

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## The Mutual Love of Bridegroom and Bride

*"Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!" "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house and His banner over me was love." - Song of Solomon 4:9-10; 2:3-4.*

IN THAT ancient story of Abraham's seeking a bride for Isaac perhaps there is no sweeter or more significant statement than these simple words, "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; **and he loved** her." (Gen. 24:67.) Rebekah was after all Abraham's choice for Isaac. The wife Isaac loved was the gift his father sought and gave to him, and with that choice he found supreme delight. A beautiful picture surely of God's selection of a bride for His Son, and a soul-stirring assurance that when the greater Isaac saw the companion the Father had chosen for Him, His reactions were those of spontaneous delight and joy. Yes, "Jesus loved the Church and gave Himself for it," and, "Having loved His own, He loved them to the end,"--loved them so supremely that His joy would be incomplete until the bride He loved and cherished had reached the home and glory where He has waited for her these nineteen hundred years.

Since the story of Isaac and Rebekah is so manifestly full of typical lessons, if this narrative were all we had in the way of showing us that our prospective Bridegroom's acceptance of His Bride was not merely a compliance with a higher will, but an acceptance characterized by the deepest affection would more be really necessary to establish that fact? But a love so wonderful as His, and a delight so overflowing; could never be content with one expression of its reality. In so many ways it is told over and over again in the sacred Word. Moreover, the emotions begotten of such love as this of the Bridegroom and His Betrothed are not hidden from view in the sacred

record as, something too impractical or superficial to occupy the attention of mature, matter-of-fact minds. The Bible distinctly recognizes the emotional nature of God, and its pages are full of this blessed revelation of His adorable character. Our own emotions therefore are constantly appealed to, and in no instance more strikingly so than in that heavenly romance—the call, the mutual adoration, and the final union of Jesus and His Church.

### **A Book Wholly Devoted to This Theme**

Accepting the self-evident fact that all Scripture given by inspiration is profitable to the man of God, there can be no doubt in our minds regarding the profitableness of Canticles, or as it is more generally styled, "The Song of Solomon." Unquestionably this love story is not merely concerned with a love affair of Solomon himself, but is to be understood as being much more applicable to the "greater than Solomon" and His prospective Bride. This one complete book is given over entirely to the one absorbing theme, and surely a theme occupying such exceptional consideration should find a ready response in every heart that sings of Christ as "Jesus lover of my soul." Canticles has been truly called "the book of the Bridegroom and the Bride," for such it is. Every page reveals each in turn vieing with the other in an exchange of endearing professions of love and admiration. "It is no earthly love-song, breathing only carnal affection; it is a song which, while making use of the figures of earthly language, lifts us above the things that are seen and temporal into the region of the unseen and eternal. The love which it celebrates is 'the love which passeth knowledge'; the union which it tells of is a union beyond what eye hath seen, or ear heard, both for closeness and endearment; the beauty which it sings of is beauty surpassing all human thoughts or poetic dreams; the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, the raptures and disappointments, the meetings and the partings, which it depicts are things which, on a lower scale, belong to the daily tendernesses of human affection, but which here are stripped of all earthly grossness, and carry us up to a higher scale of love than that which in its truest purity has ever existed between man and woman.

"Love is that which breathes through every line; twofold love -- Christ on the one hand uttering His admiration for His Bride the Church, and the Church on the other giving vent to her admiration for her heavenly Bridegroom. The love on both sides is beyond the force of language to describe; yet there is and must be a difference, seeing the Bridegroom is the Son of God and the Bride one taken from the depths of poverty and degradation. 'Is not man, remarks a writer of the past generation, 'split into two parts: man for condescending love, woman for reverent love? Both of these we discover in this Song of Songs. Yet not the less true, and deep, and pure do we find this twofold love to be. The one does not mar the other. The love of man to woman differs from the love of woman to man; yet both are needful for the marriage union: the one fills up the other. Not the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, but both together make up the perfection of creaturehood, the completeness of the race. And herein is that saying true, 'It is not good for man to be alone.' He who made them at the beginning 'a male and a female,' did so not merely for the comfort and propagation of the species, but to lay the foundation of a higher symbolism expressive of the relationship and love between the second Adam and the second Eve, the Son of God and the Church, taken from His wounded side and given Him by the Father for a companionship and affection such as never could have otherwise been conceived. 'The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man. . . . Neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man.' (1 Cor. 11:8-12.) It is then the mutual affection founded upon the twofold individuality of our being that is so prominently brought out in this divine Song of love. And if we would understand aright what is written here concerning the Bridegroom and the Bride, we must go back to the Book of Genesis, and read there the symbol as given us on the

formation of the first man and woman—a symbol whose root is in creation, but whose development is in redemption; a symbol whose outline is given us in the first Book of Scripture, whose filling up is reserved for the last.

"The relationship between Christ and His Church is altogether peculiar; so is the love. Human affections are manifold, but this is one and special, apart from the rest. There is the love between parent and child, between brother and sister, between friend and friend; but this transcends them all. 'For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh.' (Eph. 5:31.) Is there not something peculiar about this statement, and no less about the manner in which it is introduced by the Apostle as bearing upon the relationship between Christ and His redeemed? 'This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and His Church.' (Eph. 5:32.) All that this 'mystery' con

"For that completion He waits the Father's time; longing, even upon the throne, for the hour of meeting, for the marriage day and the marriage supper. Heaven is not yet to Him what it shall be, when His Bride is with Him; and earth is not yet what it shall be, when its-crown is placed upon her head as well as upon His own. The cry, 'Behold, I come quickly,' is not merely the word of cheer to us here, in the day of His absence, and an intimation of His speedy arrival, but the utterance of His own heart's joy at the prospect of the final union, when all His glory shall be revealed and all her beauty unfolded—when, in language only too feeble to express the truth, He will call her 'the fairest among women,' and she will exult in Him as 'the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely.'"

