

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XVII. December, 1934 No. 12

Unity or Uniformity? Which?

WIDE ATTENTION has been attracted by a recent sermon of the Right Rev. William T. Manning, Episcopalian Bishop of New York. As our readers are well aware, "the Anglo-Catholics, of whom Bishop Manning is an outstanding leader, maintain that the Apostolic (Succession has come down in Unbroken line," and he "will not surrender the 'fundamentally and definitely Catholic' doctrines of his Church for Christian unity." "The Episcopal Church, said the uncompromising Bishop of New York, 'holds the Catholic doctrine of the priesthood,' as 'shown by the fact that a priest of the Roman Catholic Church, or of, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, who comes into the ministry of the Anglican Communion, is not reordained, whereas a minister of any Protestant Communion, if he enters the ministry of the ,Episcopal Church or of -the Anglican Communion, must be ordained 'to the priesthood through the laying ,on of (hands by a Bishop."

In view of the importance of Bishop Manning's pronouncement the *Literary Digest* "telegraphed to the editors of several of the more important denominational magazines for their views on Bishop Manning's position, and its possible effect on (Christian unity. 'Church unity,' replied Michael Williams, editor of *The Commonweal*, a New York Catholic weekly, 'is a mere Utopian dream, and a superficial ideal at that, unless, :or until, the fundamental facts of :the problem are clearly known, and honestly dealt with.'

"Mr. Williams, who is held in wide esteem by Protestants as well as Catholics, said that there can be, and is, 'a large measure of cooperative unity among Christians of all denominations in regard to many important social questions. . . .

"But the Catholic Church, of which the Pope is the head, denies that the Protestant Episcopal Church possesses valid ordination, as ' explicitly as 'Protestant churches either deny that

ordination is 'essential to the Church of Christ, or that ordination is exclusively possessed by the Catholic Church. Hence, there is an absolute impasse to genuine church unity. . . . There can not be corporate unity, for there are not many true churches; there is, and can only be, one.'

"A's an independent in religion,' replied Dr. William E. Gilroy, editor of *Advance*, organ of 'the Congregational and Christian Churches of America, 'I am more interested in catholicity of Christian spirit, and in fidelity to Christ in thought, and deed, than I am in catholicity of name, creed or organization. Jesus said, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven the same is My brother and sister and mother." I am more concerned about attaining that sort of catholicity in the Christian family than about Bishop Manning's, or any other person's, definitions, or efforts, to limit the Church by any name or professed catholicity 'of his own.'

"Christian unity is a spiritual fact and does exist under the Holy Spirit,' replied Dr. Stewart M. Robinson, editor of *The Presbyterian*. 'Christian uniformity will never come, and would not be a good thing if it did. There was unity without uniformity in the New Testament Church. 'The message of the Church is more important than its machinery.'"

Which is the True Apostolic Succession?

As we watch with keen interest the developments in the ecclesiastical heavens, and note the fine Scriptural sentiments expressed in the replies of Doctors Gilroy 'and Robinson, shall we not do well to examine our own hearts that no sectarian prejudices may hold sway there? **Because** iniquity abounds, the love of many is waxing cold, and today many are beginning to feel that if it is impossible for men to be united in the fellowship and service of 'Christ, then Christianity is either an idle dream, beautiful but impossible, or an empty fairy tale. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the scoffs and jeers of the world, and the bickering and wrangling of worldly-minded Christians; in spite of the irritation outside the 'Church, and the agitation within, all truly consecrated followers of Jesus long for a larger fellowship. When that longing becomes a determination, when the wish becomes a will, where there is :a will there will be provided °a :way to overcome the lethargy that is upon us, to overcome the sectarian vanity from which perhaps none of us is entirely free.

When the Gospel 'first began to be preached by our Lord and His Apostles, what a oneness was manifest in the Church, as the little band of followers sought to walk in the footsteps of the Master! They were only a humble folk, without wealth, or scholarly attainment, or social standing, but thy seemed to catch the spirit' of the Muster, and after Pentecost such a spirit of joy and love and faith and hope possessed them, and such a fervor of missionary zeal, such a oneness of heart and action, that it seemed almost as if the prayer of Jesus would find speedy fulfillment, and that the whole world would soon believe on Him. (John 17:21.) In the early centuries the Gospel Message seemed to spread like fire. In the language of the Revelator: "It went forth conquering and to conquer." (Rev. 6:1.)* Just to read the story of those early days is enough to (rake the heart beat faster. Well might the powers that were in those days be astonished, as they witnessed the power of the Gospel in the lives of those who received it, giving to believers such a vision of our glorious hope as enabled them to stand undaunted in the face of cruel deaths, -to meet the furious hate of their persecutors undismayed; nay more, to meet that hate with a gentleness, a love a compassion, which *only* close followers of Christ can display.

*See Vol. I, pages 305-309, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (published by our Institute).

Alas! the rider on the white horse, which seems to symbolize that period of the Church's history, was followed by other horsemen, as those of us who are familiar with our Lord's Revelation are aware, and ere long, as history shows, a great compromise was effected between the world and the Church. Since then, the story of the Church has often enough been a history of hatred, of narrowness and stupidity, of inconceivable bigotry and brutality. What crime against God and man has the Church not committed? How appalling is the record! As we read the pages of history the outrages there revealed fill our minds with horror, remembering as we do that they were perpetrated in the holy Name of Jesus. Yet through all the centuries, amid wrangling bigots and proud tyrants, the true faith was kept alive. Though the Church as a whole was not Christian, became indeed Anti-Christian, some few were found at all times who had not defiled their garments. These have been the salt of the earth, the light of the world. As another has said: "If one seeks an Apostolic Succession, here it is, unbroken, and uninterrupted, a shining tradition of vision and service. It is in their gentle lives, silhouetted against dark backgrounds, that we trace the history of the hidden Church, the "little flock." Though not inspired, as were the Apostles, they were entrusted by God and by Jesus with the Gospel, and they guarded it, dear brethren, for us. They kept watch over it as of a sacred treasure, as keepers of a holy fire, which must never be stamped out. They yielded their lives to the sweet, mellowing influence of the Holy Spirit of love and truth, though it meant for them certain privation, loss and hardship beyond our experience, enjoying withal a fellowship of spirit which not even the curse of sectarianism could destroy. And if these with their feeble light were enabled to preserve a fellowship of spirit even in the midst of sectarian bondage and in the darkness of the Dark Ages, will not the Lord expect at least as much from us as we face the issues which confront us today?"

