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"Delight Thyself also in the Lord"

Our Text for the New Year 1934

**"DELIGHT THYSELF ALSO IN THE LORD; AND HE SHALL GIVE THEE THE
DESIRES OF THINE HEART." - PSALM 37:4.**

THE above statement by the Psalmist is chosen as our motto text for the year 1934. It is our confidence that a devout consideration of these words throughout the year cannot fail to bring a corresponding spiritual blessing to the heart. Obviously it is an admonition to one who is already in heart relationship with God, a relationship with God that has been brought about through separation from sin and by a personal heart union with the Son of God. It is calculated to encourage such trusting one to fortify his position by keeping the heart not only in an attitude of resignation to God's will, but that of **delight** in the Lord.

Perhaps no test of the Christian life comes more closely home to the child of God than that of maintaining a state of pleasure and delight in the Lord and in His will, through all the changing scenes and circumstances of life. Indeed nothing but a definite and implicit faith in God can enable one to meet the requirements of this text. Considering that God's way is often through the whirlwind and the storm, a way of affliction, of adversity, and of fiery trial, a knowledge of God in the sense of a personal acquaintance with Him is most necessary -imperative, if the heart would delight itself in the Lord at all times. The basis of such an attitude can not be otherwise than in a recognition of the infinite and unfailing grace of God, that in every affair of life no matter how painful or grievous, He has our highest eternal interest in view and is shaping all His providences to that certain end.

As Seeing Him Who Is Invisible

Such perception of and trust in God is realized only in connection with the infilling and presence of the Holy Spirit. And this delight in the Lord which we are now discussing, that joys in Him at

all times, is born of that living faith that endures "as seeing Him who is invisible," "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Pet. 1:8.) Another referring to this satisfaction and delight in and consciousness of His invisible presence, which is difficult to describe, has remarked that something like this "might perhaps exist in the case of a blind child, who has an attentive and affectionate father. The child, being blind from birth, has visually and perceptively no distinct knowledge 'of his father. But he knows there is an object present to him, though unseen; and that this outward and unseen being is ever beneficent and ever active in securing his happiness. He has but an indefinite and obscure notion of his form, and is not capable of any accurate analysis of his character; but his mind rests in the general complex idea of an ever-present being, who, although he is unseen, and in many of his attributes is essentially unknown, is nevertheless the precise object which of all others is the most fitted to secure, and is the most worthy of his love. It is thus contemplatively rather than discursively that his father is ever present to his thoughts, and is ever the object of his almost adoring affections."

Thus it is with the spiritual child of God, as he is given to experience the blessedness of his union with Him and the consciousness of His abiding presence. He delights in the contemplation of the grace of God, of His glorious attributes; he delights in Him as he surveys the grandeur and sublimity of the Divine promises; and is given thereby a greater grasp and comprehension of the goodness of God. God recognizes the import of these meditations upon Him and responds by condescendingly unveiling Himself in His loving kindness and benevolence. "There is a constant flowing and reflowing of affection; love ascending to God and love returning; so that there is not only a consciousness of love to God on the part of the person; but what is yet more striking, there is a consciousness, or rather a deeply wrought conviction that God loves him in return. He can say in the beautiful expressions of the Canticles, 'His banner over me was love. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me.'"

It will be to the edification of our readers to ponder again in connection with this review of our year text, the timely remarks of our dear Brother Russell:

The Balm of Divine Consolation

"Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.' This delight in the Lord is a still more advanced step in the Christian life. It is a blessed thing to learn to -trust in the Lord; but it is when continued trust and responsive providences have ripened into personal acquaintance and fellowship with God that we learn to delight in Him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of, peace, when the Divine care and love are specially seen in the guidance of our way: in a word, when we come to feel that the Father and the Son have so clearly manifested themselves to us that we can recognize their abiding presence with us. Ah! then it is that we begin to delight ourselves in the Lord. Then, however dark may be the way, or however heavy may be the storm that rages about us, the balm of Divine consolation is always there, so that the child of God, though often troubled on every side, is not distressed; though perplexed, he is never in despair; though cast down, he is not destroyed; and though persecuted, he is never forsaken.

"To delight thus in the Lord is to have the affections centered in Him; it is to have the heart in such sympathy with righteousness and truth as to see in God the fountain of all goodness -and truth, the one altogether lovely. The Psalmist expresses such an attitude of heart when personifying our Lord Jesus, he said, 'I delight to do Thy will O my God: yea, Thy law is within

my heart.' And again, 'O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.' And again, when he says, 'O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. . . . Because Thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee. . . My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches. Because Thou hast been my

help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after Thee: Thy right hand upholdeth me.' - Psa. 63.

No Good Thing Will He Withhold

"Such an experience springs only from the felt consolations of Divine grace in times of sore and pressing need, and however great the afflictions or the trials of faith, patience and endurance that led to such an acquaintance with God, there is great cause for rejoicing in them; for

" 'E'en sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We never saw by day.'

"When the heart has been thus centered in God, it is its most natural impulse to commit its way to Him. As one has beautifully expressed it:

"We'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
We'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight.'

"And how precious is the promise to those who thus learn to trust in the Lord and go on doing good, no matter how obstinate or fierce may be the persecution it may excite, and who delight in the Lord and confidently commit their way to His loving wisdom. Surely they shall have the desires of their heart, and no good thing will He withhold from them. Their fervent prayers avail much, and in His own good time their righteousness, however misrepresented and evil spoken of now, shall be brought forth as the light-clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their hearts, as the noon-day. And even while we remain here as aliens and foreigners in the Enemy's land, verily we shall be fed, both with the temporal bread and with the bread of heaven for our spiritual sustenance. 'Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.'

As this lesson from our Father's Word is kept before the minds of the brethren causing them to remember their goodly heritage in Christ, may each and all throughout the coming year, delight themselves in the Lord, and consequently realize the desires of their hearts.

Mountain-Tops of Vision

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." - Gen. 22:14.

MOUNTAIN-TOPS are associated with very many of the greatest events of which the Bible speaks. Perhaps it is because their peaks are lifted high above the general level, and often raised above the clouds, and therefore nearer, heaven, that God has chosen to use them in most of His outstanding dealings with men. In any event they have become monuments and memorials of His grace and power. When we think of Moriah, how it stands out as a sweet memorial of Abraham's obedient faith; and Pisgah, standing near the borders of Israel's inheritance, and from whose height Moses surveyed its lengths and breadths, seems to speak to us of elevations from which we too may "view our home beyond the tide." Sinai, with its thunders and terrible sights, will always speak of laws inviolable. The Prophet kneeling in prayer for the showers of rain long withheld from an unfaithful people, has fixed Carmel in our minds as a memorial of God's delight in the prayer of faith. And what sacred memories cling to Olivet! What scenes it witnessed in days when "Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples" !-What loving interviews! the details of which even we are not privileged to share, for they have not been told. And it was from Olivet that He ascended again to His Father, and our Father, to His God, and our God. It was on its brow that the shining angels uttered that pledge of faithfulness to His beloved followers: "This same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11.) Coming to Mount Zion-"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." (Psa. 48:2.) What a wealth of fragrance is associated with the name, Zion! Well may we sing, "Happy Zion! What a favored lot is thine!" For "the Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. (Psa. 87:2, 3.) In the glorious consummation, when the faithful Church is all complete, O Lord of glory, may we share Thy people's part in Zion.

