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The Life of Blessedness

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in, the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." - Psalm 1:1, 2.

BLESSED -- this is the first word of the Book of Psalms, and this is the key-note of all its songs. Here, as frontispiece, is set the picture of the blessed man, and here is the beginning of the blessed life. The after history follows it through many changes, through troubled days and gracious deliverances, until at last it reaches the land where sorrow and sighing flee away, and, day and night, praise fills the holy temple.

Very full of meaning is the background of the picture. There are three groups, having little to do with each other, yet bound together by dreadful bonds; so that the first group is ever moving on to become the second, and the second goes on in turn to become the third. The first group is of men who are walking and talking; as if of unsettled ways. The second group stands busied, as if thought and way were now decided and being carried out. Then the company is broken up, and the ungodly who walked in counsel, and the sinners who stood in their ways, sit, each by himself, in the seat of the scorner.

But the blessed man has found a grander occupation. He sits, and upon his face there is thrown a reflected light, that comes from the open book that lies before him; his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night. Between himself and these others there comes the law of the Lord; an authority mighty, majestic, supreme, yet not a burden or a hardship; his **delight** is in the law of the lord.

This blessed life grows right up out of the Word of God rightly used. The blessed man does not read it only, does not only search it, he meditates in it day and night. The law of the Most High God is accepted by him in all the completeness of its claim. And meditating in the Word, he

finds in turn all that constitutes the foundation of the blessed life. Contact with the solemn presence of Jehovah; a holy fear and reverence before Him; a lowly obedience that waits listening to His voice, and heeding it earnestly; a lofty ideal of life in its origin and purpose; a blessed consciousness of an ever-ready help, almighty and most merciful; a vision of holiness, kindling desire and inspiring hope; a brave trust in God as ordering all things; a patient and tender love for all men-these are the gifts and graces that wait for him, gifts which he can find in such rich fulness nowhere else, and which he can get at in no other way than by meditating in the Word.

Of this let us be well assured, that in the blessed life this meditation is the starting point. Whatever we need to see, to know, to be, begins in meditation on the Word. In the world a man sees only the point of time we call the present. Away on every hand there lies the infinite, the eternal, but the eye sees only that which it is bent over. The man is in contact only with earth and his neighbors. All the consciousness of mind and heart, all the powers of body and soul, are wrapped about the little business of the day. Hope and desire, which should soar into the heavens, are caged within these bars. To go up the mount of meditation is to pass out of the narrow ways and busy tumult up into an ampler, purer air; out of dusty roads to dewy freshness. We begin then to see the true proportions of things. The present is lost, and the eternal unfolds itself. New faculties begin to unfold themselves in the stillness. There opens within us an eye that sees the unseen, an ear that hears other voices. And there, as of old, in the cool of the day, comes the very presence of God Himself to walk and talk with His child.

He cannot know the blessed life who does not secure to himself this leisure-to be still in God's presence; to listen and long for His coming; to give up the soul to communion with Him. Devotion does not require that we should neglect business which duty bids us do, rather it commends diligence. But devotion does require that we so manage our business as to secure this quiet, earnest, meditating in the law of the Lord. Let there be what there may be besides this, there can be no substitute for it. Endless religious activity, meetings, sermons-these things make this quiet meditation only the more needful. If this quiet, earnest, habitual meditation be lacking, we can know little of the blessed life. If this be ours, then is the blessed life begun.

Meditation Cleanses the Mind

Meditation carries the purifying and repairing forces of the Word throughout the whole nature. "Now ye are clean," said the Lord to His disciples; "through the Word which I have spoken unto you." The Word of God cleanses the thoughts and the motives and the imaginations. No life is lower or more hopeless than his in whom every sight is made to minister to a foul imagination. And, on the other hand, few shall walk the earth more safely than they whose minds are hung about with pure visions; within whose crystal walls there entereth nothing that defileth or maketh unclean. Let meditation be the limner whose hands shall set in glowing colors the scenes of God's Word about the "chambers of the imagery."

Note further, that this meditation is not dreaming-reverie. It is so thinking about God, and so searching for Him in the Word, that it soon passes into the glow and blessedness of communion with Him. We may venture, perhaps, to alter the word, and say: "His delight is in the love of the Lord, and in His love doth he meditate day and night." Sweet and hallowed companionship is ours with that best Friend and dearest Brother, who walks and talks with us whenever we meditate upon His Word. Not alone we sit. "I will come unto you," is His promise. And this is the appointed place; here He bids us wait and look for Himself. Beside this stream, whose waters make glad the city of God, and underneath this tree of life, is His trysting place. And in that

presence to lose the loneliness of life; to forget the fear and weakness; to have Him as our own; to find the mind illumined as He opens the understanding; to find the promises so rich, and full, and personal, and present, as He opens the Word; and to have the faith emboldened till, like John, it leans on His bosom, and, with Thomas, calls Him "My Lord and my God"; to have in Him the past hushed-a holy calm which no voice of condemnation breaks; to have in Him the future all lit up with the glow of heaven's pure, sinless glory; to find the love of all the heart drawn out and satisfied in Him; this is blessedness indeed. So comes the blessed life.

"He shall be like a tree." The word tree has the same source as the word truth-that which stands and abides. The blessed man is he who has got something to hold on with-and he has got something to hold on to. "A tree planted." The roots are wrapped about the stones. The principles have taken hold of God's everlasting truth. The ungodly are like the chaff-there is neither rest nor resting place -- whirled hither and thither, now up into the heavens, now trampled into the mud. O, the calm of the blessed man! It may blow a hurricane, tossing the branches, sweeping the leaves, but the roots hold to the rocks. Where else can a man find the Abiding, and the Almighty, and the Authority that can give him so settled and sure a hold as this? The Word of the Lord abideth, and abideth for ever. Blessed indeed is it, amid the shifting things of life, its trembling uncertainties, its fleeting shadows, to get on to the granite of God's own truth for a foundation. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water" -- not only firmness and strength shall he find here; not a commandment only, but a promise not only a law, but that which ministers to life. The Word is a refreshment, a secret source of nourishment. Fierce heats may beat, and summer droughts may linger long, but the river of God is ever full of water.

Fruitfulness in Season

"He bringeth forth his fruit in his season." A man suited for the times, who hath **hope** for the spring-time, and joy for the summer, and **peace** for the autumn, and **patience** for the winter. Like trees whereon the many grafts present a variety of fruits, some late, some early, he bringeth forth gentleness and brave faith, and all the year round the golden fruit of love and praise. This meditation on the Word is the secret of blessedness. Strength, stability, and gentleness are the sure outcome of it.