Behold What Manner of Love

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." - John 3:16.

BY THE time this issue of the "Herald" has reached the brethren in some of the distant parts of the earth, the Christmas date will once more be close at hand for some, and perhaps be over and gone for those living in the remotest corners to which this publication goes. And as in former years it has been considered not only appropriate but manifestly helpful to consider together the significance of this particular date, so again we are glad to review some of the wonders and extraordinary features of God's redeeming love which Christmas calls to mind.

The quickly passing years come and go, bringing to each of us- innumerable confirmations of the declaration that "God is love." And to the Christian, while every day is a thanksgiving day, and every day is likewise an appropriate occasion for calling to mind the loving providences through which God's love has been demonstrated to us, yet surely there is something peculiarly fitting in our special regard for the Christmas season. Whatever of blessing we enjoy in our relationship to God in time or in eternity, is and ever will be due to the astounding love which sent the Son of God into a world of sinners lost, and through His death revealed that God is just, and the justifier of all who believe in Jesus. Oh what would it mean had the Babe never been born in Bethlehem for the angelic choir to announce! That song then with its inspiration must drop out of the life and hopes of men! How the mind staggers in any attempt to conceive of the inevitable woes of humankind, if Jesus had not come!

But will some one protest and claim that since Jesus left no intimation of His desire to have the date of His first advent commemorated by the Church, and since there is a possible miscalculation regarding the exact date of His birth, the day should pass as do other days of the year without any special recognition or commemoration? In answer to any such conclusion might it not be said that in view of what His advent into the world as a Babe has meant, it would seem quite unnecessary for Him to leave explicit instructions concerning matters of this kind. Since when has gratitude required such commands before acting, or needed to wait until the pronouncement of some rule made it obligatory to adopt a certain form of expression? How inconceivable it is to believe that loving devotion could ever be deprived of its delightful traits of spontaneous impulse, or be shorn of all its innate inventiveness to find multiplied ways and means of revealing its overflowing presence in the heart? Did Mary with her treasured alabaster box of ointment need to wait for explicit instructions as to when and how to act on that occasion of her special privilege? We will search in vain for anything in the character or teachings of Jesus which would deny her love this, its legitimate spontaneous expression. Is it not very manifest that her intuitive impulse which acted without command, was in the eyes of Jesus a sweeter and more fragrant act of self-effacing devotion, than if she had simply acted in obedience to some command?

And may we not consider the matter of observing the birth date of Jesus in this same manner: True enough, no command of His makes such observance obligatory, and it is equally true that we of today have had no voice in creating the custom of observing the date, but is it not a cause for gratitude on our part, just to find ourselves so influenced in heart and life by what the season brings to mind, that we can eagerly embrace any opportunity to show our appreciation. Since spiritual perception is intended to become more and more enlarged as the years pass by, ought there not to be a greatly increased ability and disposition this year, more than on any former occasion, to comprehend what manner of love the Father has revealed in the Gift of all gifts, even His own dear Son?

If Jesus had never come

It often helps to deepen our sense of gratitude for blessings enjoyed, just to allow ourselves time to consider all that the withdrawal of such blessings would mean to us. It is so possible to form the habit of thinking only of what now is, without really pondering over what might never have been. And when it is remembered that God was under no obligation to redeem man from the results of his own disobedience, it becomes evident to a thoughtful mind that there is a terrible "might have been" had divine love not devised a way to save rebellious man. Had there been no eye to pity and no arm to save mankind, and with no man able "to redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psa. 49:7), what an abyss of inconceivable anguish, corruption, and eternal death, would have been the destiny of every human soul. Familiar as we are with the terrible leprosy of sin, and pained as we often must be by the sights of depravity which cross our pathway, yet how incapable we inevitably are to really visualize the chaos, the wickedness, the awfulness of man's experience in a world deserted by God, and under the unhindered sway of myriad devils incarnate in human form. In Genesis chapter 6, and in Romans 1, we are given just a little vision of what would have been, had God not tempered His displeasure with mercy, and in His Plan provided for 'the preservation and recovery of His earthly creations. If the wrath of devils, and man's inhumanity to man has produced so much of misery and wickedness in a world where holy men have exerted their potent influence, and a world in which the Son of God left the indelible impress of His short abode therein, what then would have been the history of mankind had no plan of redemption been devised? No human mind can conceive, nor pen nor tongue

describe the unmitigated woes of men, had infinite love never opened mercy's gate and sent angels forth to sing, "Glory to God in the highest, Peace on earth, good will to men."

Had Jesus never come, there could have been no songs to cheer the long night of weeping, no "song of Moses and the Lamb" to inspire hope and foster faith in a coming morning of joy and emancipation. The Cross, which stands, by God's abounding grace, almost midway between the expulsion from Eden and the full return of man to his Paradise home, has lighted up a darkness which otherwise must have been intolerable. Enoch, walking with God, sang of a time when ten thousand saints would form the bodyguard of a mighty Deliverer whose rule of love and equity would banish the usurper from the earth, and cover it with the glory of God even as the waters cover the great deep. Others caught the song and passed it on-yes, "all the holy prophets since the world began."

