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Be Filled with the Spirit

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord: Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." -- Eph. 5:18-21.

WHILE the Scriptures leave no doubt as to the vicissitudes, hardships and obstacles to be encountered, fought against, and overcome in connection with the attainment of the heavenly Kingdom, they also remove all doubt as to the means and grace provided whereby all who so run may be enabled to achieve complete victory in the Narrow Way. It is of the utmost importance, however, that those who would ultimately be counted worthy to be numbered amongst the more than overcomers shall pay strict attention to the heavenly counsel on the subject of receiving strength from God whereby to gain the mastery and to fulfill the Divine will. Who is there that has not been struck with the force of the Master's words, as He was about to take His leave from His disciples at the time of His ascension: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you." Here our Lord touches upon the keynote and the source of all the Church's success in her spiritual warfare. This is abundantly borne out by the sacred records that have been left us respecting that wonderful outpouring at Pentecost and those holy influences and forces that operated in the establishment of the Church in the Apostolic period.

It was in keeping with these facts that the Apostle Paul from various standpoints and in various ways appealed to the brethren in Christ to recognize the importance of the office and work of the Holy Spirit, and repeatedly admonished all who would be victorious in the Christian race to be "filled with the Spirit." In addressing the brethren at Ephesus in the above language, it is evident from the contrast instituted between being drunken with wine and being filled with the Spirit, that Christians and not worldlings are addressed, and that wine is used as a symbol of the unholy, unchaste spirit of the world. In other words, the Holy Spirit of God is set over in contrast with the unholy, unclean spirit of the world. And the Apostle here warns the children of God not to become intoxicated with this spirit of the world, but counsels us on the contrary to be filled with the mind and Spirit of God. He would have us recognize clearly that it is not enough that we banish from our hearts the world's influence and spirit, but that we be so exercised as to keep filled with the Holy Spirit of God, else the contrary mind or spirit will come in unsolicited and take possession.

Spirit of the World Stupefies Spiritual Senses

Everywhere about us is the manifestation of the spirit of the world -- the disposition and sentiments of fallen humanity upon every subject; and the inclination of the natural mind is to embrace that spirit and be controlled by it; it is the mind of the flesh, the carnal mind, the selfish mind. To whatever extent any partake of this mind or disposition, they are sure to become intoxicated with it; and this intoxication stupefies, the spiritual senses and

beclouds the reasoning faculties and so greatly mystifies the vision of truth itself that its clear discernment is impossible. This accounts for the fact that amongst the professing people of God there are many that possess little or no real spiritual appreciation and discernment. But a little study of the history of the Church discloses the fact that multitudes in the Church have known little or nothing of the inner workings of the Spirit of God in the heart, and that comparatively few have possessed that Spirit so that it has been the dominating factor in their lives.

What we find amongst the brethren throughout the world today is in confirmation of the Scriptural viewpoint on this subject. As has frequently been the case in the past, so today, there are many questions, issues, and problems before the Church, and we not only observe the varying degrees of the Spirit that is exhibited by the various brethren as they deal with and handle these issues and problems, but it is to be seen that large numbers give evidence by their methods of reasoning and expressions that the Holy Spirit is not the influence or power that is predominating in their deliberations and decisions regarding the important questions of the present hour. The human viewpoint, the natural man's ideas and selfish considerations are permitted to enter in and are brought to bear in such a way that the real issues frequently become confused and those vital considerations that involve the spiritual health of the Church are lost sight of in an array of human ideas and philosophies. Thus we have many factions and groups of brethren today governed largely by the sectarian spirit and mind of the natural man.

Cutting through even to a Separation of Life and Breath

But the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, produces the very opposite effect, because it is the spirit of love and of a sound mind, whose helpful tendency is to illuminate the understanding and to invigorate every noble faculty of the soul. The present problems before the Church are deliberated upon and dealt with from the standpoint of the mind and Spirit of Christ by those who are filled with His Spirit. Such, being emptied of the spirit of selfishness, vanity and pride and moved by the mind of the Lord, are enabled to exercise that discernment, to see the principles involved, and to recognize wholesome counsel by which they reach wise decisions. Such are found taking their stand on the side of the Lord, on the side of righteousness, purity, and holiness even though that frequently means standing with the minority.

How important indeed is the filling of the Holy Spirit! Not only is the Holy Spirit that influence in the Christian Church enabling its members to discern between truth and error, to discern the Lord's voice and providential leadings in connection with all her trials and conflicts, but it is that power in each individual disciple of Christ by which he discerns the very mainsprings of his soul, by which he observes the intents and purposes of his own heart. The Apostle's description of the power of the Word of God comes to mind here: "The Word of God is living, and energetic, and more cutting than any two-edged sword, cutting through even to a separation of life and breath, and of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Heb. 4:12, Diaglott.) While it is of the Word of God that the Apostle here speaks, it is of that Word acted upon, expounded and applied by the Holy Spirit. The mere Word of itself or the mere reading of that Word avails nothing, but when the Word is spoken and unfolded by His Spirit in a consecrated heart, it produces the effect the Apostle describes, it becomes a discerners of the most secret recesses of the heart, it discerns whatever of

selfishness, secret pride or ambition that may like leaven be working there. And if the soul, the heart be properly committed and surrendered to God, that Spirit from above dwelling within will divide asunder and cleanse away the carnal and defiling elements so that the life may be conserved and turned more abundantly in the direction of the Divine will, and the result will be a greater fruitfulness, to the glory of God, and a more glorious exhibition of the character of Christ in the conduct of life.

The Spiritual Life of Thanksgiving and Praise

No wonder the Apostle following his admonition to be filled with the Spirit, indicates that such spiritual invigoration, and illumination will result in joy, peace and praise. And when two or three such meet, their hearts naturally flow together; and while they make melody in their hearts together to the Lord, they often delight to express themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and in prayers of thanksgiving to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And in their spiritual feasts, communions and fellowships they delight light to invoke the presence and spirit of their Master, as with the poet they sing,

"As once Thou didst Thy Word expound
To those who walked with Thee,
So teach us, Lord, to understand,
And its blest fullness see

"Its richness, sweetness, power and depth
Its holiness discern;
Its joyful news of saving grace
By blest experience learn."

Nor do such ever find themselves so beset with the cares and vexations of the present life that they can find no time nor cause for thanksgiving; for, being graciously enlightened by the Spirit of God, they know that all things however vexing or perplexing or trying they may be, are working together for good to them that love God, the called according to His purpose; and therefore it is their privilege to rejoice at all times and under all circumstances, and their pleasure always is to give thanks to God for all things.

Let the people of the world and less enlightened Christians give thanks as doubtless many of them do, out of a sincere heart, for the common blessings of this present life -- for the air and sunshine and rain, for bountiful harvests and for seasons of comparative peace with the nations abroad. Yes, blessed be God, out of His abundant mercies these rich blessings are common to all, to the just and the unjust, and it is well that the attention of all men should be called to mark and consider them earnestly. But they tell of no special favors to any of the nations or kingdoms of this world, all of which as soon as the appointed times of the Gentiles are completely fulfilled, must give place to the universal Kingdom of God. God's supervision of these in the present time is not an interference in their chosen course, but simply an overruling of their free course, so that they may not interfere with, but rather that they may ultimately minister to His own wise ends, in the same sense as it is said that He maketh even the wrath of man to praise Him.

And while humanity thus marks and rejoices in and in some cases returns thanks to God for the common blessings of life, let our hearts rejoice not only

in these things, but more particularly in the higher spiritual favors bestowed upon the sons of God, giving thanks always and for all things unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Principal Dangers of These Days

Truly this is a happy frame of mind to be in, and those who can be in this attitude at all times and under all circumstances have reached an enviable attitude of Christian character and experience. But who is there that is able to exemplify such a life, except he have experienced the force of the Apostle's admonition, "Be ye filled with the Spirit," which implies that there shall be the spirit of a living faith, of a powerful trust in the unfailing promises of God. All about us are crucial trials and tests, as well as vexations on every hand, and the man or woman who has become so superior to these that he or she takes cognizance only of the end to be gained by this refining process, and who therefore patiently and even thankfully submits to the painful ordeal in hope of the glorious end designed by Divine Providence, may also confidently rejoice in hope of the final reward of the overcomers.

Of what importance is the filling of the Holy Spirit at the present time, if one would be faithful in heeding the solemn warnings of the Master as He portrayed the perils and dangers incident to the closing days of this Age! The fact that the most perilous time is to immediately precede the glorious revelation of the Bridegroom with His Bride, should put every expectant soul on the alert. And nothing but a surrendered heart, filled with the Spirit, will be able to successfully combat the adverse influences and elements of this trying hour. But what are the principal dangers of these days? Four times in the 13th chapter of Mark we find Jesus saying, "Take heed." His first caution is, "Take heed lest any one deceive you"; next, "Take heed to yourselves," be careful what you do and say, be circumspect; again, "Take heed to what I have told you"; and last, "Take heed, watch and pray." While there is a similarity in the general narration of our Lord's description of the last days as given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, yet each narrator gives some point more prominent than the others; and so we find here some more explicit directions given regarding ourselves. "Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged."

Spirit-Filled Heart Opposed to Pride

There are three things here mentioned with which the heart is especially liable to become overcharged; surfeiting, drunkenness, and the cares of this life. Again it is reasonably presumed that it is the figurative surfeiting and drunkenness; the indulging in worldly or earthly pleasures, and the permitting of the wine of the world's spirit to enter in and benumb the spiritual senses; and it is the various interests of this life, financial, social, and otherwise that bring on a load of anxiety and care.

Observing the general circumstances of the brethren in various parts today, we find that the Savior gave a faithful description of the perils of our time, and that on every hand there is the tendency toward lukewarmness, spiritual lethargy and carelessness with regard to the great things that constitute our spiritual heritage. "Be ye filled with the Spirit" is the divinely provided remedy.

Along with that wholesome frame of mind produced by the indwelling of the Spirit of God, the Apostle links the grace of humility or submission,

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Pride and self-sufficiency are obnoxious to the Spirit-filled heart. Pride is not disposed to submit to any one or any thing, for it naturally seeks its own-position, advancement, exaltation; it is disposed to bring others into subjection to it rather than yield to others. Not only is this disposition prevalent in the affairs of men, but, sad to say, is often to be observed in the precincts of the Lord's professing people, in the case of those who seem ambitious to be recognized, ambitious to be put in positions of honor and influence in the Church, and are uncomfortable and offended if their desires are not realized. Oh, beloved in Christ, what need is there for the searchlight of the Spirit of God to enter in and cleanse away this filthiness of the flesh and spirit in order to the perfecting of that holiness that is of God. For where His Holy Spirit of joy and thanksgiving and humility reign, pride finds no place, but each in lowliness of mind and in the fear of God submits himself to the other for helpful, loving counsel or criticism, to the end that by mutually taking heed to the Word of the Lord and seeking to measure up to all its requirements, the Bride of Christ, may make herself ready for the marriage.

The Times are Perilous

It is in view of the present urgent necessity of sober watchfulness and attention to the will of the Lord regarding us that the Apostle calls upon all who are to any extent intoxicated and stupefied by the spirit of the world, saying, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." Put away the worldly spirit, and awake to the importance of being filled with the Spirit of God, and look to Him for the light that will surely follow with its blessed, invigorating and health-giving influences.

The Spirit of God, the mind of Christ in the faithful will cause them to walk circumspectly, carefully picking their steps. Oh, how carefully we must tread this Narrow Way, "not like ignorant persons, but as wise men securing the season for yourselves," taking advantage of your opportunities, because the days are evil. The times are perilous and only by sobriety and the wisdom of meekness shall we be able to walk this Narrow Way to its glorious terminus. "Wherefore," he adds, "be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." In other words, the will of the Lord represents the sum total of all our obligations in the Christian walk. The will of God comprehends all that we must experience and pass through here in order to preparation for his presence and the enjoyment of the promised inheritance. The will of God comprehends all those requirements represented in the faithful admonitions and exhortations given to the Church through our Lord and the Apostles. Let us in the spirit and reverence of our Lord earnestly inquire and study these things that represent His will; and may the will of God and the joy and peace of God fill our hearts and leave no room for the spirit of the world to intrude upon us. Soon the day of trial, the day of perplexities and reverses shall be passed and we shall be permitted to enter upon the great reward, and then looking back we'll praise the way God has led us day by day.

More About the Convention in London

Eastertide, April 3-8

In a recent issue of the, "Herald" a brief announcement appeared with regard to a convention of Bible Students to be held in Great Britain during the

coming Easter holiday season, April 3-6. Since the appearance of this advance notice, the plans for this gathering of brethren who are standing free in Christ, have been progressing favorably, and it is now confidently expected that the convention will be a season of more than ordinary profit and blessing to those who are able to attend.

For a considerable time several of our British brethren have been expressing the desire that some of our brethren on this side of the water might make another visit to Great Britain, similar to those arranged for from time to time during the last ten years. More recently these expressions have taken the definite form of a personal invitation to Brother Hoskins and in the Lord's providence it has now been arranged that he will spend several weeks with our dear brethren in the British Isles, visiting various Classes throughout the country, and in harmony with the wishes of the Convention Committee, he will serve on the program of their Eastertide gathering.

Remembering the distinct advantage of a similar gathering of brethren on this side of the Atlantic, now being held each year in Pittsburgh, Pa., we have no hesitancy in expressing the confidence that the effort now being made by our brethren in London and its environs, will be productive of much good, and do much to unite the forces of the Church in those parts on the special features of her call and commission. In fact, it is hoped that this coming convention at Eastertide will represent the gathering together of all the liberty loving people of God, who are exercised by the Master's spirit of Christian tolerance, and who love our Lord Jesus Christ and His appearing. We feel sure that there will be a distinct spirit of waiting on the Lord, and an earnest desire for the manifestation of His guidance in whatever arrangements are made. Under such circumstances His blessing is assured, and on behalf of the Convention Committee we express the hope that all who can arrange to be present, may do so, coming with receptive hearts to receive a blessing, and ready to communicate blessings to others.

We are advised that the Convention will be held "at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W. C. 1. A full and interesting program has been arranged. Believers in the 'Ransom for all' are heartily welcome." All individuals and Classes who desire further information may communicate with the Secretary of the Convention Committee, Frederick Lardent, 174 Forest Hill Road, London, S. E. 23, Eng.

Christian Liberty

*"The true doctrine is not our right to think for ourselves,
but the right of the other man to think for himself."*

THE IMPRESSION very widely prevails that the battle for Christian liberty has been fought and won. So far as regards precaution of the more active kind, this is the case in the larger part of the civilized world. The right of the minority to free speech and free action in the line of conscientious conviction, is, in theory at least, conceded.

