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Signs of the Master's Presence

*"What will be the sign of Thy presence, and of the consummation of the Age?" - Matt. 24:3,
Diaglott.*

OF ALL THE gracious words which proceeded out of the mouth of Him who spake as never man spake, perhaps none have had a more powerful influence in the history of the Church than those uttered by the Master just as His earthly career was ending: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2, 3.) Nor can we think of any more calculated to inspire hope in His waiting followers today, or more calculated to renew their courage. How much this promise means to us can be best estimated by contrasting the poverty of soul which would be ours if it had never been vouchsafed to us, or if there were a question as to its fulfillment. How dark our gloom would then be, how forlorn our state, how void of all good cheer our prospects! Thank God for "that blessed hope and for the purifying effect it has had, and, please God, yet will have, in our lives. - Titus 2:13, 1 John 3:3.

Occupy till I come

Since the fruition of all our hopes, both for the Church and for the world, is intimately associated with the return of our Lord, it would be strange indeed, if we were not possessed of an eagerness to learn the time when this long looked for event might be expected. If the inquiry of the Apostles "What will be the sign of Thy presence?" was a proper one then, it would seem to be still more appropriate today when the evidences that we have reached "the consummation of the Age" are multiplied. Indeed, far from rebuking this spirit of inquiry our Lord, both by parable and direct exhortation, sought to encourage it. True, they were to be occupied, not idle, during His absence; but it was to be only "till He come." Till then they were to be diligently engaged in His business, each occupied with the special task to which he had been assigned. But while thus occupied, their whole attitude was to be one of joyful expectancy, of eager watchfulness for His return. "Watch, therefore, for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh." And it is not difficult to see that this attitude of joyful expectancy would indicate at once the method and the spirit of their service.

They were not to be as drudges who have no pleasure in their labor, nor as hirelings who care only for their wages. On the contrary their labor was to be bright with hope, with the hope of a great happiness to come. They were to do all they did as in the sight of a Master who, though absent from them for a time, was sure to return, and who, meanwhile, would be present with them in spirit, and much concerned in the success of their labors. - Luke 19:13; Mark 13:33-37.

The Glorious Hope Obscured

Those of our readers who are at all acquainted with the pages of history are aware that after the Apostles fell asleep the Adversary succeeded in obscuring this glorious hope. The effect on the life and health of the Church, as might have been expected, was most disastrous, and it was not until the doctrine of our Lord's Second Advent was restored to a foremost place in its preaching and teaching that the Church began to recover from the state *of* apostasy into which, except for a few devout souls, it fell. As we ponder the record of those times we may see that the Adversary did not accomplish this beclouding of the Church's brightest hope by means of a direct attack—an open denial of the fact that our Lord would return -- but rather by an indirect method, by an undermining of the doctrine. He allowed the doctrine to remain, but twisted its import and so corrupted its meaning *as* to rob it of its power. Under his leadership questions were raised as to the object of our Lord's return, and after a while the glorious hope was changed into a dreadful fear. Instead of a joyful, longing, expectancy for her beloved Bridegroom to return to claim her for His own, and thereafter to introduce "times of refreshing," those "times of restitution" spoken by the mouth of all God's holy Prophets since the world began, the Church was filled with grave forebodings.

Symbolic Scriptures were so wrested and misapplied; that the precious promise seemed to take on the character of a dire threat. Under the circumstances we do not wonder that instead of cherishing it in their hearts, men did their best to forget it. Thank God for the light now shining, which enables us to look for the return of the Lord with the same exultation of spirit that is manifest' in the prophetic utterance of David

"Let the heavens be glad,
And let the earth rejoice;
And let men say among the nations, Jehovah reigneth.
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
Let the fields rejoice, and all that are therein.
Then shall the trees of the wood sing aloud
At the presence of Jehovah,
Because He cometh to judge the earth.
O give thanks unto Jehovah, for He is good;
For His mercy endureth forever." - 1 Chron. 16:31-34.

If there is any lingering doubt in the mind of any of our readers as to the magnificent object of our Lord's return we suggest a re-reading of the sixth chapter of "The Divine Plan of the Ages." Indeed, we believe that all who have not read that chapter in recent months would be advantaged in doing so now, in connection with this article. There the evidence is conclusively shown that our Lord's return is "manifestly the hope of the Church and the world." *

* See also the "Herald" March 1-15, 1927, "What Say the Scriptures About Our Lord's Return."

The Glorious Hope Restored

Once the truth concerning the object of our Lord's Second Advent was regained by the Church the old fervency of desire for its speedy accomplishment was restored. St. John's plea: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" well expressed the sentiment which again prevailed, and the old spirit of inquiry as to how and when was revived. Much searching of the Scriptures ensued, and light was granted on various matters. The whole story of those thrilling days cannot be told here. Those who would learn it, or those who would refresh their memory concerning it are referred to Brother Russell's luminous expositions in the six volumes of Scripture Studies and the Watch Tower. Here we must content ourselves with noting three outstanding convictions resulting from those Bible studies.

One of these was the realization that our Lord is no longer a man; that while He had been put to death flesh (a flesh being) He had been raised spirit (a spirit being), and it was therefore not as a man but as a spirit being, a spirit being, moreover, of the highest order, the divine, that we should look for Him. (1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17; 1-16b. 9:28; Phil. 2:9; 1 Tim. 6:16). A natural corollary to this thought was that He would be invisible to our physical eyes, since as human beings we could not look on a spirit being except by a miracle.

Another conviction reached was in regard to the sign which would acquaint the watchers of the Lord's presence. Whatever that sign should prove to be they became convinced that its signification would be twofold: it would indicate both that the Lord had returned and that the consummation of the Age had been reached. In other words they were not to look for one sign or series of signs to indicate the Lord's presence and another sign or series of signs to tell them that the end of the Age had been reached, but that the two events (or, as they later came to understand them, the two eras) would synchronize, and one sign or series of signs announce them both. If therefore, they should recognize' a sign or signs that the Lord was present, they might understand also that the end of the Age had been reached, and conversely, and most important to notice here, if they should become aware of signs pointing unmistakably to the fact that the end of the Age had been reached, they might know also that the Lord was present.

A third conviction, closely related to the other two above mentioned, was that there were already signs sufficient to satisfy them that these two long looked for events (eras) had arrived, -- the consummation of the Age had been reached, and they were living in the days of the second presence of the Son of Man. True to these convictions the Watch Tower carried as its sub-title:

Herald of Christ's Presence

As time went on and studies progressed, the thought did not seem unreasonable that the Scriptures might contain sufficient data to enable the watchers to determine when our invisible Lord would shine forth in such a way that **every** eye would see Him -- they also which pierced Him. They knew, too, that when that event should transpire their own pilgrimage here must of necessity be ended, for when Christ who is our life shall be thus manifested, then shall we also with Him be manifested in glory. (Col. 3:4.) Such a reflection could not but add to, rather than detract from the zest with which this line of study was pursued. All are aware that the 'conclusions reached' pointed to 1914 as the year in which the glorification of the Church might be reasonably expected. All are aware, too, that this expectation was not realized. To quote from

Brother Russell: "Our thought was purely an inference, and now [Sept. 1916] we' see that it was an unjustified one" (Watch Tower Reprints Vol. 7, page R3950). Since that time various further attempts have been made to determine the date of the glorification of the Church, but all have thus far proved futile.