"His leaf also shall not wither." The tree has two ends, root and leaf. The root that abides unmoved in every season-firm as the ground in which it sets its hold; and the leaf-end, sporting with the sunshine, dripping with the showers, swayed by the lightest breath. The principles are the roots-they never yield; but the blessed man has many interests and sympathies with many passing things, earthly ties, children, friendships, obligations of varied kinds; and because the root is by the river, the furthest leaf is green; because the principles are fixed, the outermost thing of life shall feel its wholesome power, and be kept in health and beauty.

"Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The blessed man is ever a prosperous man, a rich man -the richest. Prosperity is his who has had the breath of God breathed over him with His "peace, be still." The Spirit of God has brooded over him, and hushed the storm, and ended the confusion, and brought light and rest and gladness.

In hope, in enjoyment, in memory, in sure confidence, a rich and prosperous man is he; one whom kings might envy. Putting a conscience into his work, too, and doing least things as unto God, what he does shall be well done, and his work shall prosper. He knows God's law, and God

knows his way, and in that knowledge is the very center of rest, and the secret of Heaven's own blessedness.

-M. G. PEARSE.

Christian Life and Experience

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." - 1 Cor. 15:51

THOSE who have truly repented of sin, and have advanced to a state of a grateful yielding of the will to God, to Christ, invariably become conscious of inner tendencies and longings to be Godlike, Christlike, pure, holy. By repenting of sin, we mean that a person has been moved to sorrow and contrition through a realization that sin is displeasing to God ("against Thee ... have I sinned") and has turned away from it and experienced the blessed consciousness of sins forgiven, through faith in Christ as our Savior. Such an one invariably realizes to more or less an extent these longings after holiness satisfied; and this is the Divine intention. (Matt. 5:6.) To have such desires, longings, aspirations, are evidences of regeneration, of entire consecration. To lose them, in any measure, is evidence of spiritual decline.

The first impulses after the beginning of the new life, are always toward a loving obedience to the Divine will, a hunger and thirst after righteousness, a reverential fear to displease God, a sorrow and regret at the discovery of any evil inclinations and tendencies in the life, a quick sensibility to God's voice speaking through His Word, a measure of delight in prayer, and a love for the society of God's people-those who possess like aspirations, desires, longings, and who are seeking diligently to have them realized more and more. It may, indeed, be truthfully said that no person was ever truly converted and had yielded his will to God, in whom all these things were not to a greater or less degree existing.

"Be Ye Holy For I Am Holy"

It is just at this point that two errors, indeed two dangers, are encountered. One is that of thinking that an absolute perfection is attainable in the present state; the other is a failure to see that there is an attainment, a state of grace that is not only possible to reach, but must be reached in order to be at last accepted to joint-heirship in the Kingdom. As is generally true in matters of this kind, the truth is found in the safe middle course.

The first error is in the failure to see how far reaching are the effects of the "fall" which brought man not only under condemnation, but separated him from his God. One of the Scriptures describing this condition informs us that the creature was made subject to vanity-weakness, frailty. This weakness is manifest in every part of man's nature, physical, mental, and moral; not that the fall has imparted a new, sinful nature, and made man totally depraved, but rather it has corrupted and perverted the original human perfection. The will is weak, the heart is measurably depraved.

This error is manifested in a failure to keep in mind the fact that the Divine character of holiness must ever and always be the standard of character to be patterned after. Not the least of the evil effects of the "fall," is man's ignorance of the Divine character and perfection. This character of holiness and standard of perfection was exhibited in the Lord Jesus as He lived and dwelt amongst men. He definitely made known in a few words what this pattern of character is-"Be ye also perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." He, of all the human family, possessed and maintained this standard of perfection.

Danger in Extremes

It is very necessary, in this connection, to observe carefully the Scriptural definition of sin. "Sin is the transgression of the Law." (1 John 3:4.) This includes not only the outward act of sin, but also the desire and purpose. "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, bath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5:27, 28.) "All unrighteousness is sin." (I John 5:17.) "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17.) "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14:23.) As we examine the Scriptures on this subject we discover that there are sins of commission and omission; sins of the heart and sins of ignorance. The Scriptures also speak of "weights"- "lay aside every weight," etc. As we come to realize that a certain thing, not in itself sinful, becomes a hindrance to our progress in the Narrow Way, it should be striven against.

Those who keep before the mind the Divine standard of holiness, perfection, as exhibited in the Holy One, Christ, will ever realize in the present life a coming short. This will cause the Christian, in whatever stage or state of Divine grace, to feel deeply a sense of unworthiness, and to appreciate and trust in the Divine arrangement, by which we are made acceptable in His sight through a living faith in the merit of the precious blood. This is the way the Apostle expresses it "Having in love previously marked us out for sonship through Christ Jesus for Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, . . . "by whom, through His blood, we possess the redemption the forgiveness of offenses-according to the opulence of His favor." (Eph. 1:5-7.) To make the mistake of supposing that there is an absolute perfection to be attained in the present life is productive of evil consequences. It causes those who profess it to lower the Divine standard, to excuse or ignore the Scriptural definition of sin, and leads, if the error is not discovered and abandoned, to that most heinous of all sins, hypocrisy.

On the other hand, there is great danger of going to the other extreme-of falling into the error of belittling the Divine power to keep us from the commission off those things that we know are sinful and displeasing to God; in other words, of imbibing the error that because of our imperfection it is impossible to live any other kind of a life than one of continual defeat, of failure to overcome and have victory over our natural besetments. There is a disposition on the part of those who hold to this error to excuse themselves and to say that God overlooks these defections; and failing to seek forgiveness at the "mercy seat," to suppose that these failures are covered by the merit of the precious blood.

Transformation Through the Truth

The Scriptures are very plain in their teaching that every time we are conscious of doing wrong, we must seek God's forgiveness. If another has been injured by us, forgiveness must be sought of the one injured, and until this is sought or the determination is fixed to do this, God's forgiveness is withheld. Furthermore, it is required of us that we not only seek and obtain forgiveness, but Divine grace, Divine power, in order that such a sin may not be repeated. There is a certain measure of Divine power realized by a belief of the Truth, and it is possessed by all true believers. A simple belief in the true Gospel exerts such an influence on the life and actions that it acts as a restraining power over the life and conduct. However, this is only one phase of the Divine power that works unto godliness. The consecrated believer is represented as having placed himself in a condition where he needs to trust momentarily for Divine grace to help him, to

enable him to overcome the various besetments daily. This Divine power is given in special times of need. It is realized by faith, by trusting God to give it when needed. Its possession when specially needed is dependent on our meeting the divinely required conditions. While this power comes from God, the measure we may possess is made dependent upon us. Those who have come to realize the most fully their own utter weakness are the ones who are the best prepared to receive this Divine power when needed. The condition of the mind, the attitude required to receive: this grace in time of need, is very simple, and yet despite its simplicity, few learn how to preserve that condition and attitude. Just in proportion as the believer heeds the injunction of the Savior to "watch and pray," just in that proportion is the Divine power received, and the overcoming of evil is realized.