But it is a mistake to assume that because harsh laws have been softened, human nature has been radically changed. The grosser forms of persecution have disappeared, but subtler forms remain. The intolerant spirit has survived the death of many institutions by which intolerance was once manifested. Christian liberty is still, in a considerable degree, conceded only in theory.

Men still endeavor to punish those who have the temerity to differ from them.

There is no cause for astonishment at this manifestation of inconsistency. It is one of the curious things in human history to see how generally the persecuted have become in turn the persecutors the moment the power was lodged in their hands. And Why? Because the true principle of Christian liberty had not been grasped, and is to this day apprehended by only a few. The right of any body of men to differ from others has always been claimed by them; there is no novelty in that. From the beginning, every Christian sect that has arisen has vehemently contended for its right to differ others. It has protested against persecution -- that is to say, the persecution of itself by others. But in few cases has any sect conceded the right of others to differ from it, or forbore to persecute when it had the power. And in our own day each man is prompt to claim and assert the right to think for himself, but how loath most are to concede the equal right of all other men to think for themselves. Every one resents any attempt to coerce him into the avowal of anything that he does not honestly believe, but how few fail to attempt to coerce others.

The true doctrine of Christian liberty is not our right to think for ourselves, but the right of the other man to think for himself. There is no danger now that our right will not be insisted upon and enforced, particularly if our thinking happens to fall in with that of the majority. It is the other man's liberty that is in danger, particularly if he is in the minority. It is his liberty that demands defense at all hazards; for, if liberty is denied him, how long will it be conceded to us?

To demand liberty for the other man, even when he differs from us, is not to admit that truth and error are essentially one, or to deny that it is of great consequence what the other man believes and teaches. It may be our duty to oppose with all our might what he teaches, to denounce it as a deadly error. But this may be done without identifying the man with what he teaches, and without the display of the spirit of intolerance and persecution. We need not try to make the man odious because his opinion is odious to us. To be loyal to the truth, and yet faithfully to recognize the equal rights of all men to free thought and free speech, is not always an easy task. The two may, however, be combined. And nothing can be more certain than that the preservation of Christian liberty for any, is conditioned on the concession of that liberty for all. -- Selected.

A New Generation, Heirs of Glory

"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." -- 1 Pet. 2:9.

THE TERM, "high calling," is one of those significant designations selected by the Spirit to express the thought of the exceptional grace and favors that God is extending to a comparatively small number amongst men, between the two Advents of the Savior. When once we grasp the meaning of the invitation coming from heaven during this dispensation, it is seen to be exceedingly glorious and high; and the purpose of God most exalted, noble and sublime. Briefly, it is the making ready of a peculiar people for a very peculiar and very glorious purpose. The purpose is nothing less than that of a

joint-reign with Christ for a thousand years by means of which, not only shall all the families of the earth be blessed, but angels also shall be brought to a righteous judgment and rewarded, and all things in heaven and in earth will be brought into perfect harmony with and conformity to the Divine will, and universal peace and joy and praise shall abound to the glory of God.

Why are God's People Peculiar?

This peculiar people is a new and chosen generation. They were first chosen out from among men, "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. 2 :13.) Or, in other words, having believed the message of salvation through Christ the Redeemer, and having gratefully accepted the same, and being earnestly desirous of perfect personal conformity to the Divine will, and having therefore humbly submitted themselves entirely to God, they were chosen 'of God to be His. peculiar people.

That which renders this people peculiar as compared with all other people in the world is a very radical change -- a change of nature, from the human to the Divine. (2 Pet. 1:4.) This change of nature has been brought about by the power of the Truth, which leads those who are rightly exercised by it to a full consecration of heart and life to the will and service of God, even unto death. This change of nature is, however, only begun in the present life and consists as yet only of a change of mind and a consequent change of character and action in harmony with the new hopes, aims and aspirations generated by the "exceeding great and precious promises." No wonder is it that a people actuated by such hopes and aims should be a peculiar people -- a people separate from the world -- in the world and yet not of it.

They are indeed a new "generation" -- that is, a new race, of a new and noble nature, distinct and separate from the human race, although as "new creatures" they are as yet only begotten and developing in the embryo state, the full development or birth being due at the resurrection. Wonderful indeed is this truth -- "Ye," brethren, "are a chosen generation" -- a new order of beings and chosen of God as the heirs of His special favor. And not only so, says the Apostle, but ye are a priesthood, a royal priesthood -- a people to be clothed with authority and power to stand between God and fallen humanity to lift humanity up from its degradation and restore it to the Divine likeness and favor. Ye are indeed a royal priesthood, whose power and glory will appear in due time to the glory of God and the blessing of all the families of the earth.

Our only Sword that of the Spirit

But further, says the Apostle, Ye are "a holy nation." In what sense can this people be called a nation? A nation is a body of people united under one government and having common interests and bound by mutual obligations and mutual consent, either expressed or implied, to conserve those interests. Truly such a people, such a nation, are we under Christ Jesus our King, and our interests are indeed one: they are the interests of the truth concerning the establishment of Christ's Kingdom in all the earth. Our national policy is aggressive, and contemplates the complete subjection of every other power; but its object, unlike that of all other ambitious powers, is not the glorification of selfishness, but the exaltation of meekness and righteousness and the establishment of universal peace and happiness. Every loyal citizen of this nation is deeply interested in its politics, and is ready to take up the

sword for its defense at any moment. However, we remember that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds. Our sword is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," and an every-day exercise and drill in its use makes us able soldiers.

Let all the members of this "chosen generation," this "royal priesthood," this "holy nation," this "peculiar people," seek more and more -- by vigilance, by faithfulness and by holiness -- to separate themselves from the spirit of the world, to submit themselves to the transforming influences of the Spirit of God, and to discipline and drill themselves in the use of the sword of the Spirit, that so they may "show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Babes in Christ

This peculiar people the Apostle likens, in the beginning of their life of faith, to babes. Though they may be men of mature years, they are but babes beginning a new life. And the Apostle counsels them, as new born babes, to earnestly desire and seek for the sincere milk of the Word of God -- the simple truths, the foundation doctrines. These are the plain clear statements of the Scriptures (1) of the original perfection and glory of humanity, created in the image of God -- Gen. 1:27, 31; (2) of the fall of Adam and the race represented in him in trial -- Gen. 3:1 Cor. 15:22; (3) of the death penalty -- Gen. 2:17; 3:19; Rom. 6:23; (4) of the redemption of Adam, and therefore also of the race represented in him, by the payment of an equivalent price -- the sacrifice of "the man Christ Jesus who gave Himself a ransom for all" -- 1 Cor. 15:22; 1 Tim. 2:6; (5) of the actual deliverance of the redeemed race in God's due time and order. -- Acts 3:19-21.

Those who in simple faith accept these truths and who, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, endeavor to live worthy of this salvation, esteeming it as only a reasonable service to devote themselves thenceforth to the service of God, are accepted of Him as sons and heirs -- as spiritual sons. And precious indeed are these little ones in the Lord's sight. It was with reference to such that the Lord said to Peter, "Feed My lambs"; and again that He gave warning to false teachers, saying, "Whosoever shall ensnare one of the least of these who believe in Me, it would be better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were sunk in the depth of the sea." (John 21:15; Matt. 18:6.) And again, under the figure of a tender shepherd caring for a weak and straying lamb, He shows His tender solicitude for these babes of the family, saying, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." -Matt. 18:14.

But while the babes in Christ, because of their very feebleness and inexperience, have much special care bestowed upon them, and are dearly be loved of the Lord, and while their meek and teach able spirit is commended to all (Matt. 18:4), it is not the will of God that they should always remain babes. The very object of his commending to them the milk of the Word is that they may **grow** thereby out of this infantile state, up to the maturity of spiritual life-"that we be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine." (Eph. 4:14.) There should come a time in the experience of every healthy growing child of God, when he should be able to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ the foundation

doctrines -- having them firmly established and settled in his mind, and therefore not needing to dig them up and lay them over again -- and go on growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth unto perfection. -- Heb. 6:1.

Beware of All Adulterations

The Apostle Paul reproved some of his day because they did not thus grow, saying, "For when for the time [spent] ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat: for every one that useth milk [only] is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe." (Heb. 5:12, 13.) We are not to live continually on the milk diet, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4.) Some of these words are the simple truths above noted -- the milk; and others are deeper truths, the strong meat for those who, nourished by the pure milk, had grown and had developed considerable firmness and strength of Christian character. This "solid food," says the Apostle (Heb. 5:14), is for adults -- for those possessing faculties habitually exercised in the discrimination of both good and evil. He also warned them of the dreadful result to them if they should fall away. -- Heb. 6:4-6.

If the babes in Christ are fed on adulterated milk -- a confused mixture of truth and error concerning the above mentioned foundation doctrines -- the result will be that they will sicken and die, unless the unwholesome diet is speedily removed and the sincere, pure milk is sought after and used. As a general thing there is not sufficient care on the part of the babes in Christ about seeking the **pure** milk of the Word; and many of the adults are too careless about setting the impure milk before them. Let those who are truly the Lord's little ones bear in mind the Apostle's counsel to desire and seek after only the **pure milk** of the Word and to resolutely discard all else. Any theological views which will not rest squarely upon the above named foundation doctrines, so plainly enunciated in the Scriptures, but which attempt to pervert and to shift and to make them void, do not constitute the pure diet for the Lord's children. Let them cautiously beware of all such adulterations, and feed only upon the **pure** milk, and by and by upon the more solid food -- that is food indeed to those who have their faculties exercised -- and thus grow up to maturity, to a full development of Christian character and faith.

The Spiritual House

The Apostle then shows (1 Pet. 2:4-8) that such consecrated and faithful children of God have the privilege of becoming members of a grand spiritual house, of which Christ Jesus is the Head. The shape of the building to which reference is made, evidently, is that of a pyramid, and was probably suggested to his mind by the words of the Prophet Isaiah (28:16) to which he refers, saying, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; . . . the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed."

The chief corner stone in a pyramid is the top stone, which is also the model after which the whole building is being fashioned. The Prophet Zechariah (4:7) calls it the head-stone, and Isaiah (28:16) calls it a foundation-stone. At

first thought these figures seem incongruous, but they are not really so when we consider that this building is not an earthly, but a heavenly building, having a heavenly foundation, and that it is held together, not by earthly, but by heavenly attraction. And it is in accordance with this thought that we are invited to come unto Christ, the Chief Corner Stone, to be built up under Him and to be fashioned for our places as living stones in this building, in accordance with the lines and angles seen in Him who is the model.

The Blows of the Hammer and the Chisel

The great work of preparing these living stones for their places in this building of God is still in progress, although it is almost completed. This is the painful part of the work to every one of the stones. The blows of the hammer and the chisel -- the hard discipline of experience -- are not desirable except for the effects -- the peaceable fruits of righteousness. And if we would have the results, we must patiently submit to the painful processes, and see to it that no cross-grained willfulness on our part shall interfere with the work; for such interference would sooner or latter be the occasion for abandoning us, and the Builder would substitute another stone more pliable and easily worked; for the time is short, and what is to be done must be done quickly.

The Prophet further showed that the foundation stone of this great building would be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to many until the time of its exaltation. Those who will stumble over it, says the Apostle, are not those faithful and loyal to the Word of God, but those who stumble at the Word, being disobedient, and who will not accept its plain and simple teaching relative to the great foundation of our faith -- Christ Jesus, who gave His life a ransom for many. (Matt. 20:28.) And this class, he assures us, were appointed to stumble -- that it does not happen so, but that God designed that they should stumble, because they are unworthy to stand, being disobedient.

God lays great stress upon loyal and loving obedience on the part of all His children. It was only a little matter of disobedience that cost Adam and his posterity so dearly; and that will bring similar results to all those who, having once, through faith in Christ the Redeemer, escaped the condemnation of death, thereafter refuse to stand before God in the robe of His righteousness, but prefer to appear in their own. All such were appointed to stumble; but blessed are the meek, for they shall stand. "The Lord knoweth them that are His," with the Scripture.

The Flood Tide of Power

Extracts from "Quiet Talks on Power," by S. D. Gordon

HOW MANY thousands of lips have lovingly lingered over those sweet strong words: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your heart and thought in Christ Jesus." It is God's peace. It acts as an armed guard drawn up around the heart and thoughts to keep unrest out. It is too subtle for intellectual analysis, but it steals into and steadies the heart. You cannot understand it, but you can feel it. You cannot get hold of it with your head, but you can with your heart. You do not get it. It gets you. You need not understand in order to experience. Blessed are they that have not understood and yet have yielded and experienced:

"Peace beginning to be
Deep as the sleep of the sea
When the stars their faces glass.
In its blue tranquility:
Hearts of men upon earth
That rested not from their birth
To rest, as the wild waters rest,
With the colors of heaven on their breast."

With that will come a new intense longing to do the Master's will; to please Him. As the days come and go, this will come to be the master-passion of this new life. It will drive one with a new purpose and zest to studying the one Book which tells His will. That Book becomes literally the Book of books to the Spirit-dominated man.

With that will come a new desire to talk with this new Master, who talks to you in His Word, and is ever at your side sympathetically listening. His Book reveals Himself. And better acquaintance with Him will draw you oftener aside for a quiet talk. The pleasure of praying will grow by leaps and bounds. Nothing so inspires to prayer as reverent listening to His voice. Frequent use of the ears will result in more frequent use of the voice in prayer and praise. And more: Prayer will come to be a part of service. Intercession will become the life mission.

Still another result, of the surprising sort, will be a new feeling about sin. There will be an increased and increasing sensitiveness to sin. It will seem so hateful whether coarse or cultured. You will shrink from contact with it. There will also be a growing sense of the sinfulness of that old heart of yours, even while you may be having constant victory over temptation. Then, too, there will grow up a yearning, oh! such a heart-yearning as cannot be told in words, to be pure, really pure in heart.

A seventh result will be an intense desire to get others to know your wonderful Master. A desire so strong, gripping you so tremendously, that all thought of sacrifice will sink out of sight in its achievement. He is such a Master! so loving, so kind, so wondrous! And so many do not know Him: have wrong ideas about Him. If they only knew Him -- that surely would settle it. And probably these two -- the desire to please Him, and the desire to get others to know Him, will take the mastery of your ambition and life.

The All-Inclusive Passion

But all of these and much more is included in one of Paul's packed phrases which may be read, "the love of God that flooded our hearts through the Holy Spirit given unto us." (Rom. 5:5.) The all-inclusive result is love. That marvelous tender passion--the love of God--heightless, depthless, shoreless, shall flood our hearts, making us as gentle and tender-hearted and self-sacrificing and gracious as He. Every phase of life will become a phase of love. Peace is love resting. Bible study is love reading its lover's letters. Prayer is love keeping tryst. Conflict with sin is love jealously fighting for its lover. Hatred of sin is love shrinking from that which separates from its lover. Sympathy is love tenderly feeling. Enthusiasm is love burning. Hope is love expecting. Patience is love waiting. Faithfulness is love sticking fast. Humility is love taking its true place. Modesty is love keeping out of sight. Soul-winning is love pleading.

