

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XX February, 1937 No. 2

Meditations in 2 Timothy 1:1-12

In four parts*- Part 1

THE Second Epistle to Timothy is one of the three Pastoral Letters, or letters to pastors, which St. Paul wrote while he was in the Roman prison, not long before his ' death as a martyr for his Lord.

The time in which he wrote was one of great danger. The Emperor, Nero, had set fire to the city of Rome and had turned the popular anger against the suspected and hated Christians, resulting in an outburst of cruel warfare against them. Persecution was in the air. All men had forsaken the Apostle. One faithful friend, Luke, and only one, remained with him. Allegiance to the Lord Jesus was taken to mean high treason to the State, and Christians were regarded as the enemies of mankind.

Realizing the conditions under which he wrote, we shall the better appreciate such notes of sadness as we may read in this epistle, and marvel the more at the grace which enabled the Lord's Apostle to write such words of comfort and hope as we find it contains.

Timothy -- "Ye Know the Proof of Him"

Timothy, to whom St. Paul writes, is one whose name is very familiar to us, being mentioned in the Book of Acts, as well as by St. Paul in his several letters. Timothy's father was a Gentile, while his mother, the Eunice of our Epistle, was a Jewess. (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5.) From the time when Paul first adopted him as his own personal helper on his pilgrim journeys, until now, when he is Pastor of the Church at Ephesus, Timothy appears to be laboring always in close, and endeared, connection with St. Paul, as a son with his father. (Phil. 2:22.) Their characters would seem to have exactly tended to draw their hearts and affections together. On the one side was the Apostle in whom were wonderfully blended a supreme 'strength of purpose and a far-seeing natural genius with exquisite sensibilities and sympathies, and a love welcoming heart. On the other side was his spiritual son, like him in a devotion, deep and true, to the name and cause of

Christ, while manifestly unlike him in a character shy and sensitive even to timidity, anxious in the face of difficult duty, clinging to a stronger personality than his own, born rather to second- with a noble fidelity- than to lead. This is not expressly stated in the Scriptures concerning Timothy, but there are unmistakable allusions to this trait in his character.

* In the preparation of these Meditations we have not hesitated to consult available helps, and we desire to acknowledge our special indebtedness to H. C. G. Moule, from whose devotional commentary we have drawn liberally.

For example, in 1 Cor. 16:10, 11, the Apostle admonishes the Church at Corinth: "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear; for he worketh the work -of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him; but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me; for I look for him with the brethren." We could hardly imagine the Apostle writing in this strain about John the Baptist or about the Apostle Peter. Such likenesses, and such differences, would draw together their hearts into a friendship of the tenderest and deepest, when once Christ had made them one. The strong man would find a joy and a solace in the devotion to him of the less strong. The younger man and weaker would feel as if the presence, or at least the knowledge of the life and possible presence of his talented, yet most humanly tender leader, constituted, under God, his most precious earthly tie. Joined to each other in the Lord with that peculiarly strong and holy bond which links one who has received the Gospel to the one from whom he received it, and which links the helper to the one he has helped, they would need each other, meet each other, gain strength and help from each other, in a thousand ways.

Timothy's Dark Outlook

And now, what aspect does life take for Timothy? He stands at the darkest hour of his day. For some time he has been doing his best to be a leader rather than a follower. If we understand the first letter aright, he has been trying to act as the leader of a little group of churches in and around Ephesus—a task far less to his liking we may be sure, than the happy simplicity of taking and doing, one by one, the instructions of his own beloved leader, Paul. He has had the pain, the strain, the solitary and anxious trouble, for such it would be to him, of standing alone and in the front; tasting the dreariness of a prominence for which he felt no natural gift. This would be a sad experience at any time for one of Timothy's temperament; but what would it be at a crisis when the Neronian terror grew daily more formidable, and when to be prominent among the hated Christians was to be marked for probable destruction? Then, on the other hand, at that, particular time, under just that strain of circumstances, apparently in and from Timothy's very presence, while he wept in an agony of tears (2 Timothy 1:4) St. Paul, who had joined him for a time, was torn from him by the police or soldiers of the persecutor, and carried out and away for martyrdom. Who that has the least power to feel through the heart of another does not ache with some sense of that agony as he thinks upon it? It was death in life to Timothy. The burdened mind and the broken heart were blended into one dreadful consciousness of blind distress. Timothy stood awfully lonely, yet awfully exposed, in face of a world of, thronging sorrows. Well might he have been shaken to the root of his faith. Indeed it must have been only by the grace of God that he was not overwhelmed in darkest despair.

To such a heart, when some sad weeks had passed, came this letter, our Second Epistle to Timothy, to pour its mighty sympathies into his sorrows, and to bid him be strong again in the living Lord Jesus Christ.

