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As We Pursue Our Pilgrimage

"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." - 1 John 3:21.

IT IS generally conceded that as the great Life giver, giver, God holds within His grasp the possibilities of eternal life for any and all of His creatures. Further, it is evident that only those whose state of heart and life, after due trial, meet with the Divine approval shall be accepted into the glories and blessedness of eternity. There is therefore no happier, richer condition, no state more to be desired, than that implied in the Apostle's statement above-that condition in which there is freedom from all sense of condemnation, and one in which there is ever the consciousness of the Divine smile and approval. Nor is there any more important consideration for a child of God to have before the mind at the close of the old year and at the beginning of the new, than that of a sober and careful survey of his life, and an earnest self-examination and self-analysis, with his heart bared before the all-seeing Eye.

If Our Hearts Condemn Us Not

We have confidence toward God if our hearts are pure and upright before Him, which must surely mean that if our hearts are acceptable to Him, we shall have peace with God, and shall experience the peace of God filling our hearts and keeping us in the midst of all the strife and turmoil of our pilgrim way. In brief, the object of our earnest contemplation of the will and providences of God at this time or at any time, is that we may establish of a surety that our relationship with Him through His blessed Son, is sound and well grounded, 'and that we are accordingly in the position to exercise good confidence toward Him and fervent trust in Him. Such confidence is most necessary as we look forward into the shadowy future, with deep desire to be continued in His grace and in the enjoyment of all those blessed privileges that are the heritage of His people at this time. Truly in order that our hearts may not condemn us, they must be kept by a power and an influence far above and beyond our own or that which we possess. "Keep thy heart with all diligence," says the Wise Man, "for out of it are the issues of life." Harkening to our Father's Word further, we hear His voice of instruction to the effect that all human effort, all human endeavor **of itself**, is utterly futile and incompetent to deal with the vast forces of evil and with

our own fallen condition. None better than the great Apostle Paul realized this as he dwelt upon those matters of such solemn import, relating to the Christian warfare and the struggles of the Narrow Way, and so this Apostle asks the question, "Who is sufficient for these things?" He responds, "Our sufficiency is of God." In other words, as the Lord assured the Apostle Paul that His grace would be sufficient" for him and that by trusting implicitly in Him and following the Divine counsel, he would be a victorious warrior in the Lord's army, so also will He cause His grace and strength to be sufficient for every child who heeds His counsel and who accordingly possesses confidence toward God because his heart condemns him not.

The Christian's Larger Capacity

Doubtless all the brethren will concur in the suggestion that it is with special appropriateness that at the beginning of this new year we take a comprehensive view of our experiences and of God's providential leadings, looking circumspectly at the way we have traveled; that we should consider well which have been the steps that hindered progress, and which have been proper steps in the footprints of Jesus, bringing us nearer the goal, the maturity of Christian development, which we must surely realize if we would be accounted worthy of a share in the promised Kingdom.

To a certain extent the experiences of the Christian are such as are common to all mankind; yet the Christian, especially if he has been for some time in the school of Christ and is somewhat developed both in knowledge and in grace, has a larger capacity than others for grasping and appreciating life; because no matter how unsound his natural mind may have been, he has now "the mind of Christ," "the spirit of a sound mind," which is far better able than the natural mind to estimate matters at their true worth.

Beholding our state of helplessness and need, our heavenly Shepherd gives the assurance, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." "Call upon Me in the day of trouble," He says, "and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." Thus His inspiring voice may always be heard above the crash and din of battle-"Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." "Be -of good cheer, I have overcome the world." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Greater is He that is for us, than all that can be against us."

Personal Acquaintance with Christ

But yet how truly experience as well as the Word, of the Lord clearly teaches that in order to, derive power from these promises, the soul must repose implicit faith and trust in God. Again the words of our text are recalled, "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God"; in other words, the heart must be constantly right before God, it must be holy and pure in His presence in order that there may be a good foundation or basis for the exercise of confidence and trust in Jehovah. It is truly said that our faith can grow only by knowledge; but not merely a theoretical knowledge, not merely knowledge in the intellect; rather, the knowledge by which we grow in grace and Christlikeness is that which comes in connection with heart union with the Lord Jesus Christ, and personal companionship with Him, a close walking, with Him, resulting in a deep, intimate, personal acquaintance. Logically" then, we must study well our Master's words and general conduct, as well as His providences of private instruction to us in connection with our personal experiences, interpreting these always in the light of His Word. Much of what we accept at first by faith respecting the Lord's goodness and wisdom, will gradually become knowledge;

giving basis for still greater lengths and breadths of faith as well as for greater love and appreciation of our blessed Redeemer.

As the true child of God thus makes advancement in this life of the Spirit and in the comprehension of things pertaining thereto, he comes to realize all the more vividly the force of the Apostle's words, "This is the will of God [concerning you] even your sanctification." Everything else, every other consideration in life, therefore is subservient to this most important work within. It is then the will of God that must constitute our meat and our drink, that upon which we feed and are nourished from day to day, as it was in the case of our illustrious Head and Forerunner.

God Kindly Veils Our Eyes

Are we at this time anxious to know in advance something of the details of what lies in our pathway? and are we anxious to draw aside the curtain that hides the future, that we may discover before the time the nature of those experiences that are in our pilgrim way? But the counsel from heaven wisely forbids, our being permitted to have that knowledge, and it is not God's will that His children should know in advance, and so He kindly veils their eyes, and

"O'er each step of their onward way,
Doth make new scenes to rise."

Is it not sufficient that we accept the assurance of our Father's Word that "Our times are in His hand." We have only to recall further that the consecrated have struggled on by faith all along through the Age, without knowing the hour or the year of their deliverance. Nor is there extra need for us to have such knowledge now, any more than in the past. Hence it is our conviction that the Lord has not made any revelation to any one disclosing the exact time or concerning many of the details that relate to the conclusion of the Church's experience in her earthly pilgrimage. We are still walking by faith with regard to many of life's experiences and the Lord would have us content to leave in His hand the entire question of what He may be pleased to pour for us in the cup of experience. Meantime, He would have us concern ourselves with the work that is all important-that of the finishing touches of the Christian character. If we are faithful in performing the work in hand and doing God's will in our daily lives, then we shall be ready for the Master's call or for any of the new scenes that He may cause to rise before us.

Love of Christ Impelling Power

In consideration of all that is before us in these days of crucial testing and sifting amongst God's people, it is without doubt the will of God that we shall in the year 1934 continue to heed the Apostle's words: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." This girding up of the loins of the mind evidently relates to the mobilizing and concentrating of all the forces of the soul-longings, aspirations and affections, and the uniting of these in the direction of carrying forward the great engagement into which we have entered with the Lord, that of doing the Divine will. There are subtle intrusions and encroachments of the Adversary from various directions, and through many instrumentalities; hence the need for earnest vigilance and for being on guard lest we be misled by some of the deceptions and enticements of the Evil One.