And what terms of endearment He employs Unfamiliar as we may be with some of the similitudes used in this old oriental Song, we can, nevertheless quite easily understand the strain of divine love it sings. Love has a language all its own any way, and its inherent character is ever the same though its verbal expression be set forth in the language of many diverse tongues. And certain it is, the Spirit which dictated this Song of Songs will also interpret it to every responsive Christ-loving soul. Harken then to the Bridegroom's delight in the excellency of His betrothed "As the lily among thorns, so is My love among the daughters." (Song of Solomon 2:2.) Fragrance, it is said, is a special characteristic of these lilies, and such a fragrant flower among thorns is she in His esteem. Again we hear Him say, "O My dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." (Song of Solomon 2:14.) First the countenance, then the voice. First her love-lighted countenance revealing the transforming power of His love' and reflecting back her reciprocal devotion, and then the voice that speaks it forth in, unmixed delight. And once again He speaks: "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee." (Song of Solomon 4:7.) What words are these to one who has already confessed, "I am black, . . . as the tents of Kedar." Yes, once black but now made fair, in virtue of His call and imputed perfections; therefore He says, "Thou hast ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse

Thy lips, O My spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon." (Song of Solomon 4:9, 11.) Truly, His is "love divine all love excelling." How He delights to bear testimony to that love for us! And how He rejoices when our love responds with equal readiness and spontaneity. One more selection, and then we turn to the words of the prospective Bride: "My dove," He continues, "My undefiled is but one she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her." (Song of Solomon 6:9.) What a precious expression of His personal love for His Bride! Oh, there may be "threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number" (Song of Solomon 6:8), but His betrothed is "the only one" for Him. How great is His pride of her! How

fully assured He is that all who see her shall praise her, and pay homage to her beauty. Truly a Lover of lovers is He.

### **The Delight of the Bride in Her Beloved**

Like the Bridegroom, the Bride, makes **use of** many similitudes with which to express her admiration and joy. Fruits and flowers, spices and wine, the graceful hart, and multiplied symbols drawn, from nature's storehouse, are needed to tell the beauties., of her Beloved. Space will not permit more than a few of these. We refer the reader to the second text quoted at the head of this article as one expression of her delights. In connection therewith we have her saying, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." (Song of Solomon 2:5, 6.) "Sick of love," literally "love-sick." Blessed indeed' are they who really know this love-sick attachment to the Person of Jesus Christ. "My Beloved," she has perfect confidence to say, "is mine, and I am His," therefore, "Until the day, break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved." "Make haste, my Beloved, and be Thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." (Song of Solomon 2:16, 17-8:14.) These last words strikingly associate the Song of Songs with the Revelation, as it expresses the same deep-drawn sigh, the same eager anticipation, the same heartfelt entreaty with which the Revelation visions close: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Thus, both in the language of this Song and in the Apocalypse, - there is the same sense of "blessed impatience" for the consummation, the same deep constant love to an unseen'

Bridegroom, and the same desire to see Him in all His beauty, and embrace Him in unbroken, visible union. "It does not intimate doubting, but only distance; it does- not: conceive that anything can break the link between her and Him whom not having seen she loves; it suspects no change in the Beloved One, but only wonders why He 'should be so long- in coming."

**"'Tis not the loss of love's assurance,  
It is not doubting what Thou art;  
But 'tis the too, too long endurance  
Of absence that affects the heart."**

Hence the eager listening on her part for every sound of His footsteps, and for every accent of His voice. assuring her, that He really comes for her, "leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills."

### **"Lover's Absent Hours"**

"Poetry has spoken often of heavy partings, and of 'lovers' absent hours in connection with earthly love; but it is in such divine utterances as the above that we get some insight into the depth of that love which subsists between Christ and His Church; into the nature of the 'absent hours' which have run their weary course since He left her here in her solitude; into the blank which this separation has occasioned, and the longing on both sides for the day of final reunion at 'the marriage supper of the Lamb.' How far the Church on earth has ever realized this sense of absence and this longing for return is a searching question. Were there the personal attachment to the Lord which, as His affianced, the saints might be expected to possess, could there be the indifference to the blessed hope of His appearing, or could there be the dislike to converse about that hope, so strangely manifested by multitudes who name His name and profess to taste His love?"

Evident it is, then, that a real personal attachment of no ordinary kind, was intended to be the important lesson of this Song of Songs. The Lord has not given us this charming poem of love without a special purpose in doing so. How apparent it must be to the most unemotional reader that this Song expresses a depth of fervent love much too sacred to be superficial. And it cannot be considered merely an outburst of Oriental sentiment expressed in exaggerated terms, for in Psalm 45 and in many statements to be found in both Old and New Testaments we find the same attachment clearly shown. No, the Song is genuine, a true picture of the feelings which should reign perpetually in the hearts of those who claim espousal to Christ. It is a true expression of His love for us, for we can have no doubt of such affection on His part, and all these words as spoken by Him are profoundly sincere and fervent. How then, is it with us? Where are the embraces we ought ever, to give to Him? Wherein do we reveal the desire, overpassing all other desires, to see Him face to face? Can we truly say, "How can I keep the longing back?" and honestly affirm that we love Him with such devotion and fervency, that we have really "lost sight of all beside"?

"A Song like this shows us that the Christ of God is no abstraction, no fond ideality invented by men to embody their own thoughts of the beautiful and the loving. He is real; His love is real; His perfection is real; His beauty is real, . . . Abstractions cannot love; neither can they be loved. But He of whom all these things are sung is infinitely real and personal; . . . capable of being loved, not merely as the friend loves the friend, or the child his father, but as the Bride loves the Bridegroom of her soul.

"One special end, then, of such a Song as that of Solomon is to lift what we call religion out of the region of abstractions, and to bring it warmly home to the human heart. Here we see it embodied in the deepest affections of our being. It *is* no mere theory, no matter of words, no impassive system wrought out by keen or subtle intellect, but something which commends itself to every part of our nature, pouring in the living gladness of love, without which the human spirit is *a* frigid, lifeless void."

## The Richmond Convention

As is always the experience in the affairs of His people, the Lord's providences were manifest in the convention at Richmond, Va., from the opening session to the close. The devotional opening exercises were followed by an unexpected but much appreciated talk on "Our Fellowships in the Gospel of Love, Life, and Light," preparing our minds for a blessed communion that was thoroughly and very profitably enjoyed by apparently all to the very close of the convention where that Gospel was witnessed to the public and our leaky vessels were refilled. The convention impressed upon us deeply that our blessed privilege is one of fellowship at a table spread by the precious hands of our glorified Redeemer. None other could serve the spiritual fare the Lord's people may now enjoy if they *will*.

"Knowing God" better by getting "Glimpses of God" was very practically demonstrated not only by the talks on these subjects but by-all the others, as well as by the testimonies and hymns and prayers, but also perhaps in a still more important way by our fellowship between meetings. The Adversary could probably have very whole-heartedly and profitably to his own cause have entered into any and every feature of this convention and no doubt had a great longing to do so, but "If God be for us who can be against us?" We who had been grateful that it is our privilege to "glory in tribulation" were thankful to have our attention called to the original text, and to know that in accordance with it we may indeed "triumph in tribulation" even though our great Enemy seek by tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword to "separate us from the love of Christ."