Cast not Away Your Confidence

Naturally this continual failure has been disappointing to many, and some, unable to understand why their expectations have failed to eventuate, have begun to question if they may not have erred also in their former conclusions as to the return of the Lord. In view of this it has more than once been suggested to *us* that if a candid review of the subject were presented in these pages, it could not fail to be of interest and profit to our readers. Acting in accordance with this suggestion, we propose in subsequent issues to re-examine the evidences which have hitherto seemed to us to point to our Lord's presence and to the consummation of the Age. In this connection we shall hope also to consider some of the questions which have been raised recently as to their validity. We trust to make such review in the spirit of discipleship -- the spirit of a learner not that of a master-and while presenting our own conclusions, to do so in a spirit of loving consideration of the views of any who may differ with us, and whose fellowship *we* would cultivate rather than mar. Let us then unite our prayers to this end. Then surely it shall come to pass that, whether or not we shall see eye to eye at the conclusion of our study, none of us will be without the blessed realization that our study was characterized by the spirit of love, without which though we have all knowledge, on this as *on* any subject, we shall be *as* nothing.

(To be continued)

Faithful Branches of the True Vine

"I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." - John 15:5.

BEAUTIFUL INDEED are the diversified illustrations of Christian life and experience made use of by our Lord in His wonderful words of life. To Him' many things in nature were fitting symbols of God's designs in the higher realms of His purposes-the natural law finding a larger expression in the spiritual world. The things not seen were thus brought within the scope of our comprehension by the things which are seen. Hence. "the Kingdom of heaven in some of its many aspects, is likened unto a net, a field, a *lost* treasure, a wandering sheep. Each illustration employed contains its own particular lesson, and all combined furnishes us with a very general picture of the works of God. What a wide field for study is thus opened up to us, in which the man of God may find "doctrine," "reproof," "correction," and "instruction in righteousness."

The grapevine as used in the chapter from which our text is taken, is full of significance. Here, we have the real facts of Christian experience clearly set forth. What better illustration could be used to teach so many of these important facts as the vine and its branches. The need of a complete unity with the only possible source of life and fruitfulness is clearly portrayed. The vine is ever saying to its numerous branches, "Without *me* ye can do nothing." Its very nature and characteristics proclaim its very special need of the care of a husbandman, and without whom its ultimate end must be destruction as a useless cumberer of the ground. In its creation the vine and branches

were designed to attain marvelous ends, producing, it is claimed, one of the most perfect fruits found in the earth, containing an unusually large amount of the important elements needed in the human body. But to attain this great end the most drastic treatment in the way of pruning and training were foreordained to be its salvation. These are some of the lessons Jesus would teach, us by this illustration. The ultimate objective is "much fruit," if we are branches in Him as the *Vine*, and separation from Him will eventually mean fruitlessness.

This abundant fruitage He assures us is within the bounds of possibility for all who truly abide in Him. *It is* not difficult to understand that a branch *must* derive its life from the vine upon which and *out* of which it grows. The life-giving juices which the vine draws from the earth giving it life and leaves, must run out into the branches also. A branch can not bear even leaves unless its unity with the vine is real, "no more can ye," says Jesus, unless "Ye abide in Me." Until there is on the part of the Christian a real union of heart and life with Christ the Vine, there can be nothing, no true faith, *no* real joy or experience in spiritual things, no true delight in the Word of God, and no intimate communion with God; therefore nothing of the evidences of eternal life will be found. This law in nature and in grace is immutable; hence the importance of the lesson before us.

The Branch a Partaker of the Vine

But if the illustration emphasizes the fact that "much fruit" must be found on each branch as evidence of its continued place in the vine, there *is* nevertheless abundant assurance given that no impossibility is being demanded. The Husbandman is One thoroughly competent to produce such an abundant fruitage, for He can never fail in His undertakings, and the Vine is a source of inexhaustible supply, never diminished however much the branches may draw the vitality needed to produce "much fruit." The giving out of this vitality does not impoverish Him, nor withholding make Him richer. The branches can never overdraw the strength of the One who has said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." On the contrary, He *so* desires us to be strong, vigorous, fruitful branches that He urges us to partake freely of the life He *so* delights to impart. As God in ancient *days* has said to His people, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it," so Jesus is ever saying to His followers, Open thy heart and life wide to Me, and I will fill it with "much fruit" whereby God will be glorified. He is able "to make all grace abound toward you," says the Apostle, "that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work." (2 Cor. 9:8.) Truly, then, if we would bear much fruit to His praise, "what more can He say than to us He has said" to assure us that in us and for us "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." - Eph. 3:20.

Our Lord's illustration teaches most certainly that the branch partakes very definitely of the vine on which and out of which it grows. Its origin is in the vine, and it conforms strictly to God's law of creation-every "fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind." The vine feeds the branch with the same nourishment with which it is itself sustained. Thus the branch bears an identical likeness to its parent vine. Is there on the vine a peculiar kind of a bark and form of leaf, so is there on the branch. There is the same kind of wood fiber, the same color and texture, the same juices flowing through all. The vine imparts life to the branch and is at the same time reproducing itself in that branch, thus emphatically making it a partaker of its own nature. It is the simple principle of like producing like. How surprising it would be to find a vine imparting this life-giving power in this way, and hickory, cherry, plum, or peach branches springing out of its side. But such monstrosities do not occur in nature. The branch of the vine will always bear an unmistakable likeness to the sustaining stem from which it receives its life.

Christ's Members are Christlike

Christ is indeed the true vine, and His members unquestionably should partake of His nature. When He imparts to -us a new spiritual life, does He not promise to thereby give us of His own characteristics? Christ's people, members of His Body should be Christlike, for "if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of His." And what are some of these outstanding characteristics, which if manifested in us give evidence of our being in the relation of branches to the vine? For answer, the Apostle would say, "We have the mind of Christ," and again, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5.) To have the mind of Christ would surely be to have the spirit or disposition of Christ. It would therefore mean Christ living in us, controlling our lives, possessing our hearts, and reproducing His likeness, His nature in us. Thus the promises embraced in Peter's statement would include promises pertaining to this life in its daily round of work and warfare, as well as such promises which in their very nature cannot be fulfilled until after the second veil is passed. Meeting the conditions underlying all these promises will little by little result to us in increasing measures of the spirit or disposition of Christ.

The Life of Christ Manifested

Possessing the life of Christ in our hearts will reveal that' new springs of action are operating in us. New tastes and desires are kindled in our hearts and we become more and more copies of God's dear Son. Is there in Christ a delight in holiness? So is there in the true Christian, yea a consuming desire to be holy as God is holy. Is there in Christ a spirit of love? So is there in the Christian; his life will reflect that love in word and deed if he be really in Christ. Is there in Christ a spirit of meekness? So will there be in His disciple the adorning of a meek and quiet spirit. Is there in Christ -- a great desire for the salvation and blessing of others? So there will be in the disciple; for contact with Jesus must bring us into perfect accord with His spirit of love and consideration for others. Is there in Christ a desire for intimate communion with God? So is there in the true disciple; for such true union with Christ begets an ever increasing longing for close communion with the Father. Is there in Christ a definite hatred of sin? So is there in the Christian united to Him; for it is impossible to be in union with Christ and at the same time in connivance with sin.

