accepting it as true that we are now living in the time beyond this "henceforth" point, or knowing that our works must be of gold, silver, and precious stones to follow with, or after us, under any circumstances, are we ready for the test? Are our works such that we could carry on the same work in the presence of the Lord?

Let us for the purpose of illustration imagine a case. We will suppose ourselves occupied with some great work, connected, we claim, with the Lord's cause. Perhaps we have fallen into the oft-repeated mistake of unduly

hastening the Lord's plans. We are jealous to have the rule of the Kingdom established in the earth. The kings have had their day, but are loath to vacate their thrones. The greed and oppression of giant monopolies call for action, and we are immersed in the Herculean task of overthrowing them. Everything else has become subservient to this great aim, for this only remains to be done. Taking the liberty of extending our illustration, it is now supposed that we reach the end, and we pass beyond, and our works follow with us ; what a surprise awaits us. God's will is fully done in heaven, and obedient waiting is the rule there. We will find no feverish haste to overthrow present kingdoms, in fact we may quickly observe that four angels are still standing in their appointed positions, holding back the very winds that would prematurely bring the end of present powers. Under these circumstances would we not discover that our works were "great works" of wood, hay, and stubble which would not be acceptable there? ..

Will our Works Stand the Test?

But perhaps we are not thus occupied. It may be that our special interest is in the Lamb's Book of Life. We are zealously affected by the belief that now the few remaining ones may be easily identified, and we are competent to separate such from all others. Suddenly life ends, and again we take the liberty our illustration affords, and we appear yonder. Our works follow with us, therefore the Lamb's Book of Life will still be our special interest. As we run over the names written there, what surprises we will again find, name after name, that in our presumptive zeal we had deleted will still remain on the record of the Lamb. Now it will be our work to correct that record, for our works follow with us. The very suggestions make one shudder. Would we dare? No, a thousand times, no! Then what does this Scripture teach? Plainly, with awful certainty, it teaches that the doers of such works are in positive danger of being judged as they themselves have judged, that they have little hope of sharing in the full blessedness of this resurrection text, for it is positively certain their works could not follow with them.

But says one, can any be so engaged that they might pass from the scene of present activities, and appearing in the Lord's presence, continue on in the same occupation? We answer, Yes. If we have been obedient children of the Lord we will have observed His explicit instructions. We will have been most concerned about the character-likeness of Christ that we have been instructed to copy, we will have obeyed the leadings of the Spirit and sought as the great attainment, a character approved of God. Having done that, we will be admitted into His favor. But what about works continuing beyond the veil? Ah, it was for the very purpose of fitting us for our future work that we have been urged on with the development of this character here and now. Our Father will surely then say to us, "Now you have had experience, you have known the struggle, you will therefore be a great, merciful priestly class, well fitted to continue such a work. Here are the resurrected millions of earth, keep right on planting the truth in their minds, and build them up in characters worthy of everlasting life. Keep right on with such constructive upbuilding occupation until they too have entered into everlasting life."

The lesson is obvious. Let us in these days take all our works, and our theories, into the presence of the Lord and examine them there; no honest heart will continue there, that which is unauthorized or questionable. Could our present works follow With us, or would we see them consigned to the destroying fire as things to be burned, that we ourselves might be saved?

Walk as He Walked

We now conclude with only a brief comment on our last point; the restitution laws. We usually give restitution away to the world, and think of it only as a feature of truth that we now hold as rounding but the knowledge of the Divine Plan. But let us question ourselves as to whether we are true believers in it. We are remembering of course our definition of a true believer, one who believes and then acts in harmony with that correct belief. As illustrative of restitution laws we quote such texts as these: "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, then the inhabitants will learn righteousness." "Judgments will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet." "He shall rule over them with a rod of iron," etc. Suppose the Apostle were to inquire of us, Do you believe these truths? We answer, Yes. Do you believe such rules will be good rules, and that men ought to appreciate them and obey them? Again we answer, Yes. Again he inquires, Do you as a believer hold that the principles of righteousness and justice, brotherhood, and obedience, that those laws represent, should be willingly and gladly conformed to by mankind in general? Once more we affirm our agreement. Without doubt his reply would be, Then as a true believer, you walk as though you were in that day, square your life by those principles, and thus prove that you are of that true believer class, one whose action squares with his profession.