Apparent Failure of the Gospel

Not only must things have seemed very black indeed so far as the personal prospects of both Paul and Timothy were concerned, but the sacred cause to- which they had devoted their lives, the glorious Gospel of God was apparently a failure. There was nothing from the natural outlook to tell them that the crisis which was before them meant anything less than the complete,

suppression of the cause of Christ. The Roman Empire was intolerant of secret societies, and it knew how to extinguish them. In its view Christianity was a very dangerous secret society, and it was a secret society with no material forces at its command. It could be suppressed; it **was to be** suppressed; the statesman, the despot, the fanatic, were all agreed upon it. And now the far most important leader of the society was in prison, and would soon in fact be dead.

Accustomed as we in America are to the exercise and enjoyment of freedom of thought and speech it takes an effort on our part to realize that when this letter was written the Gospel trembled, humanly speaking, on the verge of annihilation. Did Paul, did Timothy, never ask themselves if it would not be annihilated in fact? We may be sure they did. And their only answer would be, not a calculated forecast of probabilities, but a grasp, strong as death, while full of the life of faith, upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And that grasp would not be easy. It would cost them an agony of effort to gird up the loins of their minds and hope to the end.

Another New Testament writer, James, has said: "Behold we count them happy that endure." Yes -- and we will not only count these two, who endured, happy, but by God's grace we will follow them, as they followed Christ. For us, too, in the cause of Christ today, -- unless we are strangely insensible to facts around us, there hang thunderclouds enough and to spare in the sky of both church and world. We are passing through a time of suspense and shadows-that hour of trial which was to come upon the whole world to try them that dwell upon the earth. (Rev. 3:10.) Does any thinking Christian doubt it? Well let us remember that the same grace which sustained these two soldiers of the Cross will disclose to us also, the true secret of victory -- not clever forecasts as to the future, but a personal reliance on the One in whom they trusted. "I. know whom" (not merely what I believe, but whom) -- "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." -- 2 Timothy 1:12.

"He is a Chosen Vessel unto Me"

"Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord." (2 Timothy 1:1, 2.) So begins this most wonderful of farewells, Paul dictating, Luke writing on the papyrus sheet before him. To us the style is somewhat official and distant "Paul, an Apostle," etc., but when Paul lived and wrote, the most familiar correspondence would open this way. And what reflections are ours as we pause for a moment at these opening words. The very name, Paul, occasions in us an emotion of thankfulness, reminding us at once of a personality so vivid, so human. We have come to feel that we know him in his splendid strength; in his strength of **nature**, manifested in an intellect, a will, a love of the highest kind; in his strength of **grace**, the power of Christ resting upon him (2 Cor. 12:9); Christ magnified in his body. (Phil. 1:20.) We have come also to feel that we know him through the heart-moving attraction of his **weaknesses**, his physical frailties so often alluded to by himself and others.

Then, too, what thoughts spring up in our hearts as we reflect on his apostleship! An apostleship was a rare commission; indeed, we know that there are only the twelve, and we could well pause to give this high office a larger place in our meditation here. However, we must be content in noting at this time that the Apostles were our Lord's chosen witnesses of His resurrection. Their **general** commission did not greatly differ from that of the other disciples, nor from that of our own, which we understand to be to preach the Gospel to the meek. But their **special** mission was that of witnessing; and among the many things concerning Jesus to which they were to bear faithful testimony, the most important of all was the fact of His resurrection.

"Paul, Apostle of Christ Jesus." -- He had often called himself by that title before, in the old days, in the fulness of his powers and ministry. Some in those days, just as in our own time, had questioned his apostleship -- had, in fact, denied that he was an Apostle. But to such denial he had expostulated: "Am I not an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? [that is to say, the Risen Lord]. Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an Apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." (1 Cor. 9:1, 2.) It had been his *joy* to realize himself as just this -- the emissary of his Lord. The realization that the Lord had chosen him for his high office filled him continually with both a peace of mind and a vigorous energy, animating him for the care of all the churches (2 Cor. 11:28), and for the thousand common duties and burdens of the day. It relieved him of all that fatigue which comes of purely personal ambitions, and it precluded the secret dreariness of self-conceit. He belonged to Another; there in that settled fact was the secret of his life. He was the chosen and sent emissary of Another; in that thought the whole work of preaching and of pastoral care was disburdened of the haunting sadness of doubt and of the exhaustion which comes with a continual publicity, and it was filled with a sense of sure commission, and of never-failing support, as he rested in the will of the One who had sent him. And now once more, yet once more, close to the grave, old and worn-out, and in the persecutor's final grasp, he calls himself by the old title, and rests, with all his weariness upon it. He is Apostle of Christ Jesus even to the end. He can travel no more. He can never again exercise a pastoral care over the Church. He will never be the means of founding another ecclesia, nor ever plan another tour for their development and instruction. He has but to bid farewell and die. Yet he remains to the last in the unaltered possession of the One who had commissioned him. Even if his message-bearing is reduced to one last word to the executioner, he remembers, with perfect peace, that he is still "the chosen vessel"; chosen, not because of any good in him, yet chosen, nevertheless, and at the Chooser's service to the end of his earthly career, and then at His service for evermore on the other side.