Thus the new life which the Vine imparts to us and which constitutes one a Christian, is a life begotten of God, and therefore must of necessity 'bear the nature of Christ. God begets children in His own likeness. No amount of grace would make a Christian omnipotent or omniscient; yet grace will, nevertheless, make us like Christ. The Christian who really abides in Christ, and draws his life from Christ, as a branch from the vine, may surely expect to have a Christlike love, a Christlike patience, a Christlike meekness, a Christlike compassion, and a Christlike delight in all the will of God. As a branch of the true vine, he will assuredly resemble Christ.

The Branch must Feed on the Vine

The more we feed on Christ the more of His character we possess. The branch feeds upon the vine always. In a sense, and an important sense, we must likewise feed on Christ, for so He has said, "I am the living Bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." And again, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." - John 6:51, 57.

Surely the branch no more feeds upon the vine, than does the believer on Christ. And how may we feed upon Christ? We feed upon Him in our faith appropriation of His redemptive work on our behalf. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," and we feast upon Him as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. The great doctrines of the cross of Christ are food to the Christian alive to spiritual things. In the cross of Christ he glories. To the cross he clings, and to its foot he yearns to bring all who need its saving power. We feed upon Christ as we ponder over and personally assimilate His words of life. And in this we may properly include all. Scripture. The doctrines and the promises alike of God's Word cheer and strengthen the Christian's heart. Did David not have this in mind when he said, "O how love I Thy law: it is my meditation all the day." And had not the poet been feeding on Christ in this way when he wrote for saints to sing, **"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word."**

Have not saints throughout the Age, when their faith needed to be nourished and strengthened, turned away from men, and found cheer and comfort, and faith to endure, in the Savior's own words. Over and over again no voice but His could comfort, none other could say, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." And as the spirit has brought to remembrance whatsoever things He hath spoken, the green pastures and quiet waters have brought peace and joy.

We feed upon Christ at the throne of heavenly grace. Through Him alone we have access to God, therefore in our prayer life we are but appropriating the things freely given us by God through Christ. And what a feast this is! When we come thus, ransomed by His precious blood, we come into communion with God our Father, and with Jesus our beloved Head, and there we rise above the world into the realm of that which is pure and holy, and there hold converse with Father and Son in intimate fellowship. In this way we draw from the true Vine spiritual food for our spiritual life. And what blessings attend the faithful use of this means of appropriating strength from the vine. Well has the poet said:

**"Prayer is appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give.
In every case should Christians pray,
If near the fount of grace they'd live."**

When we take into our hands the emblems of a suffering Savior, Gethsemane and Calvary are brought again to view. The compassion of our dying Lord is then well calculated to excite our love and gratitude, and to awaken in our hearts resolutions to live a life wholly dedicated to Him who loved us so. That scene of agony which bought us from death, and opened up to us such inestimable privileges as our "great salvation" makes possible to us in this day of exceptional grace, surely must bestir us to an overwhelming gratitude, and cause us to cry out, "I will take the

cup of salvation" and henceforth live wholly for Him who loved me so. Let Him impart to me His "life more abundant."

Surely in all these things we feed upon Christ. And as we thus feed upon Him, we partake more and more of His nature, reflect more and more of His image, and thus manifest to others more and more of His likeness.

What has Years of Contact with Jesus Produced

How important, then, is the question, How much of the character of Christ do we really possess? -- especially if we have enjoyed years of this close relationship to Christ, having, as we have surely had, this privilege of drawing life and vitality from the inexhaustible Vine. How very much of likeness we ought now to bear to the Vine of which we have been the branches these many years. Certainly we ought to possess unmistakable likeness to Christ now, if the relationship has been all that it should have been.

If some one should give us a branch taken from a grapevine and -ask us from what it had been taken, we would have no difficulty in deciding whence it came. There would be the leaves, the wood, and the fruit, all of which would remind us at once of the vine on which it grew. So the life and character of the Christian should remind others of Christ. If we desire to draw others to Him, we must show them the attractions of Christ. As His followers we should become more and more partakers of His nature or character and thus show that we have been with Him and learned of Him. Our own sinful nature must be repressed, and the character of Christ increasingly exhibited in our lives. Being the professed people of God, we can in this way show to others something of the love and beauty of our adorable Redeemer.

By abiding in Christ, and drawing from Him large supplies of spiritual life, we will increase in those graces of which He is the source, increase in our resemblance of Him, will exhibit more of His character, and thus verify His own precious word of promise, "He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

"DWELLING WITH THE ROSE"

"A Persian fable says: One day
A wanderer found a lump of clay
So redolent of sweet perfume
Its odors scented all the room.

'What art thou?' was his quick demand
'Art thou some gem from Samareand,
Or spikenard in this rude disguise,
Or other costly merchandise?'
'Nay: I am but a lump of clay.'

""Then whence this wondrous perfume-say!"
'Friend, if the secret I disclose,
I have been dwelling with the rose.'
Sweet parable! and will not those
Who love to dwell with Sharon's Rose,
Distil sweet odors all around,
Though low and mean themselves are found?
Dear Lord, abide with us that we
May draw our perfume fresh from Thee."

Lessons from the Life of Joseph

[Contributed]

Scripture Reading: Psalm 105:17-23; Genesis chapters 37; 39-50.

JOSEPH AND HIS DREAMS

THE story of Joseph begins when he was a lad of 'seventeen years. His brother Benjamin was four or five years younger. Joseph was sent by his father to his 'brethren who were herding the flocks, to find out how they fared. He was unpopular with his brethren, because he was his father's favorite. Jacob showed his favoritism, which, in a family, is most unwise. It is the dull child, or the weak one, who really needs the more praise and encouragement, the more help and favor; and favoritism for the more talented usually spoils the child, cultivating pride, self-conceit. It is unjust to the others, and draws down upon the favorite their envy and hatred.

Joseph's brethren saw him coming afar off, and said, "Behold, this dreamer cometh." Joseph had had some 'dreams in one of which his brothers' sheaves bowed down to his sheaf; the sun, moon, and stars made obeisance to him. With boyish simplicity he told his dreams and his brothers never forgave him. The dreams were divine intimations of the boy's future; but the hints of his present or -possible superiority over them made their envy the more bitter.

Sixty miles he had come to find how they fared and carry back word to his father. Doubtless they knew him afar off by his coat of bright 'colors. "Behold, this dreamer cometh," they said. "Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and 'we shall see what will become of his dreams." Here we see the fearful danger of allowing envious thoughts to remain in the heart. Envy grew into murder-murder of their own brother! We are reminded of- the wisdom of Paul's counsel, ' "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." We should instantly crush the merest beginnings of envy. Ere we close each day, we should see that every feeling of bitterness against any person, is cast out of our heart. It should be 'a time of forgiving and forgetting all injury, or unkindness done us by any one.

But Joseph was not killed: his mission was not yet ended. His brother Reuben was not ready for murder, -- and proposed casting him into a dry pit, intending to rescue him later. His suggestion was accepted; Joseph was cast into a pit, and they sat down to eat. In all this, God's providence was working. As they ate, they saw a caravan coming, and Judah proposed they sell Joseph to the passing merchants. It seemed good to them for two reasons: They would get rid of the boy's blood -- and blood is always a troublesome thing on one's hands. It will not wash off. Besides there would be a little money in the transaction. So they hastily drew Joseph from the pit, and after parleying with the Midianites they sold him for twenty pieces of silver - \$12.50.