The impression that seems to prevail among many of the Lord's professed followers, that the Christian should expect to be continually failing and to be overcome, to be continually stumbling, is not based on the Scriptures. Some have settled down to this erroneous conclusion, and certain Scriptures are cited to excuse them-to support this error. We believe this to be an error, almost as serious as the one already referred to-that it is possible to attain a life of absolute perfection. Among the Scriptures quoted to support this error are the words of St. Paul recorded in Romans 7:19, "For the good that I would [do], I do not: but the evil which I would not [do], that I do." This Scripture is not only quoted to sustain this error, but it is quoted also thoughtlessly, -by force of habit, by some who believe in the overcoming life in Christ.

The Overcoming Life

It does not seem to require a very careful examination of these words in the light of the context to show that they were not designed to describe Christian experience. While it may, and doubtless does describe the experience that many Christians have, because of a failure to realize their privileges in Christ-one of which is to have Divine help and power to overcome the daily besetments -it certainly does not describe true Christian experience, the experience of the sons of God. It surely was not intended by St. Paul to describe his experience after he was brought out from under the bondage of the Law Covenant into the light and liberty of the Covenant of Grace. This will be seen from his words in describing the miserableness of this experience. "I am carnal, sold under sin." . . . "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" -margin, "this body of death." Surely such words do not describe Christian experience; Christian experience is not (as Moffatt translates it) to feel like a "miserable wretch."

A Christian is not "carnal," but spiritual; he is not "sold under sin," but redeemed from its power; he is not a "wretched man" sighing for deliverance, but a happy man who knows himself delivered; he is not a slave, but a free man, endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit and able to say, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

"Many Christians there are who have doubts and fears, and are ever disposed to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?' But is not a Christian delivered? Is he not accepted in the Beloved? Is he not united to Christ? Ought he not to **know**, to **enjoy**, and to **confess** all this? Unquestionably."

St. Paul is describing in this chapter (and he knew well how to describe it) the experience of one who is seeking to obtain God's favor, God's approval, by the works of the Law. He well knew what this experience was, as he in one period of his life lived under the Law. It did not give him assurance of God's favor, that he pleased God, because he was always failing in some particular

point. It did not give him peace (that which Christ gives), for the same reason. His own early instruction and environment taught him that the Law was just and good. He recognized that to obtain God's approval, he would be required to keep it. He tried to the best of his ability to keep it, but found that he was unable to do so. He was, therefore, all the time experiencing condemnation, a certain dread of coming judgment. There was no blessedness in this kind of a life. Indeed, to the more sincere person-to the one who is the most desirous of pleasing God-it could be described only as a miserable, a wretched experience.

Deliverance from the Law's Condemnation

The only way that a deliverance from conscious condemnation could be realized by one under those conditions and circumstances would be by ignoring God's perfect Law, and by substituting for the same the traditions of the elders, as many Jews did in Christ's day. The object St. Paul had in writing these words was his desire to magnify the power of the Gospel of Christ. In the beginning of his theological discussion in chapter 1, we hear him saying: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." In the 7th chapter, after showing that the Law of God brought the knowledge of sin, and the breaking of the Law brought only death-brought an experience that was well illustrated and described as like that of a criminal condemned and sentenced to the punishment of having a dead body fastened upon his back, and "being compelled to carry it around-having reached the climax by relating this as an illustration of the experience of one who is endeavoring to secure God's favor by keeping the Law perfectly, he continues to enforce the truth contained in the illustration by crying out for deliverance-"Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Then follows the answer, which was designed to magnify the power of the great Deliverer, Christ: "I thank God," he says, "through Jesus Christ my Lord." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." * -- Rom. 7:24, 25; 8:1.

* The words that follow immediately, are placed by some translations as a part of verse 25, which "seems the only logical position."

The experience of the trustful, intelligent Christian is next described by St. Paul. He is represented as having the spirit of sonship, as distinguished from the spirit of bondage; that is, he has not only come into favor, into fellowship with God, but he has become a son. Instead of the spirit of bondage that the Law gave, he has received the spirit of sonship. He is represented as having become possessed of a new spirit, a new mind-he has become spiritually minded, the characteristics of which are "life and peace," not attained through keeping the Law perfectly, but rather through coming into Christ, who kept the Law, and voluntarily for us, met the penalty, the righteousness of the Law being reckonedly fulfilled in us who walk after the spirit. St. Paul again describes the Christian life in contrast with the life under the Law: "For as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God;" and as another translator renders the words which follow: "Since you have not received a slavish spirit to fear again; but you have received a filial spirit in which we say Abba, Father."

After describing the blessedness of such a realization of sonship, and the witness of the spirit thereunto-that we have been called to joint-heirship with Christ-the Apostle goes on to show that we are being dealt with as sons, by a kind, loving, all-wise Father, whose great design in calling us into this realization of sonship is that we might be conformed in our character into the likeness of the One who delivered us from the bondage of fear the bondage of sin and death. And in order to this end, He is overruling in our affairs so as to cause all things, all the trials, difficulties-everything-to work together for the accomplishment of this purpose.

Security in the Great Refuge

After portraying the wonderful character of this sonship that has superseded the bondage of sin and death, he then describes the safety, the security, enjoyed by those who have become God's sons. "What shall we then say to these things," or, as another translator renders it, "What then shall we say about these?" "If God be for us who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" St. Paul closes this description of the sons of God and their blessed state and privileges in the words: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:28-39.) Who can believe that the child of God who has come to a realization of what he is and what his future destiny is to be, and of God's protecting care and oversight over him, as here described by God's inspired messenger, could reasonably have such sentiments as would cause him to cry out, "O miserable wretch that I am."

It will therefore be seen that one of the greatest, indeed, the most important matter for God's children to keep in mind in their earthly pilgrimage, in order to be overcomers in the various trials, temptations, and sore besetments, which of necessity they are divinely ordained to encounter, is to guard well, to preserve this spirit of sonship, this spirit of filial relationship to God, to ever realize that our overcoming the world is by faith, not only in God's power to enable us to overcome, but faith in the precious blood to make us acceptable continually. It is written of some of Christ's suffering, tried ones of old, that they "overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony." Let us therefore hold fast to these Divine provisions given to us in order to preserve the spirit of sonship.