Let us be reminded of the fact that no matter from what standpoint we are studying the will of God concerning us, no matter what phase of the Christian life we are discussing, it is the love of Christ in the heart which is to constitute the moving or impelling power in the direction of doing God's will. That love of God and love of Christ that St. Paul expounds in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, embraces all the elements or ingredients that go to make up the perfect Christian character. What strong incentive there is for all followers of Christ to seek to be filled more abundantly with this love! The attainment and large manifestation of this love surely represent the graduating degree of the school of Christ, that school in which we all trust to be well pleasing to the Lord during the new year before us. Let us then unite our hearts and prayers and above all our new wills with each other's and with our Master's to this end that we may be wholly sanctified and for the Master's use present and prospective made meet. "And the very God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." - Rom. 16:20.

Upon the Verge of the Unknown

In those far-off days God said to Israel, "The land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." (Deut. 11:11, 12.) Another dwelling upon this passage has pointedly said:

"Today, dear friends, we stand upon the verge of the unknown. There lies before us the new year and we are going forth to possess it. Who can tell what we shall find? What new experiences, what changes shall come, what new needs shall arise? But here is the cheering, comforting, gladdening message from our Heavenly Father, 'The Lord thy God careth for it.' 'His eyes are upon it *away* to the ending of the year.'

"All our supply is to come from the Lord. Here are springs that shall never dry; here are fountains and streams that shall never be cut off. Here, anxious one, is the gracious pledge of the Heavenly Father. If He be the Source of our mercies, they can never fail us. No heat, no drought can parch that river, 'the streams whereof make glad the city of God.'

"We cannot tell what loss and sorrow and trial are doing. Trust only. The Father comes near to take our hand and lead us on our way today. It shall be a good, a blessed new year!"

Fruit-Bearing

"Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." - John 15:8.

WHAT is fruit in a Christian? We know what it is in the natural world, and know its uses; what is it in the spiritual world? It is not merely Christian activities. True, well-directed activities are fruits; but there is danger in these things, when work is so lauded, that we overlook another kind of fruit which certainly is as essential as the forth putting of consecrated energy. In nature, fruit is part of the branch itself, not something apart from it. There are spiritual fruits that are part of the life, growths into holiness and Christlikeness. Thus St. Paul says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Very evidently these fruits are such as appear in the character itself. The aim of Christ's religion is not merely to make workers of us, to send us out to do good in the world, to fight against evil, to help the weak, and to minister to the sorrowing and the suffering. Its first aim is to make us good, to transform our character, to produce in us the likeness of Christ.' Then we shall be ready to minister. While, therefore, we are to be fruitful in every good work, we are to seek also to be fruitful in the qualities of Christ like character.

In nature the tree's fruits feed the hunger of men. No tree consumes its own fruits; it drops them for those who come to gather them. This suggests that we should not be selfish in our fruit-bearing. We should not seek the culture of our characters merely for our own sake. Our aim should be to provide something in our lives that will feed others and bless the world. All about us are hungry hearts. There are those who crave sympathy and love, those who yearn for comfort, those who desire to be saved. We are so to live that our lives shall yield bread for these.- *Selected from the writings of J. R. Miller, D. D.*

The Great Shepherd and His Son, the Good Shepherd

"The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

DAVID, THE PSALMIST, wrote prophetically, "Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psa. 23); for in David's day the arrangements for the Shepherd and the flock of this lesson had not been completed. True, the heavenly Father had purposed His entire Plan as respects humanity's redemption and return to His care as His flock, but He had not yet sent His only begotten Son, the Good Shepherd, to give His life for the sheep, to call the flock, to open the door and to lead them out and into pasturage and to rest. Nevertheless, in the Lord's providence the nation of Israel had already been gathered, as those who would be prepared to be the flock of the Good Shepherd when He should come. These were "shut up under the Law" (Gal. 3:23), waiting for the coming of the Good Shepherd to open the door and to call them by name, as His own sheep. Others, indeed, came before the Messiah, affecting to be the true shepherd, leaders sent of God, but they were mere pretenders, who sought their own good and glory, and not that of the sheep. They were thieves and robbers, who sought to gain possession of the sheep for their own selfish ends.

We note also the care of the Shepherd over the sheep, for He says, "He putteth forth His own sheep and goeth before them." The words "putteth forth" have the significance of looking after them, that they all get started in the way to the green pastures and still waters for soul refreshment. He is not heedless, careless, respecting them, whether they go or do not go; nevertheless, having started them in the way He will not drive them: He goeth before ' them to lead, that they may follow. Our Good Shepherd 'has indeed set us a noble example, so that we may walk in His steps; and whoever will, to the extent of His ability, trustfully do this, will find His wants abundantly supplied, for "No good thing will He [the Shepherd] withhold from those who [thus] walk uprightly." "He will guide them with His counsel, and afterward receive them to glory." - Psa. 84:11; 73:24,

Our Lord's parable does not tell us about the disciplines which the sheep are sure to receive, but these are set before us in the prophetic psalm on the subject, in the words, "Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." The thought is that the Shepherd, while going before and not driving the sheep, nevertheless has such an interest and care that He will not suffer one of the sheep to wander away without administering certain chastisements designed for its good, and to correct it and to bring it back into fellowship in the flock. This is a comfort; and yet it should certainly be the desire of all true sheep to follow the Shepherd so closely that the rod shall not often be necessary.

The "porter" (representing the 'Law) would not recognize any of these pretenders, nor approve them, nor open to them access to the sheep. But when the true Shepherd came He satisfied the Law (the porter), and bought the sheep from justice, giving His own life as their redemption price. Thus He gained the full right to open the door, the full sanction of the porter, the full authority to lead forth the Sheep to the green pastures and still waters of Divine truth which then became due to them.

At the time of the giving of this parable our Lord was laying down His life, and at the same time tittering His voice, that the true Sheep might learn to know Him. And not only will all the true sheep learn to know the Shepherd, but, precious thought! the Shepherd knoweth His own sheep individually, so, that He calleth each by, name as He leads them out. This suggests to us the intimacy of the relationship between Christ and each member of His flock.

His Voice -- the Word of God

The link between the Shepherd and the sheep, as here indicated, is love. The Shepherd loves the sheep, and has demonstrated this in having laid down His life for them; and the sheep speedily learn to love the Shepherd, as their care-taker; they recognize Him through His voice-the Word of God. This voice appeals to the hearts of all the true sheep, who quickly respond, "Never man spake as this man."

The voice of the Good Shepherd is a blending of various sounds in a manner in which they are between Christ and His flock, the Church! He gives to each one of us a new name, and we are each personally known to Him-our peculiarities of character, temperament, etc., our strong points and our weaknesses-He knoweth them all. He loves us, cares for us, 'helps us over our trials and difficulties, and shields us from the temptations which would be too strong for us. "He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation provide also a way of escape," and causes that "all things work together for good to them that love God, the called ones according to His purpose" -- His "little flock" of this Gospel Age.