When Reuben returned he found the pit empty, and supposing that Joseph had been killed, he rent his clothes in grief. The other brothers, knowing that some news must be sent to their old father, killed a kid, dipped Joseph's coat in blood, and sent it to the father with the explanation: we found this coat, in this condition,- in the field. Does our father think it is his son's coat? The father recognized the coat, and drew the inference they wished, and said, "Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces!" So he thought for more than twenty years, and all the years were filled with sore mourning.

Let Our Farewells be in Love

Let us pause here and draw some lessons from this narrative. When Joseph parted from those at home, they thought it was for only a few days' absence. His Grandfather Isaac was still living, and Benjamin was but a small boy. They thought in a few days he would be home again. No one dreamed that for more than twenty years they would not see his face again -- some would never see him again. There is a lesson for us here: Our casual partings too may be for years -- may be for ever. When we part at our doors in the morning, we never know- whether we shall look in each other's face again or not. We expect to gather in the evening at the fireside; but we never know. Many go out who never come home. If Jacob had known what was to befall his son, how tender would have been the parting! Above all, we should never separate in an angry or impatient mood, with unforgiveness, bitterness, misunderstanding. No amount of flowers on the coffin will atone for the coldness of the parting, or take the pang out of the bereft heart. Every parting with loved ones should be sweet enough, kindly enough, for a last farewell.

"If thou dost bid thy friend farewell,
But for one night though that farewell may be,
Press thou his hand in thine.
How canst thou tell how far from thee
Fate or caprice may lead his steps, ere that tomorrow comes?
Men have been known lightly to turn the corner of a street,
And days have grown to months,
And months to lagging years, ere they
Have looked in loving eyes again.
Parting at best is underlaid
With tears and pain:
Therefore, lest sudden death should come between,
Or time, or distance, clasp with pressure firm the hand
Of him who goeth forth:'
Unseen, fate goeth, too.
Yea, find thou always time to say some earnest word
Between the idle talk, lest with thee henceforth,
Night and day, regret should walk."

Another lesson: Joseph, the happy lad leaving Hebron for Shechem, had no inkling of what was to befall him. He expected a kindly welcome on meeting his brothers, and to return quickly to those who loved him. So we know not what lies before us. We spend today in gladness, not knowing that tomorrow will bring us tears. We move on through the flowers, heedless of danger, not suspecting that at our next step we may fall into some hidden pit. We rejoice in our prosperity, unconscious of the fact that disaster may come any hour and sweep it away. We set out on the happy journey, without thought of the possible accident which may leave us crippled or dead.

What is the lesson? Should this uncertainty of all human affairs sadden our life? No, that is not the lesson. God does not want us to be *unhappy* while the sun is shining because by and by it will go under a cloud. He wants us to live in today, and enjoy its blessings, and do its work well, though tomorrow may bring calamity. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." How can we do this if we know that the future has in it possibilities of sudden darkness? Only by calm, quiet, trustful faith in God, and obedience to Him at every step. We sometimes wish we could look into

the future, that we might choose our way and avoid the rough paths. But suppose Joseph had been told how his brothers would treat him, and that he would 'be sold as a slave. Would he have gone forward? Then what a wonderful story of providence would have been spoiled!

Joseph would have missed all that bright future which lay beyond the period of wrongs and cruelties into which he was first plunged. And think what his people, and the world would have missed!

It would not be well for us to know what is before us; we would want to meddle with God's plans, thus marring our own future, and harming others. Nor should we 'be afraid and over-cautious. Yet this uncertainty ought to hold us near the side of Christ at all times. Nothing can ever really go wrong with us if He is leading us and we are quietly following Him. Though He take us through pain, misfortune, suffering, it is because that is the path to true blessing and good.

Joseph a Slave and in Prison

A modern writer has a story entitled "Hands Off," which illustrates providence in the life of Joseph. It represents a man in another stage of existence, looking down upon the Hebrew lad in the hands of the Midianites. In this story, being an active, ingenious lad, Joseph escaped from the caravan on the first night after his brothers had sold him. He had just reached the outer edge of the camp when a yellow dog began to bark and awakened the men who were in charge of him, and he was returned to captivity.

However, the onlooker wanted to kill the dog before he had awakened the camp. Then Joseph would have gotten away and would have reached home in safety. Great sorrow and suffering would have 'been avoided. But the onlooker's --guardian said, "Hands off! And to let him see the evil of interfering, he took him to a world where he could try the experiment and see its results. There he killed the dog. Joseph reached home in safety, and his father rejoiced and was comforted.' It certainly seemed a better way than the other. But when the famine came, there had been no Joseph in Egypt to foretell it and to prepare for it, and there was no food laid up in storehouses. Palestine and Egypt were devastated by starvation. Great numbers died, and the savage Hittites destroyed those whom the famine had spared. Civilization was set aback centuries Egypt was blotted out. Greece and Rome remained in a barbarous state. The history of the whole world was' changed and countless evils 'came-all because a man in his ignorant wisdom killed a dog, saving a boy from present trouble, to his own and the world's future great loss.

We would better keep our hands off God's providences. Peter wanted to keep Jesus back from the cross; suppose he had done so, what would have been the result? No doubt many 'a time love has kept a life back from hardship, sacrifice, and suffering, thereby blighting or marring a destiny. We are likely to pity the 'boy Joseph as we see him enter his period of humiliation, as we read of his being sold as a slave, and then cast into irons. But if human pity could have rescued him from this sad part of his life, the glorious part that followed, with all its blessed service to the world, would have been lost.

Few truths are more sustaining to Christian 'faith than this, that our times are in God's hands. We forget it too often, and fret when life brings hard things to endure, when our own plans are broken. But some day we shall see that God knew best.

"How oft, O God, when we have wept in vain
O'er Thy decrees and blurred with fretful tears
The heavenward window of the soul, appears
Thy purpose sweet and wise, in after years,
Like sunshine streaming through the veils of rain!
"If we had had our way -- if Thou hadst given
The lesser good in our, imploring hands,
Withholding larger; if the small demands
Of human choice, that sees nor understands
Life's broader issues, had prevailed with heaven;

"If we had never wept, nor known the keen,
Pure, cleansing pain of . sorrow's sacred fire
The broken tie, the unfulfilled desire
Our sluggish lives had never risen higher,
But fixed in self, had ever, selfish been.

"But Thou hast led us out of self, hast shown
How love's great circle rounds from soul to soul,
How sorrow makes us quick to others' dole
And binds each unit in the larger whole
Of life and love, complete in Thee alone.

"O God, Thy thought infolds us all! the days
Ev'n of this brief, imperfect life attest,
Ere they are spent, "Thy will is ever best.
Oh, may we in Thy love and wisdom rest,
For Thou dost know the end of all our days!"