But if there had been no Babe destined to come to Bethlehem, there could have been no star of hope, and no prophet to declare, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:6.) What, then, would the absence of such a beacon light and ray of hope have meant to the world of men? And had there been no such star of hope there never would have been in this sinful world that noble band of comforters who held aloft their light in the darkness, those faithful people of God of ancient times, of whom it is written, "Now faith is the basis of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report, . . . These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth." (Heb. 11:1, 2, 13.) Surely it was love divine all love excelling that gave to these a "song in the night," whereby they might endure the permission of evil until the night is gone, and thereby comfort others with the comfort wherewith they themselves were comforted. Can we not rejoice for them that Christmas time has long commemorated the actual coming of the Son of whom their Prophet wrote, the One who shall ere long, take the government on His shoulders according to promise? And are we not glad for them, that when the Kingdom rule begins, they shall as "princes in all the earth," enjoy so exalted a place of favor? Because they believed that Jesus would **come**, they were eagerly "searching what, or what manner of time" the Spirit which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." - 1 Peter 1:11.

Many Righteous Men desired to see What We See

If Jesus had never come, then -- and O the thought of such a possibility! -- there could never have been that divine romance so unspeakably precious to the heart of a called-out Church. There could never have been that Cross which gave the buoyant hope of "a better resurrection" to those who lived before Christ, but which to us so clearly marks the time for the beginning of the distinctive call to glory, honor, and immortality, reserved for us of this Gospel Age. If Jesus had never come the gracious invitation could never have been given, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him." (Psa. 45:10, 11.) Who that has seen the King in His beauty, and has lost sight of all beside, can think of what the removal of such a hope would mean, without experiencing a shudder at the very thought of such a possibility? Is it any wonder that Jesus reminds us of "how greatly we are favored, when He says, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That

many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." (Matt. 13:16, 17.) "Grace abounding" is surely the heritage of the saints, and well may they sing:

"Not alone hath grace redeemed me,
Bought me with Christ's precious blood,
Sought me out when I, a stranger,
Wandered from the fold of God;
But beyond this great salvation
God hath shown me wondrous grace
Call'd me with a heavenly calling,
Ever to behold His face."

Surely there is "a song in the valley of blessing so sweet, that only the virgins can sing"-and all because in due time Jesus came as a little child in Bethlehem, to fulfill the Father's promises, and to bring "life and immortality to light through the Gospel." Oh if those who lived before Jesus came, and to whom much less of revelation and privilege could be given, if they found their hopes inspiring them to songs of praise and joy, then, indeed, what "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" should constantly flow- from the lips and lives of those who in this day of grace are "espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ"? To such as fully appreciate so extraordinary a favor as this, Christmas time can never be other than a blessed season of soul-stirring recollections and sweet meditations, calling to mind the present and eternal possibilities to Church and world, because "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) And Christ so "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. - Eph. 5:25, 27.

Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men

It is now nineteen hundred years since Jesus came, nearly two millenniums since the angels' song of an assured peace on earth burst forth from the heavens over the land of His birth, and still the "groaning of the prisoners" bears witness to the fact that the "god of this world" roams about as a devouring lion. Man's inhumanity to man goes - on apace, and peace seems to have utterly deserted the earth. Thus the present Christmastide finds the world of men living in a state of unparalleled disquiet and fear. How then, with these overhanging clouds filling men's hearts with apprehensive expectations respecting the immediate future, and knowing as we do that suffering beyond our powers to fully grasp now fills the whole earth, how can we possibly realize an 'increased measure of joy as again this year we keep Christmas festival? If we-weep with those who weep, and our souls are moved with compassion as the wail of a suffering, "groaning creation," mounts higher and higher, how, in the face of these things can we say, "Peace on earth, good will to men"? O, blessed indeed are they who understand 'the purposes of our God. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." (Psa. 97:11.) To these it is given to know that "He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him," and when they see these things coming to pass they know that a great Deliverer comes, yea, is even at the door, and so they rejoice and together sing,

"What if the clouds do for a moment
Hide the blue sky where morn appears?
Soon the glad sun of promise given

Rises to shine a thousand years."

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant." (Psa. 25:14.) As we stand in the midst of all that mars the peace of earth today, witnessing remarkable fulfillments of prophetic forecasts clearly portraying a world full of strife which seems to completely contradict the song of the angels long ago, are we properly appreciative of the knowledge God has so graciously imparted to us? If we are, will our joy not be increasingly contagious among those who weep and sigh? Will this Christmas time find us so possessed of an overflowing joy, because we know that though "Weeping may endure for .a night, joy cometh in the morning," that our lives made radiant with the peace and good will of Him whose plan of redemption we know, will reflect in every word and act the spirit of Him whose natal day gave us Christmas time. Surely, dear saints of God, it was never God's intention that when the angelic choir had ceased their song and gone back to the realms of glory, the song itself should cease. Ah, no, that song can never die. Songs in the night He giveth, and while the darkness deepens all around us, and ominous shadows fill other hearts with anxiety and dread, let us see to it that in so far as we are concerned, that song cannot die. Only let others see that the love that redeemed the world has taken possession of our lives, and let the peace of God which passeth all understanding be reflected in our words and acts, and let our lips be filled with songs abounding with the glorious refrain of a coming emancipation-yes, a speedy deliverance for eager, waiting saints, and for perplexed suffering humanity. Indeed, how can we keep from singing,

*"Joy to the world! the Lord is come!
Let saints rejoice and sing!
He comes to claim His virgin Bride,
Her triumph soon to bring.*

*"Joy to the world! the Lord is come!
O earth, receive thy King!
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And grateful tribute bring."*