The New Name Given

The treatment of sheep in this part of the world is very different from that described in the parable, which is still maintained in Oriental countries.. Here sheep are driven, and have little or no acquaintance with the herdsmen. But in Palestine, for instance, every sheep has a personal acquaintance with its shepherd, and he with it, and it is said that this acquaintance is so particular that the shepherds 'have a separate name for each sheep, and. know each individually by its name, and that the sheep knows its own name and will respond to a call from its own shepherd at any time. How beautifully this illustrates the close relationship blended by no other voice. His voice sounds forth the chord of justice commingled with the chord of love, and the whole intoned with wisdom and with power. Other theories, plans and schemes of men and of devils, 'have no such 'harmony of sound as has the message which the great Shepherd *has* sent us through His Son. His voice speaks to us of a just penalty for- sins-death; it speaks of love, in our redemption and the forgiveness of our sins, and the opening to us of the way of life, through resurrection. This "word of grace" constrains all the true sheep as no other message or voice could do. Moreover, when the true sheep hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, it satisfies their longings as nothing- else could do. They will no longer be in danger of being attracted by other sounds or voices, theories or schemes, but will reply to all,

"Jesus has satisfied; Jesus is mine."

There are many false voices in the world today, seeking to lead the Lord's sheep astray, and these are sometimes sounded in deceptive tones, to imitate the Shepherd's call, to draw away sheep after those who would be shepherds, but whom the. great Shepherd has not appointed; shepherds who not only have, not purchased the sheep, but who seek to ignore the great sacrifice by which the Good Shepherd did purchase them. We might mention many such false voices, or false would-be shepherds, Christian Science, Theosophy, Spiritism, Evolution, Higher Criticism, etc., but we have the Good Shepherd's word for it, that His true sheep will not be deceived by any of these.- Well do they know His voice, and its combination of justice, love, and mercy cannot be duplicated by others-its message. of redemption by the precious blood, justification by faith, the

high calling, the begetting of the Holy Spirit, the, by-and-by deliverance of the sons of God, and eventually of all who will obey Him of the entire groaning creation, through restitution.

This voice, once heard, can never be mistaken for another; and those who know this Shepherd and His voice need never be misled by others. The Lord's true sheep, whom He knows by name and who follow Him, will not heed the voice of strange shepherds, but will flee from them. They know when they hear a false voice, that it means that the Adversary is seeking to ensnare them; and such will flee from the voice of error that they may come the closer to the true Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep. If, therefore, we see some who we had supposed were of the Lord's flock heeding another voice and following after strange shepherds, and heedless of the voice that speaketh from heaven, we need not be fearful; for if they are true sheep of the Lord's flock they cannot long be deceived, if at all. We may indeed sound out the voice of the Good Shepherd, calling their attention afresh to the harmonies and beauties of the "voice from heaven," but if still they do not hear and heed, we may know that they do not belong to the flock which our Shepherd is now collecting and shepherding.

Various Voices Calling the Sheep

Amongst those who heard this parable from our Lord's lips, not many comprehended, not many had the hearing ear for the true Shepherd's voice: only a small proportion of the Jewish people followed Him and became His true sheep. Similarly now, many are professing to be the true sheep of the Lord's flock, but in this day of the Shepherd's presence His voice, the truth, becomes the test. All of the true sheep will hear and be attracted by the voice of truth now uttered, and will obey it. Those who are not of the Good Shepherd's flock, and who have not His Spirit, He desires shall now be separated; to this end they will hear the voice of other shepherds, and be deceived thereby: because they are not truly of the Lord's flock.

Dr. Porter tells of a scene he witnessed, in which several flocks of sheep were for a time commingled, and how, when the date time was come, the separation took place. He says:

"As we sat and looked, almost spell-bound, the silent 'hillsides around were in a moment filled with life and sound. Thousands of sheep and goats were there, grouped in confused masses. The shepherds stood together until all came out, and then they separated, each shepherd taking a different path, and uttering, as he advanced, a shrill, peculiar call. The sheep heard them; at first the mass swayed and moved as if shaken by some internal convulsion; then points struck out in the directions taken by the shepherds.. These became longer and longer, until the confused masses were resolved in long, living streams flowing after their leaders."

So at the present time there are many sheep in the nominal Church, but they are not all the Lord's sheep. Some belong- to human- leaders of various sects, and some are God's. The harvest, or end of this Gospel age, the time for separating the wheat from the tares, is the time for separating the different flocks of sheep. In harmony with this, we now hear various voices calling the sheep in various directions, as never before. This is, in the Lord's providence, 'for the purpose of separating all others from His own "little flock." His sheep will hear His voice and follow Him-- other sheep, consecrated to human leaders, human institutions, human theories, human efforts, will follow their own bents, and thus be separated from the "little flock," and this is now the Lord's good pleasure. Thus He will "gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity," before the glorifying of His Church and the great time of trouble that will follow.

Christ the Door of God's Sheep-Fold

As a further explanation of the matter, our Lord refers to himself as the Door of the sheep-fold, the lawful, proper entrance-gate, by which God's people might enter into rest. All who had ever come previously, claiming to be messiahs, had attempted to climb up by some other way than that of keeping the Divine law and purchasing the sheep. They were thieves and robbers, attempting to take what they had not secured a right to, and that, for selfish gain. But none of the true sheep would heed them nor follow them. Now, however, the Good Shepherd had come, and had purchased the sheep, opening a legal door of entrance to them and liberty for them, and it was appropriate that all of the true sheep should know it. Now it had become- possible for the sheep to have in Christ the liberty so long desired, and to be led out and into pasturage and refreshment and to rest and security. Henceforth Jehovah's flock should never lack for pasturage; because, having bought them through His Son, they shall be cared for. They may now say, "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."

Others who had approached the sheep, seeking to be their leaders, had done so selfishly; had been willing to sacrifice the sheep in their own interest; but the Good Shepherd, solicitous for the best interests of the sheep, demonstrated this by the sacrifice of His own life on their behalf, that they might have life more abundant, better than they had ever known hitherto,-eternal life. Hireling shepherds labor for the hire, and not from personal interest in the sheep, and consequently, instead of being ready to lay clown their lives for the sheep in times of extremity and persecution for righteousness' sake, they are ready rather to flee the trouble and avoid persecution. They think chiefly of their own ease and comfort, honor and dignity, and of how much of the golden fleece they can get from the sheep. They are not very deeply concerned respecting the spiritual progress of the sheep, their growth in grace, and in all the fatness of love and spiritual welfare; but specially in numbers and collections.

Characteristics of True Shepherds

Perhaps never more than at present is this truth clearly illustrated amongst those who are profess- edly representatives of the Good Shepherd -- under shepherds in His flock. Many of them give evidence of wanting to be on the popular side of every question-of unwillingness to suffer anything for the sake of the truth; of carelessness respecting the real spiritual condition of the flock: of interest rather in the human institutions through which they obtain their support, and with whose welfare their honor, dignity and titles are associated. Of such shepherds Milton, the poet, wrote, styling them

" blind mouths.
The hungry. sheep look up and are not fed,
But, swollen with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread."

The Christian philosopher, John Ruskin, commenting upon this, says: "These two monosyllables, 'blind mouths,' express the precisely accurate contraries of the right character in the two great of- fices of the Church,-those of bishop and pastor. A bishop means a person who **sees**; a pastor

means one who **feeds**. The most unbishoply character a man can have is, therefore, to be blind. The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed, to be a month."

