

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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God's Comprehensive Law

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are, Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.” -- Rev. 15:3.

GOD'S wisdom, love, and justice decide on what is best, and that decision is His will or law. But, strictly speaking, only so much of God's will as He expresses to His creatures **is law to them**. Hence, while His laws never conflict, they may be more or less fully expressed on one occasion than on another.

All of God's intelligent creatures are under instruction, being taught those laws which His infinite love, wisdom, and justice have enacted for the well being of all. Though created perfect, each in his plane of being, yet they all lack that scope of knowledge and wisdom which belongs in full measure to the Divine nature only. They all lack experience; hence, in giving them instruction in the wisdom and propriety of His laws, it has pleased Jehovah to make an illustration which would manifest and practically exemplify His own character and prove to His creatures the wisdom and righteousness of His laws.

It is evident that the spirit of His law is not to take advantage of some transgressive slip, occasioned by lack of experience on the part of His creatures but that He intends it to apply to the thoughts and intents of the hearts. That this is the real intent of God, we shall see illustrated by His dealings with those who have from lack of knowledge become sinners.

His law in full, as we now see it in the light of His Word, is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength,” and “thy neighbor as thyself”; and the penalty attached to the slightest deviation from that law is, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” -- that no being shall be permitted to live, who, when fully informed of God's righteous will, and enabled to obey it, shall not conform thereto; that all such be cut off from life. But this is as it may be seen now. Once it was not so clearly expressed, nor so clearly seen.

God's Plan a Wise Economy

To fully exemplify, this law, God caused man to be used as an illustration before this extreme penalty was placed upon the angels. So man was placed under the extreme penalty of His law -- death; God knew that through inexperience man would violate that law and come under its penalty; but He purposed to make an **illustration** to all His creatures of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its sure consequences, while at the same time His love and wisdom so marked out the Plan, that mankind, the illustration, might not suffer loss, but be blessed by the lesson as learned.

Nor should we forget that God's dealing with man was perfectly just. He had a right to demand perfect obedience from a perfect creature; and the fact that He at first did not inflict death upon the angels was a favor toward them;

even as toward man He has displayed His favor also, though in a different manner -- through a ransom, and Savior, and restitution, and future trial for life, more favorable than the first, because of the knowledge of sin and its effects, meanwhile acquired by experience. This was a masterly stroke of wise economy on God's part; for had the death penalty been pronounced on the angels who sinned, a redeemer of their own kind would have been necessary for their recovery; and not only one, but many -- one redeemer for each transgressor; for they were legion and were individually on trial; and the requirement of God's law is, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life.

Let us briefly view the exhibition of God's character as displayed in His dealing toward mankind whom He made a spectacle to angels. (1 Cor. 4:9.) In so doing, let us guard against the common error which judges of God's actions exactly as of our own. Let us remember that justice, love, wisdom and power, as commonly displayed by the fallen race, in dealing with each other, and by human parents with their children, are far from perfect. In our first parents those qualities were perfect: they were in the image of Jehovah; but in our experience, in consequence of the fall, these qualities are constantly at war with each other. Sometimes love has a victory over justice, and sometimes justice has a victory over love.

But with Jehovah there can be no conflict; and neither ever gains a victory or ascendancy over the other. Both are perfect, and work only in perfect harmony.

Divine Attributes all Displayed in Perfect Accord

Before man was created, the Justice, Wisdom, Love, and Power of God held conference on the subject, and devised the Plan which has since then been developing. The Plan was suggested by Wisdom and concurred in by the other attributes; the arrangement and execution of it being left in Wisdom's hands.

Wisdom designed to have the largest returns from the experience of man, and the most valuable illustration of God's character to all His creatures on every plane of being. Accordingly Wisdom said, Let the man come under the control of Justice, Love and Power, **separately**, that the force and operation of each may be the more forcibly illustrated. Let Justice first have complete control, let men be dealt with by the strict law, "Thou shalt not" -- "In the day that thou dost . . . dying thou shalt die." And it was so.

Man, inexperienced and unused to self-control and liberty, violated the law, and experienced the full weight of Justice, as Wisdom had foreseen and prepared for.

The lesson under Justice has been long and severe, but the lesson must be thorough, so that it shall never need repeating. Men and angels must learn that Justice is relentless, irrevocable and unalterable. Then, too, before it could be realized that the remedy for man lay only in Jehovah and nowhere else, an opportunity was offered for the trial of other methods for man's recovery. First, the angels were given rulership (during the Age before the flood), and made a miserable failure; for, while man became more and more corrupt himself, his evil influence led to the fall of some of those who attempted his assistance -- "those angels which kept not their first estate."

With the deluge that order of affairs passed away. Then, under the Law Covenant, given to one selected nation, another and different opportunity

was presented, to prove to man that even if God should cancel all enmity, or resentment, and receive the world unto covenant relations, they would require a Restorer, so that they could continue in harmony with God, even after being forgiven. Hence sacrifices and offerings for sin were instituted, and God treated that nation as though original sin and guilt had been removed, and then placed them under laws to prove to them, to us and to all, their inability (as degenerate creatures) to keep His law without a restitution to perfection to His likeness.

Meanwhile Love stood ready to manifest itself at the moment Wisdom should give the word. Love would have done so at once, but for two reasons: First, it could not oppose or interfere with the action of Justice in condemning man and delivering him over for the execution of the prescribed penalty. Second, though Love might have acknowledged Justice and approved its action by promptly providing a ransom (an equivalent price), Wisdom objected and did not permit this course at **that time**, because it saw best to make the lesson complete and thorough.

Hence for over four thousand years Love was not permitted to manifest itself, and might only speak in shadowy sacrifices and ceremonies, and more or less obscure promises. But, finally, when the right time had come, “in due time,” “in the fullness of time,” Wisdom gave the word, and Love began to manifest itself for man’s relief. The first act was to produce a perfect and sinless man to be a suitable “ransom for all”: one not under the Adamic curse -- who would lay down His life for the race, and whose sacrifice would meet all the requirements of Justice, and therefore be acceptable as a ransom and propitiation for man’s sins. And Love’s great exhibition was seen in the gift of the grandest and greatest and first of all God’s creation, who stooped and became man, to redeem men and “they called His name Jesus.”

“Ah!” says one who judges by his own feelings, “Now comes Love’s victory over Justice. We shall see that God is more loving than severe.”

But not so; God is not more loving than severely just: He is perfect in both respects. It will be indeed a victory for Love, but not over Justice. It will be much grander than that. It will prove a victory for both Justice and Love; for it will be gained by Love’s **paying the price** demanded by Justice -- **a ransom**, “an equivalent price.” (1 Tim. 2:4-6.) The love of God, so long veiled from sight, was manifested in the gift of His Son to be our Redeemer and Savior. The record is : “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [satisfaction or appeasement] for our sins.” **“In this was manifested the love of God** toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might **live** through Him.”

When Love had **ransomed** man, and was ready to reveal itself by restoring the willing and obedient of mankind to perfection and harmony with God, Wisdom postponed this on the ground that a further development of the Plan would ultimately enhance Love’s glory, and perfect the work; that an interlude (the Gospel Age) must occur in which should ‘he selected some from among the redeemed, some sharers in Christ’s sufferings and reproach, who should be counted worthy to share His glory and to be His associates in the execution of Love’s triumph .in “the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets.”