Love is revolutionary. It radically changes us, and revolutionizes our spirit toward all others. Love is democratic. It ruthlessly levels all class distinctions. Love is intensely practical. It is always hunting something to do. Paul lays great stress on this outer practical side. Do you remember his "fruit of the Spirit"? (Gal. 5:22, 23.) It is an analysis of love. While the first three -- "love, joy, peace" -- are emotions within, the remaining six are outward toward others. Notice, "longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness," and then the climax is reached in the last "self-control." And in his great love passage in the First Corinthian Epistle (chap. 13), he picks out four of these last six, and shows further just what he means by love in its practical working in the life. "Long-suffering" is repeated, and so is "kindness" or "goodness." "Faithfulness" is reproduced in "never faileth." Then "self-control" receives the emphasis of an eightfold repetition of "nots." Listen: "envieth not," "boasteth not," "not puffed up," "not unseemly," "seeketh not [even] her own," "is not provoked," "taketh not account of evil" (in trying to help others, like Jesus' word "despairing of no man"), "rejoiceth not in unrighteousness" (that is when the unrighteous is punished, but instead feels sorry for him). What tremendous power of self mastery in those "nots"! Then the positive side is brought out in four "alls"; two of them -- the first and the last -- passive qualities, "beareth all things," "endureth all things." And in between, two active, "hopeth all things," "believeth all things." The passive qualities doing sentinel duty on both sides of the active. These passive traits are intensely active in their passivity. There is a busy time under the surface of those "nots" and "alls." What a wealth of underlying power they reveal! Some times folks think it sentimental to talk of love. Probably it is of some stuff that shuffles along under that name. But when the Holy Spirit talks about it, and fills our hearts with it, there is seen to be an intensely practical passion at work.

When the Holy Spirit takes possession there is **love**, aye, more, a **flood** of love. Have you ever seen a flood? I remember one in the Schuylkill during my boyhood days and how it impressed me. Those who live along the valley of that treacherous mountain stream, the Ohio, know something of the power of a flood. How the waters come rushing clown, cutting out new channels, washing down rubbish, tearing valuable property, from its moorings, ruling the valley autocratically while men stand back entirely helpless.

Would you care to have a flood-tide of love flush the channel-ways of your life like that? It would clean out something you have preferred keeping. It would with quiet, ruthless strength, tear some prized possessions from their moorings and send them adrift down stream and out. Its high waters would put out some of the fires on the lower levels. Better think a bit before opening the sluice-ways for that flood. But ah! it will sweeten and make fragrant. It will cut new channels and broaden and deepen old ones. And what a harvest will follow in its wake. Floods are apt to do peculiar things. So does this one. It washes out the friction-grit from between the wheels. It does not dull the edge of the tongue, but washes the bitter out of the mouth, and the green out of the eye. It leaves one deaf and blind in some matters, but much keener-sighted and quicker-eared in others. Strange flood that! Would that we all knew more of it.

Providence and the Great Reformation

Seventh of the Series

IT IS October 31, 1517. All is bustle and excitement in what has been the quiet town of Wittenberg. It is a most important day -- the day of the feast of All Saints. Pilgrims have come from all around. Those who visit the church and gaze on the relics brought from many lands, lying in their finely jeweled cases, may, as they confess their sins, be sure of full forgiveness. In the evening of this day, a monk approaches the church and tacks upon its heavy wooden door a manuscript. There is nothing so strange about this for notices of various kinds have often been so placed.

But soon the whole town is in excited discussion. They are the propositions of one Martin Luther written against the sale of indulgences, bearing the opening declaration that they are penned in a spirit of sincere charity and with the desire to bring truth to light. But in those ninety-five theses was a principle not then clearly seen by the excited readers -- a principle that was destined to one day overthrow Papacy. The cardinal doctrine of justification by faith -- the evangelical doctrine of a free and gracious remission of sins, lay in the theses of Luther. "Often," says the historian, "did Luther, in after times, when he contemplated the vast and unexpected consequences of this courageous step, feel amazed at himself, and unable to comprehend how he dared to take it. The truth, an invisible and all-powerful hand, held the guiding rein, and urged on the herald of truth in a road which he knew not, and from the difficulties of which he would perhaps have shrunk, had he been aware of them and advanced alone and of his own will. 'I entered on this controversy,' said he, 'without any settled purpose or inclination, and entirely unprepared . . . I call God to witness this who sees the heart.'"

He Seemed to Stand Alone Against Rome

Luther's theses spread quickly. In a fortnight they were over Germany, and before a month elapsed they were in Rome. They brought light to many a cell, to humble cottages, and even to palaces. Those monks whose lives were spent in prayer, fastings, and penance, thanked God for the voice raised in the defense of truth. Those who had entered monasteries for an indolent life, plenty to eat, and spiritual honor, lifted up their voices in reproach to the author of the disturbing theses. At Erfurth, Luther was accused of rudeness and pride in the way he condemned the opinions of others, but those whose strength of conviction is inspired by the Word of God are apt to be so judged. "Who does not know," said Luther in reply to this complaint, "that we can seldom advance a new idea without an appearance of pride, and without being accused of seeking quarrels? If humility herself attempted any thing new, those of a different opinion would exclaim that she was proud. Why were Christ and all the martyrs put to death? Because they appeared proud despisers of the wisdom of the times in which they lived, and because they brought forward new truths without having first humbly consulted the oracles of the old opinions."

Luther was deceived in his expectations. He had thought many high in the Church, distinguished and scholarly, would join him. The best those who favored him offered in his behalf was a hasty word of praise and commendation. Many whom he had venerated condemned him greatly. He seemed to stand alone against Rome. He, a lowly monk, had set himself in opposition to the Church he had revered from infancy. But he trusted in the Word of God; he had drawn from that pure spring by humble, prayerful inquiry of the Author Himself, who alone can rightly interpret that Word. "I know," said he, "that from the beginning the Word of God has been such as

that whosoever would carry it into the world, must, like the Apostles, leave everything, and be delivered unto death. If it were not so, it would not be the Word of Christ."

Tetzel and His Indulgences

As is well known Luther's theses were intended to deal a deadly blow to the principle of the Catholic faith which claims that power of forgiveness of sins is vested in its dignitaries, popes, and priests, and that they have the power to grant indulgences, etc. The Church had opened up an amazing business upon earth. The salvation of souls was offered in exchange for silver and gold. The head merchant of it all, John Tetzel by name, arrived at each German city in royal equipage and was met by the entire populace headed by clergy, priests, nuns and various prominent citizens, while music played and bells rang. Immediately then the procession would start towards the church. On a velvet cushion or cloth of gold lay the Pope's bull of grace which was born in front of the crowd; Tetzel followed, supporting a large wooden cross of red. After erecting the cross in front of the altar, the sixty-three year old vendor of indulgences would ascend the pulpit and with tempting, enticing words explain his wares. "Indulgences," said he, "are the most precious and sublime of God's gifts." And, pointing to the red cross, he said, "This cross has as much efficacy as the cross of Jesus Christ." . . . Draw near, and I will give you letters, duly sealed, by which even the sins you shall hereafter desire to commit shall all be forgiven you." And again, "But more than all this: indulgences save not the living alone, they also save the dead." He continues, "The very moment that the money clinks against the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies free to heaven."

He then as a further inducement, relates how the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul are not suitably housed in their present building, and the money from the sale of the indulgences will be used to restore the ruined Church of St. Peter. "Our Lord God," said he, "no longer deals with us as God. He has given all power to the Pope."

"Then," says the historian, "the people came in crowds to the confessors. They came, not with contrite hearts, but with money in their hands." Tetzel had arranged a scale according to each person's income, and another scale for particular sins. Witchcraft cost two ducats; murder, eight ducats; and polygamy, six ducats.

Seated in the Temple of God

Tetzel replied to Luther's theses in denunciations and sweeping affirmations. By this he furthered the cause of the Reformation in that according to the words of Tetzel's propositions, the Pope seemed actually "seated in the temple of God, showing himself to be God." For, the shameless dealer in indulgences used the robe of the Pope 'to cover' his own disgraceful words and doings. "Christians should be taught," said he, in these theses, "that the Pope alone has the right to decide in questions of Christian doctrine; that he alone, and no other, has power to explain, according to his judgment, the sense of Holy Scripture, and to approve or condemn the words and works of others." "Christians should be taught," said he, "that the pope, in the plenitude of his power, is higher than the universal church, and superior to councils; and that entire submission is due to his decrees."

The monks, stirred by Tetzels attack, denounced Luther's name from every Dominican pulpit. He was a "madman, a seducer, a wretch possessed by the Devil." They prophesied that before a month elapsed, he would be burned alive as a heretic, as had Huss. Had the wish that fathered this thought been granted, such would, no doubt, have happened to him, but God willed otherwise. The death of Huss had furthered His cause, but now He would use the life of His servant.

"The Bible had decided Luther's destiny: it had molded the Reformer and commenced the Reformation. Luther's belief depended not on the testimony of the Church. His faith had come from the Bible itself: from within, and not from without. He was so deeply convinced that the evangelic doctrine was immovably built upon the Word of God that all external doctrine was to him superfluous.

The living spring which had gushed forth for the refreshment of the monk of Wittenberg, was to become a mighty river that should slake the thirst of nations."

If Any Preach another Gospel

Leo X did not condescend to interfere in the theological controversy. "A squabble among the monks," said he, "the best way is to take no notice of it." And again, "It is a drunken German that has written these theses": when he is sober he will talk very differently." But a voice from Rome is raised against the theses of Luther, none other than that of Prierias, master of the pontifical palace; who filled the office of censor. His office gave him power to determine what doctrines Christians should profess, and on what points they should be silent. He published a dialogue, dedicated to the Pope, in which he attacked Luther's propositions, using by turns ridicule, revilings, and even threats. The Reformer answered in the words of St. Peter, "If any one preach unto you another Gospel than that is preached, though he should be an angel from heaven, let him be accursed." And this, written by Augustine to Jerome: "I have learned to render to the inspired Scriptures alone the homage of a firm belief, that they have never erred; as to others, I do not believe in the things they teach, simply because it is they who teach them." Here in Luther's answer is the fundamental principle of the Reformation -- the Word of God -- the whole Word of God -- and nothing but the Word of God.

The stronger the opposition grew the more firmly did Luther stand. Men at the head of government or a party often break under the strain, but to the Christian new strength generally comes with conflict. There is for him in the Gospel a hidden source of courage and refreshment, unknown to the natural man. There is a rest, even in life's most heartbreaking experiences, for the child of God.

The Reformer, had he so desired, could have, by a few words, excited the fury of the public against his enemies, the Dominicans, but such was not the spirit that animated him. To instruct his hearers, to open the eyes of a blinded people -- this, and not personal triumph over his opposers, absorbed him. Something of the beauty of his quieter teaching is seen in the following expression on the opening words of the Lord's Prayer: " **Our Father.** ' Of all names there is not one which more inclines us toward God than the name of Father. We should feel less love, and derive less consolation, from addressing Him as Lord, or God, or judge. By that word **Father,** His bowels

of compassion are moved; for there is no sound more sweet or prevailing with a father than the voice of his child.

The Breath of Life given Christendom

'Who art in heaven': Whosoever professes that he has a father in **heaven**, acknowledges himself to be a stranger upon earth; hence, there is in his heart, an ardent longing, like that of a child that is living among strangers in want and grief, afar from its fatherland. Alas! my Father, Thou art **in heaven**, and I, Thy suffering child, am **on earth**, far from Thee, encompassed with dangers, wants, and mourning."

But especially was his eloquence directed towards that which **had so desolated the sanctuary** -- a Church which had presumed to put itself in the place of God and His Word. "All the superstructures which presumptuous priests had raised for their own gain between God. and the soul of man were thrown down; and man brought face to face with his God. The word of forgiveness now descended pure from on high without passing through a thousand corrupting channels. That the witness of God should be received, it was no longer necessary that men should attach to it their delusive seal. The monopoly of the priestly caste was abolished; the Church was delivered from her thralldom."

Steadily, although not entirely recognized by him, Luther's power increased among the people and his reputation became strengthened. That sharp two-edged sword which he could use so skillfully -- the blessed Word of God -- pierced the very hearts of men, and wrought in them the desire for personal pardon and the hope of gaining eternal life. Since the first days of the Church there had not been such hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Multitudes had been induced during the middle ages to assume outwardly the symbol of the cross, but now, under the eloquent appeal of the Reformer, hearts were opened to enfold the true cross, the knowledge of the efficacy of the blood shed forth on Calvary. These rallied around the one who had been instrumental in their awakening to spiritual life, yet how feeble, how little, these combined forces seemed beside that great superstructure, magnificent in form and pretense, and with all the prestige of past ages in its favor. But form devoid of spirit is weak, though reared with outward splendor; and spirit without form is strong, although to human eyes it may seem weak indeed. The breath of life now given Christendom was destined to overturn the proud edifice of man's building the while it gently inflated the hearts of feeble ones, hearts that had first been pierced by the sword of truth -- the pure, unadulterated Word of God, much as a steady, prevailing wind upturns the mighty tree whose roots have suffered decay but leaves the tender, yielding reed unharmed.

Luther called to Trial

But now the princes and nobles of the empire and the Church began to bestir themselves to silence this troublesome monk. Luther now was not standing alone, although he had asked for and expected no support but that of God. The whole German nation had heard his voice and frozen hearts had thawed to the heavenly warmth. The superstitions of Rome were losing ground daily and men's thoughts were directed towards Luther as the upholder of truth and freedom, and before he was aware of the influence he had acquired he had been acknowledged as their leader. Leo X, who until now had allowed

matters to take their course, became aroused by the outcry, and appointed an ecclesiastical court to judge Luther, with his enemy, Prierias, as both accuser and judge, and he was summoned -- to Rome to appear before it.

Luther asked that he be heard in Germany, and members of the university of Wittemberg sent a letter to the Pope himself interceding for him, pleading his frail health as an excuse against the long trip to the Imperial City. Circumstances having arisen that made it seem advantageous to the Pope to grant this, he did so, but in words that were audacious in power, and harsh in judgment, branding the annoying monk as a heretic even before trial, and enjoining those who should try him in these words, "If he should persist in his stubbornness, and you fail to get possession of his person, we give you power to proscribe him in all places in Germany; to put away, curse, and excommunicate all those who are attached to him, and to enjoin all Christians to shun their society." All those holding positions of power -- religious orders, universities; nobles, potentates, the Emperor Maximilian himself excepted, were ordered excommunicated at any neglect to seize his person. Any town or place or community offering him refuge should be under interdict during the time of his stay and for three days after his departure. Any of the laity who failed to obey the Papal orders would be disentitled to even Christian burial.