Nevertheless, the Good Shepherd will always be represented amongst the sheep by those who have His own characteristics, and who are seeking to walk in His footsteps; and through these He will utter His "voice," and lead His own sheep to pasture and to rest. These will not only have the same voice, the same Word, the same good tidings, but they will have the same devotion to the interests of the sheep-to feed the sheep, to lead them into the green pastures and by the still waters of present truth, and to preserve their liberties in the Lord, and not to pen them up as their own, nor to make merchandise of them.

The Father, the great over-Shepherd, Jehovah, is referred to by the Good Shepherd, Jesus, in verse 16. "The Father knoweth Me [has confidence in Me-has entrusted the care of the sheep to Me] and even so I know the Father [having full confidence in Him, and recognizing Him as My Shepherd, Director, Leader], and [it is in harmony with His arrangement for Me and for the sheep that] I lay down My life for the sheep."

The sheep that I am now calling and leading to pasture and caring for and calling by their own names, and who know Me, are a very special lot of sheep; in all only a "little flock," for whom Jehovah, the Great Shepherd, has made special arrangements and provisions in His Kingdom of glory. However, these are not all 'of His sheep, though they are all yet called and led forth. "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold." I bought the whole world with the one sacrifice for sins, and all who have the true sheep disposition, all who desire to be in harmony with righteousness, truth, and the author of these, I must recognize as My sheep, and must search them out far and near, until every one of them shall be found. But not yet: this will be by and by, after the present "little flock" shall be glorified with Me. Then they, with Me, shall be the shepherds who will gather in all of the true sheep, delivering them all from the power -of the enemy, and bringing so many as will obey My voice ultimately into that glorious condition of oneness, harmony with the heavenly Father and with Myself, in which condition, as My sheep, they will be entitled to everlasting life. "Then there shall be one fold and one Shepherd," as it is written, "Of whom the whole family both in heaven and in earth is named."-Eph. 3:15. - *The Watch Tower*.

The Crisis of the Christ

"Father, glorify Thy name." - John 12:28.

THE circumstances under which this prayer came to be uttered were unusual, even- in the unique life of our Lord, for it was His crisis hour, as the immediate context shows: "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this (hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." - Ver. 27, Am. R. V. (margin).

The Boy Jesus

There had been other, lesser, crises ill the life of our Lord, two of them, the Baptism and the Transfiguration, being marked, as was this one, by the approving voice of His Father from heaven. Even before He became the Christ, before He was anointed, when He was but twelve years of age, it would appear that He experienced something in the nature of a crisis. The law under which I: de lived required all male Jews from twelve years old and upward to appear three times a year in the temple at Jerusalem. And to the next occurring Passover, after Jesus had completed His twelfth year, He was taken by His parents. "The pilgrimage to Jerusalem," it has been observed, "would be regarded by the Jewish boys as a pleasant holiday, full of the wonder of travel, the freshness of novelty, the pleasure of social intercourse, and the excitement of scenes and ceremonies peculiar to the paschal season, and to the holy city." To' the boy Jesus, however, the -attraction was not "the hills that were round about Jerusalem, or the manner of stones and buildings which were enclosed in the city itself, or the gay and crowded street, nor yet the social entertainment, but that quiet spot in the temple court, where sacred history was recited, and Divine prophecy explained. And so absorbed did the boy Jesus become in converse with the learned in sacred lore, that the Nazareth caravan started without Him, and He seems to have-been aroused from His absorption by the expostulation, 'Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.' His reply intimates that He had expected to be set free from parental restraint, and to follow a Prophet's mission, while yet, like Jeremiah, only in His teens: 'How is it that ye sought Me? moist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' It is, however, revealed to Him that He must continue as a child at Nazareth, and with deep meaning it is recorded, 'He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, wand was subject unto them.' Judea is more attractive than Galilee, and Jerusalem more interesting than Nazareth, and the scenes of the temple more in unison with His spirit than the workshop, and the teachers of the law more congenial companions than the Nazarenes, and the study of truth more in harmony with His spirit than agricultural carpentry, and the immediate entrance upon His mission more in accord with His zeal than delay; but if there were hesitation it was only for a moment; gracefully, as the moon falls back behind a cloud; silently and sweetly, as the star of the morning, still bright and beautiful, retires before the rising still, so Jesus went back to the oblivion of Nazareth, until the time of His showing unto Israel, saying in His cheerful retirement, 'I am willing to be concealed and unknown. Father, glorify **Thy name.**' "

The Baptism

Some eighteen years later our Lord passed another crisis. What happened between these two crises we would all be interested to know, but we have not been informed. All we are told is that He grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Arrived at manhood's estate, which, under the Jewish law, was thirty years of age, He carried out the purpose, of which His boyhood days had given such glowing promise, and in full consecration to the Father's will presented Himself to the Baptist at Jordan. Acknowledged by the Father with a voice from heaven as His wellbeloved Son; granted the Spirit without measure, which appeared in the form of a dove, He is led by that Spirit into the wilderness, there to be tempted of the Devil forty days. He is urged to relieve the hunger which He experienced at the close of His long fast, by working a miracle for that relief. He is tempted to presume upon His own destiny, and upon the protection of Divine providence, and for self-magnification to expose Himself to useless danger by casting Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. He is enticed to do homage to the Adversary of God and man, and universal dominion is offered as a bribe. "This," as another has remarked, "was temptation, real trial, positive probation. He was tried as the sapling by the wind, and as the ship by the storm; as the vessel of clay by the stroke of the potter, and as gold by fire." And the result shows that the Man Christ Jesus was characterized by that perfection which consists in perfect love to God; for in the words: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God"; "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"; "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve"; -- in these words, we say, the glorious sentiment of our text is seen to be triumphant, and stronger than all other voices we hear the voice of Jesus in each temptation saying, "Father, glorify Thy name."

The Transfiguration

Another crisis would appear to have been experienced by our Lord during the week preceding His transfiguration on the mount. Only a week, before this event He had announced to His disciples that He must suffer many things, and be rejected, and be killed. Of what transpired during that momentous week we have no record--that is to say, during the week which intervened between the day He first formally announced to His disciples His approaching death and resurrection, and the day of His transfiguration, when again the voice of His Father was heard from heaven in tones and terms of warmest approval. But as an eminent writer has pointed out, since "St. Matthew tells us that '**from that time** forth,' from the very day, that is, on which He first announced His death to His amazed disciples, 'Jesus **began to show** unto them that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and scribes, and be killed'; it would seem probable that He spent this week in discussing with them [that which, in the vision, they beheld Moses and Elijah discussing with Him, namely, the decease, the departure], 'the **exodus** which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem;'" -- that He spent this week "in dissipating their foolish dream of a military triumph and an earthly empire; in answering their remonstrances, in soothing their fears, in proving to them the necessity and the expediency of His going away from them, and going by the dark road of death."