One Sweetly Solemn Thought

Years are very little things to Him who inhabiteth eternity,, and to whom a thousand years are "as a watch in the night." But the return of each Christmas season marking off another year for us means much. So many, many things are possible to us within the limits of one little year. The close proximity of the final home-gathering of the faithful Church fills each twelve months with joyful expectancy. We gather round our family altar and table, or gather in the place of fellowship, with kindred spirits, to mark this year's anniversary of the Savior's birth in Bethlehem, and what possibilities can fill the days laying between this date and the next such anniversary. Therefore, what' a sweetly solemn thought we may ponder over. We are so much nearer Home today than ever we've been before, and the groaning creation is likewise nearer to its deliverance from its awful sin and death. As surely as Jesus came nineteen hundred years ago, fulfilling the sure word of prophecy relating to His first advent, just so surely are we today witnessing soul-inspiring fulfillments of the prophetic word, pointing unmistakably to the speedy consummation of the present Age, and the completion of the work of gathering the elect Church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife. And then, when the marriage of the Lamb has taken place, the choir that sang over the fields of Judea of "Peace on earth, good will to men" will be enlarged until every voice in heaven and earth shall acclaim as Lord of all, He who once lay in a stable, a new-born babe in

Bethlehem. He gladly left the glory of that transcendent light of the Father's presence, a light unto which no man may come, then to be found by the shepherds, cradled in a manger rude and bare. Behold what manner of love! Surely we shall keep Christmas festival in spirit and in truth, our love and faith more fervent and strong, and our lives more and more filled with the joy, peace, and good will, which will make us, distributors of these Christmas characteristics wherever we go, and for all the days yet before us.

God's Unspeakable Gift

A Christian writer relates in touching language' his dream of a world into which no Jesus had ever come, and concludes his story with some observations worthy of repetition here: "I never knew," he writes, "how much the world owed to Jesus Christ until I dreamed of the world into which Christ had not come. The vision of that world without a Christmas, without a Church, without a Cross; the vision of that world without pity and without heart; the vision of that world in which life was misery and death despair-made me thank God I lived in a world into which Christ had come. I realized then that pity and sympathy and love and hope, the things that make life glad and beautiful, were born with Christ at Bethlehem.

"And so when Christmas morning broke, bright and frosty and clear, my heart was full of Christmas joy. It was, verily, a 'Merry Christmas' to me. The bells clashed out their gladsome peals, and they found an answering music in my soul. I went with the multitude to the house, of God, with the voice of joy and praise-a multitude keeping holy day. And with the humble shepherds and the wise men from the East, I too knelt at the rude manger side and worshiped the little Child, for in Him I had been taught to see God's unspeakable Gift."

"O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him,
Born *the* King *of* angels.

"Sang choirs of angels,"
Sing in exultation
Through Heavens high arches be your praises poured;
Now to our God be
Glory in the highest!
"O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord."

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

"But many shall be last that are first; and first that are last." "So the last shall be first, and the first last." - Matt. 19:30; 20:16, Am. R. V.

THIS PARABLE is confessedly one of the most difficult of the New Testament Scriptures.. Here are men hired, some at six o'clock in the morning, some at nine o'clock, some at noon; some at three o'clock in the afternoon, some even at five; and yet at six o'clock, when they come to be paid off, they all receive the same wage. Instinctively we feel that that is not fair; we feel that those who had borne the burden and heat of the day should have been better paid than those who entered the vineyard -only in the cool of the evening. As we read this parable we instinctively sympathize, do we not, with those who had borne the heat and burden of the day. It puzzles us as it puzzled them, to know why those who had worked only a single hour in the cool of the evening, should be put on a level with the weary men who had labored through the oppressive heat of the day, and had borne the brunt of the toil. It ought to puzzle us; for next to the quality of love there is nothing in us that is more evidently of God than that deep sense of justice which resents whatever is unfair and inequitable.

Nor is the wrong done to-our sense of justice at all mended, when, to vindicate his conduct, "the goodman of the house" begins to talk of his right to do' what he will with his own, and to declare that it is his will and pleasure to put the last on an equality with, or even before, the first. Indeed, to conceive of God as saying, "May I not do as I will with Mine own?" or "Simply because it pleases Me to do so, I will give unto these last even as unto the first?" -- such a conception of Him is but a new shock to our sense of justice, to our faith in the equity of His rule. Like Abraham of old, we believe that the God of all the earth cannot but do right. We have been taught to conceive of Him as actuated by love, not by caprice; as rewarding our service according to a law divinely just, and not according to the uncertain impulses of an arbitrary self-will; and we are at a loss to know how to attribute such conduct, or defense of His conduct, to the God whom we believe to be absolutely just and full of grace.

There are some people, doubtless, who are not perplexed by the householder's conduct, and his defense of it. Those who find a key to the inequalities of life and providence, in what they are pleased; to call "Divine Sovereignty," those who believe that of His own will God has elected a few to be saved and doomed the great majority of our race to be eternally tormented, and who believe that He is as truly glorified in the damnation of the many as in the salvation of the few-such, of course, find no difficulty in this parable. A penny more or less means nothing to them. But **we** who believe that God loves all men, and that Christ died for all men, and not merely for the few-we cannot hear this naked assertion of the Divine Sovereignty without perplexity and amazement. We believe not only in God's sovereign power, but in the fact that that power never has nor can be exercised except in accordance with justice and love. To hear **Him** say, "I shall do as I will with Mine own" or "I shall bestow the rewards of My grace as I please," cuts our deepest convictions against the grain. "**He** cannot be less just than we are," we say, "He must be far more just; and therefore there must be a meaning in the words which we have not yet fathomed, a meaning which, when once we find' it, will be seen to be in harmony with our loftiest, conceptions of His character." We fully believe that there is such a meaning, and it will be our endeavor in this article so to bring it out as to solve the difficulties which this parable presents.

Two Erroneous Solutions

Two very ingenious, but, to our understanding, erroneous, solutions of these difficulties are worth a moment's attention. The main difficulty of the parable is, of course, the apparent injustice of giving all the laborers the same wage. And to escape this difficulty some of our ablest expositors have assumed, that either those who were first called grew slack and careless, or the last called displayed so extraordinary a diligence that in one hour they did as much as those who had been in the vineyard all day; just, for example, as St. Paul, though the last called of the Apostles, labored more abundantly than they all.