We leave the reader free to carry the same principle into every other feature of truth. Let every truth we hold search us, and let us not rest content until we know of a certainty, that each truth has so affected our characters, that all its searching principles may be found firmly fixed in our lives, thus we shall be equipped with the knowledge of Present Truth, and adorned with its fruits and graces: Then in His impartial judgment God will number us among His true believers.

"REVELATION"

"God speaketh once; yea, twice, things marvelous,
Forth told in many ways;
The echoes of His words roll down to us
From the old days.

"Now, with His voice He thunders from the hills,
Sitting in state aloft;
Now, like the dropping dew, His speech distills,
Gentle and soft.

"Now, with profoundest thought, in higher teaching,
His subtle sense He girds,
Now, like a mother to her infant reaching,
With childish words,

"He to our weakness stoops, and shades the lustre
Of His too perfect light;
Now shrinks our dazzled eye, from a star cluster
Of truths most bright.

"By Urim and by seer, by dream and vision,
He spake in times gone by;
Last, by His Son, who stept with sealed commission
Down from the sky.

"The world's sweet infant years, forgotten wholly,
He makes us partly know;
The world to come, His harvest ripening slowly,
He doth foreshow.

"From treasured rolls and archives of the nations
He brings forth One to light,
That all may learn His wisdom, power and patience,
Reading aright.

"Not of the stars and planets in their courses,
Not of the trees, and flowers,
Not of the laws of Nature's hidden forces,
Man's servant powers;

"But of the soul's deep need, the finite's yearning
After an Infinite heart,
He holds discourse with us; His scholars, learning
Part after part.

"We con and spell, as blind men with their finger,
The lines His hand hath graved,
"Knowing in part, till, with celestial singers,
On floor light-paved,

"We stand with eyes unsealed, and all the mystery
Falls off, in perfect ken,
From the great world and little, from the history
Of man -- and men.

"But as the larger lens doth still dis sever
Fresh points in farthest blue,
So on our stronger sight shall flash forever
Some truth more new."

A VISIT TO THE LAND OF PROMISE

TRAVELS IN THE HOLY LAND

SERIES V.

Temple Area and Dome of the Rock

JERUSALEM, AFTER Mecca, is the holiest city of the- Moslems. They are in possession of the Temple Area, Haram esh-Sharif, which is in area 36 acres, one-sixth of the space within the walls. It is held in reverence by Moslem, Jew, and Christian, for here once stood the temple of the Lord first that of Solomon and later the larger one of Herod. Up to a little more than

fifty years ago no Christian could enter its precincts and no orthodox Jew of today will step his foot upon it lest, unwittingly, he may tread where the Holy of Holies once stood and, as a punishment, die within the year. The Jerusalem Jew believes that somewhere under this area there are secret chambers where are hidden the long-lost Ark of the Covenant and the holy vessels of the temple.

Quiet, with a solemn dignity that speaks to the deeper emotions, it lies here, this site of the old temple, like the stilled heart of the ancient Jerusalem. In its center stands a raised platform upon which is a building, lovely blue in color and low as to height except where the great dome rises from its center -- the dome that makes the skyline of Jerusalem just what it is.

The Summit of Mt. Moriah

Stepping within the cool hush of its inner dimness, the one great room lighted only by the row of not large but exquisite windows of stained glass high up around its wall, we see a dark, irregular mass lying in its center, surrounded by a double fencing, the one of wrought iron, the other of wood; this is the rock which the building shelters and from which it receives its name, Dome of the Rock. although it is often erroneously called the Mosque of Omar. This rock is the summit of Mt. Moriah and is believed to have been the place of sacrifice for Israel's temple, the conduit where the blood flowed downward, and was thence carried off below to the valley of Jehoshaphat being still in evidence. Many are the fanciful, traditional tales the Moslem believes concerning it especially in relation to the Prophet, Mohammed, but these are not worth repeating.