"We may be sure, we think, since Christ lived not for Himself but for others, that the glory came on Him, and the voice spake from the bright cloud on this occasion, for the comfort and teaching of the disciples as well as for His own. Yet who can doubt that in this strange and thrilling scene there was teaching and comfort for the Son of Man Himself? St. Luke tells us that it was '**while He was praying** that the fashion of His countenance was altered.' And who can doubt what the

theme of His prayer was? Who can doubt that, as afterwards in Gethsemane, so now on the slope of Hermon, He was crying with strong supplication and tears for a will at one with that of His Father, a will obedient even unto death? The, thought of the Cross had never taken such a hold on Him as during the week in which He taught His disciples that the Son of Man must be delivered up into the hands of men. What wonder if, as He spake, the prospect of death grew darker, more shameful and more' abhorrent, to Him who was the Life indeed? What wonder if, when the week was over, His spirit grew faint within Him, so faint that He must needs go up into a mountain apart and pray, in order that, y communion with His Father, He might be reconciled to His Father's will, and cheerfully make it His own?"

That this was the substance of His prayer we may infer from the answer it received. The Transfiguration was the answer. And what an answer it 'was! We cannot pause now to examine all, its lessons of faith and hope and love. We must content ourselves at this time in noting that the Father, whose Name He desired above everything else to honor, granted Him then and there a foretaste of the honor and glory that should shortly be His Moreover when the Father did this by causing His face to shine as the sun and His raiment to become white as snow, what a suggestion this was of the glorious character our Lord possessed! It was as though all the purity, all the splendor of His inner nature was breaking through the veil of flesh, while the voice from heaven proclaimed Him the beloved Son in whose devotion unto death the Father was well pleased!

The Final Crisis

But 'great though the previous crises were, and, magnificent the manner in which He met them,, they did but point, to the last and chief crisis of His life to which -our text relates, the crisis which Jesus speaks of as the hour -- this hour. In the words of another: "This was not only a crisis, and the greatest crisis, but the crisis of all former crises. He had been born for this hour. To this hour-the hour of His agony and death-all the hours of His past life had tended. He had suffered before, but now His soul was to become exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. He had often sweat the sweat of toil, but now He was to sweat the sweat of agony. He had been despised by men, but now He is to be crucified as a malefactor. He had been deeply grieved by men, but now He is to be wounded and bruised by God. Men had often hid their faces from Him but now God will forsake Him. He has lived acquainted with grief, but now He is to die of a broken heart. This hour was **the** hour of Christ's life, the hour of the hours of His sorrow, the hour in the earth's history to which the finger of time had pointed since the day in which man fell, and the hour upon the events of which rested. the performance of God's chief promises, the fulfillment of centuries of prophecy, the realization of Divine symbols, and the salvation of the world Knowing all that hung upon that hour, and already tasting the sorrow He was to endure, His soul was troubled, fear agitated Him, perplexity obscured His spiritual vision. He reeled and staggered beneath His burden," and He cried "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Shall I say: Father, save me from this 'hour? No! -- I will not say that. It was for this cause that I came unto this -hour. I will say, [and God be praised, He did say] Father, glorify Thy name."

"His prayer is as simple as it is sublime. Throughout the Bible 'name' stands for 'character.' To 'glorify' a name, therefore, is to manifest a character, to illuminate it, to render it illustrious, to bring out its full splendor. Hence the prayer of our Lord can only mean: 'Father, manifest Thy **character**, especially Thy character as **a Father**; reveal Thy goodness; let Thy fatherly redeeming love shine forth in forms so splendid that men shall be compelled to recognize and respond to it. Let them see Thee as Thou art, that they may be changed into Thine image, and reflect Thy glory by reproducing Thy goodness."

"And that which makes this prayer at once most instructive for us, and most pathetic, is the fact that it could be answered, and that Jesus, even when He offered it, knew that it could be answered, only by the sacrifice of Himself. On His lips it meant, 'Let me die for the sin of the world; let me bear the pain and shame of the cross, that men may know and believe that Thou art in very deed their Father, know and believe that Thy love is an everlasting love, a love which shrinks from no sacrifice, which can never cease to labor for their salvation and welfare, till their salvation be effected, their welfare secured.'"

"And thus perplexity did not crush Christ, fear did not enervate Him; but emerging from the cloud which for a moment obscured the cheerfulness of His endurance, and rising above the crisis which for a moment threatened to drag Him down, He proved that His ruling passion, strong even, in death, is best expressed in the cry: 'Father, glorify Thy name.' The prayer of the hour had been the prayer of every hour, the cry of His agony had been the thirst of His joy, the aspiration of His last days had been His heart's desire through life, the desire at the crisis had been His aim at every step 'Father, glorify Thy name.' This is the language of a perfect Son, of love with all the heart and soul.. of filial affection culminating in self-annihilation." Could our Lord have said more? Thank God His character was such that to be consistent with all. that was within Him he could not say less.

(To be continued)

Mountain Tops of Vision

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness."-Psalm 48:1.

(Continued from last issue)

On Mount Carmel with Elijah

AS WE recall the unique nature of the Prophet Elijah's ministry, and by the aid of Old and New Testament Scriptures gain a knowledge of benefits to be derived from his record, how greatly we can appreciate the statement of the Apostle James in reference to him. Notwithstanding all the greatness of his call and service, he was "a man subject to like passions as we are." And the story of his life bears out the truthfulness of this word regarding him. The record does not fail to reveal a few of his infirmities so like our own. We see him carried *tip* to splendid heights of holy zeal for God under the spur of the impulse and joy of knowing that he is on the side of God, and under that spell, he is unafraid to attack the strongholds of Baal single-handed, and yet, we see him a man so susceptible to distressing fear, that he will flee for his life from an angry woman, so discouraged, that he will plead with the Lord to let him die. How many have felt a real kinship of "like passions" with him in all of this. Probably very few of the outstanding servants of God throughout the ages have escaped these periods of depression when their visions were set at naught and they realized the tremendous odds against which they battled. But James would have us think just now of Elijah's great power with God in prayer, and the very "passions" that controlled him the Apostle uses as an argument to strengthen us in the confidence that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Since the Word of God, therefore, has set this character before us as an example of what such prevailing prayer will accomplish (James 5:17, 18), will it not be worth our while to stand meditatively on the scene of his triumph; and visualize for ourselves blessings of a similar character?

Strangely enough, there were seven thousand others in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal, but how evident it is that their voices had never been raised in any special way against the prevailing apostasy. Obadiah no doubt was one of these, and yet he appears to have experienced little difficulty in remaining a trusted servant in the wicked Ahab's employ. What an opportunity he lost because of his spirit of compromise, and how many others there have been who have lost similar opportunities in all ages. But Elijah, the man of prayer, stood alone in the demand 'that the worship of God be re-established in the land. He stood alone on 'that memorable occasion when the issue was put to the test on Mount Carmel, and he was surrounded by no sympathetic supporters when he wrestled in prayer for the return of the showers needed to revive the famished soil. Little wonder, then, that under the strain his courage subsequently gave way to a sense of defeat, and he preferred to die. Any who have been through similarly deep' waters for truth's sake, who have stood on a plane from which the great fundamental facts of Christian, life are seen, and from that position surveyed the idols and the myriad things so oaten substituted for true worship, such call understand the "passions" that surged through the Prophet's mind. But times there are when what is needed most, is "the clear-sightedness of that faith which shall show men the unreasonableness of their position sweeping away the cobwebs of sophistry with a single' movement of the hand; and arraigning them at the bar of their own consciences, silent and condemned."