Going back to the days of Jesus how often the mountain-top is mentioned. Sometimes we find Him there with His little band of followers, going apart to "rest awhile," at other times we find Him alone in prayer, and on one memorable occasion it was on "a high mountain apart" that He was transfigured in the presence of His three particularly intimate disciples. The record of these incidents are of much more value to us than mere historical accounts. In ways that are varied and wonderfully suited to our needs today, Jesus is still doing the same things for us. How intolerable life would be, how dwarfed our growth in the things of the Spirit, if He did not treat us just as He did His brethren when He walked upon the earth. Well He understands the cramping influences of constant contact with the worldliness about us, and lovingly provides a haven of rest from the strife of tongues, calling us into "the secret place of the Most High" where "no storm can shake our inmost calm, while to that refuge clinging." Who that knows anything of the absolute need of a personal study of the Word to replenish depleted strength, could fail to know by experience that Jesus still appoints us these needed seasons alone with Him. Mountains of transfiguration are also a part of the way whereby the God of all comfort gives vision and strength to His people, and valuable beyond all computation are those blessed moments of removal from all things else, when our eyes see Jesus only. Upon these high mountains, then let us ascend, if we would see the glories beyond, and !behold there the glory and majesty of our King.

God comes to Us on Our Mount Moriah

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the faith that can count it all joy when divers temptations come, because of a fixed assurance that such temptations properly met, "worketh patience," and the perfect working of patience will leave us entire, wanting nothing. Therefore, says the Apostle, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: who-having, not seen ye'love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing; ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:6-9.) God's ways are equal. He knoweth our frame, and therefore He does not ask us to do the impossible. He cannot ask that we attain, a state of mind wholly unaffected by the heavy weights of trial and testing to which He must subject us, and therefore He does not reprove us for hours of "heaviness through manifold temptations," but He does expect that in time our faith will shine more bright and clear when tempests rage without, and in times of danger and darkness, display no fear or doubt. How beautiful is a faith "That seas of trouble cannot drown, nor Satan's arts beguile. Then in our fervent desire to thus please' God, shall we not more often pray,

"Lord, lead me to a faith like this;
Through trial though it be;
For O! the rest of faith is bliss,
The bliss of rest in Thee."

But this bliss and rest is an afterward experience. It does not come before the fire of trial, or before the deep waters, through which our pathway lies have taught us much of the faithfulness of God. True, He does fulfil His promise, "When thou passest through the waters, 'I will be with thee; and, through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee, but how often He permits the storm to well nigh swamp our frail vessel before He rises to command the elements to be still. And do not our own experiences in the life of faith agree with the records preserved for us in His Word? When God would try Abraham's faith to the limit, does He not hide Himself until Abraham has had every tender cord drawn out to its utmost extent, before He stays the test and speaks those burden-lifting, heart-gladdening words, "Now I know." When Daniel stood in danger of the lion's den, surely God was present, yet Daniel must walk into the very jaws of that horrible death, before God acts to deliver him. His three associates, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, are likewise thrown into the midst of the burning furnace before they have any manifestation of what God will do for them. And so it oftentimes is with us as we tread the way ' of faith wherein many an unexplained cross will be God's way of lifting us very much nearer to Himself. Some day we will be told all about the need of these supreme moments of trial, some of which will be shrouded in mystery until God unrolls the canvass of life's little day, and then, when looking back this way, we shall fully understand.

The Inspiration of Clearer Vision

But though we may be comforted now by the confidence that from beyond the veil, "looking back we'll praise the way," yet, we should not for-' get that even here, while in the way, it is our privilege to enjoy the visions granted to those who through faith have triumphed in hours of trial

when some Moriah to which God has called them has been their experience. Too many saints have gone before to permit any of us at this late date to be the pioneer first to cross the deep dark valleys, or climb the mountain-steeps of the narrow way. No mountain of trial along that way but some heaven-bound pilgrim has scaled its height, and from its top "caught a gleam of glory bright" to lure him on. - And what others have seen unfolded on these peaks of higher ground we too may know, if, like them, we ascend our mountains in happy accord with the loving God who wanted us to have that particular difficulty. Some one has suggested that we can either climb our mountains or tunnel them. We can grumble through the trouble and bemoan the affliction, or we can glory in the tribulation and feel the inspiration of clearer vision strengthening us for further conquests.

God's call to whatever Moriahs He may have for our feet, we may be sure, are calls to some afterward of rich revelation and assurance. How much we would miss if no such experience ever came to us. Oh, has He never called us away to some mountain to slay our Isaac, or to face some crucial test without a thing to lean upon but His command and a naked faith in His character and word? That some such experience will come to each one of us, there seems good reason to believe, for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." Doubtless, therefore, such opportunities have come into our lives. It may be that our ears were dull, and we missed the quiet voice calling us to Moriah. If so, what rapturous visions we have bartered away for love of ease, and the thrill of hearing God say in some afterward of peace and confidence, "now I know" the reality of your faith and love, will not have been ours.

Fires that Search the Depth of the Soul

If called upon to slay our Isaac, circumstances and peculiarities of our own particular pathway and training will determine just what that slaying will consist of. But it will be sufficient for our present consideration to just think of it as representing some outstanding sacrifice or test of obedience and fidelity that the Lord is most likely to permit, some trial that will serve to demonstrate our individuality of faith and character. Faithful Abraham went out alone to face his most crucial test of faith, and whatever may be the general trend of our trials, our severest conflicts will be such as we must face alone with God. And in many a night-watch, when sleep has brought rest to others, how many sorely tried ones have been in the valley of decision, and with the breaking of the day, reaching conclusions that they well know will cost them dearly. But to those who know the meaning of standing alone with God through fires that have searched the depths of the soul, through hours when it seemed that every arm of flesh was gone, and the test, if passed victoriously, certain to leave them shorn of that which love holds dearest, and censure and misunderstanding their inevitable portion-ah, such know something of an afterward of vision that has made the life of faith and obedience a greater possibility since that hour. They know too, something of the ineffable joy of being on the right side, and that just beyond the field of blood and the temporary shadows the Master waits with yet further blessings. Verily, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." - 1 Tim. 4:8.

Now if our God has led us up some such Moriah, and there tried us in the fire of affliction, and through Christ who strengtheneth us, given us the victory, and now faith's vision has been enlarged, what then? Shall the "mighty man glory in his might," and be exalted above measure? No, indeed. "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." (Jer. 9:24.) Yes, let us be grateful witnesses to His grace, and say

to all who may fear the heart-searching, refining fires on Moriah's height, "Jehovah-jireh: In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.". The clouds you so much dread are big with mercy and love, and silver-lined with a Father's approving smile.