Long and faithfully has Love labored; but all her labor will yet be lost, unless in due time Wisdom shall commission. Power to do its special part in the great Plan.

Power has thus far stood in the background, doing nothing directly in man's relief, save in the resurrection of our Lord, and in the miracles, which shadowed forth its coming work.

Now, we are living in the day when Power begins to act, not in opposition to justice, but in harmony with Wisdom, Justice, and Love. Oh, blessed day! The Lamb who was slain and who redeemed us by His blood is now invested with Power to bless all whom He bought; and He is now about taking unto Himself His great power, and shall reign until He has subdued all enemies. -- Rev. 20:6; 1 Cor. 15 :25.

'God has chosen the Plan which most fully and grandly exemplifies His unalterable justice, and exhibits the exceeding riches of His grace -- His love; and in the restoration of man ("all who come to the Father by Him") from destruction, from death, to perfection and life, will God's power be illustrated far more forcibly than even man's creation. And as men and angels come to recognize the full fruition of God's Plan in the ages to come, will they not with one consent exclaim with our Brother and Apostle Paul, as he caught a glimpse of it: "O the depth .of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who bath known the mind [Plan] of the Lord? or who bath been His counselor? . . . Because out of Him and through Him, and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever." -- Rom. 11 :33-36.

The Institute's Annual Meeting

INTERESTED brethren are again reminded of the Annual Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute. As previously announced, the meeting will be held this year on Saturday, September 5, at 2 p. m. at the offices of the Institute, 177 Prospect Place, Brooklyn, New York.

The purpose of the meeting is the election of directors for the ensuing year, as well as the consideration and transaction of such other business as may properly come before it. On such occasions ample opportunity is given the members to freely discuss the various features of the work, and suggestions calculated to improve the ministry of the Institute are invited., We therefore trust that all members who find it possible will be present at this meeting, which is designed especially to accelerate the service of the Lord and His people.

In this connection, we desire to extend a cordial invitation to all our brethren who can make it convenient to attend this meeting, regardless of whether or not they hold membership in the Institute. Reports will be submitted covering various features of the ministry of the Lord's people, which we believe will be of interest to a%11 who are bearing the welfare of the Church upon their hearts.

The names of the brethren who have been serving as directors during the past year, and whose term of office expires September 5, are as follows

BLACKBURN, J. J. Toronto, Ont.
BOULTER B. Plainfield, N.J.
GREiNER, P. L. Ulster Park, N.Y.
HOSKINS, I. F. Brooklyn, N.Y.

MARGESON, I. I. Westwood, Mass.
PARKES, B. A. Philadelphia, Pa.
READ, P. L. Indianapolis, Ind.

In harmony with a resolution adopted by the membership at the Annual Meeting held two years ago, which gave opportunity for members of the Institute to place the names of brethren in nomination in advance of the Annual Meeting, we are pleased to submit the additional names which have been sent in as follows

HOLLISTER, H. E. New York, N.Y.
HOLLISTER, W. J. Forest Hills, N.Y.
JORDAN, J. C. Pittsburgh, Pa.
KUEHN, J. G. Rutherford, N.J.
WILSON, G. M. Pittsburgh, Pa.
WOODWORTH W. N. Rutherford, N.J.

In drawing attention to this meeting we desire once more to urge upon the brethren the importance of this obligation resting upon each individual interested in the activities of the Institute. To this end we are hopeful that the number present this year will be considerably larger than heretofore, and we are also anticipating a more active interest on the part of many who are hindered by distance and other circumstances from being personally present. For the benefit of these, provision is made whereby all the members may have a voice in the election by indicating on a proxy form the names of those whom they desire elected as directors for the coming year. These proxy forms will be mailed to each member before the election, and those who do not expect to be present at the Annual Meeting should fill out this form and return it to this office before the election date.

Realizing the carefulness that should characterize all our efforts to carry on the Lord's work, we do well to remember that the needed wisdom is promised to those who take full advantage of the privilege of prayer. We therefore entreat all the brethren to keep these responsibilities much before the Lord, that thus we may enjoy the fullest possible measure of Divine guidance and blessing, in our united efforts to serve Him and His people.

A Christian's Privilege of Fellowship

(Continued from last issue)

Fellowship with Jesus by being His yoke-fellow

CONTINUING our reflections on the glorious possibilities of fellowship with Jesus, we are reminded of His words in Matt. 11:29, 30: "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Do we understand what is meant by the yoke of Christ? And why should our Lord after inviting the weary and heavy-laden to come unto Him to obtain rest, mention in almost the same breath a "burden"? Another, writing on this text inquires: "Is the Christian life, after all, what its enemies take it for -- an additional weight to the already great woe of life, some extra punctiliousness about duty, some painful devotion to observances, some heavy restriction and trammeling of all that is joyous and free in the world? Is life not hard and sorrowful enough, without being fettered with yet another yoke?"

"It is astounding how so glaring a misunderstanding of this plain sentence should ever have passed into currency. Did you ever stop to ask what a yoke

is really for? Is it to be a burden to the animal which wears it? It is just the opposite. It is to make its burden light. Attached to the oxen in any other way than by a yoke, the plough would be intolerable. Worked by means of a yoke it is light. A yoke is not an instrument of torture; it is an instrument of mercy. It is not a malicious contrivance for making work hard; it is a gentle device to make hard labor light. It is not meant to give pain, but to save pain. And yet men speak of the yoke of Christ as if it were a slavery, and look upon those who wear it as objects of compassion. For generations we have had homilies on 'The Yoke of Christ,' some delighting in portraying its narrow exactions; some seeking in these exactions the marks of its divinity; others apologizing for it and toning it down; still others assuring us that, although it be very bad, it is not to be compared with the positive blessings of Christianity. How many, especially among the young, has this one mistaken phrase driven away from the Kingdom of God? Instead of making Christ attractive, it makes Him out a taskmaster, narrowing life by petty restrictions, calling for, self-denial where none is necessary, making misery a virtue under the plea that it is a yoke of Christ, and happiness criminal because it now and then evades it. According to this conception, Christians are at best the victims of a depressing fate; their life is a penance, and their hope for the next world purchased by a slow martyrdom in this.

"This mistake has arisen from taking the word 'yoke' here in the same sense as in the expressions 'under the yoke' or 'wear the yoke in his youth.' But in Christ's illustration it is not the 'jugum' of the Roman soldier, but the simple 'harness' or 'ox-collar' of the Eastern peasant. It is the literal wooden yoke which He, with His own hands in the carpenter shop, had probably often made. He knew the difference between a smooth yoke and a rough one, a bad fit and a good fit; the difference also it made to the patient animal which had to wear it. The rough yoke galled, and the burden was heavy; the smooth yoke caused no pain, and the load was lightly drawn. The badly-fitted harness was a misery; the well-fitted collar was easy."

How is a heavy Burden made Light?