A discourse dealing with "The Vine and the Branches" emphasized the necessity of being in-the "true Vine," and "abiding in Him." The plant which is most sensitive to grafting was chosen of the Master to show His willingness to accept us into this blessed fellowship, *in* the bearing of "much fruit" to the glory of the Father, the great Husbandman. "As many as touched [Him, our true Vine] were made perfectly whole" and thus only, as purged branches, can we bear fruitage of which the Master can testify, "Herein is the Father glorified." This can be possible only to a company whose "conversation is in heaven," who are "seated together with Christ in heavenly places"-their minds the mind of Christ. All, we trust, went from the convention with the determination that our fruitage should not be of the flesh but that it should demonstrate a mind set on heavenly things, and that our motto should be, Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy, think on these things. Opposition from our Adversary, we knew we must meet, but we carried with us the assurance that if God is able to make *all grace abound* toward you; that ye always having *all* sufficiency in *all* things, may *abound* to very good work." "Now thanks be unto God, which *always* causeth *us* to triumph *in* Christ." Oh, that we may *always* be *found in Him!*

## **Sojourning with Brethren of Other Lands**

**BY BROTHER I. F. HOSKINS**

THE privilege of fellowship with God's people is always a happy one; but in some respects it is a peculiar privilege and one of special interest to sojourn with brethren of other lands and tongues and sit together with them in places of spiritual communion. While it is a very pleasing task to review and record for others, the travels of several months, it is by no means an easy one; for one finds it most difficult by any spoken or written word to convey to the minds of others, accurate impressions of just what has happened and what one has experienced.

We had been assured early in the year 1934 that "widely separated brethren" of Great Britain had indicated their desire that another pilgrimage be undertaken there, and had definitely expressed the same in the form of an invitation to visit their shores again. The will of the Lord was definitely and prayerfully sought and we believe it was in harmony with His leading that the invitation was accepted. And now that the sojourn and travels of nearly six months in the British Isles have become a matter of history, it affords much gratification to be able to observe the providences of the Lord in that connection, and various evidences of His loving smile and approval.

The time decided upon for beginning the voyage was June 27th, on the S. S. Aquitania, and we were accompanied to the vessel by some fifteen of the Brooklyn friends who watched the ship move away from the pier and out into the New York harbor at about 11 p.m. The repeated assurances of these dear ones that their fervent love and prayers would follow us through all the voyage and travels, were most heartening. Indeed we could not but recall the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. 12) concerning the unity of the Spirit and the unanimity of the Body of Christ, as we realized there were loved ones of the same Body on both British and American shores who had made us feel deeply conscious of their loving sympathy and earnest prayers. How true it is that God frequently uses the members of the Christ to strengthen one another, "by that which every joint supplieth," in the advancing of His gracious purposes in them.

The passage across the ocean was unattended by any unusual events and was a very peaceful and pleasant voyage, being at that season of the year when the storms are less severe and the sea comparatively quiet. Some few opportunities were afforded us of personal discussion of the truth with various of the passengers, though we met with little of what would appear to be real response. One delightful experience of which we may make mention was that finding her place in the dining room, two passengers, a husband and wife, seated with us at the table, proved to be friends of the truth whom we had met in meetings some years previously. We thus had the fellowship of these friends during the voyage which was much to our mutual pleasure and spiritual uplift.

### **Happy Greetings on the British Shores**

The day of our arrival on the British shores, July 4th, was a very warm, beautiful day, and seemed to speak to us of the welcome that we were to receive shortly. We were very happy to find our dear Brother S. A. Couling of Rugby, awaiting our arrival at the landing at Southampton, and two hours more brought us to Waterloo Station in London, where some twenty friends were present; their hearty handshakes and their smiles spoke truly of a warm welcome, and we assured them



that their loving sentiments were fully reciprocated. After spending an hour or so in conference with a few of the brethren with reference to the British pilgrimage, we continued our journey to Rugby, and for the next four days, including the week-end,, it was our happy privilege to share the loving hospitality of dear Brother and Sister Couling. On Sunday in this home we had our first opportunity in connection with the present visit, to meet the Rugby friends and to enjoy with them a very happy time.

### **"Nearer My God to Thee"**

According to the preparations made and the schedules arranged, our travels through the British Isles were to start at once. Considering all 'the circumstances attending our day -- the unsettled conditions in the affairs of all people, and especially the disturbed relations, the variety of opinions, viewpoints and interpretations among the brethren everywhere, the commencement of our ministry abroad as well as throughout, was not without its anxious moments. Indeed one realizes increasingly through the years, the solemn responsibility associated with handling the holy things; that as the ministry of the truth is a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death, it becomes a matter of the utmost importance that the one who would speak in the name of the Lord shall frequently pause in the Divine presence, primarily for his own personal examination and inspection and to submit himself to the searching gaze of the Spirit from above, that he may in the spirit of lowliness and true Christlikeness go forth to speak as an oracle of God, and so be very certain that what he speaks is according to the Word and Spirit of the great Exemplar and Teacher of our holy faith. The words of the Apostle Paul to "son Timothy" were recalled: "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and of which thou hast been assured of.' Surely the things in which Timothy was admonished to continue, consisted of those well established, sanctifying truths that appertain to life and godliness and that have a very vital bearing upon the development of the life within. As therefore these reflections were before our mind in the beginning of our pilgrimage amongst our brethren beyond the sea, we felt that the theme we should *very* largely dwell upon during our sojourn abroad was well expressed in the title of the old familiar hymn, "Nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee!"

### **With Brethren in Ireland**

As about the middle of July seemed a propitious time to visit the friends in Northern Ireland, that being a holiday season, it had been arranged that we should spend from about July 10th to the 20th with the dear brethren there. Four Classes were served during those days-Carrickfergus, Portadown, Belfast, and Bangor, with an average attendance of from thirty to thirty-five. The excellent attention given and the splendid interest manifested in the themes that were discussed, such as The Will of God, Our Inheritance in Christ, Acquaintance with God, etc., gave evidence that these dear brethren in Christ were endeavoring to keep awake with regard to those spiritual issues that are vital to their continued relationship in Christ. These hours of fellowship together we felt were richly blessed of the Lord unto mutual edification.

Additionally, our spirit was much refreshed in meeting again quite a number of the friends whom we had met upon the occasion of several previous visits. Their shining countenances were indeed expressive of the fact that they were earnestly endeavoring to hold fast to the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end; and surely the Lord will perfect that which concerneth His faithful, trusting children. It was our happy privilege during this visit to Ireland, as on the occasion of our sojourn there three years ago, to share the very gracious hospitality 'of dear Sister



Kearney and family, consisting of eight persons, all rejoicing together in the one hope and steadfastly endeavoring to encourage each other in the understanding of the Word of Life. Again we acknowledge with grateful spirit the many kindnesses of these dear ones during the days of our sojourn with them, and trust that the sweet influences of this time of fellowship may be of an abiding character, ever pointing onward and upward to that blessed goal-our glorious reunion in the life beyond.