Come Ye Saints to Pisgah's Mountain

It has served a good purpose to call, to mind the closing days of the life of Moses, as the poet has done in lines inviting us to come and "view our Home beyond the tide" from Pisgah's mountain. Though we may believe that the land of Canaan in its typical sense is a picture of our present inheritance of rest in a land of "milk and honey," yet we readily grant the poetical license by which our eyes are directed way beyond the horizon of the, present possessions, and exclaim, "Look ye saints, the sight is glorious!" As we think of Moses standing with the Lord, gazing . with undimmed eyes across the intervening landscape, and scanning Israel's future inheritance before those eyes closed in death, are we not equally absorbed in seeing our hoped 'for inheritance as it may be seen by faith? As we now have the privilege of being "carried away into the third heaven" with Paul, and there seeing and hearing things which were unlawful for him then to utter, so is it not our privilege to be "carried away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain," with the beloved John, and there shown "the holy Jerusalem, having the glory of God: and her light like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." (Rev. 21:10, 11.) Indeed, there are very many Scriptures which invite us to use our telescope of faith, and look on those things which "eye bath not seen nor ear heard," but which are revealed to us by the Spirit. Our citizenship is in heaven, where "we see Jesus," "The Author and Finisher of our faith." We do indeed have afflictions, but they are light and momentary, because we "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Moses "endured as seeing Him who is invisible," and so may we, for it is yet true, "the pure in heart shall see God." Unquestionably there is a life "more abundant" awaiting those who seek it here and now-yes, "A glorious foretaste, even now, the peace and joy of heaven." Therefore, let us come up into "the mount of the Lord" where "it shall be seen," let us come up to the house of the Lord, where God dwells "in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite- and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." - Isa. 57:15.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains;
From whence shall my help come?
My help cometh from Jehovah,
Who made heaven and earth."

Thus wrote the Psalmist. (Psalm 121:1, Amer. Revised Version.) And what could he mean by such a statement other than an expression of his intention to keep his gaze directed upward to the everlasting regions of God's power. Others might "trust in chariots, and some-in horses?" but as for him, his eyes would be toward the Lord alone; therefore, he says, "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." No marvel then that we hear him testify as he does, "The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." (Psa. 16:6-8.) In these and similar statements, is he not simply being used to write down language intended for our lips? Who, more' than we, 'should be characterized by the upward look? Who, more than we, should be saying in counting over mercies received, "I remember- the days of old; I meditate on all Thy works; I muse on the work of Thy hands. I stretch forth my hands unto Thee: my soul thirsteth after Thee, as a thirsty land." (Psa. 143:5, 6.) But let it not be the uplifted eye without the outstretched hand, lest we be only visionary

dreamers, and let it not be the outstretched hand without the uplifted eye, lest we be so occupied with selfish ends that the vision of His face will not be seen.

What Think Ye of Christ?

Just to the extent that we live the life that is Christ, just to that same degree can we enjoy the view suggested by Pisgah's mountain. Just in the exact ratio of our thirsting after Him, so will be our vision of the glory to be ours when we see Him face to face. Apply them how we will, what a wealth of meaning attaches to His own words, "Without Me ye can do nothing." Think you, that one who fails to maintain the upward look, whose eyes are occasionally lifted heavenward, but mostly turned earthward, can surely visualize with Jesus, "the joy that was set before Him" and His true disciples? It cannot be. Only with Him, and in Him, and through Him, are these things seen, for only through the Spirit are they given. -What, therefore, think ye of Him? If Jesus appears before us now mainly in the role of a great wonderworker, possessed with power to lay His hands on our burdens and ease the weights of affliction, is not our thought of Him dangerously near to a selfish desire for the loaves and fishes? And if our thought of Christ habitually centers in the elucidations of truth He gave, seeking knowledge chiefly for the sake of being well informed, -or if we be disposed to linger much over the denunciations by which He attacked prevailing errors, we may indeed do Him honor as a great Teacher. We live in a day when multitudes are thinking thus of Christ, and only thus. But, "What think ye of Christ? Is He above everything else, the great life-changer, changing hearts, until the eyes of understanding are so widely opened that the present and the future are being seen as through His own blessed eyes? Oh, it is not difficult to see that He rejoiced in doing His acts of mercy, or to note His delight in preaching "good tidings to the meek," but it does require a little more of spiritual vision to see that when a receptive heart opened itself to Him, and let Him be its very life, that His joy was full. Of such He would say, they have "chosen the better part." Has He been thus rejoiced in us because we have so chosen? If, therefore, we would get beyond the mists and shadows and away 'above the encircling gloom of present discords, and enjoy the scene from Pisgah's height, let us stand close to the cross, and to Christ, where we will be farthest away from the world and self. Yes, let us stand there until we are grateful through and through for such love so marvelously revealed. Let our gratitude open all the doors of our heart and life to receive the Holy Spirit, and let the Spirit set our souls on fire with desire after Christ, and so fill our hearts with love for Him, that we shall delight in all His will because we have His heart. Then from Him will come the ability to see "afar off," and to live in the abiding sense of the eternal realities beyond the veil where "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." - Isa. 33:17.

(To be continued)

Perfume very Precious

"She hath done what she could."-Mark 14:8; John 12:1,11.

IT WAS Saturday night, as we reckon it, the evening following the Jewish Sabbath day after six P.M. -- that Jesus and His disciples and Lazarus, whom He had previously awakened from the sleep of death, with some other friends of the family, sat down to a feast prepared in special honor of Jesus at the home of His friends, where He was always welcome and where He stopped more frequently than at any other house during the period of His ministry, so far as the records show. It was at Bethany, the home of Lazarus and Martha and Mary. It was called the house of Simon the leper, one supposition being that Simon was the father of the family, and another that he was the husband of 'Martha, who at this time was a widow.

Our Lord and His disciples were en route for Jerusalem, and Bethany was on the way, in the suburbs. They probably arrived on what would correspond to our Friday, or the Jewish sixth *day* of the week. Expecting them, Martha and Mary had provided quite a sumptuous feast, and, in harmony with the Jewish rules governing in such cases, the dishes were evidently prepared in advance, as Sabbath labor was prohibited. No account is given us of that Sabbath day at Bethany, but we can well imagine the delightful social intercourse between the dear members of that family and the Lord and His chosen Apostles.

Jesus in Social Life

The Master's words of wisdom and love are not recorded, but we know on the best of authority that a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Hence we may know that the day was not given over to frivolity of word or conduct, but to rest, spiritual enjoyment, which minister to the refreshment of all in the right attitude of heart. The same rule applies to all of the Lord's followers wherever they may be, whatever may be their vocation or surroundings. Out of the good treasure of their hearts they can bring forth nothing else but good things, and if any be otherwise minded let him beware, and correct the difficulty of the heart and not merely of the head.