And what was the "burden"? It was not some special burden laid upon the Christian, some unique affliction that they alone must bear. It was not an extra burden at all. It was not another burden over and above what they were already staggering under. The burden was not a weight of some kind which Christ had carried for a-while, and which He was now having transferred from His own shoulders to the shoulders of His followers. Christ did not say: "Take My **burden** upon you, and learn of Me." He said, "Take My **yoke** upon you and learn of Me," and He goes on to say, in effect, that by so doing, "the burden which you now carry, which you find so difficult, will no longer be heavy; it will become light, just as My burden which I Myself carry is made light because of the easy yoke I wear." The burden "was what all men bear. It was simply life, human life itself, the general burden of life which all must carry from the cradle to the grave. Christ saw that men took life painfully. To some it was a weariness, to others a failure, to many a tragedy, to all a struggle and a pain. How to carry this burden of life had been the whole world's problem. **It is still the whole world's problem.**" And here is Christ's solution: First, He offers them salvation through faith in Him and in view of the sacrifice of His life which He was about to lay down, and after that His words are an invitation, a direct appeal from One who knew how to live, to all who did not know how to live, to those who had not made

much of life, who were weary and heavy-laden, to come unto Him, and begin life over again, upon a new principle, upon His own principle. In effect, He says: "Having trusted in Me for salvation, follow Me. Take life as I take it. Be meek and lowly, and you will find rest stealing its way into your heart and life. Take My yoke and you will find the burden of life easy. For My yoke is easy, works easily, sits right upon the shoulders, and therefore My burden is light."

There is no suggestion here that the yoke of Christ will absolve any man from bearing burdens. That would be to absolve him from living, since it is life itself that is the burden. What Christ offers is to make it tolerable. "Christ's yoke is simply His secret for the alleviation of human life, His prescription for the best and happiest method of living. Men harness themselves to the work and stress of the world in clumsy and unnatural ways. The harness they put on is antiquated. A rough, ill-fitted collar at best, they make its strain and friction past enduring, by placing it where the neck is most sensitive; and by mere continuous irritation this sensitiveness increases until the whole nature is quick and sore. "This is the origin, among other things, of a disease called 'touchiness'-a disease which, in spite of its innocent name, is one of the gravest sources of restlessness in the world. Touchiness, when it becomes chronic, is a morbid condition of the inward disposition. It is self-love inflamed to the acute point; conceit, **with a hair-trigger**. The cure is to shift the yoke to some other place; to let men and things touch us through some new and perhaps as yet unused part of our nature; to become meek and lowly in heart while the old nature is becoming numb from want of use. It is the beautiful work of . . . [Christ] everywhere to adjust the burden of life to those who bear it, and them to it . . . [Christ] has a perfectly miraculous gift of healing. Without doing violence to human nature . . . [the yoke of Christ] sets it right with life, harmonizing it with all . . . [its stress] and restoring those who are jaded with the fatigue and dust of the world to a new grace of living. In the mere matter of altering the perspective of life and changing the proportion of things, its function in lightening the care of man is altogether its own. The weight of a load depends upon the attraction of the earth. But suppose the attraction of the earth were removed? A ton on some other planet where the attraction of gravity is less, does not weigh half a ton. Now . . . [the yoke of Christ] removes the attraction of the earth, and this is one way in which it diminishes men's burdens. It makes them citizens of another world. What was a ton yesterday is but half a ton today. So without changing one's circumstances, merely by offering a wider horizon and a different standard, it alters the whole aspect of the world.

"Christianity as Christ taught it is the truest philosophy of life ever spoken. But let us be quite sure when we speak of Christianity that we mean Christ's Christianity. Other versions are either caricatures, or exaggerations, or misunderstandings, or short-sighted and surface readings. For the most part their attainment is hopeless and the results wretched . . . [But it matters not] who the person is, or through what vale of tears he has passed or is about to pass, there is a new life for him along this path." "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

The Powerful Influence of Peace

Brethren, are we doing this? It is such an easy thing to quote this Scripture from the platform, or to discuss and expound it in an article of this kind, but unless its teaching finds a practical place in our hearts and lives, it will avail us nothing. To take the yoke of Christ and learn of Him will take time. It will not only take time in a general way, but it will take time (perhaps with a wrench) that is at present absorbed in other matters. It will mean making Him our most constant companion. It will mean taking time to commune with Him in prayer, taking time to study, and to bathe ourselves in the water of the Word. But then if we do this, what is the promise that is ours? "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." Perhaps instead of rest unto our souls we would have preferred power, power to influence men aright. But His promise is rest, not power. Yet who that knows the peace of Christ, does not realize its power? We all know some who have taken Christ's yoke and day by day are learning of Him. Perhaps one enters their presence lacking something of the peace of Christ, but after a season of fellowship with them, he comes away feeling that he has been in an atmosphere of peace. Such friends have had fulfilled in their experience the promise -of His Word. By taking the yoke of Christ and learning of Him they have found rest unto their souls. But more than this: that rest has its own peculiar power; a power perhaps, of which those who possess it are quite unconscious, but it reaches out to all with whom they come in touch. There is none who comes in touch with them but realizes that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him. They have become His yoke-fellows in deed, in practice, in the experience of daily life. They know something of what the Apostle John meant when he said that his fellowship was with the Son, Jesus Christ.

Fellowship with Jesus by Eating Together

Then, too, we may have fellowship with Jesus in another way. In Revelations 3:20 we read: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and will open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me." In this precious word, sent to us from heaven by Jesus after His resurrection, we have His own suggestion that we may have fellowship with Him by partaking of food together. Is not that just the way we have fellowship with one another to a very large extent here on earth? When friends meet, it is not long before they arrange to have a meal together, and if a friend is expected to visit our home, and share our hospitality, we endeavor to arrange a meal which will be one thoroughly enjoyed by our friend. Brethren, when the Lord knocks at the door of our heart and says that He will come in and sup with us, is it not a very searching matter for us to decide what kind of food we shall prepare for His enjoyment? Surely we shall not wish to keep Him waiting as it were, at the door, while we rush back from the dining-room to the kitchen, and perhaps to the garbage can, with certain stuffs whose presence on the table we know would give offense. If our fellowship is really with the Son, those things which offend Him will be equally offensive to us. We know that the food He can partake of with pleasure is that of His own providing. And so, when He comes to the door of our heart, and we open and humbly bid Him enter, if He find our mind running on the principles of His Father's character and attributes, justice, wisdom, love, and power, and if He find us meditating upon the Father's glorious plans and purposes, upon the love that He Himself manifested in dying for our sins, He will delight in partaking with us of such rich and soul-cheering food, and thus will keep His Word, and sup with us and we with Him. Let us then occupy our minds more and more with "whatsoever

things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.” So doing we shall find ourselves at one with Him in the spirit of our minds, enjoying fellowship indeed.

Fellowship with Jesus in His Sufferings

There is another way in which we may have fellowship with Jesus, and that is in His sufferings. The Apostle tells us in Philippians 3:8-10, that he personally counted all things but loss that he might know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the **fellowship of His sufferings**. Here the Apostle makes a practical application of his knowledge of the Sin-offering, Covenants, etc. But let us add a word of caution. Sometimes it is possible for us to make the mistake of being too insistent upon what, perhaps, we may speak of as terminology. In an earthly court a fair-minded judge always tries to determine the issue of a case by the substance and not by the mere form of the matter which comes before him. So with our understanding of the Sin-offering, Covenants, etc. There are many minds amongst us, each of us seeing things just a little differently perhaps to the way another views matters. Our heads vary in shape and size, and what may seem very plain to one may not be nearly so plain to another. Surely the substance in connection with our part in the Sin-offering is of more importance than the words in which some of us may express ourselves. Now, we all agree that **the substance of the matter is our personal possession of the Spirit of Christ which led Him to be a willing sacrifice**, and the more of this spirit of sacrifice that we develop, the more will be our fellowship with Christ in the substance of the matter. Down through the Gospel Age there were many of the Lord's faithful ones who had a large experience of fellowship with Jesus in this sacrificial spirit, whose verbal explanations of the matter were far from exact. In all the various church associations of Christendom today there are doubtless still some dear people whose hearts are very much in advance of their heads. After all, it is, “My son, give me thine heart.” Let us then seek, not only to hold what seems to us the Scriptural presentation of the matter, but also to earnestly strive to have the substance; namely the spirit of sacrifice, more fully developed in us. After all, facts not theories really matter, and our actions on this subject as any other will speak louder than any words we may utter.