### **Heart to Heart Seasons of Communion**

The visit concluded in Northern Ireland, we returned, according to schedule, to London, where we were to spend the following two weeks, July 22nd to August 7th, with various Classes representing the different sections of this great city, including a General Convention that was held over Bank Holiday. We may here mention that there is no one general center where the friends congregate regularly, that may be said to be a representative London gathering.- For indeed this great city covers a very wide area, and the distance would be too great for any one center to really accommodate all sections as a regular central meeting place. In the circumstances we visited and served several of the London groups independently, even in cases where the Classes were not in sympathetic touch on account of difference of viewpoint along one line or another.

On Sunday, July 22nd, beginning our first week in London, we spent with two Classes whose meeting places are regularly in those sections known as Forest Gate and Aldersbrook, addressing one of these in the morning and the other in the evening. In both of these gatherings we had the very happy privilege of renewing the acquaintance of brethren whom we had met on several former visits, and of again holding sweet communion concerning the things appertaining to our glorious inheritance in Christ. Likewise in that section of London known as Ealing, we had the joyous privilege the following Sunday, July 29th, of blessed fellowship in the things of the Spirit, and again of renewing acquaintance with a goodly number of the brethren. Then during the midweek days of these two weeks preceding the General Convention early in August, we had happy fellowship in other sections known as East Sheen, Putney, Brixton, and Welling; and we include here reference to one other point considerably outside of London, that of Windsor.

It seems that we may well make reference to the fact that as desired by the friends, several of these gatherings were in the nature of informal heart to heart seasons of communion, wherein the friends freely made mention of matters and questions lying near to their hearts and concerning which they felt the need of the assistance and counsel of others in discerning the mind of the Lord. There was marked evidence of the Lord's rich blessing on all these gatherings, as was attested by earnest assurances of the brethren.

It is but proper and fitting, we believe, that we here acknowledge in connection with these two or three weeks of sojourn in and about London, that we were much blessed in sharing the very loving hospitality of dear Sister Courtenay, of East Sheen, and dear Brother and Sister Hudson, of Welling. The sweet influences of the Lord's presence and Spirit to be observed and felt in both of these homes were indeed refreshing and uplifting. From these dear ones we received many kindnesses and much loving consideration, all of which was warmly appreciated. The Lord reward their work and labor of love.

## **The General Convention in London**

There had been preparations under way for several months for the General Convention or Home Gathering over Bank Holiday, August 4-6; being sponsored by some of the London Classes as well as by several representative brethren about the city and its environs. This convention which was held in Conway Hall, London, afforded opportunity for a general assembling of brethren from various sections of London, as well as from several distant points in the British Isles; Edinburgh and Glasgow being represented. Brethren came together in fellowship who had not met for probably twenty years. It was of more than usual interest, therefore, for some who assembled here, to renew their acquaintance and fellowship and to have this general opportunity of exchange of experience and viewpoint after all these years. The largest meeting of the Convention was Sunday evening when there were probably three hundred present. It was our privilege, to serve during two of its sessions. Messages of love and kindly greeting from the brethren in America were delivered to the Convention, and they were assured that there were loved ones at home who were deeply interested in the visit to Great Britain and were bearing the matter earnestly before the Lord in prayer.

It was refreshing to note the evident longing and disposition on the part of the friends to enjoy the deeper spiritual truths of the Lord's Word that have to do with building *up* the inner man, the discourses being much along these lines. There was obviously the desire to be rooted and grounded in that which is sound, substantial, well established, and proven by the unfailing Word of God. Truly the Spirit of the Lord is the same wherever it exists. It is a spirit of love, of power, and of a sound mind. It prompts all the children of God to desire above all things a knowledge of God's will, that that will being worked out in them, may develop the image of God's dear Son.

## **Need for Clarity of Spiritual Vision**

Indeed we took occasion to state before the friends that we had not undertaken at this time, to dwell particularly on the doctrinal and elementary features of our faith, as much *as* we realize their vital importance; but that our chief solicitude for ourself and for all the brethren was that the knowledge of the doctrines and the truths *in* general that we have been accumulating through the years, should be translated into real spirituality, Christ-likeness and holiness, in harmony with our Master's prayer, "Sanctify them through Thy Truth." It was observed that probably the greatest need of our time was for a finer perception of the work and the ministry of the Spirit, and for a greater clarity of spiritual vision which is so essential in dealing with the complex problems of the present hour. It was plainly to be observed also that the friends recognized the significance of the Lord's providence in connection with the present trials and *tests* that are *upon* the Church; and that the lesson *to* be drawn from all these experiences of recent years is that the Lord is testing, proving, purifying and making ready a people for His name, to be exalted as the Bride and joint-heir with His *Son*, through whom all the grand and glorious promises of the Bible are to be fulfilled. The three days of this Home Gathering in London, evidently brought much spiritual refreshment to the friends, as was attested by their testimonies and their joyful faces; and their parting was with renewed courage and thanksgiving that they had been privileged to thus dwell together in heavenly places.

## Travels through Wales

As there was a general desire on the part of the Classes in the British Isles to be included in the itineraries that were being prepared, it became evident that the travels commencing immediately following the Convention were to extend into several months. The details of each visit we shall scarcely attempt to report as in considerable measure it would be repetitious, the experiences being similar and much the same from place to place. Frequently the friends to whom we ministered represented not only the regular attendants at the Class in the place, but several from points at considerable distance, some of whom do not have the advantages and blessings of regular meetings. Especially was this true of our Sunday appointments which were generally made occasions for Home Gatherings.

During the first of our tours we were blessed with the companionship and assistance of our dear Brother Hunnable, of Braintree. It will be recalled that in 1931, Brother and Sister Hunnable visited the United States, and met quite a good number of the friends in this country. Brother Hunnable *using* his motor car drove us *on* our first tour westward from London, and through South Wales. For all this loving assistance we are much indebted to our dear brother. We stopped at Bristol, renewing acquaintance and fellowship with the dear brethren there and having very enjoyable service with a company of about twenty friends. The following Saturday evening and Sunday were spent with the brethren in the vicinity of Swansea, Wales. As is often the case, the friends are considerably scattered and so the gatherings during our visit were made up of brethren from several localities, the number on Sunday being about twenty-five.