"Ye have not Chosen Me but I have Chosen You"

Brethren, we have not been chosen to be apostles, but if we are truly consecrated to the Lord, as branches in the true vine receiving our nourishment in the spiritual life, producing the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control, that fruit wherein; if we bear it richly, the Father will be glorified, we may rest assured that we have been chosen too, and this assurance will strengthen us in our endeavors to carry the Gospel to those who seem to have a hearing ear for it; will energize us in our ministries on behalf of those who have already embraced that Gospel, and will infuse a divine peace in our hearts when the time comes for us to pass from this earthly scene to join the happy throng on the other side. - John 15:2, 8, 16; Gal. 5:22.

In our Authorized Version the opening words read, "Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ," but a better translation is given in the Revised Version, where we read: "Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus." It is interesting to note that while the other New Testament writers invariably speak of our Lord as Jesus Christ, St. Paul usually reverses the order of the words and says "Christ Jesus."

We cannot be sure that this order has any particular significance, but since the word "Christ" means Anointed, or Messiah, and refers to our Lord's exalted office, whereas the word "Jesus" has reference to the individual personality of the One who bore that name; the thought has been suggested that the order in which St. Paul places these two words indicates that with the deep and intimate affection which he had for his Lord, there was always mingled a spirit of reverent

worship, becoming in any who are conscious of being under so infinite an obligation as he acknowledged himself to be to Jesus.

(To be Continued)

Holding the Profession of our Faith

"Having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." - Heb. 10:19-39.

THE AUTHOR of the Book of Hebrews, be he who he may, was well acquainted with the laws and ceremonies of the Jewish people and with the ancient customs of the Israelites in their early experiences in the wilderness, with the tabernacle of the congregation, its furniture, and especially with its priesthood. He recognizes them as a type and compares the priests of the Aaronic order with Melchisedec, that higher type of Christ, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually" -- "who received tithes from Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises." "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him."

He is addressing a class of Jewish Christians who still lived in Palestine and under the disturbing influences of the old order of things, and in great danger of falling away from the new, and lapsing again into that condition from which they had escaped. He is appealing to them by reminding them of the superiority of the antitype, of the greatness of Christ, and the new order, when measured by the old sacrificial order--great as that was in the sight of the Jew of his day, who had it firmly ingrafted into his very being by sixteen centuries of more or less close obedience. The Jew regarded himself as the chosen of God even though he had constantly departed from the law. He remembered the miraculous deliveries of his people; God's leading from Egypt into the promised land; the glorious prophecies of his future greatness; the songs of David; the measure of achievement in the days of the Maccabees.

Unfolding Glorious Truths Hidden in the Tabernacle

Looking back over the nineteen intervening centuries we see the scheming leaders; the priests and politicians of the day, inciting the populace against their Roman oppressors. The Jew was never conquered in spirit and he readily reacted to their play upon his nature. Prejudice, hatred, and all the evil of a distorted mind were let loose, little realizing to what he was "hastening both as an individual and as a nation--that great tragedy of destruction which in God's plan was permitted to engulf them, scattering them over the face of the earth, where "they served other gods than they whom their fathers served."

At such a time the teaching of the despised Nazarene was equal to heresy and treachery, for it not only shocked their religious sense, "but the national as well, for the followers of Christ have been taught that His "Kingdom is not of this world else would His soldiers fight." They were encouraged to non-resistance when the armies of the conquerors should come upon them. They were held in abhorrence because of this and coupled with their love of the old ritual and the

memory of their former glory they found themselves longing for the "flesh pots of Egypt," so to speak. They had lost their first love, and were tempted to renounce the cause of Him under whose banner they had enlisted.

The writer of the Epistle warns them of the danger of backsliding and explains to them the glories and beauties to which the old ordinances point, the hidden purposes of the rites and ceremonies of the old regime. He leads them step by step in the unfolding of these truths; shows to them how much higher God's ways are than man's ways; speaks of the marvels and wonders of the type and shows them the grandeur, the greater glories, of the antitype. Great as was Moses, Christ is greater. Important as was the sacrifice of bulls and goats, it must be repeated each year and for each offense against the moral and ceremonial laws of Moses, while the sacrifice of Christ was made once for all-for all time and for all mankind. He endeavored to stir up their pure minds to a remembrance of the things in which they once rejoiced, of how the old order of things must give way to the new, and of how the Ancient of Days had given to One like unto the Son of Man an everlasting Kingdom -- a Kingdom which should never pass away. The Master had taught them to pray for the coming of that Kingdom upon the earth, that the will of God should be done upon earth as it is done in heaven. With an understanding of the old tabernacle and its services we are better prepared to understand the mind of the Jewish Christian and of the writer of this Epistle to the Hebrews.