To this interpretation, however, there is one fatal objection. If all the laborers had done an equal stroke of work, how is it that the lord of the vineyard fails to urge so obvious and so complete a vindication of his conduct? Evidently what he does say is said in an endeavor to justify himself. When, therefore, his justice was called in question, why did not "the goodman of the house" meet his impugnors with the unanswerable reply "Although you were first in the vineyard you have done no more work than those who came last; and as these have done as much as you, it is but fair that they should receive as much." Instead of taking this tone, however, he falls back on his contract with them, and on his power to do as he liked with his own. His very defense implies that the last called had not done as much as the first called, although he chose to give them as much.

Another ingenious interpretation turns on the various kinds and values of the Roman denarius, translated in our Authorized Version, "penny. There were the brass, the silver, and the gold denarius; the double, the treble, the fourfold. -- And the solution is offered that just as in the Kingdom there will be one reward, namely eternal life, and yet this one reward be capable of enjoyment on various planes of being -- the Divine plane, a lower spirit plane, the human plane -- so in the parable each received a denarius, a penny, but the pennies were of different kinds and values.

But the objection fatal to the previous interpretation is also fatal to this. True and beautiful as the thought is in itself, we have no hint of it in the parable. We have hints that point in an opposite direction. If the wage, though nominally the same were really different, why did not "the goodman" bid the complaining laborers look at their penny, mark that theirs was a gold penny, while that of those taken on at midday was a silver penny, and that of those called late in the afternoon was but a brass penny? With so complete and unanswerable a defense at his command it is simply inconceivable that he should have fallen back on his contract, and his right to do what he would with his own.

We must admit, then, that there was at least an apparent injustice in his dealings. We must admit that those who were really first were put on a level with the last, and that those who were really last were put on a level with the first. We must admit that those who had done most work received no higher wage than those who had done least. In fine, we must admit the inequality of treatment, and learn, if we can, how it is to be explained and justified.

The Rich Young Man Whom Jesus Loved

To understand this parable it must be studied, like all Scripture, with reference to its context. And to do this in the present instance it is necessary to go back to the previous chapter. There we find the circumstances which moved our Lord to utter this parable. Commencing with verse 16 of chapter 19 we read the story of the rich young man whom Jesus loved. A young ruler-rich, learned, and of dignified position, yet modest, humble, sincere, had come to Jesus with every gesture of courtesy and deference, to ask Him how he-might win eternal life. Despite the temptation of luxury, he is pure; despite the temptations of wealth: and reputation he is humble, modest, dissatisfied with his present attainments, eagerly stretching forth to things before. The Lord Jesus bade him, if he would enter life, keep the commandments. This demand the ruler was able to say that he had met. He had kept the commandments.

And Jesus, looking on him, and seeing, we suppose, that on the whole he had been as good as his word, loved him. But the young ruler, emboldened by the grace and love of Christ, reveals the secret ambition of his heart. Mark how pure and lofty that ambition is. He is not content with mere life, even though it be life eternal; he longs to be perfect, perfect in all his relations with God and man. Not content with mere salvation he asks counsel of perfection. And our Lord gives him what he asks. So high and pure an ambition as his can be attained only at the cost of utter self-sacrifice. "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor." It was a difficult demand to make on a young, wealthy, learned man; and all the more difficult because it was sudden and unexpected. For, in all probability, the ruler anticipated nothing more than that he should receive a new and more austere rule of life; that he would be urged to a profounder study of the Law, or a more rigid attendance on the duties of religion. To Bear that he must voluntarily become poor and homeless, that he must part with all he prized and loved, to follow One who had not where to lay His head, must have taken him by surprise. For the moment, the test is too severe. Amiable, modest, with a heart set on the eternal realities, the young man, cursed with great possessions, cannot, all at once, give them up. In his surprise and consternation he finds himself unable to meet the rigorous demand. He goes away sorrowful.

The Master's Gracious Spirit

But if he was sorrowful as he went away, can we suppose that Jesus, who loved him, was not sorrowful to see him go? -- that He did not yearn over him, and pity him, and long to bring him back? We may be sure that He did. For, see, the young ruler, smitten with shame and grief, has no excuse to offer for himself; but Jesus begins to make excuse for him. Turning to His disciples He tells them, lest they should judge the ruler harshly, how hard it is for rich men to enter the Kingdom. It is easier for a loaded camel to push through the Needle-gate, than for a man burdened with wealth to enter the Kingdom of heaven.

Now if Peter and his brethren had been in sympathy with their Master, if they had shared His loving, gracious spirit, what would they have done on., hearing Him speak so tenderly of the young man who had just gone away? Would they not-above and before all would not ardent, impulsive Peter, have run after him, and told him how sorry the Good Master was to lose him, and have-' besought him to come back? But instead of manifesting the Master's spirit of love and tenderness, they are thinking only of themselves. "We have left all, and followed Thee;" cries Peter, "what, then, shall we have." And no words could have more conclusively shown his lack of

sympathy with his Master. It is easy to conceive how this boast and question must have jarred on the heart of Christ. He was full of pity for the young man who had won His love, and who loved Him, though as yet he could not leave all for Him. And to see that Peter, instead of sharing His pity, instead of being moved with regret for a man who had had so heavy a trial to meet, was pluming himself on, his superior virtue; to hear him exalting himself over the modest, refined, meditative ruler, who had just gone away sorrowful, with scalding tears of shame at his own weakness -- this, we may be sure was hard for Christ to bear. Christ was mourning that a man of a disposition so lovable, with a heart bent toward the loftiest aims should miss the high mark of perfection; and Peter breaks in on His tender, wistful, reverie with: "Never mind him, Lord; **He** won't come. But **we**, we have left all to follow Thee." We like to think that Peter's words here were not entirely selfish; that in his rough, blundering way, he meant to console Jesus, and to remind him that, if some went away from Him, others were ready to cleave to Him; but his very attempt at consolation must have been a new wound to Christ. For He loved Peter as well as the young ruler, and would be grieved at his boastfulness, and selfishness. Yet with what infinite grace He responds to his selfish demand. There is an infinite grace, but also, we think, a little weariness and conscious patience in the words: "No man hath left all for My sake and the Gospel's but shall receive an hundred-fold, now in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting." But it would not be for Peter's highest good that his selfishness, his lack of sympathy with his Master, his want of pity of the young ruler, should escape without rebuke. And so our Lord follows up His gracious promise with a warning and a parable "No man hath left all for My sake and the Gospel's but shall receive an hundred-fold now, and by and by life everlasting, but many first shall be last, and last first." There is the warning appended to His gracious promise. And then to make the matter plain our Lord proceeds to relate the parable of the laborers in the vineyard: "But many first shall be last and last first, for the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that was a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard." Then comes the story of some laborers who, though called into the vineyard at the eleventh hour of the day received an equal wage with those who had been called at the first hour. What did the warning mean but this -- that though Peter and the other disciples had been the first to respond to Christ's call, others might yet be called who would rank before them; that though they were the first they might become the last, and were in danger of becoming the last so long as they could boast of their superior fidelity or show a selfish and unloving spirit?