## They Spoke of Their Joys and Sorrows

We felt that this Sunday, August 12th, was particularly a blessed day. Again it was the spiritual life, the work of the Spirit, and the Church's participation with Christ in His sufferings and in His heritage, that were reviewed. The warm appreciation expressed by *all* present, of the ministry of the Word, was truly heart-cheering. In fact, just following the closing discourse of the *day*, the *chairman* left the meeting open for the brethren *to add* their testimonies, and practically all availed themselves of this privilege. In listening to these testimonies that surely came from the heart, one could not but be impressed with the similarity of experience and result in the Christian life, on the part of God's children. The friends in their testimonies spoke freely of their trials and sufferings as also of their peace and joy in Christ; both are essential and important and have their place in the development of the life of the Spirit and in the growth of the Christ-character. It was truly strengthening to faith to hear the testimonies of the brethren, representing various conditions and walks of life and evincing the Lord's providential care.

The following four days, August 13-16 were spent with brethren in Pontypool, and Abertillery, Wales, and in Oxford, Eng. These were happy days of fellowship, and the warm response to the review of the Lord's Message, on the part of the twenty-five to thirty-five present at each of these places, added much to our delight and joy in the privilege of this ministry. As is generally known, the district of South' Wales has been affected very seriously for several years by the depression; the mines operating but very little and leaving thousands unemployed. We experienced often our eyes filling with tears as we entered the meetings of these friends and realized the distressing circumstances, and the trials and tests that their faith must endure. It was a very real inspiration to observe from the faces and expressions of the friends in various parts of Wales, their long-suffering and patience, and such exhibitions of faith and trust in God. May He continue to give

them strength and grace to surmount all these obstacles and reverses of the way and so to endure as "seeing Him who is invisible," even unto the end. There is no room for doubt that the visits made amongst them, and the seasons of fellowship at this time, proved to be very opportune, and of the character to mean considerable encouragement to them.

### **A Spiritual Feast at Rugby**

Our next visit of special interest was on the following Sunday, August 19th, at Rugby, where a Home Gathering had been arranged. Rugby is located northward from London, some seventy-five miles and therefore convenient to many points' in the Midlands of England. The dear friends of Rugby had spared no effort in making arrangements for a very successful day, and as invitations were extended to brethren at various points of the surrounding territory, there was a very encouraging response in the way of attendance, upwards of 120, exceeding considerably what had been expected. Of course this number was made up largely of visiting friends who came, some of them, quite a long distance.

We feel the dear brethren at Rugby, are deserving of a kindly reference to the success of this day's fellowship, that it was due in large measure to their very warm enthusiasm and loving spirit of interest in the brethren and the work of the Lord. Brother and Sister Couling had invited several of the friends from London who responded and who 'were made to share the hospitality of their home over Saturday night. All of this added much to making this one of the old-time gatherings. The brethren scarcely ceased singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and making melody in their hearts all the day long. Again we may properly add that a very happy feature of the convention was the generous provision which had been made for all the friends to be served luncheon twice during the day. This was of course by the Rugby Class. We were told that there were 120 present at the evening tea. The hall was a very spacious one and offered plenty of opportunity for the friends to move about. Added to all the other good features was a very beautiful day, which was the Lord's provision. At the close of the day the opinion was unanimously expressed that it had been a real spiritual feast of communion and fellowship in the things that minister to the requirements of the inner man 'and to the building up of the new life. The presence of the Lord was very much in evidence and this opinion we are sure was concurred in by all. Following the convention at Rugby, our itinerary took us northward, but report of further travels is reserved for another time.

## **Full Assurance of Faith**

***"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." - Heb. 10:19-22.***

THE INTENTION of Jesus' last will and testament as recorded in John 14, 15, and 16, evidently was that His disciples might have full assurance of faith. In the clearest and most positive language He told of His great and everlasting love, and in no uncertain terms assured them of their share in His future glory. "These things," He said, "have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John 15:11.) "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33.) "Peace," "tribulation," "good cheer"-how strange that word "tribulation" must have sounded to those who were looking only for the "peace" and the "good cheer." But they were to learn that divine providence would speak peace by the blood of the cross, only that they might be developed, tried, and proved by the "much tribulation" which must without doubt be the lot of the pure in heart so long as they live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. These very tribulations, because of the chastening, the purifying, which they would effect, would be most necessary evidences of the Father's love. Without chastenings, there could be no full assurance of faith, for if we be without chastening, the Apostle says, we are spurious and not sons.

## **Love -- "As I Have Loved You"**

While He told His disciples with candor of their precious privilege of being fruit-bearing branches, the bearers of fruit that would be to the praise of the great Husbandman's glory, He also told them that to this very end every branch must endure prunings, because His name cannot be praised by any fruit we of ourselves can grow. Instead of being occasions for complaint, then, His prunings should cause rejoicings inasmuch as they demonstrate the Father's love and His faith and interest in our fruit bearing possibilities. Neither can there be acceptable fruit-bearing except as by continuing in His love we abide in the Vine of His planting. That love is not a natural love, but the same kind that He had-"That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." - John 15:12, 13.

The test is not on us as to whether we love the brethren, but as to whether we love them "as" He "loved us. There is no warrant for any disciple to be confident of final victory merely because he finds pleasure in learning something about God; or because his emotions are stirred to their depths by every providence in his life; or because he enjoys the company of those who love righteousness, who because of their greater advancement can help him to further attainments; or because he likes to work in the Master's vineyard. True love gives; the counterfeit seeks its own advancement and pleasure. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister to others, and to seek a little band of disciples who would have this same spirit, those who would love as He loved love such a fickle one as Peter of the three denials, love Thomas regardless of his doubtings, and James and John in spite of their self seeking -- yes, love the disciples who in the presence of the

emblems of the body broken for them and the blood shed on their behalf, could quarrel over the positions they should occupy in the Kingdom. Greater love can no man have than this: that he should lay down His life for such as these; not merely stand for them, but invite them to His fellowship during the whole of his ministry. It is only such love as this that can give assurance of abiding in the Vine.

### **Abounding in Knowledge and Discernment**

Then Jesus closes His farewell message with a statement of the means by which He hoped to see the love of God perfected in them-by teaching them to know God. His prayer was like that of the Apostle Paul in Phil. 1:9, that their love might "abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all discernment." (Margin.) The accumulating of a great array of facts, if spiritual discernment is not exercised as to the kind of truths that are gathered, may, or perhaps always will, result in more or less of fleshly pride and a consequent tendency to judge others; but the more knowledge **of God** spiritual discernment acquires, the more humble and charitable will its possessor be. As pride is antagonistic to faith, being an over-abundant confidence in self, it must militate against this much desired "full assurance of faith." Trust in vacillating self will be found temporarily quite satisfying, but eventually a very disappointing substitute for faith in the unchangeable God. It may give moments or even days of great exultation, only to be followed by periods of great depression when the uselessness of this feeble self in which we have been trusting is seen.