Stand Fast in the Faith

As the test was upon the Church of that day, so is it upon the Church of today. Our experiences are similar to theirs. How great the temptation sometimes to yield a little here and a little there, to compromise to a small degree with the spirit of the Age, tempted to listen to the voice of the siren and be lured upon the rocks of false views coming like strong delusions upon the Church. How often we need the Apostle's admonition: "Stand fast therefore in the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." - Gal. 5:1.

To stand fast means to continue well grounded in the faith once delivered to the saints as touching upon sound doctrines, contending earnestly for that faith in a Creator, who prompted by His love for a race made for His own pleasure, has given us an outline of His Plan for their salvation, their recovery from the degradation to which sin has carried them; faith in the redemptive work of Christ as the foundation upon which is built the entire structure of the Christian Church, that Church whose names were written in heaven before the foundation of the world; faith in the "exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." - 2 Pet. 1:3, 4.

These things and many others are being assailed by the enemies of God. Doubt and uncertainty prevail upon every side and few know today just where they do stand in regard to their religious beliefs. We find the promised strong delusions are abroad deceiving all but the very elect. But let us press on unto full sanctification, for this is the will of God. - 1 Thess. 4:3.

"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again, the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. And this we will do, if God permit." - Heb. 6:1, 3.

The Apostle explains how the typical ceremonies and the high priest pointed to a new arrangement upon an infinitely higher plane and says, "We have such a high priest who is set on

the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in, the heavens: a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." (Heb. 8:1, 2.) Again referring to the Atonement Day sacrifice he says of the high priest, "And it is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that took for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." - Heb. 9:27, 28.

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. . . . Wherefore when **He** cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared Me In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sins Thou hast no pleasure. . . . Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus. Christ once for all." "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." - Heb. 10:1-10, 19.

Need for the Apostle's Warning Today

Here is the Apostle's appeal to the Jewish Christian of his day. While our difficulties are not exactly those of his time, yet they may be similar, and we may be in danger of falling away after we have once tasted of the heavenly gift and have been "made partakers of the Holy Spirit." The same appeal and the same warnings may be needed to bring us into a close relationship with our Lord and Master. Our faith in God and our affections may have weakened; we may be dozing and may need awakening.

The writer of this epistle has most powerfully shown the superiority of the new and living way based upon the sacrifice of Jesus. While we are not in danger of passing over into Judaism, yet there are things which may just as surely bring about our destruction, "for if we sin willfully after that we have received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

If we look within ourselves with a mind open what may we find? Do we maintain the fervor and intensity of our early Christian life? Have we departed in any way or degree from our first love? Are we developing character, and do we show increasingly' the fruit of the Spirit? We may be zealous for the cause of Christ, and we may do much work, but is there anything lacking which we once possessed? If so, how can we make our way back to our former condition of loyalty, and maintain our standing before God? Have we to any degree trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith we were sanctified, an unholy thing, and have we done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

The Apostle has made a masterful comparison of the type and antitype, between Moses and Christ, between the sacrifice of the old economy and that of our Savior. He had compared our High Priest with the Jewish high priest and shown the failure of the latter and the superiority and efficacy of the former. He had explained how the high priest entered once a year into the holy of holies with the blood of the bullock and the -oat to sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, to make atonement for the coming year, and if properly done it was indicated by his emerging and

blessing the people. As he passed under the veil he represented the death of the true Christian and his entering the presence of God as a member of the Body of Christ. It also represented according to the argument the privilege of each consecrated Christian of this Age coming through the Head of our great High Priest into the presence of God Himself that we might commune with Him. Here we find our High Priest, as our advocate vouching for us as long as we remain under His robe of righteousness.

The Blood of Christ Always Efficacious

We are bidden to enter with boldness into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus. Boldness here in the Greek means boldness of speech or speaking freely all that one thinks. Thus we may come boldly to God by -the blood of Jesus Christ and lay before Him the problems which perplex us, and obtain help by the renewing of our strength at the Source of all strength. Entrance into the most holy was forbidden to all men except the high priest, but now we have access to the real Holy of Holies, for the first was but an emblem of the second, into which we may enter by this new and living way, the original meaning of which referred to something slain recently or just dead. The word "new" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament with this meaning and indicates a freshly prepared way, and a living way, because it is always open, the blood of Christ always as efficacious as when it was first shed, while the blood of the animal sacrificed must be sprinkled while it was yet warm, before it became clotted and accounted polluted. It is the way of life for the whole race in God's due time. It is like a fountain always flowing, constant and perpetual, unchanging as the living God Himself-a way consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say His flesh, set aside for us, His Body, and for the salvation n of man. His body here is likened to the veil which separated the holy from the most holy of the, tabernacle, beyond which none dared even to look, while we are bidden to enter boldly into His presence because we have a High Priest over the house of God, a greater than the high priest over the tabernacle in the Jewish economy.