Joseph was seventeen when the caravan bore him off as a slave to Egypt. He was thirty when called from prison to become prime minister of Pharaoh. The whole period of his humiliation was therefore thirteen years. The three points we wish to consider are, his slave life, his great temptation, and his prison life. The special thing to mark is that Joseph went through all the experiences unhurt. This is a secret worth learning how to meet injustice, wrong, cruelty, inhuman treatment, temptation, misfortune, in such manner as to receive no harm from the experience, Let us see how Joseph bore himself so as to rob these experiences of their bitterness and power to harm, and extract from each of them blessing and good.

Think of the sense of wrong which must have filled his thoughts as he remembered the treatment he had received from his brothers. They had torn him away from his home. They had been about to kill him. They had treated him with heartless cruelty. They had sold him as a slave. Surely it was hard to keep one's heart sweet and free from bitterness with such a sense of injustice.

A Sore Test of Character

Add to this the hardness of the new condition in which Joseph found himself. He was among strangers. He had not a friend in all the land. Not a face he had ever seen, passed before him. Many a stranger in a strange land is free to make his life what he will, and is soon on the way to success. But Joseph was a slave, in bonds. Potiphar saw him in the slave market, and bought him as he might a horse. It is hard to conceive of a condition more discouraging. It was a sore test of character to which he was exposed. If the treatment he had received from his brothers was enough to make him bitter, his present circumstances seem enough to have crushed his spirit. There are people who have not had the tenth part of Joseph's trouble but who are embittered against the world and denounce it as cold and heartless and ungrateful. Others having been wronged, grow hard and vindictive, and live only to repay the injustice they have received with like injustice -- blow for blow. Still others sullenly surrender to the injuries they have received and with broken spirit creep through life like wrecks drifting on the sea, pitiable spectacles.

Few there are who pass through such experiences of injustice and cruelty as those Joseph met and keep their heart sweet and gentle, their faith in God bright and clear, and their spirit brave and strong. It showed the wholesomeness of Joseph's nature that he passed through these galling experiences unhurt. He was not soured toward men. He did not grow morbid, sullen, or disheartened. Though a slave, he accepted his position with cheerfulness, and entered heartily into his new life, doing his duties so well that he soon became overseer in his master's house. He did not waste time or strength in weeping over his misfortunes, or grieving over his wrongs, nor exhaust himself in self-pity. The darkness of Joseph's life was not allowed to enter his heart. This was one of the great secrets of his victorious living. With hatred all about him, he kept love in his heart. Enduring injuries, wrongs, and injustices, his spirit was forgiving. With a thousand things to discourage and dishearten him, to break his spirit, he refused to be discouraged. Because other men lived unworthily was but a stronger reason why he should live worthily. Because he was treated cruelly and wickedly was fresh reason why he should give to others about him the best service of love and unselfishness. That his condition was hard, was to him a new motive for living heroically and nobly.

The Problem of Life

So we find the spirit of Joseph unbroken under all that was galling and crushing in his circumstances. The lesson can not be too urgently pressed. Many people find life hard. Sometimes wrong and injustice make the days bitter. Sometimes the atmosphere of daily life is one of strife, petty persecution, miserable fault-finding, incessant opposition, nagging, criticism. Home life ought to be ideally loving, inspiring, encouraging, helpful, full of all kindness and grace. Yet there are homes little better than Joseph's, where instead of love are envy, selfishness, bitterness. There are those who must live continually amid unjust opposition and antagonism.

The problem of life is to keep the heart sweet and kindly amid all injustice and wrong; to keep the spirit brave and cheerful in the midst of life's circumstances and conditions; to be true and right and strong in all moral purpose and deed, however others may act toward us. We must be unselfish and loving, though even our nearest friends prove selfish and cruel to us. We must keep our spirit strong, cheerful and hopeful, though adversities and misfortunes seem to leave us

nothing of the fruit of all our labors. In a word, we are to live victoriously, nobly, sweetly, cheerfully, songfully, in spite of whatever may be uncongenial in our condition.

This is the lesson from the first period of Joseph's humiliation. This is the lesson of all Christian life. We should not let the outside darkness into our soul, should seek to be delivered from all morbidness, all dwelling upon our own difficulties and unhappinesses, from continually talking about our unpleasant experiences. We should not allow anything to crush us. Though a slave as to our condition, our spirit should be free.

We read that Joseph bore himself so genially, and did his work so well, and was so capable, so true, so trustworthy, that Potiphar left all he had in his hand: "he knew not aught that was with him, save the bread which he did eat." Joseph would never have won such a success if he had given up to discouragement, if he had brooded over his wrongs, if he had sulked or complained, if he had spent his time in vain regrets or in vindictive feelings. We should learn the lesson, and it is worth learning, for it is life's highest and best lesson: It is the victory of the faith in Christ which overcometh the world.

Meeting Temptation on Grounds of Principle

Another part of Joseph's humiliation was his temptation. He had been in Potiphar's house for several years. He had lived so worthily and wrought so faithfully that he had his master's fullest confidence and had risen to the first place among all the servants. We can think of the boy's dreams of greatness as again coming into the mind of the young man as he found himself so honored. His temptation was that of an intrigue with Potiphar's wife, perhaps thereby to rise to yet higher prominence, to throw off the slave's chains and become a man of rank in the land. No eye of one who worshiped his God was upon him to inspire him to what was pure, true, and noble. He was in a heathen land, where the standard of morals was low and where doubtless such intrigues were common. He had not the social restraints which we find about us today.

But he met the temptation on far higher grounds; on grounds of pure principle. Note his answer to the solicitation of his temptress: "Behold, my master knoweth not what is with me in the house, and he hath put all that he hath into my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Two motives appear in this answer. One is loyalty to his master. Potiphar had trusted him implicitly with all that he had. Could he now be guilty of such a base wrong to the man who had placed such confidence in him? Such an act would have been treachery to his friend. In the face of this flattering solicitation of this woman of high rank, and regardless of the consequences which the offending of her might bring upon him, he kept his eye fixed on his duty and wavered not, but tore himself away from the temptation, his soul unstained.

The other motive which saved him was his loyalty to God. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" All sin is against God. "Against Thee, Thee, only, have I sinned, said David in his penitence. We can never get away from our relation to God in any act of our life.

Another element of Joseph's nobleness of character appears in his silence under false accusation. It is not recorded that he said a word to Potiphar to turn suspicion upon the accusing wife. He seems to have thought still of Potiphar's honor, and rather than lay a stain upon it he would go to

the dungeon under a false charge, leaving to God the vindication of his own honor and the proving of his innocence. It has been said, For his purity you will find his equal, one among a thousand; for his mercy, scarcely one. There are persons who bear reproach and odium to shield others. Joseph had resisted temptation to be loyal to Potiphar; now Potiphar thinks him guilty of the very baseness which for love of him he had scorned to commit. But in all this Joseph kept his heart sweet and loving.

Sometimes it seems to cost very dearly to be loyal to God. Joseph now lay in a dungeon. But his loss through doing right was nothing in comparison with what he would have lost had he done the wickedness to which he was tempted. His prison gloom, deep as it was, was as noonday, compared with what would have been the darkness of his soul under the blight of evil and the bitterness of remorse. Though his feet were in fetters, his conscience was free, and his heart was pure. Better to suffer any loss, any cost, any sacrifice, than to sin against God. The lesson of Joseph's victory over temptation is: anything-dishonor, loss, dungeon, death before sin.