We can imagine better than we can portray the loving sentiments of Lazarus and his sisters toward Jesus, the one they esteemed so highly, the one who, by calling Lazarus forth from the tomb, had demonstrated His Messiahship and that in Him was the resurrection and the life power. This was probably the first visit the Lord had made to the Bethany home since that great event.

Apparently our Lord had friends in various walks of life; a few were rich, some were poor, some in moderate circumstances. The Bethany household was apparently of a comfortable class, as was evidenced by the fact that they had their own home, that they had their own tomb, and that on this occasion Mary was able as well as willing to spend a considerable sum of money in doing honor to the Lord by anointing Him with the precious spikenard. This reminds us of the prayer of one of old, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." Riches are a great snare to the many, and the Lord's 'Word assures us that not many rich will enter the Kingdom. The attractions of the present life to them will prove too powerful and hinder their fulfillment of their consecration vows-to sacrifice their all, to lay all pat Jesus' feet, to become merely His stewards, in the use of their temporal opportunities and blessings, and to use these wisely in His service and in such a manner as to demonstrate the love and loyalty they have professed.

In many respects to have a moderate competency in life is very desirable, permitting a more generous treatment of others, greater hospitality, etc.; yet even moderate prosperity seems 'to be more than the majority can stand and yet be faithful. Consequently we find in fact what our Lord declared, namely, that the heirs of the Kingdom are chiefly of the poor of this world--chiefly of those who have little and who have little hope for getting more, and whose minds consequently are more readily turned to the heavenly things which the Lord has promised to those who love Him supremely.

To whatever extent, therefore, we have comfortable surroundings, such as were possessed by the Bethany household -- to whatever extent we have the good things of this present life--in that same proportion we need to be specially on guard against the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches and the ambitions and hopes and aims of the world, lest these should lead our hearts away from the loyalty and devotion to the Lord and His cause which full faith and trust should inspire and sustain. Evidently it is possible to be poor in spirit without 'being actually in poverty, but the more there is of earthly prosperity apparently more grace is needed to keep us in the narrow way.

"Ointment of Spikenard very Costly"

The two sisters evidently had the matter planned between them: Martha served at the table and Mary served in an especial manner with the ointment. Oriental tables were a combination of couch and table, and the guests were properly described as reclining at a feast. It was customary to rest the forepart of the body upon one elbow while using the other hand to convey the food to the mouth, etc. Our Lord thus reclining, both His head and His feet were very conveniently accessible to Mary, who proceeded to anoint first His head and afterward His feet with the ointment.

The word ointment gives rather a misimpression; the word perfume would more nearly describe the liquid used. Its **value** is incidentally mentioned as more than three hundred pence (Ver. 5.) These silver pence represent about sixteen cents each, and thus estimated the alabaster flask of perfume was worth about forty-eight dollars; but counting each penny or **denarius** as a day's wages at that time (Matt. 20:2), the three hundred pence would, be equivalent to a year's wages of a working man, ,or about three hundred dollars to six hundred dollars as compared with our day.

This was very precious ointment indeed by whichever calculation we reckon it, yet that the statement is not overdrawn is attested by ancient literature. For instance, we are told that Horace offered to give a cask of wine for a very small box of spikenard--Odes, Ovid, iv, xii, xvii. A perfume even in our day has been rated as high as X100.00 per ounce, namely, attar of roses. At this price, Mary's "pound" would have been worth \$1,200.00.

"She hath done What She Could"

The use of such expensive perfumes was very rare: indeed, even the emperors used it sparingly, but when used it was generally poured upon the head. Mary followed this custom in pouring it upon the Lord's head, as Matthew and Mark recount; but having done this, she proceeded to His feet and anointed them with the perfume, and then wiped His feet with the long tresses of her hair. What a picture of loving devotion is here given its! The feet, always recognized as the humblest and lowest members of the human frame -- the hair of the head, especially of women, always recognized as a special treasure and glory to her -- here thus brought together in a way

which signified that Mary esteemed her Lord and Master as infinitely above and beyond her. She had recognized Him first as the most wonderful of men, speaking as never man spake; she had come afterwards to understand that He was a great teacher, especially sent at a special time; and finally, through the awakening of Lazarus from the sleep of death, she had evidence that the power of the Almighty was in Him, that He was none other than the Son of God, and she appropriately did Him the reverence due to His exalted station.

She could not put Him on the throne of earth, but she would show that she was His devoted servant forever; she could not glorify Him before all the people of Israel, but she could glorify and honor Him' in her own home; she could not tell His praises and sing His worth, but she could sing and make melody in her own heart, and pour upon Him a perfume which not only filled her home with its sweet savor, but which has yielded a tender fragrance to the honor of womankind in general from her day to the present time.. "She hath done what she could," said the Lord-she has shown her devotion to the best of her ability. How true the remainder of our Lord's prophecy on the subject, "Wherever this Gospel is preached, this thing shall be told as a memorial of 'her.'" A sweet memorial of a sweet character and loving heart. Considered in the light of the odor and blessing and refreshment which it has shed upon all the Lord's people throughout this Gospel Age, Mary's alabaster jar of precious perfume, very costly, has proven to be extremely cheap.

"Might have been Given to the Poor"

Our lesson says that Judas protested against such a waste of money, and explains that it was not because he cared so much for the poor, as that lie was a thief and regretted that the amount spent for the perfume had not been handed to him as the treasurer for the group -of disciples, so that he might have misappropriated it to himself. This thought is more particularly shown in the Revised Version, which renders it, "He was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein." Matthew says "the disciples"-Mark says, "There were some"-but John mentions Judas only as doing this murmuring against the expense involved in Mary's service to her Lord. Quite probably all the accounts are correct. Judas, no doubt was the instigator of the murmuring, some more quickly and more thoroughly shared his sentiments, and the remainder of the Apostles, probably influenced by the majority, were inclined to yield and to agree that the extravagance was wrong. But Jesus set the whole matter at rest in a few words, saying, " Let her alone; against the day of My burying bath she kept this. The poor ye have always with you, but Me ye have not always."

Many of the Lord's disciples today need to reconstruct their ideas on the subject of economy. True, it is necessary for us to be provident, not wasteful, and economical, not extravagant. Our Lord frequently inculcated this lesson, as for instance, when H-e directed the gathering up of the fragments of broken food after feeding the multitude. But there is a proper place to draw the line. The person who is economical and penurious in his dealings with the Lord is sure to be the loser thereby, as the Scriptures declare, "The liberal soul shall be made fat" and again, "There is he that scattereth yet increaseth, and there is he that withholdeth more than is meet [proper] and it tendeth to poverty.