"Hearts Sprinkled from an Evil Conscience"

The next exhortation is to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Of what possible avail can this new and living way be unless we make use of it. We are living in a day of great intellectuality, when men 'are questioning all things, when their materialism demands visible proof before a proposition is accepted as true. Speculative religion has replaced the faith professed by those of the past. Belief in God with His provision for the race no longer fills the minds of men with hope. Education seems to have separated God from man rather than to have drawn Him closer. Increase of knowledge has made man a skeptic, an agnostic, or has lost him in a maze of discordant views and he exclaims, Who knows?-or with Pilate of, old, "What is truth?" To quote, "You may prove that this Book contains a divine revelation, but it is very possible that the proof may go for nothing and the belief it produces perish, unless by the devout study of the sacred pages the conscience and the heart come to discover that a voice of mighty and mysterious power speaks through the writings of prophets, psalmists, evangelists, and apostles. You may prove that by the Lord Jesus Christ atonement was made for human sin, but nothing can infallibly perpetuate a full assurance of this great doctrine, except the consciousness that through Christ's death the soul is enabled to speak to God without fear."

"Cleanse Thou Me from Secret Faults"

The Apostle has proved that through the death of Christ we may enter boldly into the holiest, so he emphatically says, "Let us draw near." How comforting to us, if we feel that in any way whatsoever we may have become lax in our privileges, if our love has grown cold, if we have allowed the things of the flesh to unduly occupy our consecrated minds and crowd out the spiritual things, if we have become indifferent and lukewarm in our devotions, or 'by any other means, upon self-examination we find we are not measuring up to our privileges.

We may go further in our examination with the searchlight of a sensitive conscience turned within us. Are we guilty of any secret sin visible perhaps only to ourselves and our God? "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults," is the remedy. Let us scrutinize ourselves with a sane and honest scrutiny. Let us remove any spot or wrinkle from our garments. "The way, Thou knowest." We have an Advocate with the Father. Let us cry unto Him for help, for He is faithful that promised. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance that the shed blood is efficacious, with an unwavering confidence which leaves no doubt, with a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience. Sin repented of is freely forgiven and no longer produces remorse and fear of God's wrath, but a consciousness of joy and peace with gratitude and love welling up and overflowing, and we realize that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of love, and of power, and of a sound mind. We emerge from the experience with a feeling of increased strength and confidence in God's love, for we have again proved that He cares for us, and that we have a part in the divine Plan, and that He is gracious and ready to forgive.

(To be continued)

Abiding in the Love of God

"As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. If ye keep My Commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." - John 15:9-11.

THE LAST of these three verses shows that they are to be taken as a sort of conclusion to the preceding parable of the Vine and Branches, for it looks back over that illustration of the unity of the vine and its branches, and declares the purpose of Jesus in using it. The parable itself has ended, but the thoughts of it still linger in our Lord's mind, and its echo may be heard in His remarks afterward as the vibration of a great bell after the stroke has ceased. The two main thoughts of the illustration are that participation in the life of Christ is the fountain of all goodness and blessing, and that abiding in Him is the only means of participating in His life. These same thoughts, free from all of the parabolical element, appear in the texts we are now to consider.

The parable speaks of abiding in Christ; these three texts define that abiding, and make it still more clear and more gracious by substituting for it the words, "abide in My love." The parable tells of fruit, the sure result of living contact with Christ as His life flows into ours. These texts also lay much emphasis on our efforts, as "keeping His commandments." Again we notice that while abiding in Christ is the sole condition of fruit-bearing, yet the converse is equally true, that fruitbearing, or keeping the commandments, is the condition of abiding in Christ. Thus Jesus takes His lesson, as it were, and turns it around before us, letting us see both sides of it, and then tells us that He does all this for one purpose, which in itself is a token of His love for us, namely that our hearts may be filled with a fullness of joy, perennial like His own.

Keynotes of the Message

Again we notice that there are three words which may be taken as the keynotes of these three verses, namely love, obedience, joy. Let us examine them in that order.

First, we have the assurance of a divine love in which it is our duty and privilege to abide. "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you continue ye in My love."

What wonderful words these are! They carry us into the very depths of a love, all love excelling. To suggest to us that there is a profound analogy between the intimate relation of the Father and the Son, and that closeness of relationship that we may have with Jesus, is indeed well nigh incomprehensible to us. Yet it is that very revelation that appears over and over again in the solemnities of these last hours and words of our blessed Lord. Think of it! Jesus here claims to be, in a unique manner, the object of the Father's love, and He 'also claims to be able to love **like** God. "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you"-as deeply, as purely, as fully, as eternally, and with all the perfectness which must belong to the affection of God. As beloved of God and as loving like 'God, He claims for Himself a place in our hearts 'which none other can fill, and He thus declares that the love which falls on us from His heart, pierced for us, is really the love of God into which He brings those whom He loves.