Lord Teach Us to Pray

Not the least of the great mysteries of Christian privilege, is the power of prayer. After all that has been said about how our prayers prevail with God, whose laws are everywhere fixed, and whose knowledge is infinite, the subject is still shrouded in much of mystery. But that prayer can set in motion agencies and powers ready to do us service, is a fact to which thousands will testify. Therefore, the important thing for us to know, is how to pray prevailingly. Even a hasty examination of the many Scriptures wherein we are urged to pray, will reveal the fact that prayer is given such an important place in Christian experience that where it is absent as a vital force in the life, the evidences of spiritual life are lacking-. But Elijah's prayer on the occasion of which we are thinking now, was of a very special character. He wanted God to be glorified before the people, and he desired that the people might be blessed and brought back into full favor with God. He became an intercessor therefore, and Carmel stands as a memorial of his successful intercession on behalf of his nation.

Think, then, of the privilege embraced in a statement such as this, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." (Isa. 62: 6, 7, marginal reading.) The Lord's remembrancers! What a service is this! And what an exalted objective on which to concentrate all the forces of prayer. Who, then, can question that God still rejoices to have such remembrancers today, and in such revelations of His will as this, He is both teaching us **to pray**, and **how to pray**. He is telling us that He wants intercessors who have the true-spirit of supplication, who will keep Him in remembrance of the special needs and possibilities of His people. And we are at no loss to know how to become such "remembrancers." We have asked Jesus to teach us to pray, and He has done so. In His inimitable prayer for the Church in the seventeenth, of St. John's Gospel, He has taken us up into a very high altitude for prayer. "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me: for they are Thine." (Ver. 9.) And what are the burdens on His heart for them? Oh, how great and vital they are! He entreats that they may be kept through the Father's name, through the indwelling Spirit imparting to them a constant increase of His own attributes, for His name represents His character. He prays that they may be kept clean from the evil in the world, be sanctified by the truth, kept so in union with the Father and Himself, that they will be in true unity with one another, and, finally, that they shall be with Him in His glory. Surely He wants us to be remembrancers day and night until such a prayer has been answered among His, people, today.

But His teaching us to pray and how to pray does not end here. Through some of His specially chosen "remembrancers" He has shown us our privilege in this matter. Listen to some of these Spirit-inspired prayers, and note the concentration on the greatest objectives, so full of vision, and so in harmony with Jesus. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." (Eph. 1:15-20.) What an altitude of spiritual vision! How great the similarity between the prayer of Jesus and this one of Paul.

But hearken again to another mountain-top prayer -- an Alpine height indeed. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3:14-20.) Surely Paul was one of God's faithful "remembrancers," fervently praying that the Church of Christ might know mountain-top visions and attainments.

Have we sung, "On Thy Church, O Power Divine! Cause Thy glorious face to shine," and really longed for such a manifestation of that power? Or have we said, "Mercy **drops** round us are falling, but for the **showers** we plead"? If we have, and the showers are truly desired, because we realize that copious showers are needed to revive parched soil, and bring back a return of first love where lukewarmness has crept in, what better way could there be to secure such an outpouring of blessing, than to follow the deep lessons taught in these Spirit-inspired prayers? The Church came into being in such an atmosphere of prayer; its existence, therefore, as an active agency in the world, and as "the salt of the earth" must be maintained by Spirit-taught prayer. Its vision was kept clear by prayer and fasting until the Spirit of waiting upon God passed out of its councils, and the few put standing revivals of the Age have come, because men of prayerful spirit became intercessors with God -- His remembrancers. The basis of God's approval is "riot by might nor by power" but through the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit can work only through a sanctified, praying people; for hands outstretched for blessing must be clean hands or prayer availeth nothing. Verily, "there shall be showers of blessing" when the need and power of prevailing prayer is more generally recognized, and "remembrancers" are found, gifted with vision, who may, without rebuke, enter "the presence chamber" on behalf of the people of God.

Resorting with Jesus to Olivet

How much has been left untold of scenes and incidents, in our Savior's ministry, of which we would be happy to know. Surely volumes could have been written about sayings and doings of His, which apparently were not at all necessary to make the Gospel records complete enough. Had everything been carefully preserved, no doubt the passing of time would have witnessed an accumulation of legendary embellishments, and dogmatic teachings setting forth these minor-incident as fundamental essentials to salvation, and much harm have been done. But when we read of Jesus "ofttimes resorting to Olivet with His disciples, how glad we would be to know just how those very frequent occasions were spent with Him. The associations connected with this garden enclosure, which even Judas knew so well, must have been many. But, after all, can we not believe that we are not entirely shut out from those precious hours of wonderful fellowship. We recall that Jesus definitely promised that when the Spirit came, their memories would be refreshed, and "whatsoever things" He had said to them would be remembered. How possible it is that we have had the joys of those refreshing conferences passed along to us by means of the inexhaustible storehouse of Apostolic writings we have today. Like a stone thrown into the calm waters of the lake starting- circles that spread far out from the shore line, so it may indeed be, if we knew it, that we too have shared in the quiet seasons on Mount Olivet.

The visions so possible to us on Olivet are many, for the reason that it was the scene of so many of the special experiences of Jesus. Besides being the spot where He frequently withdrew from the strain of His public ministry, it was to this secluded garden that He went immediately after the

last Passover Supper in the upper room, and it was there the agonies of His soul were poured out "in strong crying and tears." And as previously noted, it was from the slopes of this same mount that He went back to His Father, and to the acclaim of heaven. (See John 18:1, 2; Matt. 26:30-36; Mark 14:26-33; Luke 22:39; Acts 1:12.) Surely the visions to be seen from a spot where so much of Christian history converges, should be wonderfully sweet and helpful.

The Solitudes of Olivet and Bethany

Consider then the fact that the Son of God resorted "ofttimes" to this quiet retreat with His disciples, and doubtless about as often alone. Yes consider Him-He who gave out so lavishly to others as though possessed of an inexhaustible supply, He who in His baptism received the Spirit without measure, and who could say to the weak and burdened, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Consider Him possessed of those perfect intellectual abilities, fitting Him so efficiently with power to quickly grasp what was written in the Scriptures concerning His ministry. Yes, consider Him well, with all these advantages as equipments for service. Will not such considering of Him, inevitably lead a receptive mind to inquire, Why then did our Lord resort so often to the solitudes of Olivet, Bethany, and other seclusions? The answer, to -a. developed spiritual understanding, is clear. He was made like unto His brethren. Oh riot like them in the sense merely that He took on their form of flesh, but like them as well in the fact that His life was sustained by the indwelling Father. In time He would have life in Himself, but in His humiliation, in His pouring out of strength to the sick and dying, in offering rest to the burdened, how well He knew the need of being alone with God, in whom were all His springs. Only let the vision of the Savior "ofttimes" seeking solitude, be deeply fixed on our minds, and we will need no further admonition to recognize the urgency of such times of solitude for ourselves. And where did He look for the guidance He needed? Ah! He knew where to turn, "In the volume of the Book it is written of Me," He said. That, dear disciple, is where it is written of you, as well. There, when the heart is receptive, the life clean, the love fervent, and the mind quiet, God still speaks to the individuals who have learned their need of a personal appropriation of the Word of God. From its page the voice behind you is saying, "Behold here is your God," revealed in His glory, in His grace, and here through His Word and Spirit He waits to enrich with greater revelations of His will, and make possible greater experiences of His power.