It is a different matter for us to learn to be economical in respect "to our own affairs and to be liberal to the extent of extravagance in matters which pertain to the Lord and His service. We sometimes sing, "Thou art coming to a King, large petitions with thee bring," but he who brings large petitions to the throne of grace should be sure also that he bring with him a large alabaster box of perfume for the Lord-not hoping thereby to merit the Lord's favor nor to perfume His requests, but as a mark of 'his appreciation of blessings already received. Those who bring the

alabaster boxes of perfume of praise and thankfulness very generally have little to ask. Rather they realize that they are already debtors to such an extent that they can never show properly their appreciation of Divine favor. Properly they recognize that day by day they are receiving at the Lord's hands exceedingly and abundantly more than they could ask or wish, and that in the spiritual blessings alone they have what satisfies their longings as nothing else can do. Such more nearly follow the course of Mary and bring alabaster boxes of perfume to the Lord-their prayers and thanksgiving of heart; and asking nothing, but giving thanks for all things, they receive from the Master such-an outpour of blessing that they are not able to contain it.

Those who view the matter rightly must certainly feel that none of us have anything worthy to present to our Lord-that our very best, our most costly gifts or sacrifices, are not worthy of Him and but feebly express the real sentiments of our hearts. How glad we are if our humble efforts are accepted of the Lord, and how we hope that ultimately we shall hear the same sweet voice saying of us, "He hath done what he could," "She hath done what she could."

The poet Tennyson beautifully pictures the scene we have been considering in the following lines

"Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And He that brought him back is there.

"Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

"All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Savior's feet,
With costly spikenard and with tears."

The Poor ever with Us

Our Lord's prophecy that poverty would continue throughout this Gospel Age has been amply fulfilled. Looking forward into the future, we rejoice to know that then, under the reign of the Kingdom, there will be no more poor, no more sorrow, no more want. "Every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, with none to molest or make him afraid." Those changed conditions will not be the result of human evolution, human theories, cooperative societies, unions, trusts, etc. All these various panaceas for making everybody rich and comfortable and happy have failed in the past and will continue to be failures in the future. Because of sin warping and twisting the very fibers of humanity, and through selfishness and ambition and desire working upon the warped and twisted elements of humanity, pain, suffering and want are sure to continue as long as sin continues. And sin is sure to continue until the great Messiah takes to Himself His great power and reigns, and subdues sin and all that is contrary to righteousness and truth and establishes the latter upon the earth.

Until that glorious day shall come, all through the night of weeping, for now more than eighteen hundred centuries, the poor have been with us and many of them have been the Lord's precious

ones. Poverty has proven itself a blessing in many ways in many senses of the word under present conditions. Not only does the fact of poverty and the fear of poverty help to keep many in line and make them active in the battle of life, and thus develop in them overcoming qualities, but, on the other hand, the fact that there is poverty, the fact that we have friends and neighbors who need our care and need assistance, is a blessing to those who are more comfortably situated themselves, in that it develops their sympathy, patience, love, their desire to do good, their desire to help. He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord and the Lord will repay him. This promise is so rich and so plainly stated that the wonder is that there are not more willing to make investments in, harmony with it, and to realize that the Lord not only repays, but gives large interest.

"Me Ye have not Always"

The opportunity for honoring the Lord was limited -- a little while and His sufferings would be ended and He would be glorified, beyond the evil, beyond the power of human attention. It was appropriate then, when viewed from the right standpoint, that Mary should spend a great price upon her Lord--that the head upon which fell the slanders and anathemas of the chief priests and doctors of divinity of that day, and upon which shortly the crown of thorns would be placed, should now be honored by one amongst a "few of those who realized His true worth, His true grandeur, His Kingship, that He was indeed the Son of God. It was appropriate, too, that those feet which had trodden the valleys and hillsides of Palestine, and that were so weary at times, and that symbolized the feet of consecration treading the narrow, rugged way, and that so soon would be pierced with the nails on the cross, should now be highly honored by one who appreciated and trusted them, who loved them and who was seeking to walk in the Master's steps.

When we get the right view of the matter, we can indeed sympathize with our Lord's expression, "Let her alone," Trouble her not, Take it not from her as though when the first motion was made to use the spikenard the Apostles had wished to have it spared that they might sell it, and as though our Lord hindered them from using persuasion to that end, saying, Let her alone, do not hinder her.

Spikenard Mary represents one of the most beautiful elements of Christian character amongst the Lord's people from that day until the present. For be it remembered that the entire Church of Christ in the largest sense is the "Body of Christ," as expressed by Jesus and also by the Apostles. The Mary class, who would rather purchase perfume at a great cost whereby to serve the anointed Church, the Body of Christ, than to spend the same upon themselves, is still with us, and has been of the Church for these eighteen centuries. Not only was the Head of the Body anointed, perfumed, honored, comforted, cheered, but all of the members since have likewise received a blessing from this class, this spikenard Mary class. It is composed not always of the orators, the wealthy or the wise--its ministry is unostentatious and to many, especially of the world, it seems foolishness and waste--but the Lord appreciates it, and so do the members of His Body who are comforted and refreshed thereby. Blessing be' upon this Mary class!

Honor to Members -- Honor to Head

But if there have been members all the way down who have been comforted in this way, should we not expect some particular blessing of the kind in the end of this Age, upon the "feet" members? According to our understanding we are now in the closing of this Age -- the Head has

been glorified, many of the members of the Body have passed beyond the veil, and only the feet are here. Perhaps this very picture of Mary's anointing the feet of our Lord as well as His head constitutes a type or picture of what we may expect in this present time. And here comes in a beautiful feature of the Divine arrangement-we may all be of the Mary class as well as of the feet class. In other words, each member of the Body of Christ may to some extent serve the fellow-members of the Body, the fellow-members of the feet, as Mary served the feet of Jesus.

Let each one of the Lord's true people as he studies this matter conclude that by the grace of God he will join the Mary class, and purchase spikenard very costly and lavish it upon the feet of the Body of Christ-the Church-the true members. This will mean love, sympathy, kindness, gentleness, patience and assistance and comfort. It will mean large and growing development in all the fruits and graces of the Spirit, whose combined name is Love.

Dear readers, let us each remember that while it -is impossible for us to do as Mary did in this lesson, it is the privilege of each to do still more important things for each other, for the-brethren of Christ now in the world, the feet members of His Body. Hers was a literal perfume and in time lost its virtue; but the little acts of kindness and helpfulness which we may render one to another will never lose their merit in the estimation of our Lord, and never lose their fragrance to all eternity in-the estimation of each other. The little things Of life, the little words, the little tokens, the kind looks, the little assistances by the way, these and, not great things are our possibilities, our perfumes, the one for the other.

"Wash One Another's Feet"

The washing of the feet in olden times in oriental lands was very necessary to the comfort, and hence to wash one another's feet would signify to comfort and refresh one another even in the most menial services. This is the essence of our Lord's lesson to us, that we should be glad for any opportunity for serving one another, for comforting and helping one another, however menial the service. - Apply this now to the expression of our lesson. Mary washed our Lord's feet with perfume, and the Mary class, the most loving and devoted class in the Church, are to help one another, to wash one another's feet; and they are to do so not in the rudest and clumsiest manner imaginable, but, inspired by love and devotion to one another, they are to wash one another's feet with the kindness and sympathy and love and appreciation symbolized by Mary's spikenard; and their comforting of one another is to be with that love and solicitation which was represented by Mary's using the very locks of her head for her Master's feet.