Many First Shall be Last

In this warning and parable it was as though our Lord had said to Peter: "You and your brethren have indeed left all to follow Me. Have no fear of your reward. You shall receive it to the uttermost farthing. You were amongst the first to enter the vineyard, and you work in it as well as you know how. You have done much and well. You are bearing the burden and heat of the day, and when evening comes, you shall in no wise lose your reward. You shall have a full day's wage. But while you labor in My Father's vineyard and employ your time and talents in His service and Mine, are you thinking only of reward? only of how much you may get by serving Me? Well, you shall have even more than you hope. But there are many not called yet who will come to Me by and by. These may show a nobler spirit. They may serve from love, and not merely because it is part of the contract. And these last-will it not be just that they should be put on a level with you, or even be preferred before you, if you retain your mercenary and servile disposition?"

That this warning, that many first shall be last and last first, is the key with which to unlock the teaching of this parable is, we think, abundantly clear from the fact that after relating the parable, our Lord repeats the warning: "So" says He, "the last shall be first and the first last." We may be

sure that in these two sentences, or rather in this one sentence with which the parable both opens and closes, we have its key, or our Lord Jesus would neither have laid it so conveniently to our hands, nor so emphatically called it to our attention. - P. L. Read

(To be continued)

"THE MASTER'S TOUCH"

"In the still lute the music lies unheard;
In the rough marble beauty hides unseen:
To make the music and the beauty, needs
The Master's touch, the Sculptor's chisel keen.

"Spare not the stroke! do with us as Thou wilt!
Let there be naught unfinished, broken, marred;
Complete Thy purpose, that we may become
Thy perfect image, Thou our God and Lord!"

"Great Master, touch us with Thy skilful hand;
Let not the music that is in us die:
Great Sculptor, hew and polish us; nor let,
Hidden and lost, Thy form within us lie!

THE PITTSBURGH CONVENTION

The following report of the Pittsburgh Convention recently held has just reached us:

"More than three hundred 'Bible Students' from sixteen States and Canada assembled on the occasion of the Sixth Annual Convention held in Pittsburgh, October 26, 27 and 28. The convention smile was apparent on all faces, and the spirit of Christ clearly evidences as the brethren joined together during the three days of sweet fellowship. Representative brethren from different parts of the country served on the program and truly the Lord blessed their efforts in bringing to our attention those things most needful and helpful in these trying times.

"The various subjects discussed by the brethren -- 'Be Ye Steadfast,' 'Christians and Bankers,' 'Christian Fidelity,' 'Heartiness in the Lord's Service,' 'The Atonement Day,' 'Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem,' 'By Love Serve,' 'Witnesses of His Fulness,' 'What must I do to be a Christian?' 'Men of Violence,' 'Holiness unto the Lord' -- were refreshing, and emphasized our responsibility to the Lord and our covenant of sacrifice. The exhortations, warnings, and admonitions given were timely and we trust helped us all to take greater heed lest we come short.

"A baptismal service was held at which three brethren symbolized their consecration. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, more than one hundred friends assembled at Brother Russell's grave and participated in a brief service in honor of our beloved Brother who so faithfully served the Lord and the interests of the Truth.

"The convention closed with a public meeting in Carnegie Music Hall, where more than five hundred strangers heard the message of truth, some for the first time, on the subject of 'Are the Nations Facing Armageddon?' The reign of the Prince of Peace to follow, bringing about the desire of all nations, was emphasized, and close attention was given.

"The brethren returned to their homes, thankful for the privilege of meeting with the Lord and with one another, and more determined than ever to make their calling and election sure to a place in the Kingdom."

Sanctification and its Relation to Faith

"Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." - 1 Cor. 1:30.

THE SCRIPTURES do not support the thought that justification comes to us by one means, and sanctification by another. On the contrary the Apostle states that "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory 'of God." (Rom. 5:1, 2.) Beginning with the first faint traces of knowledge, the Christian may look to Jesus in faith for every step that will finally lead to the wisdom which it is his privilege to obtain, and for the grace of full acceptance and sanctification. Wisdom's first gleanings counsel him to seek "righteousness" and in the Way which God has provided. At first this is only a reckoned righteousness secured through faith in the shed blood of the Redeemer; but every deliverance thereafter from unrighteousness is also of Jesus. Every one who has not submitted his all to the Master will of necessity seek his deliverance more or less in his own strength, and only failure can result. But all who fail could have been "more than conquerors through Him that loved us" by a complete surrender of themselves and full reliance upon Him. Is it not still more manifest that "Christ Jesus is made unto us sanctification" and our final deliverance?

A realization of our own inabilities and our need of a Life-Giver is not all that is necessary to these steps. Manifestly also there must be a desire for sanctification and a willingness to receive it. There must be a meekness that will receive whatsoever our God shall send and that will be willing to give to Him all the credit. Nor can this submission be an involuntary one or the result of fear.* True sanctification can result only from a reverential, a loving trust in the Lord.