In our own experiences we share our joys with many, but our sorrows with only a few. If we have happy experiences, we share them with almost any one. We are glad to let our gladness extend to all with whom we come in touch. But if we have sorrow, we are apt to be very reserved. Only a few close friends, only those who are very much one with us, are permitted to enter into our sorrows. We do not feel like sharing these with many. And so it is with our Lord. While He will extend to the whole world in due time the privilege of enjoying the blessings His death has secured for them, He does not invite them to share His sufferings. He does, however, invite His Bride to do so, and the Apostle in the text we have noted counted all else loss that he might not miss the privilege.

This is beautifully shown in 1 Cor. 10:16. “The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” Some have fellowship in the thought that the memorial of our Lord's death must be celebrated precisely on the exact date once a year in the Spring, but the real fellowship with Christ is had by those, who, while not overlooking or disregarding the above, yet are still more interested in keeping the spirit of this memorial

three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. And, brethren, the cup of blessing for which we give thanks, is it not the communion of the **Christ Company**? Brother Russell has suggested the word “participation.” Another word which is an equally good translation is “fellowship.” The bread which we break, is it not the **fellowship** of the **Body** of Christ, “for we being many are one loaf”?

Two Feasts in One

This feast which we celebrate outwardly once a year, and in the spirit of our minds every day in the year, may be thought of as partaking of the nature of two feasts. To illustrate: At Christmas time, in most of the communities of our civilized lands, people who are blessed with a surplus of this world’s goods, arrange a feast for the benefit of the poor of the neighborhood. To this feast all who will may come. Indeed they are urged to attend, and those who do come are given a bountiful repast; plenty of good food is furnished, perhaps supplies are pressed upon them to carry home with them; the whole intention being to fill the hungry with good things, and if these poor people do not get well fed at any other time of the year, they are certainly well fed on this occasion. Now, that is one kind of a feast, and it has one intention. Let us now speak of another. Take for example the occasion of a king’s birthday. A feast is arranged in his honor. The poor of the neighborhood are not invited to attend; only the members of his court can secure admission. The purpose of this feast is not to fill those who come with the necessities of life. The whole idea of this feast is to honor the king. Now as we think of the feast in which we celebrate the memorial of our Lord’s death, may we not think of it as partaking of the of the nature of the first feast described, which as poor and needy ones we have been urged to attend? Then as we find ourselves dwelling in peace and safety, “filled with the fat things” from the bounty of our Lord, the nature of the feast seems to change. We, too, change from being poor and needy ones and become members of the court at the palace of the king, and realize that after all, the feast is prepared solely and absolutely in His honor.

“Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?”
“What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms!”
Dear friends, may it be our to know more and more what such fellowship means.

(To be continued)

Half Hour Meditations on Romans

No. 18.

“My spirit shall not always strive with man.” -- Gen. 6:3.

CONTINUING his elucidation of the proposition that apart from a faith-righteousness the Gentiles are without hope (Romans 1:18-32), the Apostle proceeds to show that they are proper subjects of God’s anger. They have had the truth and rejected it. Those who teach that belief in the One true God has been the “slow and difficult issue of a long evolution in the religious thought of mankind, which has led through far lower forms of thought, the fetish, the nature-power, the tribal god, and the national god,” to the idea of a Supreme Being, do not quote the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans in support of their teaching. St. Paul has shown us, on the contrary, that

idolatry, far from being a progressive step towards Monotheism, is the result of a degeneracy, an obscuring of the understanding, a darkening of the heart. As we have followed his discussion we have seen him presenting man as capable, ever since the creation of the world, of a true knowledge of God. (Verse 20.) He has assured us “that man’s lower and distorted views of nature and of personal power behind it are degenerations, perversions, issues of a . . . primeval dislocation of man from his harmony with God.” Having thus presented on the one hand the fact of God making Himself known to man (verse 19), and on the other, the sin of man in stifling this truth (verse 21), he now proceeds to expound the third idea of verse 18, namely, the terrible manifestation of God’s anger on that sin -- that sin “in which the whole of human impiety (ungodliness, verse 18) was concentrated.”

Man given up by God

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves; who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” -- Ver. 24, 25.

“In these words there is expressed the feeling of indignation raised in the heart of the Apostle by the thought and view of the treatment to which God has been subjected by the creature to whom He revealed Himself so magnificently. The verses have something of that . . . **exasperation of heart**, of which the author of the Acts speaks, when describing St. Paul’s impressions during his stay at Athens. [“While Paul waited for them at Athens, **his spirit was stirred** in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.” -- Acts 17:16.] This feeling is expressed forcibly by the two conjunctions . . . [translated] **wherefore also**.” The **first, (wherefore)** “refers to the justice of punishment in general”; the second, **(also)** “brings out more especially the relation of **congruity** between the nature of the punishment and that of the offense. They sinned, **wherefore** God punished them; they sinned by degrading God, **wherefore also** God degraded them.” The word translated “**gave them up**,” “does not signify that God **impelled** them to evil, to punish the evil they had already committed. The holiness of God is opposed to such a sense, and **to give over** is not to **impel**. On the other hand, it is impossible to stop short at the idea of a simple **permission** [and to understand the Apostle to mean that] God **let** them give themselves over to evil. God was not purely passive in the terrible development of Gentile corruption. [Is it asked:] Wherein did His action consist? [We answer:] He positively withdrew His hand; He ceased to hold the boat as it was dragged by the current of the river. This is the meaning of the term used by the Apostle, Acts 14:16; ‘He **suffered** the Gentiles **to walk** in their own way.’ . . . It is not a case of simple abstention, it is the positive withdrawal of a force.” See also the quotation from Genesis 6:3 at the head of this article.

That man should be given up or given over by God “is a dire thought; but the inmost conscience, once awake, affirms the righteousness of the thing. From one point of view it is just the working out of a natural process, in which sin is at once exposed and punished by its proper results, without the slightest injection, so to speak, of any force beyond its own terrible gravitation towards the sinner’s misery. But from another point it is the personally allotted, and personally inflicted, retribution of Him who hates iniquity with the antagonism of infinite Personality. **He** has so constituted natural process

that wrong gravitates to wretchedness; and **He** is in that process, and above it, always and forever.”

Relationship of Unbelief to Immorality

Many people living in civilized lands seem to be quite unaware of the fact that idolatry is invariably attended by the vilest immorality. Such understand idolatry to signify merely an intellectual misunderstanding, which manifests itself in the belief that there are many gods instead of only the One. Far from realizing that this intellectual misunderstanding is associated in any way with a wrong condition of heart, many appear to be under the impression that the idolater seeks in his unenlightened way to render as true homage to his many gods as the consecrated Christian does to “Our Father.” For this reason it may not be amiss to pause a moment to observe the relationship which exists between wrong belief (or lack of true belief), and wrong conduct. This relationship, which St. Paul assumes as an axiomatic truth, is not always understood by well meaning Christians, and is bitterly resented by atheists. Such reason: Why does St. Paul represent God as giving over to immorality those who did not keep Him in their memory? If men did by their own fault become so unintellectual as to believe in a multitude of idols, and if this were considered worthy of punishment, would not the proper punishment be to give them over to such foolish errors of the mind only? Why should they be given over to immorality also? What have morals to do with belief? What has immorality to do with unbelief?