Any attempt to describe this building in detail would be a vain one for it is declared by many to be the most beautiful in the world. The richness of its colorings, its gold mosaics, its carvings, is such that the eyes and the senses of the beholder find it impossible to absorb them at all and only a fixed impression of its overwhelming beauty can he take with him. One is filled with awe and wonder that the mind of man can conceive and carry out such a wealth of harmony and minute detail. Here it stands, this temple to Allah, where once stood the magnificent temple of the God of the Israelites.

"Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mt. Moriah where the Lord appeared to David His father in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite." (2 Chron. 3:1.) This temple, razed to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar, was rebuilt we remember, on the return from the captivity of Babylon. Destroyed again, it was reconstructed by Herod. After Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus a temple of Jupiter replaced the house of the Lord, this temple being built by king Antiochus of Syria, the column remains of whose temple to the same god in Athens I have before mentioned. Christians of the first centuries, out of contempt for the Jews, covered the sacred summit with debris and refuse. Caliph Omar after conquering Palestine had it cleansed by pious rites and here his successor in 690 built this present structure. It was converted into a Christian church by the Crusaders, who placed an altar upon the rock, but the mighty Saladin afterwards restored it to the Moslem Allah by long purifications, rites and sprinklings of rose water. Thus, briefly stated, does the history of this renowned spot run.

And so, sheltered in this lovely building whose great dome rises high to declare to all who view Jerusalem from any vantage point its presence

underneath, lies this cherished rock-the old threshing floor of Ornan, the place of sacrifice for Israel's temple, the highest point of Mt. Moriah, jealously guarded these long years by its Moslem possessors.

Valleys above Jerusalem

That part of the Temple Area which overhangs the Valley of Jehoshaphat, or, Valley of the Kedron as it is more often called, is supported by a series of large pillars and arches called "Solomon's Stables," although it is not thought they served that purpose in Solomon's time but rather were places for storage; but the Crusaders at least so used this place and the rings to which the horses of the Knight Templars were tethered are still fastened in the walls.

The slope of the Kedron valley just under the wall of the Temple Area by the closed Golden Gate (it may be well to mention here that of Jerusalem's eleven gates five are closed) is covered with the white tombs of a Moslem graveyard while the slope across which climbs the western side of Olivet is covered with the great Jewish cemetery where many generations of Israel lie awaiting the Judgment Day. The name Jehoshaphat means "The Lord will judge" and the Jews have a belief, founded on Joel 3:2, 14, that the "valley of decision" spoken of in the last mentioned verse is this very valley and here all people will be assembled for that final judgment. A superstitious belief is held that all Israelites dwelling outside the land, will, after death, have to roll here some way through the earth in order to be present on the great occasion. Fortunately such an unpleasant journey may be avoided if dust from Olivet is sprinkled upon their eyelids when dead. Because of this, Jews living in Jerusalem send small boxes of holy soil to friends in other lands.

There are many traditional tombs of Bible worthies here but there is no historical foundation for these claims and so we can feel little interest in the reputed burial places of Isaiah, Hezekiah, Zechariah, James, Joseph and Mary, or even of Absalom at whose so-called tomb the Jews still aim the stones of derision. One of Empress Helena's astonishing visions located the Tomb of the Virgin here, and there is an old church of the twelfth century over it, rather remarkable in that it has an altar for the Mohammedans who also venerate the memory of the Virgin Mary. There are tombs however in this valley that are said to have been modern in Christ's day and this establishes the fact that the cemetery was also here in His time. From this may we not visualize Him in Solomon's Porch where He walked and taught (John 10:23) looking across the deep valley below through which the brook Kedron still flows (its true bed is some 39 feet deeper in some places than the present one, so deep is the debris in the bottom of the valley), pointing to the whitely gleaming stones beyond on Olivet's slope as the accusation of their inconsistency is hurled at them. "Ye build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets."-Matt. 23:29,31.

Possible Center of World

The Valley of Hinnom which lies to the west of Jerusalem, whose steep sides have formed a strong means of defense in days of trouble, is also known as the Valley of Gehenna. This great ravine and that of Kedron come together at the southern end of the city some 600 feet below the height from which each started. Another considerable valley which divided the summits of the two

mountains upon which Jerusalem is built, Mts. Zion and Moriah, in the time of Christ, known as the Tyropean Valley, then bridged across from the Temple Area to the opposite hill, is now obliterated by the accumulation of the centuries.