How Blessed the True Rest

St. Paul in another epistle warns some whom he addresses, some who had received the spirit of sonship, who had entered upon the new life that is "hid with Christ in God," who had been delivered from the bondage of sin and death, and who had come out into the light and liberty which is in Christ, of the danger of getting back under the Law and, of course, the Law's experiences, and yet continuing to profess faith in Christ. Addressing some in the Galatian Church who were at least in danger of doing this, by giving heed to false teachers, he said: "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh? Received ye the spirit [of sonship] by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:1-3.) The Apostle is not here saying that the Christian should ignore the moral law, the law of commandments. The ones addressed were making the moral law and its ceremonial observances a necessary addition to Christ's sacrifice to be the ground of their acceptance with God. Doing this could have but the effect of bringing them into bondage and condemnation again; and thus losing the spirit of sonship they would lose that power which alone would enable them to keep the Law in its spirit, the law of love toward God, toward the brethren, and toward their neighbors. How blessed is the state of those who fully enter into their privileges in Christ. Such are no longer servants but sons,

nor even infants under laws. (John 15:15; Rom. 8:15 Gal. 4:1-6.) How blessed is the true rest, the deep peace that comes to God's sons through faith in the finished work of Christ, which rest and peace neither the world nor the Law could give, and which, from those free in Christ, cannot be taken away. The power that comes with the spirit of sonship to overcome the world and sin cannot be too strongly emphasized. It is the failure to realize this, a failure to have the continued consciousness of sonship, that is the cause of much of the failure in the Christian life.

Another utterance of St. Paul that is frequently quoted, or rather misquoted, to excuse disobedience to the will of God is found in Galatians 5:17. It reads in our Common Version: "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The last sentence is generally quoted, "we cannot do the things that we would like to do." This is very evidently true. Even with our best endeavors we come short of that absolute perfection that was seen alone in Christ, our only pattern. However, it is misquoted to teach that it is utterly impossible to live a life of obedience to the known will of God; in other words, that the power of the fleshly mind is stronger than that of the new mind, the spirit. If the context is carefully examined, it will be found that this is not the thought intended to be conveyed by the Apostle, as will be seen from the preceding verse, which reads, "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." He informs us in verses 19-21 what the works of the flesh are. "Now the works of the flesh are manifestly these;-fornication, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, quarrels, jealousies, resentments, altercations, factions, sects, envyings, inebrieties, revellings, and things similar to these; respecting which I tell you before, even as I previously told you, that those who practise such things shall not inherit God's Kingdom."

"Walk in the Spirit"

It is not conceivable even to a worldly man that it is necessary for a Christian to fail to overcome these sins. The Apostle's words, "Walk in the spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh," evidently refer to these gross sins. It will therefore be seen that the thought intended to be conveyed by the Apostle's words, "so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," is not that there is not sufficient power communicated to us by the receiving of the spirit of sonship to enable us to keep from the commission of such gross sins, but rather that the spirit enables us to gain a mastery and to rise above these things in thought, word, and deed. The thought then is that on account of the infirmity of our earthen vessels we cannot do perfectly the things that we would, but the warfare is to go on, and we are to continue to make progress in subduing the fleshly mind and bringing it into subjection to the new mind.

The spirit's indwelling is sure to produce in one, cleanness, teachableness, and holiness. It is therefore of great importance that we notice the trend of our lives, the character of our motives, and the degree of our consecration. If we find these are in the direction of more love to God, a more perfect faith, humility, and a desire and determined purpose to be holy in our words and actions, we may be sure that we are in the right way. If we find ourselves settling down to the average condition of professed Christians, we are not in the right place. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to seal us unto the day of redemption. "This earnest or seal of sonship is the Spirit of love which is at one with the Father and all His holy arrangements, crying out, Abba, Father; I delight to do Thy will, O my God. He who has this seal or mark of sonship is he who not only seeks to do the will of the Father, but doing it finds it 'not grievous,' but delightful.-1 John 5:3."

That Ye Put on the New Man

The spirit or mind of Christ possessed by all the sons of God is sometimes called a New Creature. (2 Cor. 5:17.) The receiving of the mind of Christ is only the beginning, the starting of this New Creature. How important it is then that we understand the process whereby it is developed. The New Creature is not a giving of new organs to think with, 'but rather new things for the old organs to think about; not new organs to love with, but new things to love; not new things to hate

with, but the old organs caused to hate what once was loved; not new organs to rejoice with, but new things for the old organs to rejoice in; not new organs to delight in new pleasures, but new pleasures for the old organs to delight in. It is, therefore, as the Scriptures teach, not a renewing so far as the organs are concerned, but entirely new things as far as the objects for the old organs to operate upon is concerned. This is what the Apostle means when he says: "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Of the Christian he says "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." - Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9, 10.

The question then is one proper to be asked, If absolute perfection or holiness is unattainable in the present life, what then is attainable; nay, what must be attained? In the language of another, we reply: "We must get to the place where we will be free from all intentional sin or imperfection; where our hearts, our new minds, will be opposed to sin in every sense and degree; where we will be walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit, as close to the spirit of God's law as possible. If then we examine ourselves and find we have done any less than we are able to do to maintain a righteous standard of life; less than we are able to do to preserve our fellowship and relationship to the Lord and His people; less than we are able to do in upholding the standard of righteousness before the world, we should seek forgiveness.

Another question is also proper: To what extent will the New Creature, when at the mark, be able to control and govern the flesh? "The degrees of control will vary much, according to the degree of imperfection with which the mortal body is afflicted. Our blemishes of the flesh sometimes momentarily stumble us into an unloving word or act, which if repented of, will not be reckoned against us and put us away from the mark and the loving acceptableness of our Lord which the mark represents. The only standard we can set forth is, that the new nature would be very regretful, very sorrowful in respect to any lacks or errors of its mortal body. The Lord would know of the New Creature's endeavors to control the mortal 'body by the degrees of its grief in connection with every error, and its continual renewed effort to bring every power of the body and even every thought into complete subjection to the will of Christ. Any sympathy with sin is an evidence that the New Creature is not at the mark."

Temptations to slackness of service, to withhold parts of our sacrifice, to deal unkindly, uncharitably with our brethren, unkindly with our neighbors, or ungenerously with our enemies, are among the things that constitute testings at the mark. St. Paul was at the mark years before his death. May it be so with all of us.

In His Steps

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps." - 1 Pet. 2:21.

IN HIS steps," must be the motto of every consistent follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether we think of the figure of a race-course or of a difficult, narrow, and winding pathway over dangerous roads leading to a Happy goal, the thought and lesson before us are the same. It is ever and-always the Christ-life-the manner of thinking, speaking and acting according to the great and sublime example of Jesus, of whom God said, "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The basis for this high commendation from above is to be found in the fact that Jesus did always those things that pleased the Father, as He declared, "I delight to do Thy will.'" The will of God was our Lord's theme always, which signified that He was ready always to observe and obey the great principles of the divine government.