Truth Cast Down in the Streets

Thus Rome set the entire stage to crush the Reformer. From every human outlook his ruin was assured but, as the Sadducees of old, they erred, not knowing the power of God and of the Scriptures. God was for His brave messenger, therefore all the pride, power, and glory of Rome set against him were powerless.

"Even the semblance of a just and impartial inquiry had been disregarded; and Luther had already been declared a heretic," says the Swiss historian, "not only before he had been heard, but even long before the expiration of the time allowed for his personal appearing. The passions (and never are they more strongly excited than in religious discussions) break through all forms of justice. Not only in the Roman Church, but in those Protestant Churches which have departed from the Gospel, and in every place where truth has been forsaken, do we find it treated in this way. All means seem good against the Gospel. We frequently see men, who, in any other case, would shrink from committing the least injustice, not hesitating to trample under foot all rule and equity, when Christianity, or her witnesses, are concerned."

About this time there came to Wittemberg, a young man, delicate in build, as professor of ancient languages. This was Philip Schwarzerd, re-named Melancthon by Reuchlin, his relative, friend, and instructor. The professors at Wittemberg were not impressed with the delicate appearing youth, but the brilliancy of mind which they soon found to be his, melted all prejudice, and he and Luther began a friendship that ended only at death. "If there be any one," said Melancthon, "that I love and embrace with my whole heart, it is Martin Luther." **Different**, yet necessary to each other, God in all His kindness and wisdom has brought them together. Melancthon was calm, prudent, and gentle; Luther, impetuous and energetic. Melancthon moderated Luther -- Luther gave strength to Melancthon. Both were upright and generous and possessed that love for the Divine Word that caused them to proclaim it faithfully and let it govern their lives.

(To be Continued)

Half Hour Meditations on Romans

*"And though I have all faith . . . and have not love, I am nothing."
-- 1 Cor. 13:2.*

No. 14

THUS far in our consideration of "his" gospel theme, as it is summarized in the seventeenth verse of chapter one of our epistle, one point has stood out with marked emphasis: The Gospel is not a revised statement of what God requires from man, but is the glorious news concerning what God has done and is doing and will do for man. On this point an able writer has remarked:

"I believe that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian Church has ever suffered, has been the effort of men to earn, rather than to receive, their salvation; and that the reason that preaching is so commonly ineffectual is, that it calls on men oftener to work for God, than to behold God working for them. If, for every rebuke we utter of men's vices, we were to put forth a claim upon their hearts; if, for every assertion of God's demands from them, we could substitute a display of His kindness to them; if, side by side with every warning of death, we could exhibit proofs and promises of . . . [eternal life]; if, in fine, instead of assuming the being of an awful Deity, which men, though they cannot and dare not deny, are always unwilling, sometimes unable, to conceive, we were to show them a near, visible, inevitable, but all beneficent Deity, whose presence makes the earth itself a heaven, I think there would be fewer deaf children sitting in the market place."

We have seen, too, that the faith which receives this gift from God, is, in the Apostle's usage of that term, not credulity, nor superstition, nor yet the blind acceptance of something contrary to reason, but intelligent belief. "Faith is produced by testimony, [and] . . . as far as testimony goes, faith may go; but where the testimony stops, faith must and will stop. The testimony concerning Jesus tells us that He was born of Mary in Bethlehem, was baptized of John in Jordan, and commenced His ministry in the hill country of Galilee -- was crucified on Calvary, and was buried in Joseph's new tomb. Now, suppose the testimony had stopped at this point, how much faith would any person have had today in His **resurrection, ascension, and glorification?** Just none at all. As far as testimony goes, faith may go, but no further; all beyond is mere speculative opinion. Our faith may be strengthened or weakened by increasing or weakening the testimony. We have faith in the testimony of men, and we have faith in the testimony of God. . . . [and] our faith in the testimony of God is as much stronger than our faith in the testimony of men as we regard God superior to man and His testimony more reliable than that of man. This difference -- no more, no less. 'If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.' "

With the Heart Man Believeth

We have said that faith is belief, and indeed "**faith** and **belief** represent the same Greek and the same Hebrew word. Their meaning in the Bible is therefore absolutely the same." Yet none should make the mistake of supposing that faith, in St. Paul's mind, is "a bare holding either the atoning work of Christ or any other truths of revelation for true; it is a loving and

soul-constraining self-surrender to them, so that they are grasped by the moral no less than by the intellectual man." "Faith is an act partly of the intelligence and partly of the will." "This faith must be in us, as something personal and living, before we can bring forth the external fruits and works of righteousness. Our faith may be in our creed, that half-way house between the Bible and the heart; it may be in our intellect, that mid-station between the mind of God and the will of man. But this is not enough. A creed religion is apt to be disputatious, busy with mere dogmatic moralities, defending nice distinctions, and hovering forever over sectarian issues; an intellectual religion is speculative, toiling at definitions and exhausting its energies on logical inferences. And if one's piety stops at either one of these stations -- at the intellect or the creed -- that man's religion is vain'. 'If these things be **in you.**'

"Our faith must come to us through the brain indeed. But it cannot stop there. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.' The mind takes the truth from the Scriptures, weighs it; perchance, in the scales of some tried and standard confession, and then distils it into the heart, its richest essence, its finest life, condensed and deposited there. And nothing, can evolve from itself a holy, self-denying, and truly benevolent life like this. A germ of faith will make a giant in activity. That faith be in us rather than external to us is of the very highest importance then. You know the difference between an opinion and a conviction. The one is what we think; the other is what we are. Our opinions may sit lightly on us, but our convictions are the iron in our blood, which make the very strength and stalwartness of our manhood. And faith, as an active grace, is simply Christian conviction. It is what we believe and feel and are upon Divine questions and promises. And it is the only thing which can give a rooted strength and stability to our Christian life." The mere intellectual appreciation which is divorced from all will and love profits nothing. (1 Cor. 13:2.) No one will deny that the devils have a right belief in the existence of God. They however believe, but wish the facts were otherwise. Faith on the contrary is the substance of things **"hoped for."**

"If we believe that God is what His name implies, the Self-existing One, the all-powerful, all-wise, all-just and all-loving Creator, and if we believe that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, the effect will be that we **will** seek Him -- seek to know and to understand His Word; and that knowing and understanding it, we will have confidence in it; and that having confidence in it, we will direct our course in life accordingly."

What is the Active Principle of Faith?

The question naturally arises as to the reason God has set such a premium on faith. Why does He justify by faith rather than by one of the other graces? Why not by fortitude, patience, meekness, gentleness, humility; above all, why not by love? What is there in faith that gives it such value in God's sight?

We answer that faith is the fertile soil in which all other graces must have their root if they are to grow to maturity. The wise man has said that as a man "thinketh [believeth] in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7.) If therefore in our hearts we have true faith, the manifestation of all the other graces will appear in our conduct. Our lives will be (or become) characterized by fortitude, patience, meekness, gentleness, humility, love, etc. If we have in our hearts, not a dead but a living faith, we have in us the root of all the other graces; we

have in us that which is already pregnant with them, and which, in due time, will, under the guidance and by the power of the Holy Spirit, produce them all, whereas, if it were possible for our Christian life to begin with any one of them, even love, or with all of them together, without faith, their root, being in us, they would be without hope of reaching maturity, but must inevitably wither when subjected to a sufficiently strong test.

Furnish in Your Faith . . . Love

The Apostle Peter brings this strikingly to our attention in his Second Epistle, chapter 1, verses 5-8. There he shows the rounded-out, well-balanced, condition in which a true Christian character matures. We are not to first mature faith, and then to our matured faith add fortitude; and then to our matured fortitude add knowledge, etc. Weymouth's translation shows that we are to manifest **along with** our faith fortitude, and **along with** our fortitude knowledge, etc. He also tells us in a footnote, that the word "along with" is literally "in." From this it would appear that these graces are none other than the very ingredients of faith. Another able writer observes in this connection:

"It is not simply **add**. The word is a much more vital one. It is, rather, **furnish in** your faith virtue, and **in** your virtue knowledge, and in your knowledge edge temperance. **Let your faith be so prolific** that out of it may be evolved the whole continuous and unfolding system of spiritual virtues. If these things be in you, and abound, they will make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The inner, and ever-expanding life of faith will appear in the outward fruits and actions of piety, thus advancing you towards the perfect knowledge of Christ, and full conformity to His character."

As further bearing on the fact that faith is the root of the other graces, we note the "fine touch of spiritual wisdom which appears in the disciples' answer to the Lord, when He instructed them in regard to the duty of forgiveness: 'If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying I repent; thou shalt forgive him.' Exceeding strain is, this to put upon our patience [and to put upon our love] -- offense crowding on offense, and injury treading on injury, till it has grown to a sevenfold affront. 'Lord, teach us **patience**, train us in the secret of Thy Divine **forbearance**,' do they ask? No! [Do they plead, 'Lord, increase our love?' No!] 'The Apostles said unto the Lord: Increase our **faith**.' They asked that the **root** might be strengthened, to brace the tree for such trial and resistance." "Do we stop to think when we are taxed with some extraordinary service that the surest way to be fit for it is to have our **faith** strengthened; that we must **believe** more if we would be able to do more?"

While therefore it is possible, and doubtless for clarity of thought, desirable, to separate faith from love in our ideas, it should ever be remembered that they are inseparable in fact. If it were possible for one to have a living faith and not to have love, we would expect to see some examples in the Scriptures. We find on the contrary that the faith which justifies is never "represented as the ground of acceptance with God without the right conduct which is its natural sequence." It was not faith as expounded and exemplified by St. Paul, but the travesty of it as expounded and exemplified by his antinomian followers, which St. James condemned as dead. While "it is faith alone which justifies, yet the faith which justifies is not alone, just as it is the heat alone of the sun which warms the earth, and yet in the sun it is not alone,

because it is always conjoined with light." The only faith recognized by St. Paul as worthy of the name is that in which love is its active principle, or to use his own words, "Faith which worketh by love." -- Gal. 5:6.

Works and Good Works Distinguished

St. Paul says that we are justified by faith without the deeds of the law. (Rom. 3:28.) St. James tells us that by works a man is justified and not by faith only. (James 2:24.) How are these apparently inconsistent statements to be reconciled? We say apparently inconsistent, for we are persuaded and will endeavor to show, that no real inconsistency exists.

First we inquire: When St. Paul says we are justified, by faith without deeds or works; to what works does he refer? The answer, as all will agree, is Works of, or done under the Law, the Law of Moses. St. James, however, in speaking of works, refers to works of faith, to good and acceptable works. Now St. Paul "never calls those works which he says do not justify 'good works,' but simply 'works' -- 'works of the Law' -- 'deeds of the Law' -- 'dead works.'" These have nothing to do with the works of faith. Of these St. Paul elsewhere speak, "and by a remarkable contrast he calls them again and again 'good works.' For instance : 'By grace are ye saved through faith . . . not of **works**, lest any man should boast : for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto **good works**.' This surely is a most pointed intimation that the works, which do not justify, are not good, or in other words, are works **before** justification. As to whether works after, which are good, whether they justify or not, he does not decide so expressly as St. James, the error he had to resist leading him another way. He only, says, against the Judaizing teachers, that our works must begin, continue, and end in faith. But, to proceed: he speaks elsewhere of 'abounding in every **good** work,' of being 'adorned with **good** works,' of being 'well reported of for **good** works,' 'diligently following every good work,' of 'the **good** works of some being open beforehand,' of being 'rich in **good** works,' of being 'prepared unto every **good** work,' of being 'thoroughly furnished unto all **good** works,' of being 'a pattern of **good** works,' of being 'zealous of **good** works,' of being 'ready to every **good** work,' of being 'careful to maintain **good** works,' of 'provoking unto love and **good** works,' and of being 'made perfect in every good work:' [Eph. 2:8-10; 2 Cor. 9:8; 1 Tim. 2:10; 5:10; 5:25; 6:18; 2 Tim. 2:21; 3:17; Tit. 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14; Heb. 10:24; 13:21:] Now surely this is very remarkable. St. James, though he means good works, drops the epithet, and only says works! Why does not St. Paul do the same? Why is he always careful to add the word **good**, except that he had also to do with a sort of works with which St. James had not to do -- that the word. **works** was already appropriated by him to those of the Law, and therefore that the epithet **good** was necessary," lest works of faith should be confused with them? We see then that St. Paul, while conclusively showing that we are justified by faith without the deeds of the Law is far from asserting thereby that we are justified by faith without the deeds of the Gospel, and that he does not deify what St. James affirms that by works (the good works by which faith is made perfect); a man is justified, and not by faith only.

I Know Thy Works

"The world is full of works which have no root or nourishment in faith. They are useful and zealous and well directed, but are not necessarily the outcome

of a holy heart. Charity has come to be fashionable, and men and women conform to its demands in order to be in style. Good [?] works are the assessment which society makes on those who are prosperous, and many practice them to maintain their credit in polite circles: Benevolence has assumed the character of a joint-stock enterprise; by which one part of the public relieves the needs of the other; and so in fairs and concerts . . . people will eke out their shares and get their dividends of entertainment and pleasure. But there is nothing of humble, self-denying, sanctified well-doing in all this. These are the 'dead works' spoken of in Scripture -- such as have no root in faith and love to God. For whatever is separated from its source becomes dead. Sunder a branch from the tree and it dies, though its form and substance remain unchanged; and sunder the best and most approved Christian service from its relation to Christ, and it becomes dead works. It is equally true that apart from Christ we cannot be what God requires. 'Without Me' -- that is, apart from and separated from Me -- 'ye can do nothing,' says Christ. It is not the whole question, then, whether our works are manly, but whether they are also godly; whether they are humane, but whether they are also Divine; whether they command the praise of men, but whether men beholding them 'shall glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

Repentance from Dead Works

“And, to show how radical these directions are, you remember that the Scripture speaks of **repentance** from dead works.” We are not only to be sorry that we have sinned, but especially that we have been deceiving men and dishonoring God with the semblance of well-doing when the enduring root- and vital principle. have been wanting. No! the works of righteousness cannot be taken on. What we call the externals of Christianity are absolutely worthless, dead wood cumbering the tree unless they are the outcome of what is radically and divinely internal. And if there is one thing which we ought to be afraid of in these days of prevailing religious activity, it is that we may get overlaid with the outward forms of Christianity, before we have been inlaid with its precious virtues The danger is with us all, not so much that we shall become inactive, as that our activity shall get uncoupled from our personal faith. By our associations and fellowships we may be so geared into the great prevailing movements . . . that we shall move without our will; our activity kept up while our spirituality is declining; our public testimony growing loud while our closest cries are growing silent." "Whoso readeth let him understand."