*From a comparison with other passages it is evident that the word fear in 2 Cor. 7:1 does not give the thought intended. Reverence would be a better translation. It is not supposable that God could ever receive homage other than that which is given in spirit and in truth.

Harmonious Cooperation with God

As was remarked in a previous article, ** submission to God does not imply inactivity on the part of the believer, but on the contrary it brings him into harmonious cooperation with God in every thought, word, and act. The submission required for such a condition is not necessarily a formal act; in fact, the love for God may be so great as to make it an almost unconscious one. But the attitude necessary for sanctification does go beyond that which is necessary in justification. In the latter, one merely resigns all desire for sin and all thought of ever being able to obtain any standing

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before God in his own merit, while in the former, submission enters into every feature and experience of life.

It is when all the tithes are brought into the storehouse that the windows of heaven are opened and blessings such as we are not able to receive are poured out upon us. This condition is described in

the Scriptures as a purity of heart, a singleness of eye, a setting of the affections on things above. This is Scripturally described as dwelling "in Him," a condition in which we are transformed with such power that even the most active of the animal instincts may be brought into subjection. . One of the strongest of these earthly instincts is self-preservation. Instead of hoarding, of laying up treasure on earth as all animals have the instinct to do, the whole effort is given to laying up treasure in heaven; not merely because it is safe from rust and moths and thieves there, but mainly because the affections are really for the kind of treasure that can be laid up there.

Is Holiness Attainable?

There has always been a difference of opinion among the Lord's people as to whether or not actual holiness may be attained. This is an important question, for there is a possibility of great testings in any wrong view of this subject. As in other Bible subjects the only correct view must be the one which harmonizes all statements of the sacred Scriptures. It seems to us the correct conclusion is reached by making a distinction between attaining holiness of the flesh and holiness **in** the flesh. Since the world of mankind is to attain holiness of flesh in the Millennial Age, there can be no doubt but that God could have worked in us this miracle had He so chosen. This is necessarily His plan for the world because they are to be human beings, but since the Church is to be spiritual, He has chosen the wiser plan of using the imperfections of the flesh as testings upon the new creature, the new mind. For one to suppose that he has attained perfection of the flesh would mean, then, that he is either deceiving himself on that point or deceiving himself in thinking that he is spirit begotten. Immediately upon concluding that he is perfect, one would probably cease to fight against imperfections which he thought did not exist. The one who thinks that perfection cannot be attained, would err just as seriously, in that he would not strive for that which he felt could not be reached, or at least would not put forth the persistent and extreme effort which is necessary to attain it.

It is not the Scriptural thought that it is our own energy that attains holiness, but that all the energy we have must necessarily be used in cooperation with the "God who worketh in us to will and **to do** of His good pleasure." None but those who "strive" will see the blessed inheritance of those who become actually pure in heart. Again, those who think that holiness cannot be attained must be always lacking in confidence, always keeping their eyes on the imperfections of the present body instead of bearing in mind not only the imputed righteousness which is their present standing, but also the perfection of "the mind of Christ" which is being developed in them.

"Our Qualification is from God"

To **sum** up any one who claims that his flesh is without sin, deceives himself, "is a liar," but "that which is begotten of God sinneth not." One must not mistakenly suppose that the possession of the mind of Christ implies perfection of intellectual powers. It is because our reasoning faculties are imperfect that we are given the "spirit of a sound mind." Because the brain is as imperfect as all other organs of the body, it too must come under the covering of Christ's imputation of merit during the time the spirit of Christ is developing within us. It is the fallen tendencies of this brain that must be overcome, and that can be accomplished only by our realizing its imperfections-this realization moving us to entire cooperation with God from the day that He begets us by the Word of truth until the image of sonship is complete in us. No one can estimate the glorious results possible when "such confidence toward God we have through the Anointed; not that we

are qualified of ourselves to reason anything as from ourselves, but our qualification is from God." - 2 Cor. 3:4, 5, Diaglott.

It must not be supposed that because we are invited to sanctify ourselves and assured that God will join with us in this work of sanctification that we are therefore to be free from temptation; in fact the opposite is the Scriptural thought. Instead of being discouraged because of temptations toward evil, one should rather be discouraged if he does not experience or realize temptations, because the true situation evidently is that he is so in harmony with sin as not to be aware of any conflict with the motions of the flesh. It would rather be reasonable to expect that the more nearly one comes into harmony with the mind of God, that much more would "the least omission pain," and that much more interested would Satan become in him. This very warfare in the flesh, "the spirit warring against the flesh, and the flesh warring against the spirit," is one of the strongest demonstrations that the Divine power of sanctification is developing a new creature, in every point opposed to the old creature. Like the Apostle Paul, there dwelleth no good thing in our flesh; but we as new creatures can share with every other Christian of the Age in the hope of being "holy as He that hath called you is holy."

Love, the Fulfilling of the Law

Why should standards so astounding be set before us in the Word -of God, and how may they be attained? Our question insists on an answer if our professed love for righteousness is real. When preparing the mind of the disciples for the new dispensation by answering the question, "Which is the great commandment in the Law?" Christ said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:36-40.) The assertion of the Apostle in Rom. 13:10 that "Love is the fulfilling of the law" is a statement of the same fact. All thought of this standard as an impossibility begins to vanish when we realize the purport of the Master's words, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." (John 14:23.) "Christ in you, the hope of glory," is the only present hope held out in the Bible. With self and its foolish ways denied the privilege of asserting themselves, and with Christ in full possession, there can be no doubt as to the result. It would be absurd to suppose that one so pure as our Savior could take as His permanent dwelling a heart that was not using every diligence to eradicate all traces of longing for the gratification of the sinful tendencies of the flesh. His abode can 'be only with the "pure in heart." Eternity will reward the sincere prayer, "create in me a clean heart O God," with an unbroken fellowship; but this must have its beginning here.