The steps of Jesus were then steps of obedience, steps of loyalty to God, steps of faithfulness to duty and to every requirement of the divine law. We are assured in the Scriptures that it was through the course of His earthly pilgrimage, taking these steps one after another day after day, that our Savior attained a state and richness of character that qualified Him to be the Redeemer of mankind and the dispenser of all those marvelous blessings that the 'human race is to receive in that blessed dispensation of the fulness of times. (Heb. 2:10.) Those who are to share Christ's reward, who are to see Him as He is and be like Him in heavenly glory, are instructed of the Spirit that His example is before them and that they should follow in His steps.

"He Reviled not again"

It is the great Apostle Paul who likewise earnestly admonishes the Christian to "Consider Him," ponder over, take note of, observe and think upon Christ and His life. One of the evidences of the Master's greatness and strength was, as the Apostle indicates, His enduring of such contradiction of sinners against Himself. We well know that our Lord endured physical opposition; but our English word contradiction properly translates the original, implying verbal contradiction of His words. We observe as we consider our Lord's case that the people opposed Him, not so much physically, but in His words, doctrines, and teaching. It was left for the High Priest and Sanhedrin and soldiers to do Him physical violence and put Him to death; and He could 'have resisted them if He had so chosen.

That the Apostle refers more to the contradiction of His words seems to be implied by St. Peter's statement which says, "When He was reviled, He reviled not again." During the period of our Lord's ministry we find that His doctrines were disputed and that He was repeatedly slandered. It was said of Him that He was possessed of a demon; that He performed His miracles by the prince of demons; that He was a blasphemer. These contradictions and oppositions on their part might have called out from Him some very just, truthful statements respecting them. He might 'have told them that Satan was working with them, etc. His perfect command of language would have given Him ability to abundantly cope with them. When they sought to entrap Him in His words, He entrapped them in their own words. But He reviled not. He did not render evil for evil, nor railing for railing. This the Apostle shows is the proper course.

Few are Advanced in Discipleship

The great lesson in all of this course of Jesus should be obvious to every earnest follower of the Master, who from time to time realizes Himself the object of evil words, unkind words, and general mistreatment from those who misunderstand or are evilly minded. It is natural, especially for the fallen flesh, to think of something evil to say in return. And such circumstances become tests upon the Christian. If we yield to such a spirit of malice and retaliation, we are following the course of the enemy and not of the Lord. The important consideration therefore is to have a large measure of the Spirit of God, to be filled with the Spirit. If we are not thus well fortified we will very probably become wearied and faint in our minds when attacked by the Adversary, whoever may be his agents and whatever may be their missiles. He cannot do any real injury, and it will only increase our reputation and worth in the Lord's sight if we endure faithfully; he can do no outward harm that God cannot overrule for the good of His cause -- though that good may mean "sifting" of "chaff" and "tares" from the "wheat." Evil speaking, backbiting and slandering are strictly forbidden to God's people as wholly contrary to His spirit of love even if the evil thing be true. Jesus gave as a preventive of any thing in the nature of slander some special instructions that mark out the only way of redress of grievances. (Matt. 18:15-17.) Many among even advanced Christians have seemed to be much in ignorance of this divine ruling, and professed Christians are often the most pronounced scandal-mongers. Yet this is one of the few special specific commandments given by the Savior; and considered with the statement, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command," the constant violation of this, our Lord's command, proves that many are not far advanced in sonship-discipleship.

Again, we observe in the steps of Jesus, great simplicity and purity. What inspiration we find to be pure ourselves and maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and men! We must begin with the heart; we must not harbor thoughts or contemplate that which would in any sense of the word be evil. To make sure of this, let us have Christ Jesus as our pattern well and much before our minds. As soon as evil is intruded upon us, either from without or from within, let us lift up our hearts in prayer to Him for the grace promised in every time of need. Let us keep constantly before us the prayer, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord my strength and my Redeemer."

Sympathy with Divine Principles

As an aid to us in following the various specific commands of Scripture it is important that we seek more and more to understand and to come in sympathy with the principles which underlie the divine law and ruling. These will enable us to judge of the right and the wrong of such of our words, thoughts and acts as may not be particularly specified in the Lord's Word. Surely as we come to understand and sympathize with the principles of the divine law, to that extent we are getting the spirit of the divine Word. Note the testimony of the Psalmist on this point, "O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou, through Thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy Word. I have not departed from Thy judgments, for Thou hast taught me. How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." - Psa. 119:97-105.

Every child of God will want to shun a contentious and fault-finding disposition as contrary to the spirit or disposition of Christ-contrary to love. A combative courage is necessary in overcoming the world, the flesh and the Devil and their various snares. This fighting disposition may be a valuable aid to ourselves and to the Master's cause if rightly and wisely directed against sin, first in ourselves and secondly in others-if used for the Lord and His people and against Satan and all his powers of darkness and superstition. This, in the Scriptures, is called fighting the good fight, and we all should be gallant soldiers in this battle for Right and Truth, lovingly defending our Captain's honor and His people's liberties.

The Powers of Evil would make Combativeness a Chief Virtue

But such a good use of combativeness is not pleasing to the Prince of this world, who will seek to pervert what he cannot directly use. Consequently, he attempts with some to make combativeness a chief virtue. He encourages them to fight everything and everybody; the brethren, more than the powers of darkness; nominal churchmen, more than the errors of ignorance which blind them and make them such. Indeed, his desire is to get us to "fight against God."

All should be on their guard on this point. Those who are walking in His steps will first of all judge themselves, lest they cast a stumbling-block before others; let us fight down in our own hearts the wrong spirit which seeks to make mountains out of trifles and disposes us to be captious and contentious over non-essentials. Let us be very tolerant, recognizing that we are not yet judges of any. Greater is "he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." Let us guard ourselves that our defense of the Truth be, not from motives of self-glorification, but from love for the Truth, love for the Lord, for His people, the brethren. If love be the impelling spirit, or motive, it will show itself accordingly in a loving, gentle, patient, humble course toward all the fellow-servants. Let us be "gentle toward all." Let "the sword of the Spirit the Word of God," which is quick and powerful do all the cutting.

Beware of all thoughts, feelings and conditions, of heart directly or remotely connected with malice, envy, hatred, strife. These should have no place in our hearts, even for a moment; for they will surely do us great injury, aside from leading to the injury of others. Our hearts, our wills, our intentions and desires should be kept full of love toward God and all His creatures-the most fervent toward God, and proportionately toward all who 'have His spirit and walk in the way of His direction.

Do not Trust to Conscience Alone

If conscience were a sufficient guide we would have no need of the Scriptures. The majority of people have as good as no conscience; for they are blind to the principles and laws of God given to guide conscience; and still worse off than these are those mentioned in 1 Tim. 4:2. Hence the imperative necessity for carefully bleeding the Lord's Word, and walking circumspectly according to its light.