We see some evidence that this love, this spikenard-Mary love and sympathy, is growing amongst the members of the Lord's Body; that as they perceive the animosity of the world and the flesh and the Adversary against the Lord's anointed they are all the more devoted one to another, and all the more disposed to honor one another with care and love and sympathy, and to speak and act generously and kindly one toward another. We are glad of this -- we know of no better evidence of growth in grace on the part of the consecrated. Let the good work go on until we shall have filled the house with the perfume of love, until the whole world shall take knowledge of how Christians love one another -- not in a narrow or partisan sense, but in the broad sense that Christ loved all who love the Father and all who sought to walk in the Father's ways.

Let Us Do It Now

If Mary had waited another week she might have used the perfume upon herself but not upon the, Lord -- within a week from the time of this incident our Lord was buried, the tomb was sealed, the Roman Guard stood before it and there would have been no opportunity even to have poured it upon His dead body. How much better that she improved the opportunity, that she showed the Lord her devotion while He was still her guest. The parallel is here: it will not be long until all the members of the Body of Christ will have filled their share of the sufferings and have passed beyond the veil, "changed."

Wisdom tells us that we should not delay in bringing our alabaster boxes of ointment and pouring their contents upon our dear ones of the Body of Christ, the feet of Christ. No matter if they do not notice us, or think of us, or pour any upon us as members of the feet; let us -do our part, let us be of the Mary class, let us pour out the sweet perfume upon others, and the house, the Church of the Lord, will be filled with the sweet odor, even though some disciples might mistakenly charge us with being extravagant with our love and with our devotion, not understanding that the Master by and by will say again, "Let her alone, she hath done what she could." Our Lord's estimate of this spikenard and anointing is that it is all that we can do-nothing could be more or better. It indicates love, great love -- and "love is the fulfilling of the law."

"Let us consider one another," said the Apostle consider one another's weaknesses, consider one another's trials, consider one another's temptations, consider one another's efforts to war a good warfare against the world, the flesh and the Adversary -- consider one another's troubles in the narrow way against opposition from within and without, and as we do so, it will bring to our hearts sympathy, a sympathy which will take pleasure in pouring out the spikenard perfume, very costly, purest and best, upon all who are fellow-members of the one Body.

The Truth Tersely Stated

Some one has spoken of the great "Society of Encouragers" who do so much to help encourage and uplift the footsore and weary in the pathway, of life. It is not a great society so far as members are concerned, but it is a great society from the Lord's standpoint and from the standpoint of all who have been helped and encouraged by it. Spikenard Mary might have been said to have been 'a prominent member in this society of encouragers. We may well imagine that as our dear Redeemer was thinking of the severe trials, including the cross, of the week already begun, Mary's manifestation of love and devotion would come to Him as a special encouragement and refreshment of spirit. So few seemed to understand Him! even His disciples did not appreciate the situation. Here was one who at least loved Him, had confidence in Him. No doubt it gave Him courage for the remaining days of His journey.

Respecting the propriety of using present opportunities for the comfort and encouragement one of another, a writer has pointedly said:

"Don't keep the alabaster boxes of your love and tenderness sealed up till your friends are dead. Fill their lives with gladness. Speak approving, cheering words while they can hear them . . . If my friends have alabaster boxes full of the fragrant perfume of sympathy and affection laid away, which they intend to break -over my body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary

and troubled hours, and open them, that I may be refreshed and cheered by them while I need them. . . . I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy, than life without the sweetness of love and sympathy. Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward on the weary road."

Mrs. Preston's poem, "Ante Mortem," expresses the same thought thus:

. . . "Had I but heard
One breath of applause, one cheering word
One cry of '*Courage!*' amid the strife,
So weighted for me with death or life
How would it have nerved my soul to strain
Thro' the whirl of the coming surge again."

Sacrifice of Sweet Odor

The Apostle, speaking of the ministries of the Church one for another, says that ours is a sacrifice of sweet odor unto God, but again he adds that the Gospel referred to is of life unto life to some and of death unto death to others. That is to say, good deeds, kind words and efforts will be appreciated by those who are in the right attitude of heart to appreciate them, while on the contrary the same good deeds will arouse offense and constitute a bad odor to those who are in a wrong condition of heart. How often have we seen it so, that with our best endeavors to serve the feet of Christ some have been comforted and refreshed, others have been angered-to one the effort was a sweet odor, to the others it was an offensive odor, because of their wrong attitude of heart toward the Lord and toward the Body of Christ because, perhaps, of their ambitions or whatnot that were interfered with.

It was just so at Bethany: the sweet odors that filled the house, and the blessing and refreshment that came to Mary in connection with the ministration, had a very different effect upon Judas. He was angry; his selfishness hindered his appreciation of the honor done to the Lord; he could think only of himself and what he had hoped to get out of the transaction, and how, so far as he was concerned, the whole matter was a waste. The sourness that came to his heart because of its wrong attitude is indicated by the testimony that he straightway went to the chief priests to bargain with them for the betrayal of Jesus. Let us, then, clear brethren, see to it that our hearts are in a loving attitude toward the Lord and not in a selfish attitude-that we appreciate everything done in His name and for His Body, and that we be not self-seeking. Otherwise the result will be with us the savor of death unto death, as it was with Judas.

This concludes our lesson. It was the next day probably that the Jews began to gather in considerable numbers to see Jesus and Lazarus, and to take counsel respecting the putting of them to death -- "for the good of the cause." And by the way, let us remember that the "good of the cause" has nearly always been the basis for every mean and despicable act against the Truth from first to last. Let us beware of such a sectarian spirit; let us see to it that our love for the Lord and all of His brethren is sincere, and not a personal and selfish one for ourselves or some denomination, otherwise we know not into what evils we might be led.

The Watch Tower-1905.

Lord, Teach Us to Pray

"After this manner therefore pray ye." - Luke 11:1; Matt. 6:9.

THE connection between the first three petitions (considered in our last issue), and the last three (which we now propose to consider), is obvious, and may be stated thus: We have declared our own veneration of Thy Name, and our desire that it should be everywhere honored; we have petitioned for Thy Kingdom to be established on earth, and Thy will to be done on earth even as it is done in heaven, and now, in order that we may ourselves take part in the Divine work for the advancement of which we have prayed, we would ask Thee to feed us, forgive us, and guide us.

"Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread"

In order to serve God it is first of all necessary that we live. Literal food for the body is certainly intended here, although this would not exclude the thought of spiritual nourishment also. But it is impossible for us to receive spiritual nourishment unless our physical necessities are supplied. Jesus and His Apostles, who did not possess a superabundance of this world's goods, knew this better perhaps than a good many theologians who have debated the matter since. No poor man will hesitate about the sense in which this petition is to be understood. While we hold no brief for that materialism which is so occupied with the body that it finds no time for the necessities of the spiritual life, we confess to an equal distrust of any teaching which attempts to be so concerned with the spirit, that it ignores, and frequently dishonors, the body, and which interprets this text, and similar Scriptures, as having **exclusive** reference to spiritual food. The truth in this, as in so many other matters, lies, in our judgment, between these two extremes.

There is an instructive lesson on this point in the ministry of our Lord-in His post-resurrection ministry. It is recorded in the last chapter of John. Seven of His disciples had gone fishing, and though they had toiled all night, they had caught nothing. They were coming to shore with empty nets, when Jesus (although they did not know that it, was Jesus), hailed them: "Children" (or Sirs), "have ye any meat?" Then when they told Him "No," He said unto them: "Cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find." They did so, and "were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." Now when they reached the shore, what else did they find? "A fire-of coals, with fish thereon, and bread," and One to whom all power had been given standing beside the fire.

Can we enter into that scene? He who had come to reveal the Father -to the hearts of men; He who had given His life for their sakes; He who had been raised from the dead to immortality, who was now indeed the Lord of life; who was shortly to ascend to the Father to take His place as Executor of Almighty God in the affairs of the universe, had occupied Himself in that early morning hour with preparing breakfast for seven hungry fishermen, and now He says to them: "Come and break your fast." Ah! surely in this, as in all else, He did but continue to "show us the Father." "Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." Yes, He knows, and cares. "Cast therefore all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." He does indeed care whether we eat or starve. The simple necessities of our every-day life are His concern as truly as anything else that contributes to our spiritual welfare, and helps us to be what He would have us be.

This petition, moreover, takes cognizance of the fact that no matter how many second causes may intervene, our Father is the ultimate Cause. It is from Him that every good and perfect gift cometh down. What a delicate adjustment of all the elements of nature is necessary in order to make food a possibility! As an old writer has truthfully remarked: "When we witness the many dangers which threaten the springing and the rising grain; when we reckon- the opposing dangers of drought and moisture, of parching heat and pinching cold, the blights which may taint, the worm which may consume, and the other alarms which the husbandman feels and fears, we cannot but perceive that something more than the industry of man is required, and that it is with good reason we are taught to ask our daily bread of God." As the poet has said

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And *back of the flour* the mill;
And back of the mill is the wheat and the shower,
And the sun, and the Father's will."

Daily Bread

The word translated "**daily**" "give us this day our **daily** bread," has occasioned extreme perplexity to expositors. Scholars tell us that it is a word peculiar to the New Testament, and peculiar also to the "Lord's Prayer." Origen, they tell us, who was one of the early Christian fathers, could not discover the least trace of it, either among classical writers, or in the common speech of the uneducated. The Diaglott renders it "necessary." "Give us this day our **necessary** food." The thought seems to be that we are not to pray, not to, desire, superabundance. "Give me neither poverty nor wealth; feed me with food convenient for me." If superabundance comes, we are to be thankful for it and are to use it aright; we are to use the additional supply which comes over and above our need, as the almoners or stewards of our heavenly Father, dispensing His blessings to others. But we are not to pray for such excess; we are to pray for what is sufficient and needful.

This Day

Our prayer, furthermore, is to be for "this" day. "Give us this **day** our necessary food." We are to take no anxious thought for the morrow. The temptation with many of us is to try to grasp too much of life at a time, but our Lord in every way seeks to discourage this. Of course, in this complicated civilization of ours, we must give a certain amount of thought for the morrow. God Himself takes thought for the morrow. It is because He has done so, that there will be any tomorrow at all for us. It is because of His forethought that we have the seasons in rotation, contributing to the growth of the grain which becomes our bread. No! it is not wrong to take thought for the morrow. But the danger lies in anxious thought. And there is more than danger-in it. There is physical ill health in it; for it has been scientifically demonstrated that worry kills. But far more important than that, anxious thought is itself sin. It dishonors our Father by the distrust it manifests; it hinders our own spiritual growth, mars the beauty of character we should otherwise develop, and beclouds our witness for God to others. And we are to prove ourselves in this respect, as well as in all other respects, "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." As the poet has expressed the matter:

"One day at a time! That's all it can be;
No faster than that is the hardest fate;
And days have their limits, however we
Begin them too early, and stretch them too late.

"One day at a time,
Its a wholesome rhyme;
A good one to live by;
A day at a time."

One other thought in connection with our daily food. The Apostle Paul 'has expressed it: "If any will not work, neither let him eat." The clear teaching of the Apostle here is that while it remains true that our bread is supplied by the grace and as the gift of God, it is to be enjoyed only when earned. A proper extension of the Lord's Prayer, therefore, would be to ask our Father's blessing on our efforts to provide things honest and decent in the sight of all men, and that toiling, as we must, to earn our bread, we may do so in only right ways that we may keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

"I watched the sparrows flitting here and there,
In quest of food about the miry street;
Such nameless fare as seems to sparrows sweet
They sought with greedy clamor everywhere.

"Yet 'mid their strife I noted with what care
They held their fluttering pinions fleet.
They trod the mire with soiled and grimy feet,
But kept their wings unsullied in the air.

"I, too, like thee, O sparrow, toil to gain,
My scanty portion from life's sordid ways.
God grant I too, may have the grace,
To keep my soul's uplifted wings from stain."

Forgive Us Our Sins

We cannot do God's work without the supply of temporal food for our physical necessities; therefore our Lord taught us to offer this last petition. But it is equally the case that we cannot do His work unless we are at peace with Him; therefore the petition which follows: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive **our** debtors." This petition, to be day by day prayed, supposes that he who prays this prayer will be always penetrated, to the last, by conviction of his sins. Some, who resent this doctrine, reject also this prayer, regarding it as provided not for Christians but for Jews, insisting that after Pentecost Christians could not consistently use it. But it is certainly of Christians and of no one else, that the Apostle John speaks, when he says: "If **we** confess **our** sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us **our** sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Our Lord was not suggesting here that His disciples should petition the Father to release them from the condemnation which came upon Adam and on them as his children because of Adam's sin. Provision for their release from **that** condemnation would shortly be accomplished for them by His contemplated sacrifice at Calvary, and the union with His resurrection life by the spirit-

begetting influence of the Father, which would follow "not many days" later. But thereafter, as new creatures in Christ Jesus, as long as they remained in the flesh, they would find themselves unable to do perfectly. Again and again they would find themselves omitting to do certain things they should have done, and doing other things they should not have done. Such are the debts which they would incur and for which forgiveness was to be daily sought.