There is a belief in Jerusalem that a certain spot in the Temple Area marks the center of the world. Perhaps this idea is not entirely absurd. At the Sunday School Convention held there in 1904 one of the speakers taking note of this said, "I have at home a classical map of the ancient world I measured the length of it and breadth of it, and took the exact center, and it was right in Jerusalem.

The world, of course, was not nearly so large in ancient times as it is now, but such as it was, the Holy Land was in the center of it This rocky ridge-lifted up above the great river plains around where, grew and flourished the empires of antiquity -- was a magnificent rostrum from which to reach the nations with the Word of God."

And, we reflect, that even as the Prophets of old lifted up their voices from the rocky platform of ancient Jerusalem, "Hear, ye people, all of you; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is," so again shall the Word of the Lord be heard ringing from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the earth. "And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths, for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." "Jerusalem!" center of earth indeed, in a grander, more blessed sense than man has yet conceived

The Wailing Wall

It happens to be nearly evening when we enter old Damascus Gate and follow Damascus Street towards the Wailing Place of the Jews, the usual and shorter approach being by way of Jaffa Gate and David Street. We are in the old Arab quarter now, very dirty and unpleasant. Loitering some distance behind my companions in the very narrow street I suddenly am surrounded by a rushing, wooly mass of blating sheep with the usual sprinkling of black goats. They have been driven in from the day's pastures through the old gate and their upraised noses are pointing and their eager feet hastening towards the fold somewhere ahead. I am carried along in their midst for some distance, my pats and caresses neither annoying nor interesting them, and then they suddenly turn clown a side way and once more I am alone. A little farther on at a sharp right-angled turn in a narrow, alley-like way I meet a small donkey with no driver in sight, the great empty baskets hung from either side reaching from wall to wall making it altogether impossible for both of us to pass this particular place at the same time. He shows no intention of being polite about it at all and I am the one that must step back to a wider space while he continues his ascent of the small flight of steps at the turn. Those born with a love for the lower creation will find this rural phase of old Jerusalem a most pleasant one and such encounters all joy.

It is not far from dusk when we reach the Wailing Wall and find not more than a half-dozen there; these, unkempt and beggar-like in appearance, suggest nothing of devotion as they gaze our way with speculative eye. Perhaps they are some of the "professional wailers" who for small sums of money sent by Jews in other lands will shed their tears and say their prayers

for them here, in a commercialized, proxy-like manner, beside these great Herodian stones of the ancient wall.

In the lower part of this wall which is about sixty feet in height are several courses of great stones. Authorities on such things by unanimous consent attribute these first four feet of the wall to Herod the Great. Above them are a number *of* courses of stone of the later Roman period, and still higher up, are stones of a much later time, perhaps the Crusaders. It has been discovered-that the great, drafted blocks of the lower courses of the Wailing Place reach on down to the solid rock many, many feet below the paved court alongside for the debris here is very deep.

Days of Lamentation Soon to End

The custom of weeping here is of ancient origin. After A. D. 135 the Jews were not permitted in the city; in the fourth century they were permitted to view it but only from the hills outside. Later on St. Jerome relates (A. D. 410) that they were obliged in his time to pay the Roman soldiers for the privilege of visiting the city once a year on the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple that they might wail over its ruins.

My former visit here happened to be on a Jewish Sabbath and the scene was then both interesting and touching. A varied crowd, old and young, was here, some weeping, some praying, some kissing the stones. One could almost weep with them as they recite those Lamentations of Jeremiah:

"Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us: consider and behold our reproach; our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens. Our fathers have sinned and are not; and we have borne their iniquities. The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned. For this our heart is faint; for this our eyes are dim. Wherefore dost Thou forget us forever, and forsake us so long time? Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."

How good to know as we watch them there that such faith, enduring through generations of sufferings and discouragements is even now close to its reward: "In that day will I raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof ; and I will raise up his ruins: and I will build it as in the days of old. . . . And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." Yes, speak comfortably to Jerusalem and tell her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she has received double for all her sins.