We are not to faint in our minds nor become discouraged, feeling that so much has been said against us that we must give up the race. On the contrary, we are to feel assured, as did our Lord, that nothing can befall us except with the knowledge of the Father, who is working all things for our good. It was thus our Lord was prepared for His exaltation. So we, if we are rightly exercised by our various experiences, and if we follow as closely as possible the commands laid down for

our guidance as we seek to walk in His steps, will find that even revilings, slanders, oppositions to righteousness, will work out blessings for us, as they did for our Lord.

But how many become weary and are in danger of losing the prize because they fail to consider what the Lord faithfully endured of opposition! If such would consider that the Lord, who was perfect, suffered in every sense unjustly for righteousness' sake, and that their own conduct is imperfect, they would not be weary in well doing, but would learn to fight and to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ"; they would continue to "fight the good fight of faith."

"We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we [the Church] are, yet without sin."

The London Convention

"The London Convention held in the Memorial Hall, August 3, 4, and 5, proved a very happy and blessed time of fellowship and exhortation. Time and again did the various speakers stress the fundamental basis of our Christian faith and fellowship, our personal covenant to be 'dead with Him' and our continued progress in the 'knowledge of Him.' This gathering, made possible by the loving offerings of many friends both inside and outside London, and carried through by dint of unselfish labors on the part of those who served the meals and attended to the comfort of the friends, proved once again how good it is to come together in that spontaneous assembling with those who recognize but one standard -- the law of love; who hear but one voice--the voice of the Good Shepherd; who have but one desire--to bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar.

"Two devotional meetings, one in the Southwest and one in the Southeast of London, were held during the ensuing week, and these were really continuations of the convention inasmuch as some of the provincial visitors and speakers who had not yet returned to their homes were able to attend and voice their appreciation of the wonderful blessing experienced. A closer understanding and fellowship between friends in different parts of the country is the immediate fruitage of this gathering but the ultimate fruitage is known best to our Master."

Sanctification and the Knowledge of God

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." - 2 Pet. 1:2, 3, Sinaitic MS.

THE DOCTRINE of God," is the apostolic definition for the Word of God as it comes to us in the form of teaching, instruction, setting before the children of God the truth as to the character, will, and purposes of our Heavenly Father. And this is termed "the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus we have the word "doctrine" frequently mentioned in the New Testament, such as "the doctrine of Christ," "My doctrine,"- "sound doctrine," etc.

Very properly great importance is attached to what we may call doctrinal truth, inasmuch as its purpose is to convey to the child of God, conceptions of the Heavenly Father and such truths relating to Him and His will as have to do with holy Christian living. There was a time when God dealt with Israel, when it was said that "My people perish for lack of knowledge," signifying that the people because of not knowing God and refusing the knowledge of Him, were pursuing ways -and methods in opposition to Him, and disobedient to His commands. Thus they were perishing, tending in the way of death rather than that of life.

Jesus Taught the Doctrine of God

In introducing this dispensation of the Spirit, Jesus announced that "To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth"-doctrine of God. We are probably safe in saying that our Lord's celebrated Sermon on the Mount is in some respects the greatest masterpiece of truth, doctrine, teaching, that has been committed to the Christian Church; for in these diversified sayings, all the principles of the divine will and purpose are clearly annunciated and the Savior solemnly affirmed the signal importance of that sermon when He said, "He that heareth these sayings [doctrine, instruction] of Mine and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock." Likewise, "He that heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them not, I will liken 'him to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand."

Again the Master declared that "The words [of doctrine and truth] that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life,"-they are words of spiritual power and lead to life in those who heed them and live by them. In rejecting the Adversary's temptation to turn stones into bread, Jesus said, "It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In other words, real life, real living was realized only by those whose lives were fed with the divine Word and regulated thereby.

Again we have His wholesome advice that, "If ye continue in My Word [of truth], then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"-by accepting and obeying His word of truth it would lead to complete freedom from bondage to sin and death. Then once more in His last prayer He supplicates the divine care for His followers, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth." The sanctification or setting apart unto God, unto His

will and service, including the transformation to the Christ-character, was to be accomplished through the truth, in connection of course with the administration of the Spirit, which Jesus said would soon follow His departure-"not many days hence."

Another phase of this subject is that as it has been the truth, sound doctrinal teaching and instruction, that has been such an important factor in the Church's sanctification; so followers of Christ were admonished to be on guard against unsound teachings, unsound doctrines, which could have only an unwholesome influence on the Christian believer. Spiritual discrimination therefore was to be used, as the Apostle suggests, "Try the spirits," teachings, doctrines, whether they be of God, that is, be vigilant against those doctrinal teachings that are not definitely sustained in the Word of God, and that do not therefore have the sanctifying effect in the life. It is seen, then, that the word doctrine is also used with reference to unsound teaching or teaching that varies from the truth. Thus the Apostle warned against giving heed to "seducing spirits and doctrines [teachings] of devils," and admonishes, "in doctrine [teachings], showing uncorruptness," and to hold fast to the form of sound words-doctrines, teachings which make up the true knowledge of God.

From the foregoing apostolic testimony we realize the conviction deepens that a knowledge of God through a clear understanding of the great doctrinal truths of the Bible is of vital importance in the sanctification of the lives of those who would be made meet for the Kingdom. We witness now, how through the past nineteen centuries the purposes of God have been achieved in the direction of selecting a people for His name, "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." We append below a selection from Brother Russell's pen which we believe all can read with much profit, in further elucidation of this subject.

Importance of Proper Foundation

The true foundation upon which we should build is, faith in the righteousness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ -- faith that His sacrifice for sin was once for all a full and complete ransom-price for Adam and all his posterity, so that all of these, as in due time they shall be brought to a knowledge of Christ, may, if they will, obtain cleansing and eternal life under the gracious terms of the New Covenant. It is those who build upon this foundation that may hope to multiply their grace and peace. How?

The Apostle answers -- "Through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." At first it may occur to some that this has but a slight meaning, and that it simply signifies that we come to know that there is a God, and that there is a Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But the knowledge of God means far more than this to the advancing and developing Christian: to him it means an intimate acquaintance with the Father and with the Son, a knowledge of the "mind of Christ," which is a full and clear representation to us of the mind of the Father. We are to grow in this knowledge by studying the Word of God, by discerning through that Word the principles which govern the divine conduct, as to how divine justice, wisdom, love and power operate. These are progressive studies. Something may be learned the first day of our Christian experience, but the end of the first year should show considerable progress in the knowledge of the divine mind; the second year should show us a still further increase, and so on.