With questions such as these in mind an able writer has remarked: “There is a dark sequence, in the logic of facts, between unworthy thoughts of God and the development of the basest forms of human wrong . . . It is so in the nature of the case. The individual atheist, or polytheist, may conceivably be a virtuous person, on the human standard; but if he is so, it is not because of his creed. Let his creed become a real formative power in human society, and it will tend inevitably to moral disease and death.” Another writing on this subject asks: “Is it not one of the most fatal errors of unbelief that it has separated what God has joined together, and presumed to feed man’s moral and spiritual nature without the light of God’s Word, or the light of His Son? Hear what many are saying today -- that the knowledge of a personal God is not necessary in order that one should be virtuous; that the light of conscience is not dependent on the light of Christ to keep it burning; that goodness is entirely possible without God; that, in a word, the inward moral life is independent of any outward illumination. Now, it is possible, no doubt, for righteousness to exist in the heart of an atheist. There are dead virtues just as there are dead works; there are consciences whose action is simply the unexpended momentum of Divine influences long since rejected; there are virtuous instincts which are simply the reminiscences of a lost and forgotten state of innocence; there are exhibitions of truth and justice, and honor, which are simply the old coins of righteousness still passing current after God’s image and superscription have been worn off from them, so that they who trade in them know not whence they are. And as there are dead virtues, so there is a dead light which they send forth. If you have ever witnessed at night that strange glow which is emitted from decayed wood in the forest, you have the best illustration of it. There is light, indeed, but it is utterly cold. Not a spark could be gotten from it to kindle a fire to illumine the way for a bewildered traveler. It is the light of death. And, alas! this is all that many have who, while denying God, still boast they are walking in the light.”

My Spirit shall not always Strive with Man

“So He **‘gave them up, in their desires of their hearts’**; He left them there where they had placed themselves, ‘in’ the fatal region of self-will, self-indulgence; **‘unto uncleanness,’** described now with terrible explicitness in its full outcome, **‘to dishonor their bodies,’ . . . ‘among themselves,’** or **‘in themselves’**; for the possible dishonor might be done in a foul solitude, or in a fouler society and mutuality; **‘Seeing that they perverted the truth of God,’** the eternal fact of His glory and claim, **‘in their lie,’** so that it was travestied, misrepresented, lost, ‘in’ the falsehood of polytheism and idols; **and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.’** The Apostle “casts this strong doxology into the thick air of false worship and foul life, as if to clear it with its holy reverberation. For he is writing no mere discussion, no lecture on the genesis and evolution of paganism. It is the story of a vast rebellion,, told by one who, once himself a rebel, is now altogether and for ever the absolute vassal of the King whom he has ‘seen in His beauty.’”

“On this account God delivered them over to infamous passions,” etc. -- Ver. 26, 27, Diaglott.

“As if animated by the word of benediction, he returns to denounce ‘the abominable thing which God hateth’ with still more terrible explicitness. **‘For this reason,** because of their preference of the worse to the infinite Good, God gave them up to passions of degradation; He handed them over, self-bound, to the helpless slavery of lust; to **‘passions,’** eloquent word, which indicates how the man who will have his own way is all the while a **‘sufferer,’** though by his own fault; **the victim** of a mastery which he has conjured from the deep of sin.”

“The picture which follows, of the unnatural vices then prevalent in (gentile society is confirmed in all points by the frightful details contained in the works of Greek and Latin writers.” History has thus abundantly proved the soundness of the Apostle’s position. In the words of the writer last quoted: “The moral sentiment in man is based on the conception of the holy God. To abandon the latter is to paralyze the former. By honoring God we ennoble ourselves; by rejecting Him we infallibly ruin ourselves. Such, according to the Apostle, is the relation between heathenism and moral corruption. Independent morality is not that of St. Paul.”

False worship -- Foul Life

The Apostle “has described the **ungodliness** of the Gentile world, idolatry, and its punishment, unnatural **impurities**. He now describes the other aspect of the world’s sin, **unrighteousness** [see verse 18], and its punishment, the overflowing of monstrous **iniquities** committed by men against one another, and threatening to overwhelm society.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” -- Ver. 28.

“To retain God as an object of distinct knowledge . . . is to keep alive in the mind the view of that Holy Being; so that His will shall give law to our whole conduct. This is what the Gentiles refused to do. Ceasing to contemplate God, they were given over to all unrighteousness.” God gave them over “to a mind void of discernment . . . ; **having refused to**

appreciate God, they lost the true sense of moral appreciation, and this loss, with all its consequence is a judgment.” In the words of another: **“And as they did not approve of keeping God in their moral knowledge, God gave them up to an abandoned mind, ‘a reprobate, God-rejected, mind’;** meeting their disapprobation with His just and fatal reprobation. That mind, taking the false premises of the Tempter, and reasoning from them to establish the autocracy of self, led with terrible certainty and success through evil thinking to evil doing; **to do the deeds which are not becoming,** to expose the being made for God, in a naked and foul unseemliness, to its friends and its foes; **filled full of all unrighteousness, wickedness, viciousness, greed; brimming with envy, murder, guile, ill-nature; whisperers, defamers, repulsive to God, outragers, prideful, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, senseless, faithless, loveless, truceless, pitiless; who morally aware of God’s ordinance, that they who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do them, but assent and consent with those who practice them.**

“Here is a terrible accusation of human life, and of the human heart; the more terrible because it is plainly meant to be, in a certain sense, inclusive, universal. We are not indeed compelled to think that the Apostle charges every human being with sins against nature, .as if the whole earth were actually one vast City of the Plain. We need not take him to mean that every descendant of Adam is actually an undutiful child, or actually untrustworthy in a compact, or even actually a boaster, . . . a pretentious claimant of praise or credit which he knows he does not deserve. We may be sure that on the whole, in this lurid passage, charged less with condemnation than with ‘lamentation, and mourning, and woe,’ he is thinking mainly of the then state of heathen society in its worst developments. Yet we shall see, as the Epistle goes on, that all the while he is thinking not only of the sins of some men, but of the sin of man. He describes, with tremendous particularity the variegated symptoms of one disease -- the corruption of man’s heart; a disease everywhere present, everywhere deadly; limited in its manifestations by many circumstances and conditions, outward or within the man, but in itself quite unlimited in its dreadful possibilities. What man is, as fallen, corrupted, gone from God, is shown, in the teachings of St. Paul, by what bad men are.

Who can Understand His Errors?