Another phase of Joseph's humiliation was his prison life. The Psalmist says of him (Psalm 105:18): "His feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in chains of iron." This, then, was the reward of being true to God and duty! He -had resisted sin, and here he was in irons, while his guilty temptress was posing as an injured woman, receiving compassion and enjoying luxury.

However bitter the prison may have been at first to Joseph, he was not yet crushed, but the noble soul within him rose above the effects of the misfortune and wrong he had suffered. He did not despair, but his old aptitude for meeting life with courage and hope showed itself. "The keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prisonThe keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand." His manhood was not in chains. The fetters did not hurt his soul. He was victorious over all the wrong, the injustice, the false accusation, the suffering. He found his period of humiliation a time of growth, of discipline, of training, producing in his heart hope, joy, and love. And when at length he was called from prison to sit beside the king, he was so well fitted for greatness that his head was not turned by the pinnacle of honor and fame.

So we get from this part of our story the lesson of victory over all of life's conditions. Be true to God, true to yourself, true to your fellow-men. The record is that "The Lord was with Joseph, and shewed kindness unto him.... and that which he did the Lord made to prosper." Likewise, if we are true to God, He will bless us, and will use even our misfortunes to train us for a larger, better, nobler, more useful life. Christ is with us; His life is *in* us; and nothing should be allowed to crush us. Live close to Christ and the world's power cannot hurt you nor its darkness dim your soul's light.

From Prison to Palace

This story reads like a romance. In the morning Joseph was in prison. He had been there probably three years. He knew of nothing that gave any hope of release. In the evening he was wearing the king's ring, was arrayed in vestures of fine linen, had a gold chain about his neck and was honored as next to the king. It seems too strange to be true, yet it was true.

Though he was in prison, he was not a criminal; he was there on false charges. We see a man with a pure soul, though under the cloud of a black charge. May it not be so with some one we know, of whom people allege dishonorable things, but .who in God's sight is innocent? We should stand

for justice and charity toward all. We should shut our ears to the insinuations and whisperings of the slanderer's tongue. It was a lie that put the felon's garb and chain on Joseph and robbed him of his good name. Be slow to believe an accusation against another. One false mouth can destroy the reputation won by a life time of worthy deeds. Let us see to it that we have the love that thinketh no evil.

Joseph was suffering wrongfully; but his case demonstrates the truth declared by the Psalmist "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and he shall bring it to pass. And He shall make thy righteousness go forth as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." (Psalm 37:5, 6.) We, too, may safely leave our vindication to the Lord.

The life of Joseph remained gentle, beautiful and sweet under all the terrible trials of those thirteen years. Yet some of us can hardly keep sweet under little or imaginary slights, the microscopic hurts and injustices of every-day life. And what though our trials may be severe and long? The noble bearing of Joseph teaches us to be superior to all circumstances and conditions, to all unkind -or unjust treatment. Discouragement is undivine. We must be strong in the grace of God. We must be unconquerable through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us. We must *put* misfortunes, adversities, personal injuries, sufferings, trials, *under* our feet, and tread ever upward on them.

**"We rise by the things that are under our feet;
By what we have mastered of good or gain;
By the pride deposed, and the passion slain,
And the vanquished *ills* that *we* hourly meet."**

Remember, your problem in living is *to* keep sweet, to keep your heart gentle, brave, strong, loving, full of hope, under the worst that the years can bring you of injustice, hardship, suffering, and trial. That is what Joseph did; then, when he was suddenly wanted for a great duty, he did not fail.

Something went wrong one day in the world above Joseph's dungeon. There was trouble in Pharaoh's palace, and two high officials were hurried off to prison. God is always coming down to us through unlikely paths, meeting us unexpectedly. We know not what trivial occurrence any day may affect all our after course unto the end of life. The touching of Joseph's life by these prisoners from the palace was a link in the chain by which he was to be lifted out of prison.

Yet it seemed for a long time as if nothing would come of this contact. Joseph told the meaning of the men's dreams, and in three days what he had said came true. As the chief butler went out happy from the prison, to resume his old duties, Joseph said to him: "Think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house." No doubt the butler promised to do so. But the pathetic words of the record are: "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him."

The butler was restored to his place in, the palace and the brilliance of the royal presence. Waiting in his prison, doubtless Joseph hoped each day to be released through the strong influence of his friend at court-waited and hoped, but there was no answering token. Two years passed, and still Joseph was in prison: the chief butler had forgotten him.

Many there have been in all ages who would condemn the ingratitude of this Egyptian officer, and yet who repeat his sin. At the time when help comes to us, or deliverance, or favor, our hearts are warm with gratitude. We say with sincere intention that we will never forget this

kindness. But do we never forget it? Alas, we are all too prone to remember wrongs, but to forget kindnesses. We write the record of our grudges in marble, and of favors in water. The lesson is that we should write the record of hurts and wrongs done *us*, in water, and of kindness shown to us, in stone.

Yet see how God uses even this adversity to Joseph's final good. Had he been released at once, he was still *a* slave, and might have been sold away from the city. Or had he been set free, he would likely have returned to Canaan. He would not likely have been in reach when he was sought for to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. And so all the future blessings would have been thwarted.

But while Joseph was left in prison, God's *purposes* were ripening in the world outside, and Joseph's character was ripening into strength and self-discipline within the dungeon walls. In God's providences, nothing comes a moment too soon, and nothing lags, coming too late. He whose hand whose hand moves the machinery of the universe is also our Father. And all the wrongs suffered may, by the divine touch, be transmuted into blessings.

Shall we suppose that Joseph's life was in God's hand in any exceptional. sense? Is there any less of God's providence in our life than there was in the life of the Hebrew lad? He did not see the providence at the time; not until afterwards did the dark clouds disclose- their silver lining, or the rough iron fetters reveal themselves as gold.: Not until afterwards shall we see how our disappointments, hardships, trials, misfortunes, and, wrongs, are all made parts of God's providence, for, us; but the "afterwards" is sure if only we firmly and faithfully follow Christ and keep our own hands off.

(To be continued)

True Consecration Revealed in Purification

*"If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be." -
John 12:26.*

IN THE context of the above Scripture Jesus has explained the nature and the necessity of His death by an allusion to a plain and universally known fact in the vegetable world: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." By this He meant that if He did not die as a sacrifice on behalf of the sinner-race, mankind could never be redeemed; in which case He would abide alone, saving only His own life. But by dying, rising again, and ascending to the Father's right hand in the heavens, He has before Him that glad hour of a completed redemption work when, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." When in due time there shall be given to Him a completed Bride gathered as a first-fruits from among men, and when she together with Him shall carry through to a glorious consummation the full restoration of all the willing and obedient of earth, then indeed His heart of love will be fully satisfied. For the joy set before Him in the days of His humiliation He endured the cross, despising its shame, and drank to the bitter dregs the cup poured for Him. Assuredly, this joy of eventually leading many sons unto glory was one of the greatest features of the happy prospects before His vision, which led Him to so willingly fall like a grain of wheat into the ground and die, that thereby such a multiplied fruitage might be made possible.