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The Passover Supper

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." -- 1 Cor. 5:7, 8.

IT IS generally conceded by Christians of all denominations that the special Supper that Jesus instituted just before his death, finds its origin in the

ancient Passover ordinance observed by the Hebrew race ever since their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. That Passover was and still is, among Israelites, one of the most important of their religious observances. It was the first feature of the Law given them as a typical people.

The ceremony as originally instituted is described in Exodus 12. A lamb without blemish was slain, its blood sprinkled on the door posts and lintels of the house, while the family within ate the flesh of the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. On that night, the fourteenth of the first month, Jewish time, because of the sprinkled blood and the eaten lamb, the firstborn of Israel were passed over or spared from the plague of death which visited the firstborn of the Egyptians. On this account, and because on the next day Israel marched out from Egyptian bondage free, therefore by God's command (Exod. 12: 14) they commemorated it every year.

Christ Our Passover

The Israelite saw only the letter of this ceremony. and not its typical significance. So too might we have been in similar darkness had not God given us the key to its meaning by inspiring the Apostle to write : "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." (1 Cor. 5:7.) Our attention being thus called to the matter, we find other Scriptures which clearly show that Jesus, the Lamb of God, was 'the antitype of the Passover lamb, and thus His death was as essential to the deliverance of the Church of the Firstborns from death as was the death of the typical lamb to the firstborn of Israel. Thus led of the Spirit we come to the words and acts of Jesus at the last Passover which He ate with His disciples.

The Supper which our Savior instituted was without doubt designed to supplant the annual commemoration of the typical. passing over of Israel's firstborn, whose lives were saved through the blood of the typical lamb. Such an event could be properly celebrated only on its anniversary, which our Lord and His disciples and all the Jews strictly observed. They no more thought of celebrating it any other time than do men in their natural affairs thinly of celebrating any great transaction on any other day than its anniversary.

It was the custom of the early Church to celebrate it as we do, on the fourteenth day of the first month, Jewish time, as the Lord indicated; and though there was a great apostasy and falling away from the original purity of faith which commenced even in the days of the Apostles, this custom was still retained by some Christians down to the fourth century, when it was peremptorily abolished by the Council of Nice, when the falling away predicted by the Apostles had practically developed the great system of error afterwards known as the Papacy. On this point we quote the following from Mosheim's Church History: "There arose toward the close of this [the second] century, between the Christians of Asia Minor and those of other parts. particularly such as were of the Roman Church, a violent contention. . . The Asiatic Christians were accustomed to celebrate . . . the institution of the Lord's Supper and the subsequent death of the Redeemer on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month . . . This custom they stated themselves to have derived from the Apostles Philip and John."

Jesus Breaking the Truth to Disciples

Jesus knew the import of the Passover, but the disciples knew not. He was alone, none could sympathize, none could encourage Him. Even had He explained to the disciples, they could not have understood or appreciated the explanation, because they were not yet begotten of the Spirit. Nor could they be thus begotten until redeemed from Adamic sin -- passed over, or reckoned free from sin by virtue of the slain Lamb whose shed blood ransomed them from the power of the Destroyer -- Death.

Thus alone treading the Narrow Way which none before had trod and in which He is our Forerunner and Leader, what wonder that His heart at times was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. When the hour had come they sat down to eat the Passover, and Jesus said unto the disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof; until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." (Luke 22:15, 16.) Doubtless He longed to have them understand how it would begin to be fulfilled a little later on in that very day by the slaying of the real Lamb.

Probably one reason He specially desired to eat this Passover with them was that He there designed breaking the truth of its significance to them, to the extent that they could receive it; for, "As they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is My body." (Mark 14:22.) "This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me." "And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: . . . This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:17-20.) We cannot doubt that the design of the Master was to call their minds from the typical lamb to Himself, the Antitype, and to show them that it would be no longer proper to observe a feature of the Law which He was about to fulfill. And the bread and wine were to be to them thereafter elements which as remembrancers of Him would take the place of the typical lamb. Thus considered there is force in the words, "This do in remembrance of Me" -- no longer kill a literal lamb in remembrance of a typical deliverance, but instead, use the bread and wine, representative of My flesh and life, the basis of the real deliverance, the real passing over. Hence let as many as receive Me and My words henceforth "do this in remembrance of Me."

All Men Desire Bread of Eternal Life

There seems to be little room for difference of opinion as to the significance of the emblems: Obviously, the bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of our Lord. Our Lord as a man was the living bread (literally, bread of life) which came down from heaven to give life to the world. The illustration is perfect: Mankind is dying for want of life and needs some food so full of life-producing qualities that it will arrest the wasting of death, and repair and restore to the original perfection lost in Adam. Men have sought panaceas, elixirs, life-restorers, in every quarter -- in animal and vegetable foods, in minerals and in chemistry; but all in vain. No such bread of life has ever been found. But after men had for more than four thousand years sought in vain, the true Bread of Life came from heaven, of which, if a man eat (partake or appropriate to his use as it is his privilege to do) he shall live forever. That is, if by faith in the means which God has provided to accomplish his redemption, he accepts the favor of life, he can have it on those terms and those only. This our Lord symbolically termed eating His flesh.

Our Lamb was slain for us -- on our behalf, because He was the bread of which all must eat to have life, and because we could not eat Him until He gave Himself. Then the question is, What did He give and what do we eat? The answer is, His flesh, and that means He gave Himself at that time a human being. Whatever He possessed therefore in the way of human rights and privileges under God's Law, He there resigned in our interest, that the human family, which has no rights or privileges, having loss all in Adam, its representative, might receive back all these privileges and rights and liberties. Adam's family was all in him when he sinned and lost life and every right and privilege of sonship, and so we all are sharers in that one loss. So now, corresponding full and sufficient rights belong to the new Man, the man Christ Jesus, who as a perfect and uncondemned being exchanged His higher rights for man's lower rights which Adam had forfeited. And when this One then gives Himself and lays down all that He has in the interests and for the use of the condemned race, we see that the giving of His flesh for the life of the world means the handing back to dying men, the life, liberties, and privileges lost. And the eating of His flesh would consequently mean the appropriating to his own use by the eater, of all the rights, liberties and life which the perfect, sinless man, Christ Jesus possessed--no more and no less.

It is this appropriating to ourselves of the benefits of Christ's death by faith, this spiritual feeding upon Christ, not merely as a mental theory, but in the heart, that is of the utmost importance to all who would enter into and maintain proper relationship to God and His well beloved Son. The eating is not merely a single act in the beginning of one's Christian experience, to be through with and forgotten; it is a process that must be keenly observed and followed out all through life if one is to be properly nourished spiritually, so that he can properly discharge, those responsibilities that are associated in his covenant of fellowship with Christ. Another, writing on this subject, has beautifully observed that:

Unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth

"We are not merely under the eternal shelter of the blood of the Lamb, but we feed, by faith, upon the Person of the Lamb. Many of us come short here. We are apt to rest satisfied with being saved by what Christ has done for us, without cultivating holy communion with Himself. His loving heart could never be satisfied with this. He has brought us nigh to Himself, that we might enjoy Him, that we might feed on Him, and delight in Him.

"But how was this lamb to be eaten? 'With unleavened bread and bitter herbs.' Leaven is, invariably, used, throughout Scripture, as emblematical of evil. Neither in the Old nor in the New Testament is it ever used to set forth any thing pure, holy, or good. Thus, in this chapter, 'the feast of unleavened bread' is the type of that practical separation from evil which is the proper result of being washed from our sins in the blood of the Lamb, and the proper accompaniment of communion with His sufferings. Nought but perfectly unleavened bread could at all comport with a roasted lamb. A single particle of that which was the marked type of evil would have destroyed the moral character of the entire ordinance. How could we connect any species of evil with our fellowship with a suffering Christ? Impossible. All who enter, by the power of the Holy Spirit, into the meaning of the cross, will assuredly, by the same power, put away leaven from all their borders. 'For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the

unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.' (1 Cor. 5:7, 8.) The feast spoken of in this passage is that which, in the life and conduct of the Church, corresponds with the feast of unleavened bread. This latter lasted 'seven days'; and the Church collectively, and the believer individually, are called to walk in practical holiness during the seven days, or entire period, of their course here below; and this, moreover, is the direct result of being washed in the blood and having communion with the sufferings of Christ.

"The Israelite did not put away leaven in order to be saved, but because he was saved; and if he failed to put away leaven, it did not raise the question of security through the blood, but simply of fellowship with the assembly. "Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land." (Ver. 19.) The cutting off of an Israelite from the congregation answers precisely to the suspension of a Christian's fellowship, if he be indulging in that which is contrary to the holiness of the Divine presence. God cannot tolerate evil. A single unholy thought will interrupt the soul's communion; and until the soil contracted by any such thought is got rid of by confession, founded on the advocacy of Christ, the communion cannot possibly be restored. (See 1 John 1:5-10.) The true-hearted Christian rejoices in this. He can ever "give thanks at the remembrance of God's holiness." He would not, if he could, lower the standard a single hair's breadth. It is his exceeding joy to walk in company with one who will not go on, for a moment, with a single jot or tittle of 'leaven.'"

Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ

The invitation extended to the disciples of Jesus to drink of the cup of the fruit of the vine, in addition to representing the offer of His life to them, evidently represented further, the Master's offering to them the privilege of sharing in His sacrificial death. The inspired Apostle Paul in an impressive manner calls our attention to the deeper truth associated with this ordinance of the Lord's Supper. He says: "The loaf which we brake; is it not the communion [fellowship] of the Body of Christ [the Little Flock, the Church of which our Lord is the Head]? The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [fellowship] of the blood of Christ [the entire anointed company]? For we though many [members] are one loaf and one Body, for we all share in that one loaf." -- 1 Cor. 10:15-17.

To the consecrated, therefore, there can be but one meaning to the Apostle's language; the emblems, bread and wine, are not only remembrancers of the Lord's sacrifice, but also of their own covenant to share the sacrifice with Him, if by any means they might fulfill the conditions and be accounted worthy to be made partakers of the Divine nature, and to be with our Lord and Redeemer, His joint-heirs and co-workers in the blessing of all people.

Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." In associating the thought of the blood with the New Covenant, the purpose evidently was to convey the idea that His blood poured out was to be the means by which the New Covenant was to be inaugurated; in other words, it was to be for the sealing of the New Covenant -- that arrangement by which God would deal with and show mercy toward all mankind during the time of Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom. (Jer. 31:31-33.) And the Master in offering the cup to His followers was offering them the privilege of becoming identified with

Him or counted in with Him in the great sacrifice and in the shedding of blood which should go toward the sealing of the New Covenant when the day of sacrifice and the shedding of blood is over.

Self-Examination

"Let a man examine himself," says the Apostle; let him see to it that in partaking of the emblems he realizes them as the ransom price of his life and privileges; and furthermore, that he by partaking of them is pledging himself to share in the sufferings of Christ and to be broken for others; else otherwise his act of commemoration will be a condemnation to his daily life before his own conscience -- "condemnation to himself." Through lack of proper appreciation of this remembrancer, which symbolizes not only our justification, but also our consecration to share in the sufferings and death of Christ, the Apostle says, "Many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1 Cor. 11 :30.) The truth of this remark is evident; a failure to appreciate and a losing sight of the truths represented in this Supper are the cause of the weak, sickly, and sleepy condition of many in the Church. Nothing so fully awakens and strengthens the saints as a clear appreciation of the atoning work of our Lord and their share with Him in His sufferings and sacrifice in behalf of humanity. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

In keeping with our custom in the past, we have recommended this year the observance of the Passover Supper on the evening of March 31st; that being according to Jewish calendar, the beginning of Nisan 14. As for the matter of deciding the date of the Passover: If various brethren of influence amongst the friends attempt to reason out the matter and to fix the 14th of Nisan apart from the calculations of the Jewish calendar, the result will frequently be a variety of opinions, as various viewpoints may be taken. And if each insist that his view be adopted as the correct one, it would mean probably that three or four dates would be chosen and observed by different brethren throughout the country, each one being able to present forcibly from his particular viewpoint, the technicality on which he bases his conclusions.

Deciding the Date -- Unanimity of Observance Desired

Bust such lack of unanimity as to the time of the celebration of the Supper is sure to interfere materially with the oneness, sympathy, and harmony of the occasion as a whole for the entire Church, and rob it of the greater blessing that comes from a oneness and unanimity of thought and observance of this blessed celebration. In line with the above it is remembered that as in his earlier years Brother Russell attempted to personally determine the Passover date, he encountered these difficulties referred to above, and recognized that frequently there was a choice of two or more dates. He was accordingly led in his later years to overcome this entire difficulty by not attempting himself personally to fix the date at all, but to accept without equivocation or question the Passover date determined upon by the Jewish authorities and set forth in the Jewish calendar each year. We believe his decision was a wise one, for, as he explained, the matter of the exact day was not one of such importance as that the brethren should divide over it, some choosing one night, and some another. By accepting the Passover date of the Jewish calendar, this settled the matter for all, so that there was full harmony and oneness in the celebration of this precious and blessed occasion. For this

reason we have in these recent years recommended to the brethren that we likewise, adopt the Hebrew reckoning for the sake of general harmony and unanimity, and that the blessing may be all the greater, as upon the same night all are partaking of the Supper and remembering other individuals and Classes of brethren who they realize are also partaking of the emblems that evening.

As the brethren this coming Passover season unite once more to commemorate this most important and sacred event, let us endeavor to consider more profoundly if possible the love of Christ for us and for all; it will surely strengthen us as His followers to endure more and more hardness as good soldiers of the cross. Ah, let us consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest we become weary and faint in our minds under the light afflictions now permitted for our trial and discipline, which if faithfully endured will work out for each a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

"SOME BETTER THINGS"

"Though wintry wind the yellow leaf displaceth,
For Spring's sweet harbingers it maketh room;
Ere long the tender bud the forest graceth,
New verdure waketh from old nature's tomb.

"The snowy blossom from the orchard fadeth,
'Tis then the earnest of fair fruit we find;
Though morning mist the landscape overshadoweth,
The sunlit mountain-peaks are just behind.

"Lo, in the crimson West the Glory dieth,
And from his throne Day's Monarch hath withdrawn!
Herein the promise of the sunrise lieth
Already we are waiting for the dawn.

"O heart bereaved, some better thing remaineth,
Though God should seem thy treasures to remove;
Some better thing His gracious hand retaineth;
He will not fail the children of His love.