“Do we rebel against the inference? Quite possibly we do. Almost for certain, at one time or another, we have done so. We look around us on one estimable life or another, which we cannot reasonably think of as . . . [consecrated], if we’ take the strict Scriptural tests of . . . [consecration] into account, yet which asks and wins our respect, our confidence, it may be even our admiration; and we say, openly or tacitly, consciously or unconsciously, that **that** life stands clear outside this first chapter of Romans. Well, be it so in our thoughts; and let nothing, no nothing, make us otherwise than ready to recognize and honor right doing wherever we see it, alike in the saints of God and those who deny His very Being. But just now let us withdraw from all such, looks outward, and calmly and in a silent hour look in. Do we, do you, do I, stand outside this chapter? Are we definitely prepared to say that the heart which we carry in our breast, whatever our friend’s heart may be, is such that under no change of circumstances could it, being what it is, conceivably develop the forms of evil branded in this passage? Ah, who, that

knows himself, does not know that there lies in him indefinitely more than he can know of possible evil? ‘Who can understand his errors?’ Who has so encountered temptation in all its typical forms that he can say, with even approximate truth, that he knows his own strength, and his own weakness, exactly as they are?

“It was not for nothing that the question was discussed of old, whether there was any man who would always be virtuous if he were given . . . the power to be invisible to all eyes. Nor was it lightly, or as a piece of pious rhetoric, that [one of] the saintliest of the chiefs of our Reformation, seeing a murderer carried off to die, exclaimed that there went John Bradford but for the grace of God. It is just when a man is nearest God for himself that he sees what, but for God, he would be; what, taken apart from God, he is, potentially if not in act. And it is in just such a mood that, reading this paragraph of the great Epistle, he will smite upon his breast, and say, ‘God be merciful to me the sinner.’ -- Luke 18:13.

“So doing he will be meeting the very purpose of the writer of this passage. St. Paul is full of the message of peace, holiness, and the Spirit. He is intent and eager to bring his reader into sight and possession of the fullness of the eternal mercy, revealed and secured in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Sacrifice and Life. But for this very purpose he labors first to expose man to himself; to awaken him to the fact that he is before everything else a sinner; to reverse the Tempter’s spell, and to let him see the fact of his guilt with open eyes.”

Conclusion

Since this revolting and melancholy picture of the Gentile world was a true representation, all must admit that the Apostle has established his proposition that apart from a faith-righteousness (justification by faith) the Gentiles are without hope. “It will be remembered that, in these charges, the Apostle speaks of the enlightened and refined nations of antiquity; and especially that he speaks of the Romans at the very height of their power, intelligence, and splendor. The experiment whether man could save himself by his own works, had been fairly made. After all that their greatest philosophers could do, this was the result, and it is clear that there was need of some better plan than this. More profound . . . philosophers than had arisen, the pagan world could not hope to see; more refinement and civilization than then existed, the world could not expect to behold under heathenism. At this time, when the experiment had been made for four thousand years, and when the inefficacy of all human means, even under the most favorable circumstances, to reform mankind, had been tried, the **Gospel** was preached to men. It disclosed **another** plan; and its effects were seen at once throughout the most abandoned states and cities of the ancient world.” As the Apostle in another place said: “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ . . . **knowing, . . . how ye turned to God from idols.**” -- 1 Thess. 1 :2, 3, 9.

“Be not Dismayed, I am Thy God”

*“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: Be not dismayed; for I am thy God:
I will strengthen, thee.” -- Isa. 41:10.*

THE WORDS of the above text may very properly be regarded as peculiarly in season for the Lord's people in these times; they are words filled with comfort to those who by faith properly ponder them. While the language of the Prophet may be understood as applying to natural Israel, and based upon the covenant and dealings of the Lord with that people, yet the words were doubtless written under Divine inspiration and evidently of a prophetic character, for the edification and comfort especially of the true Israel of God. The preceding verse reads: "Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art My servant: I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." Such language is, applicable in the fullest sense to the Gospel Church alone. The admonition to them to fear not and to be courageous has all along been in order from the beginning of the age, inasmuch as the course of the true disciple of Christ has been a stormy and difficult one; and the closing days of this Age in which we are now living are no exception. There are tests upon the Church today of peculiar and searching character; there are conditions that tend to cause fear and to beat down the courage unless one is faithfully observing the Master's instructions and exercising that faith that rests in the conviction that the God of heaven is with him and causes His strength to be sufficient for every time of need.

The word dismayed signifies to have the courage broken down, "as by sudden danger or insuperable difficulties; overcome with fear of impending calamity or failure; to fill with despairing; apprehension; utterly dishearten," etc. The Christian if permitted to drift into this attitude is surely in a helpless condition and unable to battle with his adversaries.

Nearer My God to Thee

In order that the children of God may not be dismayed or cast down, they must constantly rely upon the Divine assurance that the Lord is with them. Not only so, but their hearts should be kept full of the spirit of loving and warm devotion to the Lord, as a result of their continual remembrance of His goodness, of how much He has honored them by making them His children and placing before them those blessed and exceeding great and precious promises. The Lord by His Word and providences would draw us very close to Himself in love and faith and childlike confidence. It is that sense of the Lord's nearness, of His protecting care over us that should constitute our support in a large sense, in the hour of trial. We must be seated together by faith in heavenly places in Christ Jesus if we would be secure.

While reason and common sense have their rightful place and are indispensable to a religious life, the soul that never mounts upon the wings of holy and fervent devotion, that is never stirred to its depths by a sense of Divine goodness and beneficence, has never yet experienced the blessedness of the relation of sonship. A true son of a beloved and approving father naturally experiences the fervor of tender emotion; especially is this so of a true son of God who recognizes in his Heavenly Father the perfection of every grace, the crowning glory of all excellence, and who lives in close union and fellowship with Him and has the constant witness in himself of His love and approval.

Ah, those were no empty words of our blessed Lord Jesus when He said, "The Father Himself loveth you." "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our

abode with him.” It is under such conditions that all those holy emotions of love, tenderness, faith, gratitude, and praise fill to the brim our cup of joy; and with holy ecstasy we exclaim, “My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

Was it not in view of the Lord’s providences and of His many deliverances from the power of his enemies and of the uniform kindness and mercy of God as he meditated upon them, that led David to exclaim, “The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” This consolation, variously expressed throughout the Scriptures, comes with all its blessed potency in our times of greatest need. The more desperate and determined the foes we encounter and the more fierce the conflict with the powers of darkness, the more glorious is the deliverance and the clearer are the manifestations of Divine grace. As a consequence, faith takes deeper root, and with renewed confidence and assurance lays hold upon all these precious promises of God; love and gratitude well up from a heart refreshed with an increased sense of the Divine favor and blessing.

“Whom Shall I fear?”

It is in view of the sureness of the Lord’s promises and this glorious outcome portrayed, that the Christian is to be filled with holy boldness and courage. These qualities are not only born of faith, but they increase and grow strong by a living faith developed and strengthened by the lessons of experience. Courage born of faith and strengthened by endurance, cries with humble boldness in the midst of the deepest darkness of the most perplexing difficulties, and in the midst of the wildest storms and most threatening dangers, “Whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life.”

The Apostle Paul surely caught this blessed inspiration, when he said, “Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with, thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto, God.” Mark how all through the Word of God we are taught not only to be sober, vigilant, diligent, thoughtful, careful, and always abounding in the work of the Lord through whatsoever it may bring of toil or care or reproach or persecution, but in the, midst of any or all of these experiences we are taught to be happy and to be filled with the inspiration of a holy joy. We are confident that the peace and rest of heart to the Lord’s people will be much enhanced during the days before us, by keeping prominently in the mind, in the midst of all their triads, reverses, and vicissitudes by the way, this appealing admonition of the Lord, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee.”