Failure because of Unbelief

Purity of heart in the sense of a heart fully devoted to the Lord is essential to the complete development of even faith, for until one has determined to be fully and unalterably the Lord's, divine providence cannot work in the life with complete freedom for the development of any quality. Assuredly it takes great faith to make a consecration 'to do a thing which to the human mind is impossible, but the daily seeking for that holiness which is humanly unattainable can result only in the development of great faith in the Divine power which patiently by the daily renewing of our minds, makes of us a new creation. A failure to make this consecration complete may 'be safely laid to the door of some morsels of self still tenderly nourished, and also of a

failure to heed the exhortation: "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." It takes great faith in the One upon whom we may cast these cares to accept this invitation, but the result is one of those spiritual experiences which cannot be expressed in words. So slight a thing as the desire for honor bestowed upon us by misshapen brains may be the trifle that will keep us from a fulness of consecration to God. Hear Jesus: "How can ye believe, if ye receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" Consecration is the divinely arranged method of seeking honor from God and at the same time confessing our willingness to forego all earthly benefits.

As long as our consecration lacks in completeness, there cannot be a fulness of faith that God will be a father to us, doing for us all that His Word has promised. Though He bestows the rain and the sunshine upon the evil as well as upon the good, who could be so foolish as to expect special favors for those, who are not showing special devotion to their Maker. As evidence that intuition teaches the human family this much, note the conduct of Adam and Eve as soon as they were guilty of one slight deflection from the law of God. Instantly their faith in Him as a benefactor failed.

"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." The Apostle's exhortation of 2 Cor. 6:17, 18, "Come out from among them, and ye shall separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" is given not because of sinful practices to which He might truthfully have referred, but because of their association with unbelievers, as verse 14 of this chapter indicates. It is evident that the Christian needs the fellowship of those who will inspire to greater faith. The children of Israel were called to be a holy nation, but failed. Their fundamental error, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews indicates, was lack of faith. Any of us who fail, will do so because of lack of faith, but back of that lack of faith will probably be a too feeble desire for true holiness, shown by our failing, as the children of Israel did, to separate ourselves from the people of the land and their practices.

(To be continued)

The Wonderful Will of God

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." - Eph 5:17.

ARE we not apt to connect the thoughts of God's will with efforts to submit to what is not very pleasant to us? Is this fair, when all that He Himself tells us of His will should make us love and admire and rejoice in it? Truly our thoughts are not His thoughts about it, or there would not be so many a sigh over that glorious petition, "Thy will be done."

Let us see what He says it is, for He hath "made known unto us the mystery of His will"; and in proportion as we are filled with the knowledge of it, shall we walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." - Eph. 1:9; Col. 1:9.

It was the good pleasure of His will to predestinate us unto the adoption of children, that we should be His sons and daughters, His own dear children. And if He had told us no more than this, ought not "Thy will be done" to peal forth as an "amen chorus" from all His adopted ones? - Eph. 1:5; 2 Cor. 6:18.

It was the will of God our Father that the Lord Jesus Christ should give Himself for our sins, "that He might deliver us from the present evil world." Jesus said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," and "give Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity." And day by day He is delivering those who believe that He "doth deliver" and trust "that He will yet deliver"; for this is "the will of the Lord." - Gal. 1:4; Titus 2:14. 2 Cor. 1:10.

By this will we are sanctified. Sanctification is the continual fulfilling of the good pleasure of His goodness in us. It is the making us partakers of His holiness and of the Divine nature itself. It is making us like Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifest even in our mortal flesh. It is granting the desire, the thirst of thirsts, of every renewed heart. And "this is the will of God, even your sanctification." - 2 Cor. 4:11; Matt. 5:6; 1. Thess, 4:3.

It is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us, that in everything we should give thanks, "always for all things." This implies a life full of cause for praise, and full power to praise. Can any one describe a brighter ideal? Yet *"this is the will of God concerning you."* - Eph. 5:20.

Perishing, failing, dying-how the very 'words "everlasting life" shine out to us in the darkness! a resplendent gift purchased for us by the one transcendent gift of God! It includes everlasting salvation, light, joy, love, glory; and it is for every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him: for Jesus says, "This is the will of Him that sent Me." - 2 Cor. 9:15; John 6:40.

Now for the climax: and this time it is the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who tells His Father that He is one with Him, and then, in His own Divine name, declares His Divine will: "I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." This is the consummation of His will concerning us, that we should be for ever with the Lord! Shall we like "strangers" submit to this? Shall we bow to this? Shall we dare to sigh over "Thy will be done"? Shall we not rather submit ourselves wholly to His holy will and pleasure, bow under the very load of the benefits of His will in deepest adoration and intensest thanksgiving, and not wait for "the happier shore," but here and now sing out of the abundance of a simply believing heart, "Thy will be done"? For truly it is "good will to men"; and may we be so "transformed by the renewing of our minds," that we

may daily and joyfully "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." - John 17:24; 1 Thess. 4:17; Psa. 68:19; Rom. 12:2.

"Thy Father reigns supreme above;
The glory of His name
Is Grace and Wisdom, Truth and Love,
His will must be the same.
And thou hast asked all joys in one,
In whispering forth, "Thy will be done."

NEW EDITION OF VOLUME ONE

The supply of Volume I having been exhausted, a third edition is now on the press and we are hoping to be able to fill orders by the fifteenth of this month, if not before. The present edition will be a duplicate of the previous one, the pocket-size volume, but the same size print as our first edition. It is practically the same size as that issued by Brother Russell and known as the keratol edition, on thin paper and in semi-flexible binding. It is very convenient for carrying in the pocket and of sufficiently attractive appearance to make excellent material for pastoral or colporteur work, or to place in the hands of interested friends and acquaintances.

Remembering that we have in this volume, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," the great and essential truths of the Bible set forth in clear light and beautiful form, let us realize afresh our privileges of sharing in this ministry of the divine message.

As already indicated in our previous announcement, the price of the book will be thirty cents per copy, postpaid; or in lots of ten copies or more, twenty cents per copy, carriage charges collect.