"Some better thing! Thy life-joy all departed
Its glory trailing sadly in the dust;
O cleave to Him; the Savior tender-hearted
Thou canst not understand, but thou canst trust.

"Perchance He leads to depths of self-abasement,
And storms awake, and billows round thee roll.
Give thanks! Contrition is the open casement
Through which the Dove of Peace shall reach thy soul

"O patient heart, thy best, thy brightest bringing,
With full consent upon His altar lay!
Some fair new blessing even now is winging,
All unobserved, its sure and noiseless way.

"Thy purpose crossed, each sunny prospect clouded,
Still to His changeless promise learn to cling.

Although His plan may be in darkness shrouded,
Jehovah hath reserved some better thing!"

Ministering to the Edification of Others

"Let no unwholesome words ever pass your lips, but let all your words be good for benefiting others according to the need of the moment, so that they may be a means of blessing to the hearers." – Eph. 4:2, Weymouth

WHAT EMPHASIS the Word of God has put upon the inevitable results of a good or bad conversation! In many plain, forceful statements we are repeatedly shown that the words of our mouths are the unfailing index of our characters; the thought being that the habitual drift of our speech will reveal the real condition of the heart. Thank God, it does not necessarily mean that every word that is not perfectly in tune with holiness, and every relapse into unprofitable conversation that may occur, must be taken as the sure token that deliberate wickedness is established permanently in the heart; for we remember the assuring words of Scripture, "For we often stumble and fall, all of us. If there is any one who never stumbles in speech, that man has reached maturity of character and is able to curb his whole nature." (Jas. 3:2.) But such a man does not exist, therefore we all need and must continually plead the merit of our Redeemer and Advocate, while we continue on in the effort to bring every thought and word into captivity to the will of Christ, and to perfect holiness in the reverence of the Lord.

Among the many Scriptures bearing on this point we recall the significant statement of Jesus, which is such a beautiful illustration of His teaching that speech reveals character: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (Matt. 12:34, 35.) These words of our Master indicate that the heart and the mouth are under very special scrutiny, the former representing the individual character, and (the latter being an index of the character. It is in this same view of the matter that those words of wisdom were penned: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee." (Prov. 4:23, 24.) The indication is clear that a right condition of heart is necessary to right words; for, as experience testifies to every man: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It is therefore just and proper that our words should be a criterion of judgment in the Lord's estimation of us, as He tells us they are. True, honeyed words are often only a mask of deep hypocrisy; but the mask is sure to drop off some time, as soon as selfish policy renders a change of tactics necessary. The fact therefore remains that the words, the course of conversation and conduct, are an unfailing index of the heart condition.

Keeping the Heart our First Duty

Our first concern, then, should be for the heart – that its affections and dispositions may be fully under the control of Divine grace; that every principle of truth and righteousness may be enthroned there; that justice, mercy, benevolence, brotherly kindness, love, faith, meekness, temperance, supreme reverence for God, and Christ, and a fervent love for all the beauties of holiness, may be firmly fixed, as the governing principles of life. If these

principles be fixed, established, in the heart, then out, of the good treasure of the heart the mouth will speak forth words of truth, soberness, wisdom and grace, words that will be unctuous and blessed to all with whom we have converse, or to whom we may minister, publicly or privately.

No Fountain Yields both Sweet and Bitter Water

Depraved appetites so often seek justification behind the theory of doing evil that good may come, under the pretext of helping others to a knowledge of real or supposed facts. And herein lies a subtle snare of our wily Adversary, whereby he would subvert our minds and deceive us with the thought that there are exceptions to this rule, and that we may frequently indulge in gossip and rehearsals of someone's evil practices without injury to ourselves. It can not be denied that there are rare occasions when reference should be made to flagrant evils that are positively known to exist, and which, if winked at, and condoned, would work great damage to others, and bring reproach upon the cause of truth. But it is the business of the pure in heart to see that he walk very circumspectly in this matter. He must learn to draw a dead line between that which duty to God and the brethren obligates him to disclose, and that which is merely a rehearsal of what is already quite generally known to be facts. For this latter there is no precedent in the example of Jesus and His Apostles, and as we have seen in a recent review in these columns of Luther's life, he also reprov'd some of his contemporaries for indulging in it, clearly recognizing that such was not only unbecoming to saints, but manifestly harmful to both speaker and hearer. The pointed question of James, and its uncompromising answer, as given in chapter 3, verses 11 and 12 of his Epistle, is worthy of note in this connection. There he asks, "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh." This unqualified statement has been verified in our experiences so often that we cannot doubt its truthfulness. We have never, at any time, seen a natural fountain pouring forth a refreshing stream and at the same time filling our cup with briny and bitter water. Likewise, there cannot be found a saint, well pleasing to God, and an influence for good among the brethren, whose mouth is filled with blessing and cursing. Truly, then, it might be said, By their words ye shall know them -- the good man, out of a good, pure heart, will bring forth good, constructive, wholesome things; the evil man, by the same inflexible rule, will be recognized by the disposition to gossip, to rehearse unprofitable incidents, past history, and current rumors, and leave behind no trace of the Spirit's elevating influences.

Unwholesome Words Grieve the Holy Spirit

Let us consider here the words of the Apostle Paul contained in the texts immediately following the one with which we began. The connection, it will be noticed, is quite important. "And beware of grieving the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you have been sealed in preparation for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and all passionate feeling, all anger and loud insulting language, be unknown among you-and also every kind of malice." (Eph. 4:30, 31.) The thought is that we grieve the Holy Spirit by indulging in that which is out of harmony with holiness and spiritual helpfulness. It is surely offensive to the ears of God to hear us dwell much upon unprofitable reiterations of well known evils, for the rehearsal of which there is little or no justification, for we are satisfied such things are most distressing and painful

to Him, and we grieve His Spirit by our frequent transgressions of the Apostolic command, wherein we are urged to habitually dwell upon "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." -- Phil. 4:9.

But this matter of grieving the Holy Spirit is something that extends much further than is generally supposed. By violating the Lord's explicit commands, we grieve the Holy Spirit in our own hearts, but when this violation is in the presence of others of the Lord's people, in a way that would be to their spiritual injury, as in evil speaking or other unprofitable conversation, the Holy Spirit in them is also grieved, and thus our offense is a double one. If this thought was always kept in mind, we doubt not that it would prove an effectual brake on many conversations that are allowed to run along unchecked in the presence of those to whom general gossip and reiterations of the faults and failings of others are positively painful.

The Spiritual Love the Things of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit revels in spiritual things, and unless it be a matter of absolute duty, where one might be seriously injured by not knowing the truth, the prompting of the Spirit will always be to forget the things that are behind, and to concentrate the thought and effort on the things that lift the mind to higher planes. Is this not the meaning of the Psalmist's words as he addresses his wholesome counsel to those who might be overburdened with a desire to reform present wrong conditions: "Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evil doers shall [so-on] be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord [to correct and punish], they shall inherit the earth." (Psa. 37:1, 2, 7-9.) Surely it will be such who will enjoy at the present time most of the Lord's sanctifying presence, for the pure in heart see God and He holds converse only with those whose minds are clean.

Accountable to God Alone

As an expression of what we consider very wise and appropriate advice, we will here quote from the early writings of Brother Russell, wherein he sets forth the course of action that seemed best to him, and which, we believe, he consistently followed throughout the long years of his ministry:

"Each one should **know**, directly or indirectly, what he is assisting to promulgate as truth. If you have read and failed to comprehend a publication, do not suppose your mind incapable of grasping anything so deep and complex, and then proceed to circulate it among others; but conclude that if you have not the mental capacity to understand it, your safest plan will be not to run the risk of choking any one else with it. 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin,' applies to this as well as to other matters.

"These criticisms apply to Watch Tower publications as well as to others. Prove by God's Word all that you receive from this office. (1) See that it squares with the doctrine of the Ransom: if it does not, you need go no further with the proving. (2) If it is in accord with that foundation of the Gospel, proceed to examine it in the light of all the Scriptures. (3) If it stands these tests, receive it and hold it fast, as being from God; and (4) circulate it wherever you can. (5) But if ever you get from us either tract or paper which you do not find in harmony with the Scriptures, surely let us know wherein it disagrees, and do not circulate it. . . . It is not for us to forbid any one the exercise of his own talents according to his own wisdom. But if any one exercise his talents in a manner which we consider unwise or wholly or partially erroneous, it is our duty not to render any assistance to the unwise course. It is one thing to forbid, and to use sword and fagot to restrain, and quite another thing to **leave them to themselves and to exercise your own talents according to your own judgment of the Lord's will** We have but one motive in publishing -- namely, to disseminate the Truth, as the Editor understands the Word of God to teach it. **Let others publish what they please, and how they please; we forbid them not, and we assist them not if they follow not the lines of truth as we have been guided of the Lord to see them, and are seeking to follow them.**"

Have not the years of faithful service subsequent to this statement in 1894 demonstrated the wisdom of such a decision? How thankful we are that it was so steadfastly adhered to, and that our minds were so constantly focused on the Lord and His Word. Thus in the volumes and the Watch Towers that came from his pen there remains a freshness and a spirit of helpfulness that directs the reader's mind, not to the endless controversies of men, but to the peace-producing, love-inspiring, and sin-destroying Word of God. Thank God, Brother Russell chose this more excellent way instead of treating his readers to a continual self-laudation, ingeniously accomplished by a perpetual examination and dissection of the efforts of others, and a treadmill rehearsal of how wicked and unorthodox all contemporaries were, because they "follow not with us."

Kind Words can Never Die

While present developments in our midst have caused us to reflect and to consider thoughtfully the situation, yet after all, there has been no ground for surprise over the changes that have taken place. Bible prophecy, and faithful forecasts of the future possibilities that came to us years ago, have prepared the watching saints for all that has transpired. Since the meaning, therefore, of the shakings and testings that now abound has been well understood, it should not be difficult for any one to see where the burden of effort should be focused. And if we have approximated in our personal development the proportionate measure of the spirit of a sound mind possible to us, we will know that we are not called upon now to assume chiefly the role of a corrector and reformer, but on the contrary, we will find numberless ways of comforting and encouraging those who are faithful and spiritual, while we wait on the Lord and let every man's work be revealed by the fire of the testing time.

It is only the things that abide that are really worth our while just now. How many are there today who know that the Wesleys and Toplady, the hymn writer, were irreconcilably opposed in many of their religious views. Wesleys, the Arminians, and Toplady, the Calvinist, engaged in much wordy

warfare over their disputed questions, and had little good to say of each other's Christian virtues. All are long since dead, and while we are not forgetting; that in God's overruling, the cause of truth was, in some measure advanced by these and similar discussions, the point we are making now is that only those familiar with Church history know that in the heat of argument these men emphasized their differences and were blind to each other's virtues, but now while their disputes repose in libraries, their better side, their virtues, clothed in heaven's language, and breathing the life of the Spirit, are fresh and ever green in the minds of saints everywhere today. And as long as the Church remains in the flesh, she will sing with every heart emotion thrilled, Toplady's

"Rack of Ages, cleft for one,
I am hidden safe in Thee:
Hidden here from all my foes,
None can harm though all oppose."

And likewise, she will continue to find her deepest longing expressed, and her sense of gratitude revived, in the hymn Charles Wesley framed in words that cannot die:

"Jesus, lover of any soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the billows near me roll,
While the tempest still is high."

And as illustrating the same lesson, that the things that are good abide, while the unprofitable and destructive elements die, we have the historian's account of Bernard of Clairvaux, a monk who became very influential in political circles in Europe during the 11th and 12th centuries. Of this man, history tells us that he was ready to depopulate Europe in pushing the misguided crusades to the Holy Land, and yet his devout meditations and one of his hymns are about all that is preserved for us from the musty archives of the ancient world. And with all the freshness of the morning his hymn lives on:

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills my breast,
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

"No voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Thy blest name,
O Savior of mankind."

Speaking Things Unctuous and Blessed

Doubtless these men, in the days of their ardent zeal, were fully convinced that a grateful posterity would remember them chiefly because of their fiery denunciations of their contemporaries, and for their defense of opinions, held supreme and sacred. But today, we who are separated from them by the lapse of time, are witnesses of the fact that "all flesh is grass," and all that emanates from the flesh is as transient as the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is withered away. Therefore, while their "war of words" has faded from memory, the "still small voice" of the Spirit, as it found expression in the lives of these men, lives on and on, fostering in succeeding generations the things that are true, venerable, just, lovely, virtuous,

praiseworthy, and eternal, thus weaving into the character of each receptive soul, the love that has no pleasure or rejoicing in doing or rehearsing iniquity, real or imaginary, but does rejoice in the truth.

How important it is that we each recognize our responsibility in this matter, and to always remember that we are continually exercising our influence for good or evil in all our contacts with others. This responsibility we have to some considerable extent acknowledged, and we have repeatedly pledged ourselves before the Lord and His people to "be careful to honor the Lord with my lips, that my words may be unctuous and blessed to all." How appropriate it would be, then, if at the end of each hour of converse with the brethren, or at the end of each discourse in their presence, we applied this test. Surely if we began with a prayer that the Lord would set a watch before our lips, and then at the end of such conversation or discourse we subjected our words to the rule of this pledge, the passing days would produce a mellowed spirit, a guarded speech, and an outflow of edifying, gracious words. And in this we would have a criterion that would eliminate any misunderstanding as to what we must, in the discharge of duty, speak forth, and as to what should be considered unnecessary and unprofitable. From John Wesley we have this rule: "Would you judge in the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure [anything in which the fleshly mind finds pleasure], take this rule: whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things; whatever increases, the authority of your body [flesh] over your mind -- that is sin."

A Sweet Savor of Christ

The story is told of a young artist who, after observing a beautiful picture that he saw hanging, in a palace, desired to reproduce it. His request for the privilege of copying it in the palace being denied him, he determined to do it from memory. Thereafter he went daily to the palace to sit and gaze on the painting that had inspired him, until all its outlines were impressed upon his mind. Then he began to paint, returning at frequent intervals for fresh impressions of the picture he desired to reproduce. Day by day he added feature after feature, and under his brush the picture grew into line with the original. Finally it was completed and placed on exhibition, with the result that those who saw it were thrilled and delighted. But when the circumstances were all explained to them, and they learned that it was a reproduced work of art, they at once said, **We must see the original.** How well this illustrates the lesson, namely that it ought to be the object and spirit of all our Christian service to so faithfully represent and reproduce the gracious words that proceeded out of our Savior's mouth, that our hearers would experience a fresh impetus and say, If this brother's or sister's conversation and ministry are reproductions of Jesus, then, I must see Jesus.