Just as certainly as self-assurance interferes with true fellowship, so the full assurance that results from sanctifying truth (John 17:17) effects the oneness of the Body members which the Master prayed for in the immediately following verses.

That oneness will in turn result in greater faith and encourage to that "full assurance," as the Holy Spirit manifested in others "beareth witness with our spirit," demonstrating "the spirit that worketh in us."

### **Full Assurance of Faith Based on Attachment to Christ**

As there are always counterfeits of the true, so we find in this-a faith that bears semblance to the "full assurance" but in its fruitage gives evidence of being false, and of a different origin. Fidelity to a man or an organization has frequently produced the kind of assurance that would burn all opposers at the stake, in its positiveness, a good simulation outwardly of the true and full assurance of faith that is the right of those who have as their head Christ, "out of" whom "the whole Body maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love." The Apostle could hardly have stated more strongly than he does here the dependence of the members of this Body upon their Head and upon each other. It is without doubt his thought that there is no reason for assurance on the part of those who are separating themselves from-other members of that Body with the result that they cannot have "that which every joint supplieth." To be cut off from one member of the Body of our own volition, whether that member be of this century or a previous one, would seem to be to deprive ourselves of a portion of that which the loving Father had designed to supply us "according to the proportionate energy of each single part." (Eph. 4:16, Diaglott.) It would be only because of ignorance of our real need that any of us could deprive himself of the Father's predestined means of supplying that need.



While self-confidence is to be discouraged, there is no excuse given in the Scriptures for the hesitating manner in which we sometimes express the hope that we may possibly be so living as to stand some chance of gaining a place in the heavenly Kingdom. Paul is not heard saying, "I hope it may be that Christ is living in me," but, he says, "Christ liveth in me." Very little spiritual perception indeed must have been developed in the one who cannot positively tell the difference between the old will of the flesh and the new will of Christ working in him. There is needed by such Christians very much more of time devoted to a study of the Bible teaching regarding His will for us. A study also of the lives of our brethren, past and present, to see the manifestation of Christ in them, will help to give us this full assurance of faith if we find evidence of the same power working in us. That this may be accomplished, however, there must be a very determined closing of our eyes to their flesh and its imperfections. This is no easy task, for the flesh, above all things else delights in finding the faults of others; but even in this His grace is sufficient and will be supplied if we but persistently ask for it. Back of the prayer must be a heart desire for likeness to the Master in this "unfeigned love of the brethren," a desire strong enough to lead us to join whole-heartedly in cooperating with Him in His providences and disciplines against this self centered tendency of our flesh.

### **Need for Truth in the Inward Parts**

Probably not until His grace has led us to see this flesh in all its hideousness can we have genuine desire to say with the Apostle, "for me to live is Christ, and to die gain." A feigned faith, or love must surely result in the vain janglings that evidence a confidence in the flesh, a false condition that must arouse even a sleeping conscience to frequent accusations and thereby interrupt this confidence which is born of conceit. Faith in self must ever be spasmodic. The untrustworthiness of self, and its unloveliness becomes the more distressing when viewed by the side of such statements as "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." There is no lack of confidence here, with the Apostle, for the frailties of self had taught him to abandon it long ago and now all his dependence is upon the Captain of his salvation. In His service he fought the good fight of faith, to say at its close, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course [of faith], I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." There was left not one occasion for the undependable flesh to boast or to doubt, for all his trust had during that whole course been in the unchanging One.

Any doubts we may have must be regarding self, for "God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled [from self] for refuge to **lay hold upon** the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. 6:17-20.) If one is in possession of the faith that would constitute him an heir of promise, and if he has denied self-the old self that will otherwise invariably stand between him and any hope of a blessing in the present or the future, a full assurance of faith it would seem should unfailingly result. Unless a diseased brain is the cause, the unavoidable conclusion then seems to be that if we have doubts, however skilfully the flesh may turn them away from itself by sly philosophizings, those doubts are resolved into one lone doubt as to whether we really do wish that flesh to be dead, as to whether it may not have a few little whims that we would wish to give consideration before we finally resign everything to the Lord to dispose of as He may desire.



## **Faith at the Expense of the Flesh**

A favorite ruse of the flesh is to pose as very humble in claiming that we "are not good enough," which is in reality a tacit admission of the fact that we consider our flesh of so great importance that, while Jesus did "present Himself without spot to God to cleanse our conscience from dead works" (Heb. 9:14), His provision would naturally not be quite sufficient for a case so important as ours. There may be here faith enough to believe that there are "very great and precious promises which have been bestowed upon us, so that through these we might become partakers of the Divine nature," but the emphasis is upon the "might become" and with an inflection of doubt instead of the assurance the words were intended to convey. The flesh would rightly consider it impossible that it should have any part in such great and precious promises, but it adds the thought that while there might be some chance for a few in far away climes and distant centuries to have this full assurance of faith, any who had come in contact with **it** would be ruled out, so tremendously important does this hypocritically humbled one consider itself. If faith, then, is to have any assurance, it must be at the expense of this "deceitful and desperately wicked" thing. It must die-die now as regards its will, in order that the will of God may reign and the "good fight of faith" progress to victory, and finally the flesh must go into actual death that we may "see the fruition of our hopes."

Peter's positiveness in stating that our entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ shall be an abundant one is not based on any pride in ourselves as being not quite so bad as some others we know, but is based on a faith in those great and precious promises which become to us a foundation on which we build, super-adding fortitude to faith, knowledge to fortitude, and so on until the glorious superstructure, symbolized 'by gold, silver and precious stones' is completed at last under Divine direction, to be the glorious temple of God, His eternal dwelling place. "For if these things be in you, and abound, they shall make you that ye shall neither be barren [inactive] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." He is the foundation upon which we build, for all these precious promises are in Him, and if our building is to be squarely upon that foundation, we must know well, not as a vague theory but by actual personal daily contact, every line of His glorious character. Otherwise our "fortitude" will be the courage of the flesh, our "knowledge" akin at least to the "wisdom of this world," our "self-control" the spasmodic, by fits and starts kind, that the flesh has made so familiar and so distasteful, our "patience" the patience of disdainful superiority, our "piety" the self-righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, our brotherly kindness the smug condescension that unfailingly finds its way to the surface of self-satisfaction no matter how much the approbative hypocrite may seek to cover it under a daintily tinted cloak of humility.