The late trouble between Arabs and Jews, "the revolution" as the Arab terms it, had as its direct excuse as I have mentioned before, the attempt by the Jews to place a screen across this court thus separating the men and women as is their custom. This, the Moslems declared, was a desecration of the wall of their Temple Area and the rioting started. The real cause, no doubt, lies deeper and the report of the committee appointed to investigate the matter is announced as off the Press and ready for release, but not until the Easter season is over that minds may not be disturbed at such a time. -- G. M. H.

(To be continued)

THE MINISTRY OF COMFORT

"The Lord hath anointed me . . . to comfort all that mourn; to appoint [promise] unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." -- Isaiah 61:1-3.

THE PROPHET'S message is surely Good Tidings in a, very broad and deep sense; most comforting not only to Zion, the consecrated Church, but to all who mourn; and as mentally we cast our eyes over the world we are deeply impressed with the thought that the vast majority of mankind are in mourning: as the Apostle expresses it, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." There are undoubtedly a few who are full, satisfied, and who mourn for nothing, and who, therefore, under these conditions, are excluded from any share in this promised blessing; but they are exceptions to the rule. Some of them are wealthy in this world's goods, and feel that they have need of nothing, and are kept busy with their efforts to enjoy themselves. There are others of the same full class who, though not wealthy, have a very self-satisfied feeling as respects the moral status; they do not realize themselves as sinners; they do not realize their daily imperfections nor their need of a Savior, and are not mourning for anything, and not therefore in the way to be comforted with any of the comforting assurances and promises and provisions which the Lord has made for those who mourn.

So far as the world is concerned, our Lord's ministry of comfort to them is chiefly a future work. We rejoice, however, that the time is sure to come when all that mourn, all the "groaning creation," shall be brought under the blessed influences and provisions of the Millennial Kingdom, and shall there come to know the consolations which God has provided in Christ : the balm for every trouble, every wound; the cure for every blight, every sin and every imperfection; and their privilege of profiting by these to the fullest measure by giving themselves unreservedly into the care of the Good Physician. But the poor world; blinded and deceived by the god of this world as respects the character and Plan of Jehovah, can neither see, hear nor appreciate now the wonderful provisions made for them, and hence they cannot receive the blessing, the consolation, the "comfort" now, but must wait for it until the establishment of the Lord's Kingdom, the binding of Satan, and the opening of their understanding with the eye-salve of the Truth.

But as respects Zion, the consecrated Church, this comfort is now her privilege, and all children of Zion need to be comforted. First of all, they need the comforting knowledge that their sins are forgiven, and that they are no longer strangers and aliens and foreigners, but children of God, jointheirs with Jesus Christ their Lord, if so be that they suffer with Him. They need to be comforted, too, with the assurances of the Lord's Word that our God is very sympathetic, "very pitiful," and that if anyone be overtaken in a fault he may be restored, and "not be utterly cast down." If the children of Zion had no such consolations as these they surely would be utterly discouraged, disheartened, and faint by the way; hence the Lord has provided these comforting assurances pointing out to them that having begun a good work in them He is desirous of completing it, if they will permit Him to do so, and that to this end they must abide in Christ by faith, coupled with obedience to the extent of their ability. What Christian is there who has not shared these

consolations, these comforts; and what Christian has not needed them, and realized that without them he would long since have been undone?

The Source of our Consolation

The Scriptures point out to us that our comfort comes through fellowship with the Heavenly Father and with our Lord Jesus: we are comforted, not by believing that they are ignorant of our weaknesses and shortcomings, nor that they have a low standard of righteousness and a sinful basis of fellowship, but quite to the contrary of all this, they comfort us with the assurance that although our every imperfection is known to the Lord He is yet very sympathetic, very merciful; and that having provided, in the great sacrifice at Calvary, a full propitiation (satisfaction) for all sins, the Lord is very pleased to apply, on behalf of each of His adopted children, in full measure, the riches of grace necessary to the covering and off-setting of every unintentional, unapproved error and failure. What comfort is here! What consolation! What privileges of fellowship with the Father and with the Son!