And how eminently proper it is that the one who would thus pray should himself be able to exercise a similar largeness of spirit towards others. For it takes the same kind of a disposition to **receive** forgiveness as to **show** forgiveness. And the two are inseparably joined together by our Lord. Indeed, in this very connection He reiterates the matter, thus: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you; if ye forgive men not their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Elsewhere He emphasizes this same doctrine in a parable-that of the unforgiving servant. In debt to his master ten thousand talents and freely forgiven, he yet had no compassion on his fellow-servant who owed him a hundred pence, a comparatively insignificant sum. Ah! is not this parable true to life? We fret and chafe over the wrongs and injuries done to us by others as if they were really enormous. But how fared it with this unforgiving servant? Did he not find his old debt rolled back upon him with all its crushing weight He did indeed. And our Lord, bringing home the lesson very forcibly to His disciples, concluded the parable with the words: "So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye do not from your hearts forgive every one his brother their trespasses."

A lesson which is so plainly taught by our Lord, and emphasized by so many repetitions, must be a most important one. The duty of forgiving others is not merely one of the refinements of Christian culture, something which adds to the beauty of a Christian character. though not essential to it rather it is a vital element in every true Christian life. We pray that we may be made like Christ, that His image may be impressed upon us; but we cannot be like Christ unless we have the spirit of forgiveness. Too many people who call themselves Christians seem to give little thought to this phase of the Christian life. - They may seek to be truthful, honest, just, and upright, but they pass over, the duties of love. There is a great lack of tenderness in many lives. Yet we cannot read the New Testament without finding the lesson of gentleness on every page. In the culture of our Christian life we are exhorted to put away every trace of bitterness, and to gather into our character everything that is kindly and loving. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." "Put on therefore a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye." These quotations show the tone of the whole New Testament. But how close to these teachings is the Church of Christ living? Are we not all disposed to be too keenly alive to anything in others which appears to touch us unkindly? We praise love, but do we live it? We want other people to practise forgiveness, but when one has wronged us we are slow to practise it ourself.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive.
Ah! who, dear Lord, can pray that prayer?
The rest, with ready zeal is said,
But self-accused, we falter here.

"If in my heart has been
An unforgiving thought, or word, or look,

Though deep the malice which I scarce could brook,
Wash me from the dark stain."

Lead Us not into Temptation

With the remembrance of past trespasses there succeeds in the mind of the Christian the realization of his weakness and the danger of further stumblings and failures. His prayer, therefore, passes naturally from the petition to be forgiven sins already committed, to a petition for guidance, and protection, so as to avoid sins in the future. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One."

Scholars tell us that the word "to tempt" originally meant "to try," or "to test," without indicating in the least whether the purpose of the trial was good or bad. Hence the word "attempt," which may be employed in a good or a bad sense. So also the word **tentative**, which is but a contraction of the word **temptative**, and which we know means trial, as for example, in the case of the unforgiving servant we were noticing in a previous paragraph. He , was forgiven tentatively, provisionally, with the understanding that his own character and conduct would show some correspondence to the grace of the One who had forgiven him. In Gen. 22:1 we read that God did **tempt** Abraham, that is, He made a holy trial of Abraham's faith. In John 6:6 the word is translated **prove**: "This Jesus said to **prove** Philip, for He Himself knew what He would do." This was a good trial or temptation, intended to develop Philip's faith. In 2 Cor. 13:5 we read "**Examine** yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." If the word had been uniformly translated, it would read: "Tempt yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." We thus see that the word is often used in a good sense; however its prevailing use is to denote an evil trial, trial that would ensnare, trial that is with the purpose of alluring to wrong-doing --morally insidious, seductive temptation.

Now concerning the first sort of trial, a trial that is intended to have only a good result, the Apostle James exhorts: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience." Again, he says: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when He is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." Surely then, we are not to suppose that Jesus is here instructing His disciples to implore their Father not to lead them into this sort of temptation.

But on the other hand, if we adopt the bad sense in which the word temptation may be taken, another difficulty arises. How could we ask God not to lead us into a trial with the malicious intent of ensnaring us into wrong doing? God Himself cannot be enticed into evil, neither in that sense does He tempt any man.

We believe the solution of this problem depends upon our settling the question as to who is the author of the temptations which this petition anticipates. And the next clause supplies the answer to that question. It is none other than our Adversary. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the **Evil One**." The one who is responsible for the temptations referred to in this petition is Satan.

Now of course our Father would not lead us, guide us, impel us, into the snares of the Adversary. On the contrary He would lead us in an opposite direction. But if one is led away by his own uncontrolled desires, our Father's usual method of waking such an one up is to withhold for a moment His guiding and protecting hand. Especially does He do this with one whose heart is lifted up in pride, one who is beginning to think more highly of himself than he ought to think. "Let him

that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall." We hear rather overmuch these days of independent Bible students. It is possible that from one standpoint the word may be rightly used, but more often than not it has no right to be used. None of the readers of this journal, we trust, are independent Bible students in the wrong sense of that word. We are very much dependent on each other, are we not? And we are especially dependent on our Father. And that is the point of emphasis here. This petition is a recognition of our dependence on Him, and is equivalent to asking Him not to abandon us to our own unaided strength to the snares of the Evil One. It is as though we would petition our Father for our brethren and for ourselves "Father, if today an occasion to sin presents itself, if the enemy of our souls seeks to ensnare any of us today, grant, Father, that any one of us open to such a snare may be found walking so close to Thee, that it will not be necessary for Thee to chastise him by abandoning him to that snare, with the certain humiliation and shame which must result to him ere he is recovered out of the snare of the Adversary. But on the contrary, deliver us, rescue us"; (the term is a military one, denoting the deliverance of a prisoner who had fallen into, the hands of the enemy) "deliver us, Strong Deliverer, from the Evil One."

And His gracious word to us is that He will. As St. Peter writes: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations," and He will do, so, and as St. Paul declares: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Was it not this same spirit of dependence on His Father that enabled our Lord to overcome, that made Him more than conqueror? **He** had no disposition to rush heedlessly into danger zones in the spiritual warfare. No experienced soldier would ever enter lightly into another battle, least of all one who had been a hero in the strife. Instead of such a spirit of bravado He manifested the contrary spirit. We hear Him praying in the garden-praying with agonizing earnestness: "Father, if it be, possible, let thus cup pass from Me." Here was no self-confidence, but if anything a sense of distrust of His own powers. But there was no distrust of His Father, for with a deep conviction that His Father's power would enable Him, and that His Father's will was best, He adds: "Not My will but Thine be done." May His spirit be ours in ever increasing measure.

"Sun of my soul, my Father dear,
I know no night when Thou art near.
O! may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes."

The Chicago Convention

In a communication recently received from friends in Chicago announcement is made of a convention to be held in that city, Sunday and Monday, December 31, 1933 and January 1, 1934. All sessions will be held in their regular meeting place, 910 N. La Salle Street. The Chicago brethren are very anxious to have the fellowship of all 'who can unite with them in this time of spiritual communion, and assure all of a warm welcome. No doubt many will join in the prayer that the blessing of the Lord may be very much in evidence as the friends thus speak often one to another. For further information address the Secretary, Brother Irving C. Foss, 944 N. Knox Avenue, Chicago, Ill.