## **Spirit of Holiness gives Assurance**

That there should be no difficulty in knowing whether it is this unlovely self that is in control or the perfect will of Christ, Paul clearly infers by his direct question of 2 Cor. 13:5: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is **in** you, except ye be reprobates?" And this last phrase literally rendered is, "except ye be without proof." The same Greek word appears in the next verse which is properly rendered by Mr. Wilson: "But I hope that you will know that we are not without proof." Various interpretations are possible of 2 Cor. 13:5, but this sixth verse seems to leave -no questioning but that it is teaching this one important thing, namely that we should have "full' assurance of faith." Those in Corinth who would set the standard too low would be without proof of the Spirit, for they would not have God's Spirit; but those who had enough of the spirit of holiness to receive the Apostle and his message, he evidently expected also to have faith in

sufficient abundance to be assured that God was dealing with them and that nothing could pluck them from His all-powerful hand.

Since faith that grows is one of the qualities mentioned as a portion of the "fruit of the spirit" there can be no explanation of the miracle of our possessing it except that we are "in Him and He in us." "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might **know** the things that are freely given us of God," and that we, too, might say: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly." But to run with certainty, assurance, we must heed the advice of the context: "but I brow-beat my body, and lead it captive." (1 Cor. 9:27, Diaglott, literal rendering.) Many-in that Church who had made a profession of full participation with the Master in His life according to the Spirit were living after the flesh and were therefore unworthy of partaking of the Memorial Supper since it did not represent them. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep," the Apostle says 'of them. (1 Cor. 11:30.) There was no hope of their running certainly until they had taken up with positiveness the browbeating of, their flesh. The mind must be brought into control if the body is to be led captive to His will. It is useless to expect the flesh to rejoice in His law, for "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7), but "if Christ be in you, the body is dead," and who could have any difficulty knowing whether he carried with him a dead body or a live one, a body that was satisfying its cravings or one that was under the control of a mind that, though contrary to it in every particular, was yet managing to use it to further its every spiritual interest?

### **Real Surrender and Consecration Essential**

"Hereby know [not guess] we that we are in Him." "Hereby do we know that we know Him, is we keep His commandments." (1 John 2:3, 5.) And the most important of those commandments is the one the Apostle has been emphasizing and continues to enlarge upon throughout this epistle-love for the brethren. To have that is to have full assurance, for "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." (1 John 2:10.) As long as the flesh is allowed in any particular to press its interests above the service of the Lord and His brethren, instead of love prominently showing its fruitage, criticisms, judgments, condemnations, and an uncertain fight, beatings of the air will characterize us. "We **know** that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" enough to sacrifice the interests of our flesh, enough to serve them instead of self, love them enough to rejoice to see them honored instead of ourselves, to be careful to always keep the cloak of charity drawn over their imperfections instead of granting the old deceitful flesh the satisfaction of talking about them -- yes, love them enough to place them above self in every particular. We will not only have knowledge of our standing ourselves, but the Master said that "by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one for another."

Must we not confess, then, that an expression of doubt as to whether I have passed from death unto life, a spirit begotten one, is merely to say that I have not yet learned to love the brethren, and that is to say, "I still love myself above the Lord and above the brethren." "Hereby we know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit," -- the spirit that came not to be served, but to serve. (1 John 4:13.) Our consecrated course was begun with this spirit of full devotion to God, His Kingdom, and the brethren. We have only to maintain this fulness of consecration to finish our course with joy. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." It is not merely because of the joy it adds to the Christian life that it is well to have this confidence. No, it is of vastly greater importance than that to us, for it is one of the conditions stated as a necessity for the receiving of that reward. To be of

His house we must "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Again: "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." - Heb. 10:35; 3:6, 14.

## Report of Western Pilgrimage

BY BROTHER JOHN HOSKINS

HAVING JUST returned from the pilgrimage of Northern California, Oregon, and Washington, and the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, Canada, it gives me much pleasure to give you a resume of my experiences.

In undertaking this pilgrimage it was not without an appreciation of the lack of personal qualifications. Had it not been for the grace of God through His Spirit I could never have carried out the gracious desire breathed in the touching words of the departing Shepherd, "Feed My sheep." But the Lord most graciously led the way and placed in my hands a service for Him in which I found much joy. He is excellent in working. He knows how to separate His own from every earthly thing.

As I went in and out among the Lord's people and found the encouraging evidence of His love, I realized that the Lord is truly perfecting His own. Among many I found that trials and disappointment in things of earth were means that sent them afresh to Jesus. When we are stripped of every cherished earthly idol, then it is we can appreciate Christ and His words, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." And oh what rest He gives! Then it is we can rest from our own works. Then it is that God can work in us. For it is He that "worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

It was encouraging to meet those who are not satisfied with knowing something about God, but are longing to **know Him**, and who, give evidence of His Spirit "working mightily" in them and of the transforming influence of His grace. They realize with us that what God wants and must have is the fully surrendered life, a life yielded to Him, that He may transform it. "What can the potter do with the unyielding clay? How can God fashion the unyielded life? If every idol He shatters is secretly mourned: if every chastening stroke is bitterly denounced: if every higher purpose is resisted by a hostile will, how can He mold and transform and bless?"

It was a source of joy to note the desire for a higher life and a more complete union with the Lord on the part of many of the friends. We enjoyed special fellowship with brethren in the Province of Alberta. These had not been visited by the Institute's representatives for years, and our communion in holy things and the mutual blessings enjoyed will long be remembered. If the friends along the way received benefit from my service, it has been by the Lord's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, and I want to acknowledge here the many blessings I have received from the friends in various ways.

"The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above."

There was frequent favorable mention of the spiritual food found in the pages of the "Herald." Financial reverses during these strenuous times has made renewal impossible for some, but I

urged none need be without its monthly visits on this account, as is stated in each issue of the "Herald."

This pilgrimage has been a glorious experience -a foretaste of what future association will be when all the weakness of the flesh will be forever laid aside. It was a time of faith and confidence -- a time of sweet communion with God and His Son and of closest fellowship with some of His saints. The past few days have been days of physical rest and quiet and it seems I ought to be going somewhere to tell of the unsearchable riches of Christ and how they are attainable by the poorest mortal by faith. But the cloudy pillar is resting-so I rest and wait-wait for the cloud to move forward. Waiting is an important factor to the servant of God. How quickly seemingly unsurmountable obstacles can disappear or adjust themselves and leave the way open to proceed. The muddy waters of today may be clear crystal tomorrow-if we wait. To this end is my faith in God. What a life is a life of trust-a heart and conscience perfectly at rest and able to repose in Him who directs. Right now I rest as "at the commandment of the Lord." Suffice it to say that no words of mine could express my appreciation to my Heavenly Father for this experience-for His commission and His presence all the way, for all of which I humbly thank Him. Pray for me that my steps may be ordered by Him.