Keep Thou My Way, O Lord

What emotions would be stirred within us if we lingered here to fully review all the precious incidents associated with Olivet. If our vision was cleared of all that would dim the eyes-if we were sacred and pure, what would we not behold as we stood on that holy ground meditating on the incidents we have not time to consider here. But then is one vision we must not miss. If this mount lift our minds high above the sordid and the common place, it also directs our attention to incidents well calculated to give an intense earnestness to our supplications for grace to walk faithfully before our God. It is well indeed that we gather all the exuberance of joy our mountain-tops may secure to us, but the Scriptures, and experience have taught us that mountain-tops of special triumphs may not lie far from ignoble defeats; therefore the warning is given, "Let him that thinketh lie standeth, take heed, lest he fall. It was on the Mount of Olives where Jesus was so painfully disappointed in three of His disciples. In an hour when it would seem that every cord of love and sympathy should be so quickened, and intuition so alert, and the ears so eager to hear, and the heart to obey, that beloved brethren would do none other than watch. But it was in the midst of just such a setting as this of which it must be written, "And He cometh unto the disciples,

and findeth them asleep. As if that were not pathetic enough to quicken sympathy into action, we are told that a second and a third time He came from the place of His agony, only to find them sleeping. And all this failure to rise to the occasion, is told of Peter, James, and John, His closest friends.

How full of warning this story is to us. Here we have three men honored beyond their contemporaries, and yet they fail so greatly. These were the three who had been witnesses of the transfiguration glory. One of them had just sworn allegiance even to the point of willingness to die for his Master, and another had but a few hours before leaned upon His breast at the table. Oh, what a vision this gives its frailties nestling within us and ready to humiliate us unless we are wide awake, and occupied with prayer lest we too fall in temptation. Mountain-tops of special-honor and blessing are likely to give a false sense of security, and foster the pride that so often precedes a fall, unless the heart is kept humble and watchful by a realization of its own unworthiness and weakness. The faithful records preserved of these men, have been given us not just to expose their weaknesses, but to warn us of our own. If they fell so seriously in the face of such exceptional honors, then, "My soul be on thy guard."

"Simon, Sleepest Thou?"

We need not engage in useless speculation about how these weary disciples felt when found asleep. It is not difficult to imagine how Peter must have noticed the emphasis intended in the words of Jesus to him, when in His direct manner He asked, "Simon, sleepest thou?" Surely one so willing to die for his Master as he had declared himself to be, could "watch one hour." But what of us? If Peter on this one recorded occasion publicly affirmed his unflinching devotion to the person of Jesus, and that death itself would not cause any deflection in his devotion, and yet failed to remain true to his vow of self-sacrifice, how many times have we failed in a similar way? In what a multitude of ways we have classified our love **par excellence** in contrast with many others who claimed to love Him too. We have mistakenly felt that others might indeed love Him, but being only nominal believers, professions must be discounted, and the ingredient of love possessed, must surely be so much less than our own. And what shall the finished record reveal? Ah, w-ho of us will have heard Him say, "Simon, sleepest thou? You who have enjoyed so great favors; you who have been so faithfully taught and who professed so much, "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" And what if He should find us asleep the second and third time also?

With the Lamb on Mount Zion

Some glad sweet day the "mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow into it." In that great day all the kingdoms of this world will have become the realm of our King, and we with Him shall rejoice over this flowing together of all these mountains. , But as a prelude to that glorious work, will there not be to us the joy of finding that all the mountains over which we have traveled, have wonderfully converged in the glory in which we shall stand on Mount Zion? Will not the fleeting visions that gladdened our hearts and quickened our steps in the pilgrim way, be all gathered to greet, us there, and increased a thousand-fold. Will not all the blissful foretastes of heaven's happiness granted to us on our mountains here give a blessed preparation for the marriage feast "when the Bride and Bridegroom are made one, before the great White Throne"?

And shall we be there? Momentous question indeed! For answer let us turn to God's description of those to be so highly favored. From the high mountain-top to which lie was carried, the Apostle describes to us what was revealed to him. "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having **His Father's name written in their foreheads.**" (Rev. 14:1.) As we think of the Lamb's book of life, and recall that only those whose names are written on its pages shall be numbered with His Elect, we very properly feel disposed to inquire, "Is my name written there?" But perhaps for thee present hour the more important question might 'be, Is His Father's name being permanently written on my forehead? Am I being transformed day by day into His likeness, His attributes and His holiness being engraven so deeply into my character, that ere long "on His own image in me He may smile? Of such will be those who stand on Mount Zion, and gaze therefrom into the illimitable future of joy unspeakable, and "follow the lamb whithersoever He goeth." Oh what can we conceive of the joys to come when God will "show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

"The Plan of God in Brief"

We have recently received from the Bible Students Committee in Great Britain, a booklet of the above title - "The Plan of God in Brief," being made up of short excerpts from Volume One, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," a brief selection being made from each of the sixteen chapters with the exception of Chapters I and II. The booklet contains nothing else but these selections from Volume I. The entire matter makes ninety-five pages, bound in heavy paper covers, 6 1/2 x 4 1/4 inches.

There appears to be an advantage in having the Truth in this condensed form, as in this time of hurry and running to and fro, some will be appealed to by this brief synoptical statement introducing the Truth, who would not be inclined to take time at first to look into the larger volume, "The Divine Plan of the Ages." Our brethren having given the matter careful consideration have decided that an edition of this booklet shall be issued by the Pastoral Bible Institute, in the confidence that a considerable number of the brethren in this country would be interested in having a supply of it on hand for distribution. In this edition which we will send forth, mention will be made that the matter contained in the booklet is in the nature of an excerpt from the larger volume, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," followed by a further statement respecting the importance and value of this larger and more comprehensive volume.

The price of this booklet will be fifteen cents per copy; in lots of ten or more, twelve cents each, postpaid. We hope to have copies ready for mailing within' a few weeks and therefore orders may be sent to our office at once.

How Some are Edified

Dear Brethren:

We feel sure you will be glad to have a report of our little services on the occasion of our dear Brother McKeown's visit with us October 21 and 22, last. We were very thankful, indeed, on receiving the October "Herald" to find we were to have the Brother with us.

Inasmuch as the Institute, and incidentally, Brother McKeown, were used of the Lord in May, 1931, in inaugurating with us little conventions which have proven the means of wonderful blessings to the Lord's little ones in this part of His vineyard, we feel sure a brief report of these services, together with that of his more recent visit, would be of interest to you.