As a dear saint of former days has truly said, "Any man who does not desire Christian perfection [for himself and others], and who does not constantly make it his aim to attain it, may set it down as demonstrably certain that he has no true religion," and therefore nothing to impart to others. Therefore let us each give careful heed to the words of our text, and henceforth "Let no unwholesome words ever pass your lips, but let all your words be good for benefiting others according to the need of the moment, so that they may be a means of blessing to the hearers."

The Son of God before the Court of Man

"And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked Him, saying, art thou the King of the Jews?" -- Matt. 27:11.

“KEEP thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life,” wrote one of old, and experience truly shows that the words are fraught with much wisdom. How much depends upon our proper decision on the questions of life as they come before us day by day! We cannot be too careful in the way we meet the trials and testings of character which come to us and whose determination involve so much respecting the present as well as the future life. These thoughts logically come before us in a solemn manner as we consider the subject of our Lord's last hours during which He and His disciples, as well as various others, came under severe tests.

The narrative of our dear Redeemer's shame, endured so patiently on our behalf, is most touching, and perhaps the relation of it and the reading of it have brought more hearts to repentance than almost anything else. Nor does it lose its power with those who have already accepted our Lord and the redemption which His blood effected; it mellows our hearts every time we consider Him who endured such great contradiction of sinners against Himself, when we remember that it was unmerited by Him, and that it was a part of His sacrifice on our behalf.

The Apostle refers to how in the days of His flesh He offered up prayers with strong cryings unto Him who was able to save Him from [out of] death, and was heard in that He feared. (Heb. 5 :7.) He was heard in respect to that He feared: He was delivered from death by a resurrection. More than that, He was delivered from the fear of death, from all doubt as respected His faithfulness to the Father's will and His acceptance of the Father down to the very end.

Infinite Love Knew no Wearying

The charge brought against Jesus as He stood before Caiaphas, the High Priest, was that of blasphemy; it was one of the few charges the penalty of which under the Law was death, and it was His death His enemies wanted. The blasphemy against God was declared to be proved in that He claimed to be the Son of God, and blasphemy against the temple was claimed to be proved in that some had heard Him say that if the temple were destroyed He could rear it again in three days. A decision was reached, but nothing could be done until daylight. Meantime the petty officers of the court spat upon the Lord, blindfolded Him, and struck Him, saying, "Prophesy now, who is he that smote thee?" and thus the weary hours passed till daybreak. The Jews thought it a trial of the Lord, but His trial was all in the past. It was the trial of their high priests, of the court officers and of the members of the Sanhedrin and of the Jewish nation. It was a trial of whether they loved truth or falsehood, righteousness or unrighteousness. They decided for unrighteousness. Our Lord still made no defense under this terrible ordeal. The remark of another is well in place here:

"The hands they had bound had healed the sick and raised the dead, the lips they smote had calmed the winds and the waves. One word, and the splendors of the Mount of Transfiguration would have filled the chamber; one word, and the menials now sporting with Him at their will would have perished. But, as He had begun and continued, He would end as

self-restrained in the use of His awful powers on His own behalf as if He had been the most helpless of men. Divine patience and infinite love knew no wearying. He had but to will it and walk free, but He came to die for man, and He would do it."

Pilate's Wonderful Opportunity

The trial before the Sanhedrin finished, the Savior was next brought before the Roman governor. Now Pilate's time had come for trial. He stood as judge, and the principles of right and wrong, truth and untruth, righteousness and unrighteousness, in this case were for him to determine. What a wonderful chance he had! Suppose he had refused to connive at the malice of the high priest when he recognized that it was "for envy they had delivered Him." Suppose that Pilate had dismissed the high priest and Sanhedrin and the multitude and had set Jesus free, and had cautioned them that if any of them did Him injury they would be answerable with their lives! What a noble picture it would have been before the eyes of history! But instead, his course and reputation have been anything but commendable and admirable. Nevertheless, while recognizing that he thus had a test, and that he failed to take the noble part, we could scarcely share with the majority in their very ignominious view of this governor.

We are to remember that Pilate was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a heathen man without God and having no hope in the world. We are to remember that he did not believe in the Jew's religion, whatever he may have believed. He did not believe in Jesus, nor had he any respect for the Messianic promises. He was filling the office of governor as the representative of Caesar's government at Rome. He had his own pleasures and self-gratifications distinct from the Jews and their festivals, etc., for which he cared nothing. He was not in covenant relationship with our God, but was merely representing Caesar, and Caesar expected nothing of him except that he would preserve the peace and quiet of the city and maintain the dignity and authority of Rome. Rome cared not if one or ten or hundreds of innocent persons were put to death, it only the peace of the country were maintained. If was, therefore, Pilate's first duty as Roman governor to keep the peace in Jerusalem.

Art Thou the King of the Jews?

From this standpoint we can say that Pilate's course appeared to be noble and just -- though not the noble and just one which we would have preferred for him. Pilate did not readily accept the charges of the Pharisees; he knew them to be hypocritical, and really we may here say that the worst wickedness in the world at any time, at every time, in its history has been that form of wickedness which parades under the cloak of religion, which does evil in the name of that which is right, true, good. Pilate asked for specifications respecting the treason, and, this seems to have surprised the chief priests, who presumed that their word would be taken on that subject without proof. If they thought a Jew had been worthy of death for treason, then Pilate should certainly so suspect and so believe, for they were not supposed to wish the destruction of any fellow-Jew on such a charge. Pilate looked at Jesus, and saw in Him no criminal appearance, saw that He did not look at all like one who would become a leader of sedition; that, instead, meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, love, were marks of His features. Pilate inquired of

Jesus respecting this charge, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Our Lord's answer was not quite equivalent to yes, and yet it intimated that He did not wish to dispute the charge. To have attempted to explain the Kingdom of God under such circumstances would have been improper, for none there were prepared to hear and appreciate or understand; to have done so would have been in conflict with our Lord's own instruction on the subject, not to cast pearls before swine. Those present were not prepared to understand that the Kingdom would come a spirit Kingdom, that it would have earthly representatives, etc.

Preferring Barabbas to Jesus

There had been a real sedition, a genuine movement against the authority of Rome, at a previous time, and Barabbas and others had been made prisoners on account of it. Some one in the crowd started a call on the governor to do as was his custom every year at this time -- to release some prisoner as a matter of clemency and favor. Soon the whole mob took it up, and Pilate inquired, "Shall I then release unto you the king of the Jews?" -- Jesus. His thought evidently was to arouse in them to some extent an enthusiasm in favor of his liberation of Jesus, for we read that he perceived that it was the chief priests and not the multitudes that were against Jesus. He hoped to turn the rabble to the side of Jesus and to release Him on their request. But Pilate was mistaken: The hatred inspired by religious fanaticism is the deepest, wickedest, and most conscienceless of all, and Barabbas was promptly accepted - which left Pilate committed on that point and left Jesus under the implied sentence. One wonders that they were not ashamed in the presence of even a heathen governor to manifest their perfidy in this manner -- to accuse Jesus of being a traitor to Rome and asking to have Him crucified and in the same breath to urge the release of one about whose rioting there was no question.

Pilate evidently heard something said about Jesus' work being largely done in Galilee, and thought to be rid of the matter by turning the case over to Herod, the ruler of Galilee, who was present in Jerusalem at the time. He therefore sent Jesus bound to Herod, with the explanation that, as He was a Galilean, Pilate was pleased to acknowledge Herod and to submit the case to his adjudication. Finding that Jesus would not reply to him, nor perform any miracles for his entertainment, Herod returned Him to Pilate, in turn expressing his appreciation of Pilate's course, but declining to interfere in Pilate's territory. From that time Pilate and Herod were friends, though previously they had been adversaries.

Behold the Man!

Some six times in all Pilate declared the innocence of Jesus, yet under the circumstances already narrated, he hesitated to absolutely refuse the demand of the Jewish priests and multitude; especially did he feel the point of the argument made by the priests, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend," which meant, You are an enemy to Caesar and to the government of Rome. Pilate realized that such a course would not be understood by his superiors, and hence he tried every method to get the Jews satisfied in the matter. One step in this proceeding was to order that Jesus should be scourged. He hoped that the scourging would satisfy His adversaries' thirst for blood. Meantime Pilate's wife sent a message to him urging that he do

nothing against this man, that she had had a dream in the night to this effect. Under the circumstances Pilate evidently did everything that could be expected of a worldly man in the times and under the conditions in which he lived. The only exception to such a procedure that we could expect would be on the part of a Christian, or of some one who under Christian influence had gained a much more than ordinary love for justice, and willingness to sacrifice every interest in its behalf.

It was in connection with his endeavor to free Jesus from those who sought His life that Pilate stood Jesus forth so that they might see Him, exclaiming, "Behold the man!" The impression we get is that Pilate himself was struck with the quiet dignity of our Lord in His facial expression, in His composure under trying conditions. His words seem to mean, Look at the man you are talking about crucifying! Why, Jews, you have not such a man in all your land. I doubt if there is any man His equal anywhere! But it was all of no avail; the multitude had become excited and were clamoring for our Lord's blood. In the expressive symbolic language of the time, Pilate, before delivering Jesus for crucifixion; indicated that he was averse to the sentence they were compelling him to pronounce, and that wherever the responsibility lay he was not the guilty party. He did this by washing his hands with water in the presence of the people, exclaiming, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." -- Matt. 27 :24.

The Result of these Trials-Retribution

What a number of trials, testings, and provings we have found in this lesson -- and now let us briefly glance at the results. Judas, as a result of failure in his trial, died soon by his own hand. Pilate, the unwilling instrument of the condemnation and not one hundredth part as guilty as the Jews, shortly afterwards lost his commission as governor and in despondency committed suicide. Annas, the high priest, was subsequently dragged through the streets, scourged, and murdered. The multitude who cried out, "Crucify Him!" and who, in answer to Pilate's declaration that he was innocent of the blood of Jesus, declared, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," experienced a baptism of blood not many years after when the entire city of Jerusalem was a scene of most horrible atrocities, which culminated in the utter destruction of their city with great loss of life, in the overthrow of the entire Jewish polity in Palestine, and in the scattering of the survivors amongst all nations and peoples. The curse they thus brought upon themselves still remains to some extent; His blood is still upon them, and from that day until the present time the Jews have suffered greatly; and although the Divine disfavor has been passing from them as a nation in these last times, it will continue in some measure until the divinely set time. The curse will be remitted because of its being forgiven through the grace of God in Christ.

In great contrast we note the rich blessings that came to the Lord Jesus as a result of His testings and trial, during which He demonstrated His loyalty to God to the last degree. The Apostle points one of his most forcible lessons with this subject, urging that all of the Lord's followers should consider the meekness, patience, and sufferings of Christ, endured most unjustly, lest we should be weary or faint in our minds, when enduring comparatively light afflictions, while seeking to walk in His footsteps. (Heb. 12:3.) Again, the Apostle refers to this, in connection with the other sufferings of Christ, saying that He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich; that he suffered, the Just for the unjust, that he

might bring us to God; and that He laid down His life on our behalf, a willing sacrifice, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Providence and the Great Reformation

Eighth of the Series

MELANCTHON WITH all his learning in Greek and Latin, became a valuable help to Luther in the translation of the Scriptures. His fellowship meant much in the days just preceding his hearing at Augsburg, where it was agreed by the Pope that his trial should take place, instead of at Rome. At Augsburg he must face a greater wrath than that which brought Huss to the stake. But full of faith in the power and goodness of God, Luther did not tremble: "What I have undertaken to defend," said he, "I hope I shall, by Christ's help, be enabled to maintain. As to force, we must needs yield to that, but without forsaking the truth."

Staupitz, that good, but timid, friend, moved at the thought of his danger and feeling himself responsible, who had urged him from the cloister out in the troubles and dangers of life, wrote him, imploring him to flee and take refuge with him in his convent. "It seems to me," he wrote, "that the whole world is up in arms, and combined against the truth. Even so was the crucified Jesus hated! I see not that you have anything else to expect than persecution. Ere long no one without the Pope's permission, will be allowed to search the Scriptures, and to learn Christ from them, which yet is Christ's injunction. Your friends are few in number. God grant to those few friends courage to declare themselves in opposition to your formidable enemies! Your most prudent course is to leave Wittemberg for a time, and come and reside with me. Then let us live and die together"

Luther's Indomitable Courage

Still others who sympathized with Luther reasoned with him and endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose to meet his adversaries at Augsburg. One of these, John Kestner, purveyor to the Coredeliers aroused with grave fear at the thought of the immense peril to which Luther was subjecting himself, said to him, "Brother, in Augsburg you will meet with Italians, who are learned men and subtle antagonists, and who will give you enough to do. I fear you will not be able to defend your cause against them. They will cast you into the fire, and their flames will consume you." To this Luther replied, "Dear Friend, pray to our Lord God who is in heaven, and put up a 'paternoster' for me and for His dear Son Jesus, whose cause is mine, that He may be favorable to Him. If He maintain His cause, mine is maintained, but if He will not maintain it, of a truth it is not I who can maintain it, and it is He who will bear the dishonor."

Thus, says the historian, "The courage of the Wittemberg doctor [Luther], who was going quietly on foot to answer a summons which had terminated in death to so many of his predecessors, astonished all who saw him. Interest, admiration and sympathy prevailed by turns in their hearts."

En route to Augsburg Luther stopped at Nuremberg, where he, had conference with a number of notable characters, and the historian says, "He derived strength from the conversation of these excellent ones of the earth, while many monks and laymen felt alarm at his journey, and endeavored to shake his resolution, beseeching him to retrace his steps. The letters he wrote

from this city show the spirit which then animated him: 'I have met,' said he, 'with pusillanimous men who wish to persuade me not to go to Augsburg; but I am resolved to proceed. The Lord's will be done! Even at Augsburg, even in the midst of His enemies, Christ reigns. Let Christ live; let Luther die, and every sinner, according as it is written! May the God of my salvation be exalted! Farewell! Persevere, stand fast; for it is necessary to be rejected either by God or by man: but God is true, and man is a liar.'"

The facts bearing upon Luther's examination and trial at Augsburg are most interesting; we briefly note some of the more outstanding features: The supreme Pontiff at Rome had delegated as his envoy and representative, before whom Luther should appear at Augsburg, Cardinal De Vio. He was from the town of Gaeta, in the Kingdom of Naples, where he had arisen to the distinction of a Cardinal; and the historian says that Cardinal De Vio was not of a character calculated to encourage Luther.

Wily and Subtle Methods

Preceding the trial, and as intending to intimidate Luther and dissipate his courage, an Italian courtier named Urban of Serra Longa was sent to confer with the reformer. He hoped to make short work with the German monk. He arrived, attended by two domestics, and after having most cordially saluted Luther, the diplomatist added in an affectionate manner:

"I am come to offer you good advice. Be wise, and become reconciled with the Church. Submit to the cardinal without reserve. Retract your offensive language. Remember the Abbot Joachim of Florence: he had published, as you know, many heretical things, and yet he was declared no heretic, because he retracted his errors.'