Abiding in His Love to Us

In this tender, perfect affection He exhorts us 'to abide. The **command** to abide in Him suggests much that is blessed, but to have that abiding **in** Him resolved into such an abiding in His infinite love is a drawing of us still closer to Himself. It is obvious that what is meant is not primarily the continuance of our attitude of love for Him, but rather that of our continuance in the sweet and sacred atmosphere of His love to us. This, as the Apostle John shows, is the divine order: "We love Him, because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19.) Thus the connection between the two expressions of this first verse, necessarily means that the love in which we are to abide should be identical with the love which had been previously spoken of, and that is clearly shown to be His love to us, and not ours to Him. But certain it is that whoever thus abides in Christ's love to him, will echo it back again' in a continuous love to Christ. So the two will flow together, and to abide in the conscious possession of His love to us, is the inseparable cause of its effect-our abiding in the continual exercise and outgoing of a fulness of love to Him.

Abiding in His love! What a quiet, blessed abode this is for us! How evident it is that the lesson that underlies all this sweet, comforting discourse of Jesus just before His death, is that of our security within the solid protection of His love. All that He says in these last hours, about dwelling in Him, in His joy, in His words, in His peace, is -to assure us that we are dwelling securely under the shadow of the Almighty. And what sorrow or care, trouble or temptation, would be able to reach us folded thus in the fortress of so strong a love? Surely they who make their abode there, and habitually dwell behind such a love, need fear 'no foes, no circumstance; they will be lifted high above them all. O to abide, really dwell, within the clefts of that Rock! To "abide in My love," what other defense could be needed. They are safe whose place of abode is the riven heart of Jesus. He holds them in His own right hand, and will not let them go.

The Secret of Abiding is Obedience

We note next the obedience by which we continue in the love of Jesus. The analogy on which He has already touched is still continued. In our second text He says, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." Here we note that He claims for Himself an absolute and unbroken conformity with the will of God, and consequently He enjoys an uninterrupted communion in the Father's love. No more wonderful words were ever spoken than these quiet ones in which Jesus declares that never, in all His life, had there been the slightest deflection or want of complete conformity between the Father's will and His desires and actions. Thus He teaches us that the secret of abiding in His love, is obedience. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." - John 14:15.

Let us notice something else here in this portion of our second text. We note that Jesus does not say, "Obey God as I have done and He will love you but He says, "Obey Me as I obey God and I will love you." Is He here coming between us and God? No, indeed, but He is leading us up to the Father by a share in His own filial obedience. Here we are blessedly assured that the oneness of the Vine and the branches represent a union that is one of sublime reality. Truly we are "made the righteousness -of God in Him," and in our union with Him, we do but give Him back the love we owe, that in the ocean depths of His love, ours may richer, fuller be.

Then, of course, the keeping of His commandments is something more than any mere outward conformity by action. It is the inward heart-harmony of the will, the bowing of the whole being to the will of God. Such are they who can say truthfully,

"O! speak, and I will hear;
Command and I obey;
My willing feet with joy shall haste
To run Thy righteous way."

This obedience, the obedience of the hands, the feet, the tongue, the life, because the heart obeys, and does so because it loves, is the condition of our continuing in the love of Jesus.

He will love us more and more as we obey His commandments, for although His loving heart is ever charged with the love of pity and of desire to help, He cannot but feel a growing sense of satisfaction and gratified affection toward us, in proportion to the measure in which we become like Himself. This is the intention in His words, "Even as **I have kept** My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." The love that wept over us, When we were enemies through wicked works, will "rejoice over us with singing, when we are His friends. The love that sought the sheep that wandered, will surely pour itself out yet more tenderly, and lavish its gifts still more abundantly upon the sheep when it follows closely in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd. A commandment it is, but how full of entreaty is its tone: "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love." Nothing shall ever be permitted to come between you and Me which will make it impossible for the sweet tenderness of that holy love to come to your hearts.

Loving Obedience Increases Capacity to Receive

The Lord's methods do not vary in this matter of sending His showers of blessing. His word to Israel of old was, "Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Mal. 3:10, R. V.) "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," and thus the obedience we render Him for love's sake will, according to the declaration to Israel, make us still more -capable of receiving, and more blessedly conscious of possessing the love of Jesus Christ. No wonder, then, that we are told "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15:22.) As the slightest cloud before the sun will prevent it from focusing its rays to a burning point through a convex glass, so even the scarcely visible acts of our self-will may prevent our feeling the warmth of God's love upon our hearts. Every earth-born cloud, every rebellious reaction will mar the true enjoyment of His favor. We cannot rejoice in Christ unless we are deeply concerned to faithfully conform to His word and will. There cannot possibly be any real comfort and richness in our religion unless it is permitted to work itself out in the daily life. We must do what He wants us to do, and do it eagerly, because it is His will for us, if we desire to have His love fill the ever-increasing capacity that loving obedience produces in a truly responsive and receptive heart.