On the occasion of the Brother's 1931 visit with us he suggested that the friends get together about once a month in a little convention for the purpose of study and fellowship. This suggestion was put to a vote of the friends then present, and carried unanimously. It was, however, with more or less fear and trembling that we undertook to carry out the Brother's suggestion, knowing we would be, in the main, without the help of Pilgrim service. However, "the Lord moves in mysterious [and various] ways His wonders to perform," and none but those who have been attending these services can appreciate the blessings they have been to us.

Our first gathering consisted of two services. Before long, however, two additional services were added, making four in all in each assembly. They consist, usually of a Berean Study, a prayer and praise service, a symposium, and a discourse, or whatever is available, with a substitute program always provided. Not only have we had these services each month without fail, but at the present time we have, in addition thereto, a monthly convention at Parsons, Kansas, a point at some thirty miles distant; thereby reaching some of the dear friends who could not come as far as Neodesha (or Iola, where the first services were held), thus making two conventions per month, as follows: at Neodesha, Kansas, 218 South. Fourth Street, the fourth Sunday in each month, beginning at 10 a. m., and continuing throughout the day, with a noonday lunch free to all; at Parsons, Kansas, 3156 Belmont Avenue, the second Sunday in each month, with hours and program the same. All the Lord's little ones within reach, regardless of past or present affiliations are earnestly urged to come to share the feast from the "table prepared for us." In the two and one half years, we have had in all about forty of these little gatherings, all but about ten of which have been without outside talent; that is, Pilgrim or former Pilgrim services.

We might mention one incident which seems especially providential: no less than three of these services have been arranged for, when later we have received the "Herald" itinerary giving us, in each instance, a Pilgrim visit on the identical date on which we had already arranged for a convention. We surely feel this can be accounted for in no other way than in the Lord's providence. This was true of the occasion of Brother McKeown's last visit, above mentioned.

These little conventions have been the means of drawing together the dear friends from no less than thirteen different cities and towns; some come as far as one hundred miles or more. . . . They have been productive, in the Lord's providence, of an increasing desire to study, and to know more of the Lord's Word; also, an increasing spiritual growth, and sense of sweet fellowship and blessing has been much in evidence.

As above stated, it was on the occasion of one of these little gatherings that Brother McKeown recently came to us. The Saturday evening service and the three discourses which he gave us

Sunday were all very helpful, indeed. Not only were they calculated to lift us up spiritually, but were given in such a way as to be particularly practical, and capable of being made a part of our every-day lives. We feel quite sure that when "the Books are opened, and another Book is opened," the Brother's visit will then be seen to have been a means in the *Lord's providence* of having helped many of His little ones to more carefully and *prayerfully* buckle on the armor and run with *added* patience and *care* the "race set before us, looking with *greater* care, and more firm determination unto Him who has been the Author, and so soon now will be the Finisher of our faith."

We are still thanking a kind Heavenly Father for the Brother's visit and our prayers are following, not only him, but all the dear brethren who are thus laying down their lives in the service of the Master whom we all so much love and strive (with now a renewed determination) to serve.

With earnest prayers for yourselves and the Lord's little ones everywhere, we are

Your brethren in Christ,
The Ecclesias of Neodesha and Vicinity

Encouraging Letters

Dear Brethren:

Christian love and greetings! We are writing to you dear brethren at the Institute to wish you the Lord's richest- blessings in the year that is before us. We pray that God will continue to bless you with wisdom and strength that you may continue to show forth His praises and bring blessings to those whom you shall be privileged to serve in the future, and' that all might be done to His praise and glory.

We raise our hearts and voices in praise and thanksgiving to our loving Father and our Elder Brother for the blessings in the year that has passed and for what He has sent us through you, and thank you for your services which have brought us many blessings. We pray that in the coming year we might continue to appreciate His loving kindness and show our appreciation by more diligently seeking to know and do His good and acceptable will that we might be conformed to the likeness of His own dear Son. We would ask you to remember us at the Throne of Grace, and our prayer for you is that "the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the -everlasting covenant, . . . make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."-Heb. 13: 20, 21.

Your brethren in the One Hope, Brother and Sister H. K.-Md.

Dear Brethren in Christ:
Greetings in His name.

It is with great pleasure, brethren, and with sincere gratefulness to the Giver of all good gifts, and to those who were privileged to serve, that we are writing to you as the fervent expression of many of the about eighty-five dear ones who were able to be present from different places at our little convention at Portland, December 31 and January 1.

Many cities and towns were represented; to mention some: Seattle, Tacoma, and Vancouver, Wash., Brooklyn, N. Y., Salem, Roseburg, Mill City, and Tigard, Ore., Boise, Idaho. The central theme of the -convention was, "Christ in you," and the discourses were as a whole of spiritual tone and exhortations to a closer walk with the Lord. . . . It is not possible to give an account of the addresses in detail as there were varied speakers and varied' opinions,' but after listening to them all, one felt that the message which the Master had impressed upon the mind of each speaker was that the Lord loveth and careth for His own.

Satisfaction was expressed in regard to the provision for the physical needs, the Class serving lunch to the entire assembly, and the admirable service of those who had that work in hand was highly commended.

We all realize the need of heavenly wisdom and guidance and desire that you will remember us at the Throne of Grace, as we also remember you.

With much Christian love, we remain, Sincerely yours by His grace, H. W. V.-Ore.

Dear Friends:
Please renew "Herald" subscriptions as follows:

I enclose check for same.

When Brother handed me a dollar for his subscription he said, "We haven't any money these days, but we managed to save a dollar for the 'Herald.' " The dear brother is half blind and is managing to keep his family from want by doing the very thing that makes his eyesight worse. But he is very brave about it and confident the Lord is overruling. I suspect the "Herald" is costing more of sacrifice all along the line these days, and I am thinking especially of those who prepare it for us.. That may be the reason it seems to grow better all the time. We certainly appreciate the loving thought that goes into it, and words can't express all pit means to us. We can only ask our Father to bless exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, those who are making it possible for us to have a paper so helpful, so comforting, so stimulating to righteousness.

With warmest Christian love to all,
Your sister by grace,
E. A.-Kans.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Fervent love and greetings in the precious name of Him we love and serve. I received the October issue of the "Herald" this date, for which many thanks. I note your offer re special "Herald" on Bible chronology. I would be grateful if you would please send me a copy. I have none.

I would like to say what joy it gave me to read the precious article in the August issue of the "Herald" entitled, "The Unity of the Spirit." How true, beloved brethren, is the statement you make that the unity of the Spirit is not a matter of bringing men into harmony with each other on matters of teaching and practice, but it is positively a matter of bringing individuals into a personal relationship with the Lord.

Yes, we all realize that when one is in heart union with the Lord, our Head, it gives one a joy in fellowship with those of like precious faith which is not realized by associations based on doctrinal tests, which too often are a matter of the head rather than of the heart. What a lot one may know about the Bible and yet not know Christ. Paul said, "That I may know Him and be found in Him," not know about Him.

"But what to those who find? Ah! this,
Nor tongue, nor pen can show:
Thee love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His loved ones know."

May God our Father continue to bless your ministry, dear ones in Christ.
In love and prayers, I remain, by grace
Yours in Christ,
W. J. E.-Eng.