"Upon this Luther spoke of justifying what he had done.

"Serra Longa.---Beware of that! Would you enter the lists against the legate of his holiness?'

"Luther. -- 'If they convince me of having taught anything contrary to the Roman Church, I shall be my own judge, and immediately retract. The essential point will be to know whether the legate relies on the authority of St. Thomas more than the faith will sanction. If he does so, I will not yield.'

"Serra Longa.--'Oh, oh ! You intend to break a lance then !'

"The Italian then began to use language which Luther styles horrible. He argued that one might maintain false propositions, provided they brought in money and filled the treasury; that all discussion in the universities against the pope's authority must be avoided; that, on the contrary, it should be asserted that the Pope could, by a single nod, change or suppress articles of faith; and so he ran on, in a similar strain. But the wily Italian soon perceived that he was forgetting himself; and returning to his mild language, he endeavored to persuade Luther to submit to the legate in all things, and to retract his doctrine, his oaths, and his theses.

"The doctor, who was at first disposed to credit the fair professions of the orator Urban (as he calls him in his narrative), was now convinced that they were of little worth, and that he was much more on the legate's side than on his. He consequently became less communicative, and was content to say, that he was disposed to show all humility, to give proofs of his obedience, and render satisfaction in those things in which he might have erred. At these

words Serra Longa exclaimed joyfully: 'I shall hasten to the legate; you will follow me presently. Everything will go well, and all will soon be settled.'

"He went away. The Saxon monk, who had more discernment than the Roman courtier, thought to himself: 'This crafty Sinon has been badly taught and trained by his Greeks.' Luther was in suspense between hope and fear; yet hope prevailed. The visit and the strange professions of Serra Longa, whom he afterwards called a bungling mediator, revived his courage."

Two days later this same courtier, Serra Longa made another attempt, hoping to overpower Luther's determination, when the conversation in part went on as follows

"Serra Longa. -- 'When all forsake you, where will you take refuge?'

"Luther, looking to heaven with an eye of faith, 'Under heaven.'

"Serra Longa was silent for a moment, struck with the sublimity of this unexpected answer. He then resumed the conversation

"'What would you do if you held the legate, pope, and cardinals in your hands, as they have you in theirs?'

"Luther. -- 'I would show them all possible honor and respect. But with me, the Word of God is before everything.'

"Serra Longa, smiling, and snapping his fingers in the manner of the Italians 'Eh, eh! all honor! I do not believe a word of it.' "

Luther and the Inquisition

At last the day having arrived for the hearing before the Papal representative, Cardinal De Vio, Luther repaired to the legate's palace, and we read:

"He had scarcely entered the legate's palace, when all the Italians who formed the train of this prince of the Church, crowded round him; every one desired to see the famous doctor, and they thronged him so much that he could with difficulty proceed. Luther found the apostolic nuncio and Serra Longa in the hall where the cardinal was waiting for him. His reception was cold, but civil, and conformable with Roman etiquette. Luther, in accordance with the advice he had received from Serra Longa, prostrated himself before the cardinal; when the latter told him to rise, he remained on his knees; and at a fresh order from the legate, he stood up. Many of the most distinguished Italians in the legate's court found their way into the hall in order to be present during the interview; they particularly desired to see the German monk humble himself before the pope's representative.

"The legate remained silent. He hated Luther, as an adversary of the theological supremacy of St. Thomas, and as the chief of a new, active, and hostile party in a rising university, whose first steps had disquieted the Thomists. He was pleased at seeing Luther fall down before him, and thought, as a contemporary observes, that he was about to recant. The doctor on his part humbly waited for the prince to address him; but as he did not speak, Luther understood this silence as an invitation to begin, and he did so in these words

"'Most worthy Father, in obedience to the summons of his papal holiness, and in compliance with the orders of my gracious lord the Elector of Saxony, I appear before you, as a submissive and dutiful son of the holy Christian

Church, and acknowledge that I have published the propositions and theses ascribed to me. I am ready to listen most obediently to my accusation, and if I have erred, to submit to instruction in the truth.'

"The cardinal, who had determined to assume the appearance of a tender and compassionate father towards an erring child; then adopted the most friendly tone; he praised and expressed his delight at Luther's humility, and said to him: 'My dear son, you have disturbed all Germany by your dispute on indulgences. I understand that you are a very learned doctor in the Holy Scriptures, and that you have many followers. For this reason, if you desire to be a member of the Church, and to find a gracious father in the pope, listen to me:'

"After this prelude, the legate did not hesitate to declare at once what he expected of him, so confident was he of Luther's submission. 'Here are three articles,' said he, 'which by the command of our holy Father, Pope Leo X, I have to set before you. First, you must bethink yourself, own your faults, and retract your errors, propositions, and sermons; secondly; You must promise to abstain in future from propagating your opinions; and, thirdly, Bind yourself to behave with greater moderation, and avoid everything that may grieve or disturb the Church.'

"Luther. -- 'Most holy Father, I beg you will show me the pope's brief, by virtue of which you have received full powers to treat of this matter.'

"Serra Longa and the other Italians opened their eyes with astonishment at this demand, and although the German monk had already appeared to them a very strange kind of man, they could not conceal their amazement at such a daring request. Christians, accustomed to ideas of justice, desire that justice should be observed towards others and towards themselves; but those who act habitually in an arbitrary manner, are surprised when they are called upon to proceed according to the usual rules, formalities, and laws.

"De Vio. -- 'This request, my dear son, cannot be granted. You must confess your errors, keep a strict watch upon your words for the future, and not return like a dog to his vomit, so that we may sleep without anxiety or disturbance; then, in accordance with the order and authorization of our most holy Father the Pope, I will arrange the whole business.'

"Luther. -- 'Condescend, then, to inform me in what I have erred.'

"At this new request, the Italian courtiers, who had expected to see the poor German fall down on his knees and beg pardon, were still more astonished than before. None of them would have deigned to reply to so impertinent a question. But De Vio, who thought it ungenerous to crush this petty monk with the weight of his authority, and who, besides, trusted to gain an easy victory by his learning, consented to tell Luther of what he was accused, and even to enter into discussion with him. We must do justice to the general of the Dominicans. We must acknowledge that he showed more equity, a greater sense of propriety, and less passion, than have been often shown in similar matters since. He replied in a condescending tone

"'Most dear son! here are two propositions that you have advanced, and which you must retract before all: 1st, The treasure of indulgences does not consist of the sufferings and merits of our Lord Jesus Christ; 2nd, The man who receives the holy sacrament must have faith in the grace that is presented to him.'"

Struck a Mortal Blow at Romish Commerce

Both of the propositions mentioned by the cardinal had struck a mortal blow at Romish commerce, for if the pope did not possess the power of giving at will, the merits of the Savior, and if in receiving money from the financial agents of the Church, men were not benefited by the so-called indulgences and commissions of sin, then this paper money would lose its value and be worthless. As a matter of fact, the revenue they had produced was no little amount, and the historian continues, "By attacking these two doctrines, Luther had imitated Jesus Christ, who at the very beginning of His ministry had overthrown the tables of the moneychangers, and driven the dealers out of the temple. **Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise, He had said.**

"In confuting your errors,' said De Vio, 'I will not appeal to the authority of St. Thomas and other doctors of the schools; I will rely entirely on Holy Scripture, and talk with you in all friendliness.'

"But De Vio had scarcely begun to bring forward his proofs before he departed from the rule he had declared that he would follow. He combated Luther's first proposition by an Extravagance of Pope Clement, and the second by all sorts of opinions from the schoolmen. The discussion turned first on this papal constitution in favor of indulgences. Luther indignant at hearing what authority the legate ascribed to a decree of Rome, exclaimed:

"I cannot receive such constitutions as sufficient proofs on matters so important. For they pervert the Holy Scriptures, and never quote them to the purpose.'

"De Vio. -- 'The pope has power and authority over all things.'

"Luther, quickly. -- 'Except Scripture!'

"De Vic, sneering -- Except Scripture! Do you not know that the pope is above councils; he has recently condemned and punished the Council of Basle.'

"Luther. -- 'The University of Paris has appealed from this sentence.'

"De Vio. -- 'These Paris gentlemen will receive their deserts.'

"The dispute between the cardinal and Luther then turned upon the second point, namely, the faith Luther declared necessary for the efficacy of the sacraments. Luther, according to his custom, quoted various passages of Scripture in favor of the opinion he maintained; but the legate treated them with ridicule. 'It is of faith in general that you are speaking,' said he. -- 'No,' replied Luther. . . .

"As for indulgences,' said Luther to the legate, 'if it can be shown that I am mistaken, I am very ready to receive instruction. We may pass over that and yet be good Christians. But as to the article of faith, if I made the slightest concession, I should renounce Jesus Christ. I cannot -- I will not yield on this point, and with God's grace I will never yield.'

"De Vio, **growing angry.** -- 'Whether you will, or whether you will not, you must retract that article this very day, or, upon that article alone, I shall reject and condemn your whole doctrine.'

"Luther. -- I have no will but the Lord's. Let Him do with me as seemeth good to Him. But if I had four hundred heads, I would rather lose them all than retract the testimony which I have borne to the holy Christian faith.'

"De Vio. -- 'I did not come here to dispute with you. Retract, or prepare to suffer the penalty you have deserved.'

"Luther saw clearly that it was impossible to put an end to the subject by a conference. His opponent, sat before him as if he were himself pope, and pretended that he would receive humbly and submissively all that was said to him; and yet he listened to Luther's replies, even when they were founded on Holy Scripture, with shrugging of shoulders and every mark of irony and contempt. He thought the wiser plan would be to answer the cardinal in writing. This means, thought he, gives at least one consolation to the oppressed. Others will be able to judge of the matter, and the unjust adversary, who by his clamors remains master of the field of battle, may be frightened at the consequences."

(To be Continued)

Two General Conventions for the Coming Season

**AT DAYTON, OHIO, MAY 29, 30, 31
AT BROOKLYN, N. Y., SEPTEMBER 5, 6, 7.**

IT IS interesting to observe that consideration is being given by some of the brethren in various parts of the country to General Conventions for the coming season. Two general centers have been carefully considered and decided upon at which to hold conventions this season, namely Dayton, Ohio, and Brooklyn, N. Y. Both of these locations are quite favorable for the accommodation of a large number of friends. Dayton, Ohio, is situated as to make it a center for the entire Middle West, and it is hoped and believed that many of the friends will take advantage of this opportunity to join the brethren in Dayton, in a general conference from which much spiritual blessing will be derived.

A communication has been received from the Dayton brethren laying the matter before us, and we are accordingly bringing it before the brethren at large, in this statement. Perhaps we can do no better than publish below the letter just at hand from the brethren there:

Dayton, Ohio, February 4, 1931.

Dear Brethren:

Re: "Then they that loved the Lord spake often one to another."

.It has become customary to hold a convention in this part of the country during the spring of the year, at which time the weather is usually very pleasant.

The Dayton Ecclesia is assuming the privilege and pleasure of arranging for the convention this year. As Decoration Day comes on a Saturday, we have settled upon Friday, Saturday, and Sunday as particularly favorable, and so are arranging to make it three days -- May 29, 30, 31.

The undersigned brethren have been appointed a committee to prepare a program and make other necessary arrangements, and we are desirous of

doing everything within our power to make the gathering of the greatest benefit and enjoyment to the largest possible number of brethren.'

Heretofore, on similar occasions, attendance has been almost entirely from among friends residing within a radius of two or three hundred miles. However, we believe if the matter be called to the attention of the brotherhood in ample time, this year the convention may be much more wide-spread in its appeal, and perhaps assume the proportions of a well and widely attended General Convention.

With this objective in mind, we desire to use every means possible to broadcast this information far and near. Confident of your interest and cooperation in this undertaking, we are advising you thus far in advance so that you can give appropriate notice to the readers of the "Herald" through its columns, and if possible route one or more of your representatives so that they can be included among the convention speakers.

Believing and praying that the Lord will make this event one of great blessing; that He will see fit to, open the windows of heaven and pour out upon the assemblage an abundance of His Spirit and truth, and with greetings in His name, we are

Your brethren in love and service,

S. T. ARNOLD, PAUL E. THOMSON, R. R. HOLLISTER.

It will be observed from the foregoing that the brethren in Dayton are making the appeal, that while in former years their conventions have drawn from a radius of a reasonable distance surrounding Dayton, it is hoped that this convention planned for the coming May 30th holiday, will be of a larger and more general character than heretofore, furnishing opportunity for the brethren as far as the Mississippi River or further, on the West, and into the State of Pennsylvania or further, on the East.

We think their suggestion is a very good one, to make large plans for such a General Convention, that it may prove an occasion for fellowship in spiritual things such as has not been had in Dayton for many years. To the Lord first of all we must Make our appeal for His approval, His presence, and His blessing:

The second General Convention for the season is to be held in Brooklyn, N. Y., September 5, 6, .and 7. This covers the Labor Day holiday season and is one of the most favorable times of the year for many to have their vacations and be free from their usual secular labors. Again, there is a considerable number of the friends of the Truth throughout the various sections of the East, including New England, and Brooklyn is quite central for the entire East, including portions of Canada. Further, it is recalled that it was, in the city of Brooklyn that our dear Brother Russell spent his last days and concluded his wonderful ministry in behalf of God's people; and cherishing the memories of the various happy seasons of fellowship in this city during Brother Russell's presence, many of the friends have expressed the earnest desire to attend a General Convention here once more.

A most cordial invitation is extended by the brethren in Brooklyn to the friends far and near, to come together with them upon the occasion of this general assemblage next September. They promise that careful attention will be given to the preparation of the program, with selection of speakers that it is believed will minister in holy things to the pleasement of all.

It is hoped that by making the announcement of these two conventions this distance in advance, it will furnish a better opportunity for the brethren to look ahead and plan their vacations and arrange circumstances so that they may be free to attend either one or both of these proposed gatherings.

Again we emphasize the importance of the friends everywhere bearing this matter of the coming conventions in prayer before the Lord. It is His name, His people, and His ministry that we all desire to see honored and promoted. And so let all the friends lift up holy hands in prayer that the Spirit of the Lord may be so in evidence in the hearts of His people, that as they come together during the seasons of these convention assemblies, the Lord may be pleased to pour out a blessing upon the hearts of all that will prove such a Pentecostal benediction as to revive and energize His, people and so enable them to edify one another and be built up in Christ who is their living and eternal Head.

Further information concerning both of the conventions mentioned above, will appear in these columns later.