And, further, let us note how all these deepest things of Christ's parable lesson and its elaboration in the three verses we have before us, bring us at last to a plain setting forth of practical duty. We have been shown that the love which works is the love that grows larger and fuller, just as the tree that is bearing much fruit, is the tree that is healthy, as witnessed in its increasing productiveness.

We may talk about the depth and sublime character of these last sayings of Jesus, and they are both deep and sublime, but for all that, they are 'connected in a very simple and practical way with the plainest possible duties.

How plainly we are taught that it is useless to talk about communion with Jesus, and about abiding in Him, of being in possession of His love, and about all those other features of Christian experience, unless we verify them by the plain way of practice. It is only when we love deeply, passionately, that this verification of profession in practice will become the habit and unconscious manifestation of a genuine love and obedience filling our hearts. "Let no man deceive you," the Apostle tells us, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous." Doing as Jesus bids us, and doing it habitually and gladly, brings us to the place in our spiritual vision and growth where we can clearly discern that above all other considerations, this revelation of His love for us, has as its special objective, the influencing of our character, life, and conduct, until we really know that **we dwell in love**. God is love, and he that dwelleth in the love of God, is there because he has discovered that love is the fulfilling of the law, and love does not ask, "Must I do this," but always says, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart." - Psa. 40:8.

That We might have His Joy

We come now to our last text, "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." In a very little while He is to be in Gethsemane, praying with "strong crying and tears," and a little later be nailed to the cross of shame—a strange time surely to be talking of His fulness of joy. Was He really a rejoicing Christ? Are we not told that "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"? Yes, indeed! But His was a joy rooted, not in circumstances conducive to freedom from sorrow and suffering, but in something far more important. The secret of His joy is revealed in the words prophetically spoken of Him, "Because Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with **the oil of gladness** above Thy fellows." (Psa. 45:7; Heb. 1:9.) The deep truth that lies in this prophetic portrait of Jesus tells us much. It reveals clearly that it was no idle claim He made when He could say, "I delight to do Thy will, O God." And none more than He could affirm, "The joy of the Lord [Jehovah] is My strength." Thus the deep truth that lies in these statements regarding Himself, is the same underlying fact He would impart to us, to the end that our joy may likewise be full, yes, even though "through much tribulation we shall enter the Kingdom." The joy He promises us is the same that He here claims as being His own experience, the joy that comes through an absolute surrender and submission in love to the expressed and revealed will of the loving Father. This was His joy, a joy, in spite of sorrows such as none but He could know, in spite of the baptism with which He was baptized, and in spite of all the burden and the weight of our chastisement He bore. Yet this joy remained with Him, and made Him the most joyful of the children of God.

This is the joy He offers to us, a joy which is the result of perfect obedience, a joy coming from a surrender of self at the bidding of love. And there is no joy that a Christian is capable of, comparable for a moment with that which springs from a surrender of everything under the impulse of love. That is a "joy unspeakable, and full of glory, for it is because of Him, "Whom having not seen we love, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable."

The Settled Confidence of the Spirit's Witness

And just as we love Him because He has so loved us, and because His love has been shed abroad in our hearts, so with our knowing a participation in His joy. We must have His joy in our hearts in order that our joy may 'be full. This is the import of His own words, when He says, "that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." This is a conclusive fact. Our joy will remain, be permanent, abiding, if, and only if, His joy is ours. Some glad day we, if faithful to present privileges, shall hear the wonderful words of welcome and commendation, "Well done, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." But let us not overlook the importance of our being privileged **now**, through obedient faith and fervent love, to enter into the joys of our blessed Lord. He surely intends that as He, "for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, and despised its shame," so it will be with us even now. Such was His reason for giving, in this last message, such words of comfort to encourage the troubled hearts of His immediate disciples, and through them to pass on the words of consolation to us. Thus, then, our joy, He intends shall be, up to the measure of our capacity, ever advancing towards a greater, possession of His joy-ennobled, filled to the full. This in turn will mean the enjoyment of the peace He bequeathed to us in this same last hour that preceded the cross. There will be a deeper calmness of spirit, and the settled confidence that comes as the Spirit's witness to those who have entered thus into the joy of their Lord.

Brethren, there is only one joy that is worthy the name, and that is the joy that comes from this union with Jesus, the Vine. That union is a reality only when we learn to appropriate Him, and when, "of His fulness have we received, and grace for grace." And as we have just seen -in our study of these three texts, love, obedience, and joy, are all available to us in the measure Jesus has set forth, **if we "abide in Him."** Let us remember then, that the greatest of all graces is love; that love, which is His love, received into our hearts, will mold them into its own likeness; that love received into our hearts, will knit, and it alone will knit, all those who participate in it into a common bond, sweet, deep, and permanent.