## **The Epistle of Christ**

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ALL ARE familiar with the fact that we have in our Bibles epistles, or letters, by various ones of the Apostles -- St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, St. James, St. Jude. But not many, perhaps, have heard of the Epistle of Christ. St. Paul tells us that it was written in his day. He describes the writing of it, how it was done, and declares that he was one of the instruments used by the Lord in connection with the writing of the Epistle. Here are his words: "Ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, ministered [written] by us; written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart." - 2 Cor. 3:3.

How beautiful and poetical is the thought here expressed! It is a compliment to both the Apostle as the Lord's faithful servant, and also to the Lord's people at Corinth. It is in line with the Apostle's statement elsewhere, "We are God's workmanship." (Eph. 2:10.) Wherever there is a true Christian-not merely spirit-begotten, but spirit-developed in the character-likeness of the Savior in meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness and love-we have the evidence of the power of God at work in him to will and to do His good pleasure, not arbitrarily,, but in cooperation with the will of the individual. And wherever there is a Church, an Ecclesia, a class of Bible students who show these evidences of the Lord's Holy Spirit working in them and developing them, we have the Epistle of Christ, declaring and showing forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

**In** the context the Apostle gives the same thought **in** words a little different, declaring the Lord's true people to be living epistles, "known and read of all men." (2 Cor. 3:2.) Bibles are invaluable, indispensable. So are books that are really helpful in Biblical interpretation; so are hymn books and tracts. All of these show forth the Lord's praises, and assist in pointing in the right direction those of the world who are feeling after God if haply they might find Him. But the best Epistle-even more valuable than the Bible, as respects reaching the hearts of men-is the life of a true

Christian, a New Creature in Christ Jesus, to whom old things are passed away, and all things are become new." - 2 Cor. 5:17.

And yet, in a previous letter from St. Paul this same Church at Corinth was criticized sharply because of its carelessness as respects proper standards of morality. The Apostle assures us, however, that his words of reproof did much good, working in the Church a repentance toward God, and proved to be of lasting benefit to them. Thus in God's providence He overruled for their good a mistake made by these followers of the Master, by using a faithful and courageous Apostle, who gave the proper rebuke in a proper, loving manner.

### **The Secret of St. Paul's Power**

What is by inspiration thus declared of the Church at Corinth, we see to be true also respecting the Lord's people today; and we may suppose that it has not been without faithful witnesses, living epistles, throughout the Gospel Age. We are especially interested, however, in conditions today. The Editor and all of the Pilgrims and the Elder Brethren in the Church have in St. Paul a noble example of faithfulness and loyalty. He did not preach himself; he did not preach enticing words of men's wisdom and science, falsely so called: ' (1 Cor. 2:1-5; 1 Tim. 6:20.) Giving *himself up* to the Lord's service, and seeking *not* his own, glory, but to do the Lord's will, the Apostle became more and more an able and -qualified minister, or servant, of the Lord. The Lord-used, him more and more in the presentation of the, glorious Message of God's Love, as revealed in, the great Divine Plan of the Ages.

St. Paul's faithfulness is manifest to us in the words, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before [in the promises of God's Word], I press toward the mark for the Prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:13-14.) . That was the secret of the Apostle's power. That is the reason why the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, has used him so much and so efficiently in the blessing of the Church since that time -- through the streams of Truth which have come down through his Epistles.

What a zeal the Apostle had! Harken to his words, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16.) This does not signify that the Gospel, was preached for fear of being tormented after he would die, but that he felt he could not be satisfied except when doing all in his power to make known to all who have the "hearing ear" the message of God's grace centered in Christ Jesus. Thus it was when he was giving his time exclusively to preaching. Thus it was when he was obliged for a time to be a tent-maker to support himself while preaching evenings, holidays, and at his work. Thus it was that he preached with special liberties while still a prisoner at Rome. Anyhow, anywhere, under God's providence, St. Paul was ready and glad to preach the "good tidings" to all who had hearing ears.

### **Why Elders Should be Carefully Chosen**

This should be the spirit, not only of the Pilgrims, of the Elders of the Church of Christ, but the spirit of every member of it; for in a large sense each one of us is privileged to be a minister, or servant, in writing the message of God's grace in the hearts of others.

But let us not forget that we shall 'not know how to write in the hearts of others what We have not already had written in our own hearts. Hence the propriety of great caution in the choosing of

Elders to find those who already have the writing of the Lord in their hearts, and who therefore will be competent assistants, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, for the writing of the Lord's character is of the younger brethren.

And what is the Message, what is the Epistle, that is written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit through various agencies? Is it the knowledge of chronology? Is it the unraveling of types and shadows? Is it the cracking of hard, theological nuts in respect to differently understood 'passages of Scripture? Is it the knowledge of the history of the Jews, the history of the world, the history' of the Church? Is it the understanding and appreciation of the different Covenants., past., present, and to come? No, it is none of these.

All of these; subjects have more or; less of value, and are more or less used of the Lord-in connection with; this writing that is to be done in the hearts of His people. 'But -writing the Epistle of Christ is different-the' writing, the tracing' of the character likeness of the Master in the hearts of His people -- His meekness, His gentleness, His 'patience, His long-suffering; His brotherly-kindness, His love, His joy, His peace.

We might have all knowledge respecting chronology and history, might be able to quote every text in the Bible, and to cite it, too; and yet not have the Epistle of Christ written in our hearts. It is the Epistle of which the Apostle Peter says, "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren [idle, inactive] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus. Christ"; for knowledge will have its place. And thus with these characteristics of the Master, deeply engraved upon our hearts, we shall be granted an, abundant entrance "into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." - 2 Pet. 1:8, 11.

### **Three Valuable Lessons**

The three great lessons which will be required of those- who will be heirs of the Kingdom are (1) A proper, thorough appreciation of justice, and a manifestation of that appreciation of justice by an endeavor to comply with the requirements of the Golden Rule-to love our neighbor as ourselves (2), A further lesson is that of Love, sympathy, compassion, mercy. However **exact**ing we may be respecting ourselves, our own thoughts, words and, deeds, we are not to exact from others, but be willing to take from them whatever they are pleased to give-as did our Savior. This will mean (3) suffering with Christ, having fellowship in His **sufferings**. It will mean the learning of valuable lessons to fit and qualify us for the work of being (kings, priests, and judges with our Lord in His coming Kingdom.

St. Paul emphasized the importance of having the. Christ-character engraved on our hearts when he wrote that God's predestination is that all who will 'be of the Church in glory must be copies of His dear Son-must have the Epistle of Christ written in their hearts. (Rom. 8.28-30.) - No matter how imperfect their bodies, how imperfect their attainment of their -ideals, those ideals must be according to the Divine standard. And they must be so-in sympathy with those ideals as to be glad to **suffer** for their **attainment**.