“It is High Time to Awake out of Sleep”

*“And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep;
for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.
The night is far spent the day is at hand.” -- Rom. 13:11, 12.*

PREVIOUS TO this exhortation the Apostle had been giving some wholesome counsel concerning the proper course of the Lord’s people in the every-day duties of life. His advice seems to cover a wide range of the little

vexing cares and trials that every one must meet, and shows us how to triumph in them through the mighty power of love. He evidently thought of the thin veneer of politeness in the world which so often covers deep-seated selfishness, and showed that our politeness and love should be only the genuine solid article, saying, "Let love be without dissimulation [pretense or hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil [abhor all shams and pretenses; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another." He thought of the temptations and vexations of our business intercourse with the world, and of its natural tendency to engross time, energy and thought in worldly things, and therefore counseled, not that we should give up all business, but that, while we should be energetic and "not slothful in business," we should be careful always to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

He thought of the depressing tendency of the ever-present cares of life, and of the persecutions in one form or another that are sure to come to those who will live godly; and so, while admitting that no trial can for the present be otherwise than grievous, he tells us that we may rejoice in hope; for the trial will not continue forever, and by and by it will bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness if we are rightly exercised thereby, and in the end the rewards of righteousness; and therefore he says we should be "patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer" for that grace which is promised according to our needs.

He thought of the poverty and losses of some, and therefore counseled sympathy and hospitality -- distributing to the necessity of the saints, given to hospitality. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Bless [even them which persecute you; bless and curse not. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men."

He thought of the numerous vexations arising from contact with those of undisciplined hearts and said, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. [You will thus make him ashamed of his own conduct in contrast with yours.]"

Finally, he says, "Be not overcome of evil [do not allow the trials of life to make you sour, or vindictive, or cold and unsympathetic; nor allow the more favorable circumstances to make you proud or high-minded or wise in your own conceits]; but overcome evil [of every kind] with good."

Love the Fulfilling of the Law

Then he instructs us to be law-abiding and God-honoring citizens in the communities in which we live -- "rendering to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear [respectful deference or submission] to whom fear; honor to whom honor." And after pointing to the several commandments of the moral law, he adds, "If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Yes, love; supreme love: to God and then to the neighbor as to self, is that disposition of heart that will make us victorious in every trial and temptation. In its operations toward God it lays hold by faith upon His mighty power; it trusts His wisdom and His guidance; it takes His standpoint of observation and patiently waits the outworking of His deep designs, rejoicing in hope; and is persevering and faithful through all the painful processes that lead on to victory. In its operations toward our fellow men it is pure, peaceable, kind, forbearing, gentle, sympathetic, tender, and in strict conformity to the golden rule.

“Do this,” says the Apostle -- cultivate this Godlike disposition of love. And not only so, but he would have us be **diligent** in its cultivation, “knowing the season,” knowing that the time is short in which to build up in ourselves the Godlike and Christlike character. We have not a moment to lose if we desire to be finally approved of God as meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

What Manner of Persons Ought We to Be

If the Apostle could say to the saints of his day, “Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep,” etc., because they had then entered upon the Gospel Age with its privilege of running the race for the prize of our High Calling, with how much greater force do his words apply to these closing days of the Age. In the clear light of unfolding prophecy we see that we are now living in the very end of the harvest time; that only a short time yet remains, and that before its close all the overcoming saints will have passed the veil of the flesh and entered into the joy of the Lord as co-workers with Him in the great work of the Kingdom. Yes, “the night is far spent” and “the day [the glorious Millennial day] is at hand.” Even now the gray streaks of dawn appear. It is the day when the kingly Bridegroom shall receive unto Himself His ready and waiting Bride, and the time is short in which to make ready for our gathering together unto Him. It is high time indeed to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation, our glorious deliverance, very near.

It is possible that some, even of the very dear and fully consecrated children of God, surrounded by the cares of this life, or weary in the struggle against sin and evil, or somewhat beguiled by the present things of time and sense, may have become more or less drowsy, and so stand in special need of the stirring exhortation, “It is now high time to awake out of sleep.” It is a time for earnest, searching self-examination, for a more diligent feeling after God, for a closer walk and more intimate fellowship with Him, for more thorough self-abnegation, more diligent and persevering cross-bearing, and more faithful conformity in every respect to the whole will of God concerning us.

The Apostle says, “Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light”; and again, “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” A careful, prayerful searching of our hearts will make plain wherein we lack of conformity to the perfect will of God. And if we discover in ourselves any perverse way we will want to correct it and the more fully to put on the armor of light -- the armor of righteousness and truth. Thus we put on the Lord Jesus Christ -- the mind or disposition of Christ, that spirit of love which St. Paul says “is the fulfilling of the Law”-that love which worketh no ill to its neighbor; that suffereth long and is kind, that envieth not, that vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, loth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, that rejoiceth not in

iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; and without which, though we speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have it not, we are only as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and though we have the gift of prophecy (teaching) and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though we have all faith so that we could remove mountains, and though we bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and even give our bodies to be burned, it profiteth nothing. -- 1 Cor. 13:1-7.

How important, then, in the short time that remains to us here, that we awake fully and apply ourselves most diligently to the cultivation of that Christlike character of holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, or have a part in the privileges of the glorified Church. Thus St. Peter also exhorts, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." -- 2 Pet. 3 :14.

All must Render Account of Their Stewardship

But we are to remember also that there is another feature of our faithfulness to the Lord that must never be overlooked. Not only are we to be cleansed and sanctified by the knowledge of the truth, but we have a responsibility or stewardship in connection therewith that represents an important factor in our final approval before Him.

We recall the words of St. Paul, "Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Here is a positive element of character and a recognized obligation to activity on the part of a faithful steward who would merit his master's approval. A steward is not merely a person of righteous character, whose life and conduct are above reproach, but having been entrusted with his master's property, he is expected to be diligent and careful in the use of his talents, and not to fold them away in a napkin to be returned to his master unused, just as he received them. Rather, he is to be continually exercised in mind with the thought of the master's return, and his expectation of finding not only his own, but as large and substantial an increase as possible, as an evidence of the zeal and faithfulness of his appointed steward.

Thus we see that there is no encouragement given to indolence and ease, but a definite requirement of diligent and enterprising activity -- not the service of an hireling, whose chief incentive is wages, nor service as men-pleasers, seeking present advantages, but the intelligent, loving, spontaneous zeal of sons of God, as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God; holding fast to the faith once delivered to the saints, and "as to all things exhibiting thyself a pattern of good works, uncorruptedness in the teaching, seriousness." -- Titus 2:7, Diaglott.

"Who is Sufficient for these Things?"

This ministry, which all the consecrated, as ambassadors for Christ, have received, is one of tremendous import. It greatly influences the final destiny of those to whom we preach this Gospel of the Kingdom, the tendency being either to life or to death. "For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savor of death unto -death: and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we of God

of God, in the sight of (2 Cor. 2:15-17.) The Apostle's language here is another of the solemn warnings of the inspired Word against the danger of the Second Death, and should awaken to a sense of their danger any who have been deluded into the idea that there is no such possibility, and are permitting the great Adversary thus to deceive them. There is an equal responsibility on the part both of those who undertake to preach the Gospel and of those who hear it. The truth is God's truth, and the responsibility of speaking as well as hearing it is very great.