And this comfort, the Scriptures assure us, comes to us through the Holy Spirit-it is the channel, and, hence indeed, called the Comforter. (John 14:26.) Those who have the Holy Spirit may have the comfort; those who do not have the Holy Spirit may not have this comfort, this consolation. It is only as we receive of the spirit of the Lord, the mind of the Lord, His disposition, that we are able to understand and appreciate the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths of His love and compassion and provision for us, and to be comforted thereby.

Nevertheless, this comfort of the Holy Spirit (the channel of Divine favor), reaches us through the Scriptures, for the Scriptures are the medium, or sub-channel through which the knowledge of God's grace and the comfort of all knowledge reach us; in the Apostle's language, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and **comfort of the Scriptures** might have hope." -- Rom. 15.4.

Yet while this comfort is of the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit, communicated through the Scriptures, we are informed that in great measure it is communicated by the members of the Body of Christ one to another, as the Apostle, for instance, after relating certain features of the Divine Plan respecting the deliverance of the Church, says, "Wherefore, **comfort one another** with these words." (1 Thess. 4:18.) Similarly, the Apostle declares that he sent Timothy to the Church at Ephesus, and again to the Church at Colosse, that **he might comfort** their hearts. This, of course, signifies that he was to draw their attention to the exceeding great and precious promises of the Lord's **Word**, and that thus they might drink in the **Holy Spirit** of all the promises, and that thus they might be comforted, not only ,with respect to the things promised, but with respect to the loving compassion and sympathy, of Him who promises them.

Writing to the Thessalonians, the Apostle says that he sent Timothy-"to establish you and to **comfort you** concerning your faith, that no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto: for verily, when we were with you we told you we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass and ye know. For this cause, when I could no. longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you." (1 Thess. 3:2-5.) Here again it is evident that the comforting signifies and implies establishment in the faith once delivered to

the saints, that all the terms and conditions of our covenant should be clearly held in mind, and that the promises of reward at the end of the journey might serve to comfort, strengthen and establish the children of Zion in their endurance of the tribulations as good soldiers. This comfort, again, was of the Lord, through the Holy Spirit, through the agency of St. Paul and St. Timothy.. Again, the same Apostle, speaking in the same strain says, "Wherefore, **comfort yourselves** together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." -- 1 Thess. 5:11.

The Healing of the Nations

All of the Lord's people need to remember that in proportion as they are ambassadors of the Lord, and His representatives, it will be their privilege not only by and by in the Kingdom to "comfort all that mourn," and to be the trees of righteousness, whose leaves will be for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2), but they should remember that in the present life they have a ministry of comfort to perform also, toward all who mourn in Zion -- toward all of the Lord's people who are in any tribulation, physical or mental disquiet, disease; and they should remember, too, that just in proportion as they are filled with this spirit now, it is their privilege to bind up the broken-hearted, and comfort the mourning ones. No one can have this spirit of helpfulness, this disposition to comfort and to strengthen, and to edify, and to upbuild the household of faith, except he have in considerable measure the spirit of the Truth, the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of Love: and in proportion as each seeks to cultivate this privilege of brotherly helpfulness, in comforting and upbuilding and strengthening, in that same proportion he will find the spirit of Love developing and abounding in his own heart, and that his likeness to the Lord Jesus, the Head of the Body, is becoming more pronounced from day to day and from year to, year.

Finally, in view of what we have seen respecting the Lord's goodness toward His people, and the methods by which He comforts them through the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures and the brethren, let us note one of the Apostle's expressions respecting the great comfort and consolation which God has provided for His consecrated, faithful people, saying:

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."-2 Cor. 1:3, 4. So then, all of our lessons and experiences in life in connection with trials, reverses and tribulations; if we are rightly exercised by them, should bring us larger riches of the Lord's comfort, through the gracious promises of His Word and the spirit of the same; and should make us the more capable and efficient agents and representatives of the Lord, His Word and His Spirit, in communicating comfort to others about us in their trials and perplexities.

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Beloved Brethren:

Loving greetings. I am returning the copy of "Light after Darkness," with many thanks for your kindness in sending same along.

What a sad state of affairs there is existing among the Truth friends, since the departure of our late beloved leader. Truly the dear sheep have been scattered, yet we rejoice, knowing that the true sheep knoweth the voice of their beloved Shepherd and will be found once again feeding in sweet pastures.