As our intimate knowledge of the divine plan and character increases, so must also our grace increase; for those who do not attempt to come into harmony, step by step, with that which they see of the divine character will soon lose interest in such knowledge, while those who have the

interest which leads to further and further study must of necessity be growing in grace continually. And as they grow in grace, so also will they grow in peace; for peace also is a progressive thing. We had peace when first we found the Lord and realized the forgiveness of our sins; but those who have made progress in the knowledge of the divine Plan and character have found their peace to be an ever-increasing one; and those who have advanced some distance in the good way can speak of it in the language of the Apostles and realize it in their hearts as being "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

Comprehend With All Saints

The Apostle continuing, assures us that through this knowledge of God is imparted to us by divine power "**all things that pertain unto life and godliness.**" What an assurance! This statement of the importance of knowledge for our Christian development in every direction reminds us of the words of our Lord, "This is life eternal; that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." (John 17:3.) To **know God**, as the Apostle here explains, signifies an **intimate acquaintance** with "Him that hath called us by His own glory and virtue." It is only as we realize something of the greatness and perfection of the divine character that we are properly able to estimate our own littleness and imperfection; only as we see the beauties of His gracious character can we become intimately acquainted with God, familiar with His graces and virtues. The influence of this knowledge and fellowship with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, reacts upon our own hearts and has a cleansing and sanctifying effect. Thus the Apostle prays for some that they might grow in the knowledge of God so as to be able to "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth [human] knowledge." (Eph. 3:14, 19.) Those beholding the divine character, even though but dimly, as through a glass, are thereby changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. - 2 Cor. 3:18.

Receiving the Impress of the Divine Character

The thought here brought to our attention is well illustrated in the modern art of photography. In photography there is necessary first of all a sensitized plate upon which the picture is to be reflected. Not any or every plate will serve such a purpose, but only one which has been specially prepared. This corresponds to the preparation of our hearts through repentance and justifying faith toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The first step is necessary before we can receive upon our hearts the impress of the divine character, its glory and virtue or strength. The second step is to bring the sensitized plate into good range with the features which are to be impictured upon it. This represents the proper attitude of heart, viz., full consecration to the Lord, and a desire to have His will to be our will and to have His character represented in our lives. The third step is the removal of all obscurity, all darkness, allowing the light to shine fully in upon the features to be copied. This finds its counterpart in the knowledge of God, which, as the light of truth, scatters the darkness of error and sin and gives us clearer views of the divine character, and thus permits it to impress our prepared hearts and to stamp thereon His glorious character-likeness. Fourth, the sensitized plate must then be subjected to acids in order to the clearer development of the likeness. This also finds its correspondence; for our hearts, after we have gotten a clear view of the Lord, and been freely impressed with the glories of His character, require nevertheless, the "fiery trials" of life, which, like the acid, only tend to develop the likeness the more perfectly. Fifth (for the correspondence continues), it is a well known fact that although photographs may be taken without the use of precious metals, gold and silver, yet only when these are used will the

photograph retain its color without fading. As heretofore seen, gold represents the divine nature, and silver represents the truth, and only in proportion as the likeness of our Lord is fixed in our hearts upon the basis of the truth and the divine nature can 'a lasting likeness be hoped for. - Rom. 8:29.

The Conflict Between Light and Darkness

The world in general, of course, "knows not God," and very evidently the great mass of professing believers know very little about Him. The Apostle Paul explains, that Satan, "the god of this world," is particularly interested in hindering any from obtaining the light upon the Lord's character and plan necessary to impicture it upon their hearts. He declares, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ [who is the image of God] should shine unto them." (2 Cor. 4:4.) Here we see the constant and irrepressible conflict-the battle of darkness against the light, as our Lord explained it in His day, saying, "The darkness hateth the light, neither cometh to the light." But all who receive and rejoice in and obey the light are the "children of the light"; and after the image of the Lord has been impressed upon their hearts, such become light-bearers to others and so shine forth upon all with whom they come in contact, reflecting the light which is shining upon them from the divine source, unseen and unappreciated by the world.

At present the influence of these lights is but small in comparison with what it will be hereafter. Now, the Lord's people are like lights set upon a hill which cannot be hid, and yet their influence upon the world is comparatively small. It is still true of the Body of Christ as it was true of the Head, "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." But of the by and by it is written, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father"; "The sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His beams." This will be the great Millennial Day; and as a result of the shining forth of the elect Church, we are assured that all darkness will disappear and the light of "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth."

Proceeding, the Apostle assures us that in order to the attainment of this intimate knowledge of God which multiplies our grace and peace and gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness, God has "given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." Looking about us we find that the majority of our fellow-Christians in the world, even of those who have the "precious faith" and trust in the "precious blood," must be "babes" in even elementary knowledge; for evidently they do not know much concerning these exceeding great and precious promises. If we would inquire of them with reference to these promises, the vast majority would answer -- Our hope is that by the grace of God, if faithful, we shall 'escape eternal torment 'and get to heaven. And many would add, If I can get just inside the door of heaven, it will be all I could ask or hope for.

What? Do they know **nothing** of the "exceeding great and precious promises" mentioned by the Apostles? Alas! apparently very little. But what are these promises, and who have knowledge of them?

Those Blessed Promises

Only those who are following in the pathway which the Apostle here marks out; who multiply their grace and peace, through an ever-increasing, intimate knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, -those who are seeing more and more clearly the divine character and plan, and whose hearts are in a susceptible -and impressionable attitude, and upon which is being **fixed** more and more distinctly the image of God's dear Son, who is the express image of the Father. (Rom. 8.29.) Before these, shining out as helps by the way, in letters of 'light, are the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God's Word, which to other hearts are unilluminated, dark and almost meaningless.

Which and what are these promises?

Oh, they are so many and so precious that it is difficult to know which would rank first. Perhaps first of all is the precious promise, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be **like Him**, for we shall **see Him as He is**. Another is, "If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself"; in harmony with which is the prayer, "Father, I will that these may 'be **with Me**, where I am, that they may behold My glory." Another is, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." Another is, "They shall be Mine.... in that day when I make up My jewels." Another is, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Another is, that we 'are "Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, our Lord, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Another is, that we are "**Begotten again** to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Another is, "To him that overcometh I will give power over the nations"-authority, dominion as "kings and priests unto God" to "reign on the earth." Another is that these kings and priests will reign to bless, as it is written, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Another promise is that Israel according to the flesh shall yet obtain mercy and blessing through the mercy of these kings and priests of the Gospel Age. - Rom. 11:32.