The Apostle's words show that many in his day, as in ours, failed to realize this responsibility, and, to answer their own selfish ends, corrupted the Word of God. To willfully or recklessly corrupt the Word of God -- to vitiate its pure and holy doctrines; to add to it than vain philosophies of ambitious men and seek to support their theories by perverting its truths; to underrate its exceeding great and precious promises and mystify the conditions upon which they may be realized; or to minimize or make void the solemn warnings of the Word of God -- is indeed dangerous business, in which the faithful saints will never engage, but in which those who fall away from the faith are usually most active -- deceiving and being deceived.

To be faithful ambassadors for Christ-faithful representatives of the truth and faithful proclaimers of it requires great humility and simplicity of heart. It necessitates the complete ignoring of all worldly ambitions and aims, and the cultivation of a brave spirit of endurance which will not shrink from any reproach which fidelity to the truth may bring. And such service, the Apostle here shows, is acceptable to God as sweet incense, no matter what may be the effect upon those to whom we minister, whether they accept or reject the Message of Divine grace. What God is looking for in His people, is loyalty to Him and devotion to His cause; and this condition of heart He appreciates, regardless of their success or failure to secure large results. What a comfort it is amidst all the discouraging circumstances of life, to know that the Spirit of Christ in the saints, is as sweet incense to God. And the reward of His constant approval is richer than all the unwholesome sweets of ambition gained by corrupting the Word of God.

By the Renewing of Our Minds

How responsible then is the position of those who are building character in themselves and in others! Remember that our characters are manifested by our habits of life; and each act, even the smallest, tends to form some new habit, or to confirm one already established. How important, then, that our thoughts and actions should not be aimless, but with a purpose (1 Cor. 10:31); and above all, that our lives should be "transformed [reformed] by the renewing of our minds"; that, putting aside the evil, and all influences which tend toward evil, we should receive of the Lord, through His Word, the "spirit of a sound mind," the "mind of Christ." In this view of the case, it is indeed a solemn thing to live, a solemn thing to think, and to act; and it behooves us to guard well our words, our thoughts and our actions, and ever to bear in mind our responsibility to God, both for ourselves and for others as ambassadors for Christ.

"And who is sufficient for these things?" Surely none of us in our own strength. We need first of all to give ourselves to the Lord without reserve, and then daily to drink in more and more of His Spirit by communion with

Him through His Word and in prayer; and constantly to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation.

Let all the consecrated endeavor more and more to realize their responsibility, both in the matter of their own character-building and also in that of building up others in the most holy faith and in the character which is the legitimate result of that faith. The issues of eternal life and eternal death are before us, and before those to whom we present this Gospel; therefore it behooves us carefully and prayerfully to present the pure truth of God in all sincerity and in the spirit of Christ before God, ever bearing in mind that it is a savor either of life unto life or death unto death.

Letters of Encouragement

Dear Brethren in Christ:

On renewing subscription for "Herald" we would like to take the opportunity of adding a few encouraging words expressing our appreciation of your "labor of love" on behalf of His people. Christian fellowship is indeed a precious thing, particularly in these last days; and the "Herald" has played its part faithfully and well in providing this through its pages for the lonely remnant scattered throughout the earth.

We are glad of the firm stand you have always taken concerning the true mission of the Church this side of glory. We also heartily endorse the view that there is only one Gospel of the Kingdom given to Christians to preach--that which relates to the "strait gate" and "narrow way"; and that we have not the slightest authority -- nor is there any purpose served -- in preaching any other. It is a matter of surprise that such a hoary old snare of the master Fowler should have entrapped so many among the Truth-enlightened of these last days. Yet the old story has once again been re-enacted, before our eyes -- of the headlong rush to the World with the Truth, which was sown only for the righteous. No longer is it for "thinking Christians" but for the crowd! Therefore make it popular; make it appeal in every way at any cost! Consume as much time and money as you can in this "great work" of "casting pearls." Surely, if "they turn again and rend you," then one is not suffering for Christ's sake but for one's own folly. We are grateful for the clear lead the "Herald" has always given the brethren in this ever recurring issue, and trust it will continue to the end in its good work of "confirming the souls of the saints."

May we suggest as a very helpful "confirming" feature, a more frequent review of "the progress of events" as per your last one of February 15, under this, title

We much enjoyed the privilege of entertaining recently our dear Brother Hoskins during his pilgrimage this way. The friends here greatly appreciated and were much benefited by his ministry and fellowship.

The L_____ friends unite in sending their warm Christian love.

Your brother by His grace,

O. E. K. -- Ire.

Dear Brethren:

We feel that you will be interested to know of our efforts here, and the surprising way the Lord has blessed us and given us privileges to serve Him by declaring His glorious Message of Salvation.

About two months ago a number of the Lord's people seemed to find and be drawn to each other, after several years of searching and hoping, and not without praying for our Master's guidance. This we surely feel we have had. Altogether about fourteen are assembling regularly, having a First Volume study Sunday evenings, and a prayer and praise service Wednesday evenings. Oh, how our hearts have rejoiced! It has seemed like old times. when the spirit of the friends was the spirit of humility and love, placing the Truth above all, striving for purity in doctrine.

Shortly after beginning our Class, a call came from friends living out in the country' for a public talk at their school house, on the subject of "Hell." A revivalist had been preaching along that line, to the sorrow of those who knew the truth of God's great love. One of our brethren responded. On Sunday afternoon with the temperature around 110 degrees over fifty came -- a very attentive audience hungering for the Truth, which had been denied them. At their invitation we again returned for two more Sundays.

At the same time, another brother served a class of people gathered in the city park at G _____. The first, meeting being such a success they asked for a return,. so the following Sunday one of the brethren served there and another at the schoolhouse. The attendance at the park has increased -- over 60 being present this Sunday, and a meeting being arranged for next Sunday.

We have designated our Ecclesia "Associated Bible Students," and have cast off all entangling earthly connections. At a regular meeting on Sunday, we unanimously extended to the Pastoral Bible Institute our cooperation in the work of the Lord, and ask that we be, placed on your regular Pilgrim list I am sure you will rejoice with us in these blessed privileges and receive of the joy they have brought to our hearts.

Sincerely, Your brother in Christ,

R. S. -- Ariz.

A Second General Convention

In harmony with the announcement made in the "Herald" of March 15 of this year, we are now privileged to remind the brethren of the Convention being arranged by the friends of Greater New York, to be held here on September 5, 6, and 7. When considering the matter in the earlier part of the year, it was thought that holding several general conventions throughout the country this year would be decidedly advantageous to the friends at large. Word had already been received from Dayton, Ohio, that the friends there were planning for such a gathering of this general nature, and by making special effort to arrange an attractive program of a representative character it was expected that many from nearby and more distant points would attend; and we are glad to know that these expectations were realized.

This also is the desire of the brethren of New York in connection with the forthcoming conference here. It is their hope that the Labor Day holiday season will leave many of the brethren free to join in this convention, and that it will therefore be attended by friends representing a very wide territory.

Program arrangements have been made which will assure all present of a rich blessing, such as may well be expected at a gathering of God's separated people today. And in this connection it may be appropriate: to emphasize the fact that this assembly of saints will be beneficial or otherwise in proportion to the spirit of prayer and expectation of all interested in it. If the Lord go not up with us, and make ready our hearts, and speak through our lips as we minister one to the other,, then our gathering will be barren of those encouragements, reinvigorations and heavenward attractions so essential at this time. Therefore in the meantime let us make these three days of coming apart with the Lord a special feature of our prayers for Zion's sake.

Any desiring information regarding accommodations, etc., may address the Secretary of the Class, Miss N. G.. Mitchell, 360 Third Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.