I was privileged to know dear Brother Russell personally, and I honor the name and labor of such a faithful steward of the Divine truths. Since his days with us in the flesh, much has happened, great changes have been seen among the friends, and especially among the leaders, the lack of love and, desire for spiritual food giving place to work and witness (so called).

Any way my dear wife and I rejoice in having found our wings and fled once again from Babylon. You will be pleased to hear that sixty or more of the dear consecrated ones, celebrated the Memorial of our beloved Lord's death here. We had a sweet; happy time. It was good to be there, and we are determined by His grace to go on following in His footsteps. .

Please accept our thanks for sending book along. It is a real eye-opener. May the Lord richly bless you all in your efforts to serve the Lord's people. The "Herald" comes as a real uplift. I fully endorse its contents, and am anxious to co-operate with you in any way, in upholding the Truth in this hour of severe test upon the Lord's people.

I would love to see a real convention of the Lord's people here in this country. As I come in contact with the dear ones, they all express the desire for a united gathering here. I am sure the Lord will make it plain in the near future. Each month news comes along of dear ones leaving the Society. Let us be ready and willing to assist these dear ones, and thus be pleasing to the Lord. May the Lord richly bless you.

Your brother in the one Hope,

A. H. L. - Eng.

My, dear Brethren:

Through the grace of the Lord, I came into the light of Truth in 1909, and I am rejoiced greatly in the glorious anticipation as a member of the Anointed.

In 1916, the departure of our beloved Brother Russell came as a staggering blow, as it was to so many of the Lord's people throughout the earth. Deeming it not possible for the Lord to forsake the institution as originally formed, I have been a staunch adherent to the Watch Tower Society till recently, even though I sought to cover certain viewpoints which caused some uneasiness owing to their lack of transparency.

A physical illness of last year caused me to survey the workings and dispositions of the Society. With consternation and amazement I found myself awaking from a kind of spiritual stupor or slumber, especially as I perceived the cool indifference and rampant breaking of the Golden Rule, upon which law we are judged by the Most High in respect to our future destiny. The prayerful study in the Scriptures which followed resulted in the conviction that the Lord was outside the self-styled "God's Organization" and that in a very special sense He was dealing with individuals, so clearly affirmed in the final message to the Church of the Laodicean period:

Now that my eyes were opened, to maintain eldership of the London Tabernacle became impossible, hence the letter of resignation addressed to

each fellow Elder, a copy of which I enclose. The unstable, incoherent answers received, as well as the indifference on the part of the bulk, confirm me in the belief that the I. B. S. A. is sectarian, that their apparent zeal is not according to knowledge, and that they had become "lukewarm" in matters affecting vital spiritual interests.

Since then, copies of the "Herald" have fallen into any hands, and I and those associated with me, are finding them a great blessing. Quickly the old delightful heart-cheering, refreshing and life-giving viewpoints are being restored and we are grateful beyond expression to the Good Giver for His bountiful goodness in again revealing His glorious Truth in a way that we can easily comprehend. I have also read other literature, some of which has been good and helpful. I prefer however that which is not of a dogmatic nature. For instance there has come certain typewritten sheets hailing from the States, purporting to give **the message** from the Lord. I am forced therefore to again discern dispositions. Frankly, while I find that this publication evidences clarity of thought in respect to certain fundamentals, yet it is wanting in that unassuming spirit which should appertain to the Lord's own. "One is our Master and all we are brethren," therefore we err when we adopt an attitude of superior intelligence, and to make the further error of outlining the unknown future in respect to the servants whom the Lord may use, etc., appears somewhat presumptuous.

I take for granted, dear brethren, that you have such fraternal open-mindedness, that any brother who may deem himself "taught in the Lord" would not find a barred door if such were passed on to you for consideration and that you would even publish same if it were of general help and interest along the lines of Scripture and lucid reasoning. (Gal. 6:6; Matt. 5:15.) It affords me much pleasure in corresponding with you. Sister joins with love in our dear Redeemer.

Yours in our Hope Eternal,

F. L. -- Eng.