Love of God All-Surpassing

Finally, all of these exceeding great and precious promises are summed up by the Apostle in his declaration that, through this knowledge of Go -I and through the influence of these precious promises, it is God's will that we who by nature were children of wrath even as others "might become **partakers of the divine nature**." Oh, what a rich promise is here! How exceedingly great and precious! Who could have thought such a thing? Our highest thought might possibly have been perfection of the human nature, the earthly image of God, or perhaps, as some have sung, we might want to be angels and with the angels stand. But although angelic nature is higher than human nature, our God has not been content with offering to the "elect" Church angelic nature, but in the riches of His grace and wonderful provision He has far out-done the highest flight of human fancy and has promised that the overcoming Church, the "little flock," to whom it is His good pleasure to give the Kingdom, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, shall be exalted to share the **divine glory and divine nature of her Lord**, as well as to share His heavenly Kingdom.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for us: we cannot comprehend why our great Creator should exalt to His own nature such poor, helpless creatures of the dust as we by nature are. But this and all the other gracious promises exhibit to us more and more the heights and depths, the lengths and breadths, of the love of our God, which surpasses human knowledge.

In view of what we already know of our Creator, especially as revealed to us in and through our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus, shall we not, as those who have come to see something of His glorious character, "press toward the mark (Phil. 3:11.) for the attainment of all that He may be pleased to reveal to us concerning Himself, that thus we may be more and more partakers of His Spirit, more and more conformed to His likeness, more and more acceptable, and by and by be actually and everlastingly accepted in the Beloved, to the full realization of all those blessings which God has in reservation for them who love Him, and of which now we have the exceeding great and precious promises?

Such promises and such knowledge properly inspire our hearts to love, obedience and self-sacrifice, that we may please Him who has called us to His own nature and fellowship; and, as the Apostle says, "He who 'bath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He [the Lord] is pure.!"

It was to this intimate knowledge of or acquaintance with the Lord and its reward that the Apostle Paul referred, saying-"That I might **know Him** and [experience] the power of **His resurrection** [the First or Chief Resurrection, by] being made [fully] conformable unto His death [-which full surrender is possible to those only who **know Him** well and have drunk in His spirit]." - Phil. 3:10.

Convention Reports

Saginaw, Mich.

"The Convention held in Saginaw, Mich., over Labor Day week-end was another season of enjoyable fellowship. The friends from several nearby Classes and a goodly number from more distant parts, filled the very comfortable and quiet hall provided for the occasion, and all seemed actuated by the same appropriate spirit of gratitude to the Lord, that notwithstanding the disturbed condition of the world generally, it is still possible for so many brethren to come together for such seasons of fellowship and interchange of thought.

"The several speakers, each in his own way, gave emphasis to one or another of the duties and privileges of the Christian life, and doubtless each one gave a message particularly helpful to hearts specially in need of what was heard. Attention was given to the ever present need of striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, the necessity of bearing much fruit as a branch in the Vine, and the necessity of a constant watchfulness against the wiles of the Adversary, so important today. Alertness to the possibilities of serving 'others by making known the purposes of God, and the special need of an enduring faith under all circumstances, were also given due consideration.

"The dear friends of the three Classes participating in the arranging for this Convention, and making provision for all visiting friends, are surely deserving of the warmest gratitude of those who attended. Good substantial meals were provided for all in the same comfortable rooms, and no service necessary to the pleasure of the gathering escaped the notice of the local brethren. This of itself added much to the blessing of the convention, creating, as it did an atmosphere of hearty welcome, so suggestive of the true spirit of the family of God. We trust the occasion was to all present an added impetus to more and more abide in and live by Christ, to the end that ere long we may be privileged to feast together with Him in the glory that excelleth and in an assembly where saints of God will 'meet to part, no, never.'"

Vancouver, B. C.

"A very profitable and precious season of fellowship was enjoyed over the Labor Day week-end at Vancouver, when brethren from a goodly number of surrounding Churches met with the local Ecclesia in a three-day convention to learn more of 'Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, mighty in word and in deed.'

"The average attendance at the meetings was around 125 with probably twice that number present for the Sunday evening discourse to the public. Meals were provided so the friends were able to spend more time together than would have otherwise been possible. The flowers that adorned the hall were abundant and beautiful, yielding a sweet fragrance to us, as we trust our lives do to God.

"Special singing at the convention added to the devotional side: 'Oh Calvary, dark Calvary! 'Twas there my Savior, died for me,' being one of the hymns rendered. The testimonies and prayers offered expressed appreciation of the things we had learned from the beginning 'Truth, how sacred is the treasure! Teach us, Lord, its worth to know'-coupled with a desire to rise in the arms of faith -and be closer drawn to God,

"Various talks emphasized the privilege of spreading the glad tidings of great joy which has so blessed and enriched our own lives, and standing fast in the faith as we have learned it. The themes that were dwelt upon at times with much solemnity-were such as to make us feel we were taken into the very presence of God. Some were concentrated on the heavenly calling, and the things necessary to its attainment. The need was shown for a deeper infilling of the Spirit and a greater measure of cooperation with the Father and the Son to the end that we might be transformed into the image of Him who said, 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.'

"It is hoped that the general effect of the convention may be to make one and all live more in the presence of the eternal things and to ever keep in mind the not far distant day when the present order shall be changed as a vesture, and the overcomers shall inherit the Kingdom. 'We love Him because He first loved us.'"

Minneapolis, Minn.

"A delightful season of fellowship and communion was enjoyed at the annual convention in Minneapolis, September 1 and 2, at which there was an average attendance of about 125. A profitable time was spent in conference on the Word of God, as we were reminded of our privilege of fellowship in Christ, our privilege of walking with God, walking in His light, that we may have fellowship one with another through Him. This means our* 'halving the mind of Christ,' 'the Spirit of God.' The invitation 'Come let us reason together,' can be appropriately responded to only by those who have this mind and who realize that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's thoughts higher than our thoughts. Such are glad to come humbly and reverently to sit at His feet, laying aside their own 'human reasonings,' and listening to every word that proceedeth out of His mouth-letting God do the 'reasoning' while they follow along 'together' with Him.

"There was an immersion service at which ten symbolized their consecration. This was preceded by a discourse and baptism, showing the importance and solemnity of this step, in that as 'many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death-buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' The spirit of the Lord was very manifest at this service. It was simple but very impressive-and will long remain with those who were present.

"We were glad to review the wonderful prayer our Lord taught His disciples, and to enter into that rich 'treasure house' with reverence, realizing something of the great privilege of sonship and of how we may 'hallow' the name of our Father by reflecting His character in our lives, expressing 'the beauties of true holiness.' Oh, may we learn from our Great Teacher, something of His meekness and lowliness and all the beautiful graces that adorn His character, that our Father's will may be done in us cheerfully, lovingly-completely.

"Joy in the Lord, and deep gratitude for all His mercies was evident throughout the convention. Our coming together we trust has deepened the desire to have Christ 'dwell' in our hearts, that we may be 'rooted and grounded in love,' that we may 'know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge,' and that we may be 'filled with all the fulness of God.' "