Then in our text and context, Jesus is also introducing the thought of our own death and burial with Him. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." This, in all of His teaching is made a very definite and unmistakable condition of discipleship, so much so that He says, "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life, in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." That is, whoever refuses to die to all earthly pursuits, considering these of more value than heavenly measures, such an one will lose eventually both earthly and heavenly possessions. Unless there is at present a life of complete crucifixion of the flesh, there can be no discipleship with Christ. To serve and follow Him one must have this true viewpoint of the privilege of full consecration and the divine purpose in granting such privilege to any one in this day of grace. There must be a willingness to suffer even to the point of martyrdom, rather than save the present life or its interests by refusing to pay the price of a full, whole-hearted obedience to the will of God.

The Will of God Our Sanctification

The fact and necessity of service as a feature of consecration is very properly included in our Lord's Word as given in our text. He makes this plain by saying, "If any man serve Me, let Him follow Me." This is a reminder of the fact that He made Himself servant of all, and thereby made service a very honorable thing, and placed a very high premium upon our service if patterned after His own example. It is as if He were saying to us, In service be careful to follow Me, and then, "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." He came not to be ministered unto, but to give Himself out in service for others, thereby clearly teaching His followers that the real true and consistent Christian life is one filled with God's service, according to individual talent and opportunity.

This same thought is brought to our attention in Paul's very familiar words in Romans 12:1, 2. were we are once more reminded that a true dedication of oneself to God constitutes a "reasonable service," in view of the mercies received. The thought is, of course, that this

consecration represents the giving over to God in unreserved fashion, first our own selves, and then all we have, that henceforth God may be glorified in our body and spirit which are His. Henceforth we -are to live not for self, to save our life, but to live a life of complete abandonment to the will of God, and certainly the will of God for us demands that as stewards of His grace, we must be prepared some day to give an account of our stewardship responsibilities.

But this thought of service is not the most essential truth set forth in the words of Jesus, and this fact is a very important one. We must be extremely careful never to separate the second verse of Romans 12, from the preceding text. If we do, there is an open pitfall-one into which many have fallen throughout the Age. It is inevitable, once verse 2 is forgotten or superficially considered, that the conclusion will be reached which will make out, consecration chiefly a matter of doing what is frequently explained as "putting our all on the altar," meaning our money, our time, reputation, and talents, etc., for the spread of the Message we ourselves have received. All these are included in our opening text and also in Paul's appeal in Romans 12. But in neither of these texts is this the real objective.

Paul is not directly appealing for any of these things we usually speak of as "our all," but he is asking us **to present ourselves to God**, and clearly for the purpose of letting God have His own unhindered control. The objective of Romans 12:1, is distinctly stated in verse 2: "That ye may prove [know experimentally] what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Therefore the primary fact is that consecration relates not chiefly to service, but to an experience of purity of heart and life. And this is God's invariable law. First, "Be ye clean," then, "bear the vessels of the Lord." First, "Blessed are the pure in heart," then, "they shall see God." First, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me," then, "will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."

All efforts 'at a regeneration work either in ourselves or others, must certainly break down in a regrettable wreckage, unless this divine order is steadfastly recognized and followed. The lament will inevitably follow as a result of any other viewpoint and practice: "They made me the keeper of the vineyards [of others], but mine own vineyard I have not kept.'" Verily, then, consecration is not chiefly concerned with what we may do for God, but ever first and foremost stands the vital fact, that this dedication is **to let God do for us**. May He give us to see with increasing clearness this all important truth.

Where I am, There Shall My Servant now be

After a full surrender of ourselves to God and the consequent inflow of spiritual life, the objectives set before us are plainly stated: "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." "Mortify your members which are upon the earth." "Be ye filled with the Spirit." "Be ye holy." "Walk even as He walked"; and many commands of a similar kind fill the Word of God. Thus it is seen that what God very particularly desires of us is a sanctification of ourselves through which a deep affection, a heavenly fellowship, and a fervent, loving devotion will become the outstanding attainment in our relationship to God, and toward our dear Lord Jesus.

Not to be thus risen with Christ up, out of the human and carnal into a real sanctification, is to be wholly unlike Him, and to be Totally apart from where He is. The exhortation, "Draw nigh to Me, and I will draw nigh to you," must mean the throwing off and separation from everything unlike Him, and therefore displeasing to Him. To take up this newness of life, and in that new life take on and habitually practise that which is Christlike, is the only condition of heart whereby the

good, acceptable, and perfect will of God may be proved, or known in experience. Is this not what Paul means when he says, that as a result of our dedication, "We have the mind of Christ" -- we now have the indwelling and controlling Spirit of Christ, and thus the life of Christ is manifest in our mortal body-our daily life.

So then, when Jesus says, "There shall also My servant be," His words need not be, should not be confined to a future time and place, but to a present, deep spiritual union of walk, service, and fellowship with Him. This will certainly mean a character-likeness to Him, displaying the fact that we do indeed have "the mind of Christ" **now**. An outstanding evidence of our being with Him where He is will be in the sweet fragrance of His character which attaches itself to His intimate friends. They will be like the lump of clay which the legend tells us became so impregnated with sweet perfume, all because it had been "dwelling with the rose." Out of such a life of fellowship with Jesus will flow the greatest service, the greatest helpfulness, the most lasting benediction God's grace has placed within the reach of His obedient, truly consecrated, sanctified people -- serving people.

To reach this degree of spiritual power and its antecedent and continuous transformations is the practical "proving of the perfect will of God." This will mean the development of a clear perception of **all** the divine purpose in regard to that sanctification which His will has decreed for us, if we would enjoy His approval. This clear perception of His will transmutes all mere theory of the will of God into real living facts and possibilities. The things not understood nor appreciated by the carnal mind, will become veritable activities to such as follow the Master wheresoe'er He will lead His own. The boon of fellowship with the Father and the Son will be increasingly enjoyed. Rest and peace, -and a quietness of spirit where none can make trouble, will pass from the sphere of pleasant dreams of what should be, over into a blessed realization that being where He is, does indeed bring tranquility of mind, and strengthening, assurance of His understanding love and faithfulness.

A Life Reflecting an Enthroned Christ

The words, "Let him follow Me," in the meaning we may properly apply to them, demands, therefore, that we must certainly follow Jesus in the law of death-follow Him to a complete crucifixion. We must be able to say with Paul, "Our old man is crucified with Christ." The destruction or subjection of the self-life must be thorough. Until this is true of us, then, whether we will believe it so or not, there will most certainly be manifest in our conduct and spirit, an active, carnal principle which cannot be hidden. The base metal of carnal-mindedness will reveal itself and vitiate all profession of our being dead with Christ, and this will render impossible a true and glad realization of our Lord's expressed wish, "Where I am, there also shall My servant be." The carnal mind is at enmity with God, irreconcilably so, the Apostle reminds *us*.

In all its forms, carnality is displeasing to God. Its fruitage we are told is easily recognized by the spiritually enlightened. And what a fruitage this carnal principle produces: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditious, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like." Bring to bear upon this list the divine rule which makes unlawful desire, adultery; hatred of a brother, potential murder; worship of any object or person, *a* sin of idolatry; and what a truly awful warning is clothed in the faithful words of Paul. How beautiful is the contrast, the picture of a Christ-enthroned life, the following verses furnish us: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

When the crucifixion of self is real, then it must follow that the meekness and gentleness of Christ will be manifest in His obedient follower. He will take *on* more and more of the qualities of His example, who, under the greatest of injustice and misrepresentation, remained "as a sheep before her shearers" -- "dumb, so He opened not His mouth." This follower will learn to more fully commit himself and all of his interests to the loving care of God. He will live and walk in happy communion with his beloved Lord, and through the practice of the presence of God he will grow more and more Godlike. He knows that divine power *is* in operation *in* his heart, creating a more and more decided desire to have the whole will of God wrought out in him. His faith is strong to believe that God knows, and loves, and cares constantly, and he rejoices in knowing that when God giveth quietness, none can make trouble. This is the daily life and deportment which does truly "express the beauties of true holiness" and in which "the Christian graces shine," revealing to all the power divine.

Revealing the Reality of His power Within

"No man liveth to himself" *is* a scriptural statement. We influence people for good or evil in our daily contacts. And God certainly desires that we shall reveal to others the reality of His power within us. Thus the Christian's purity of life should be felt wherever he goes. He should shed around him *a* heavenly fragrance that will abide, so that his pure spirit, and his helpful example, will be remembered, treasured, and coveted, long after he has gone far away. Thus he reaches in a blessed degree His Master's wish, "Where I am, and what I am, there, and that, will My servant be." And who would not fervently pray with the poet:

**"O God, take my life that has no renown,
Use what Thou canst of it; make it flow down
Far into the sea of some other soul
To sweeten his life and help him be whole.
To help him win others, to help him be pure,
To help him touch thousands, and be not obscure.
Yea, make him reflect the light from Thy throne,
That his kindly deeds may be many and known.
And I shall not envy this loved one of Thine
Though he shall long serve Thee with strength beyond mine."**

And where *will* such a follower be with and like Jesus? Within the sphere of his activities he will be with his Lord wherever there are hungry hearts needing to be fed the bread of life, wherever *impoverished* lives need to be brought into closer touch with Christ, the only source of life. He will be wherever there are sorrow-burdened hearts longing for the comfort of the Scriptures, giving to them the oil of joy for the cup of sorrow. He *will* be exhibiting the warmth and healing influences of a divine sympathy and compassion, holding up the atoning work of Christ, and knowing naught but Christ and Him crucified. And, like the disciples of old, he will be bringing others to Christ for pardon, for healing, for life, for love and peace and joy. Thus he will reach the maximum of usefulness, and reflect the life of Jesus, because Jesus possesses him, lives in him, empowers him, is glorified by him.

Finally, whether the words, "Where I am, there also shall My servant be," are thought of as applying to a present or a future hour, they do certainly involve the promise of all the gracious help we need to reach this *blessed* experience of being where Jesus is, in time or in eternity. Whoever

serves Christ -in the sense of thus following Him, "walking as He walked," in the spirit of complete self-surrender, such have the right to expect that the old man with his deeds will assuredly be put off, and the new man of the heart be as definitely put *on*. It *is* the faith privilege of such to say, "The life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God." "Christ liveth in me." But profession and conduct must be in full agreement; for God requires it, and men demand it.

The earnest Christian, intent on going on to know and follow the Lord, will not remain content with anything less than what the blood of Christ has provided for him in justification, and neither will he remain satisfied with any standard *of* purity and completeness below that exemplified in Jesus Christ Himself. There will be a longing to really know a perfect purity of affection, of motive, of conduct, reflecting through a transparency of character the Christ enthroned within the heart. Walking where the Master walks, constantly asking, What would Jesus do? What would He say? *How would* He meet this experience? deal with this problem, etc., we will realize the evidence that such a following of Jesus **does** effect a purification of the character, destroying the inherent carnal principles of the old nature, and adorning the life with Christlikeness. As the One thus loved, and served, and followed, is pure, so this purity spreads itself over the one who follows. Whatsoever things are true, lovely, of good report, virtuous, fill his mind, and out of these good treasures in his heart, he lives to elevate the minds and' lives of others. Wherever he goes, there also shall' the Lord go, and be wonderfully revealed in the word and deed of His disciple: What-oneness with, and likeness to Christ may be ours even- now! Shall we not serve Him faithfully,, follow Him closely, and continuously find ourselves with Him wherever He is, and be to those about us Christ manifest in the flesh?

Brethren Who Met in Portland

The following report is at hand from the Convention recently held in Portland, Oregon:

"The gathering was not very large -- the attendance Saturday being about sixty-five, and Sunday about seventy-five. But all who came to receive had also something to give, and were apparently actuated by the spirit of a text that appeared on our convention program -- 'Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.'

"The brethren who were chosen to minister 'the Word of the Lord' among us did not speak to us as though they were ministering to our need, but rather as bringing to us an offering for our consideration and acceptance, that we might partake with them in communion of 'the Truth in love.' And thus the common expression of reflective thought from all was, It was a convention of real fellowship in the Truth that we have learned and are assured of.

"The ministry of the speakers was a fairly well proportioned discussion of the things that are practical, and the things that are theoretical, with a larger amount of the things that we truly experience in our religious communion of life in Christ. And so, as we contemplated the things we have long held in theory, and found them still satisfying to our mind, yet our real fellowship was in partaking together of the practical things that are. our bread of spiritual life: 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them: and Thy words. were unto me a joy, and the rejoicing of my heart: for I am called' by Thy name, O Jehovah, God of hosts.'

"Since the convention, expressions of reflective thought 'clearly disclose something permanent received in our gathering in convention, because we partook together of words which are to us spirit and life •in. Jesus Christ."

"So, beloved brethren, if we are here at the end of this year, and we have no vision of prophecy to perceive that we shall not be, we hope for another like convention-only better, because of our growth in Christ during the intervening time. And we shall be glad if we may have a brother from the east coast to minister 'the Word of the Lord' among us: and to partake with us of our communion in Jesus Christ, which we may minister among ourselves 'according to the proportionate energy of each single part' which 'effects the growth of the Body for the building up of itself in love.'"

Encouraging Words

Dear Brethren:

The time has arrived for the renewal of our "Herald" subscriptions and I am enclosing a money order for \$----- to cover the same for the undermentioned, .

Another year has gone by, and events in the world seem to be hastening toward the final stage in the overthrow of the kingdoms of the world, in preparation for the setting up of that of our Lord and Savior. It is a very happy thought that the unhappiness and wickedness which prevails throughout the world is soon to be dealt with by Him with a view to its abolition.. It is a very solemn thought too that the time remaining on earth for the true members of the Church will soon come to an end, and they will all be united with the Lord. The thought of this is a help to us in our endeavor to cleanse ourselves from all the filthiness. of the flesh and spirit which still clings to us, and to- perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.

We all still appreciate most heartily, in fact, more than ever, the articles in the "Herald," and we feel that we cannot be too grateful to the Lord, and to you, dear brethren, for the very blessed and often timely help we have received through them. We have for years taken one of the articles from the "Herald" each Sunday night. for reading and discussion on the various points' dealt within it; we have found this exceedingly helpful, and that it impresses the truths dealt with more firmly on our minds. There is one article in the September issue which has impressed me particularly, -- that on "The Just Shall Live by Faith." In my own case it came to in most opportunely, in connection with some very difficult and trying experiences I am having, and I felt that it had come to me direct from the Lord. I just mention. this so that you may realize that your labor, which I am sure is one of love, is not in vain.

With much Christian love, in which Sister M----- heartily joins,
Your brother in Christ,
C. F. M. - Aus.