If we want to know the blessedness and the sweetness of victory over all our inherent unloveliness, and to walk in the liberty of love, we can get it only by keeping close to Jesus Christ, the Vine. In any circle, the nearer the points of the circumference are to the center, the closer they will necessarily be to one another. As we draw nearer, each for himself, to the Master, we will assuredly feel that we are coming closer to all those who stand around the same center, and draw from Him the same life. In the early spring, when the wheat is green and young, and is just a little above the soil in which it stands, it comes up in the lines in which it was sown, parted from one another and distinctly showing their separation, each row from the other. But, when the full corn in the ear waves in the autumn winds, all the lines and separations have disappeared, and there is one unbroken tract of waving golden grain. So it should be in the Lord's wheat-field. When the life in Christ is low in His professed people, they may be expected to be found somewhat like those early rows of tender wheat, and be found drawn up in rigid lines, but as maturity is reached those lines should disappear, and the field present a unity reflecting the golden tint of ripeness and readiness for the garner. If we live the life of Christ, and the love of Christ fills our hearts, we shall surely have entered into this ripened maturity, and be able to reach out to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and our hearts will thrill with thankfulness in the thought that we are all one in Him.

"How good it is when, weaned from all beside,
With God alone the heart is satisfied!
How good the heart's still chamber thus to close
There, in the sweetness of His love repose,
To hear His voice amid the stillness blest,
And lay me down upon His arm to rest!"
- *Contributed.*

"My Soul be on Thy Guard"

WHILE, as the Apostle predicted, "perilous times" are upon us, in which some in the Church will "stumble" and some "fall," and when "the love of many shall wax cold," let us not forget that it is "he that endureth [faithfully] to the end [of his trial], the same shall be saved." Remember the Apostle's advice, to take trials and oppositions and misrepresentations cheerfully, joyously, patiently, knowing that, so endured, they will "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." But, as the Apostle adds, to secure such blessed results from trials, persecutions, and oppositions, we must remember to "look not at the things that are seen [earthly things- and prospects], but at things that are **unseen** [the heavenly and eternal things]." We are to endure "as seeing Him who is invisible." Greater is He that is with us than all that be against us. (Heb. 11:27; 1 John 4:4-8.) "Who is he that will harm you [really], if ye be followers of that which is good?" (Read 1 Pet. 3:13-16; Rom. 8:31-39.) The opposition of evil can work only good to "the elect," those who are called according to God's purpose. To, all who are of the true Zion the promise is, "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper."

When that noble servant of God, John Wesley, was zealous in opposing Satan, and preaching a full consecration to God, he provoked Satan's enmity, and the latter found mouthpieces amongst ambitious and jealous "false brethren" who spread abroad vile rumors from time to time, not only assailing his teachings, but even his moral character. His plan was to make no defense. He argued that if he should engage in personal disputes it would be just what Satan would want—a hindrance to his work. Finally, however, when a most malicious rumor, reflecting on his moral character, was started by some prominent persons, and the entire work seemed likely to be greatly injured by it, his brother Charles and some others came to him, and said, John, you must answer this charge or your reputation is gone. John replied in substance, thus, No; I will keep right along with my work. When I consecrated myself to the Lord, I gave Him my reputation as well as all else that I possess. The Lord is at the helm! Our Lord Jesus, by His faithfulness, "made Himself of no reputation," and was crucified as a blasphemer and between outlaws, yet He opened not His mouth! No, I will make no defense. A certain class, evil at heart, would believe the evil reports regardless of my denials; and those thus alienated will no doubt, as in the early Church, go "out from us because they were not of us." "The Lord knoweth them that are His," and will keep His own; and none shall pluck them out of His hand. Besides, the Lord may see that some are thinking of me, rather than of Him and His message which I seek to declare.

The results we all know. The message of holiness with faith swept over the world, and its influence is not yet lost. And John Wesley is still loved for his work's sake in every civilized part of the world; but his traducers are forgotten. There is a lesson in this for all, as an illustration of the Lord's words—"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." - *C. T. Russell.*

The History of the Church

No. 3

"Then what is the Jew's superiority? Much in every way."

THE PHILOSOPHY of the Pagan world has been compared to a torch casting its flickering light into the darkness of a mighty cavern; Judaism then was as the radiance of moonlight, clear and steady, touching the deeper shadows of the darkness, and reflecting, with the promise of a coming day, the light of a Sun already shining upon it. Much advantage then had the Jew in every way for to him was entrusted the Scripture of God, speaking not in the sermons of brook and of stones, eloquent though they may be of creative power and intelligence, but in the loving tones of a personal Creator whose Father's heart must still remember though an earthly parent forget her child and through all those inspired pages, whether by historian, law-giver, or prophet, there lay the transcendent promise, the undying hope of a coming Messiah -- a coming but dimly at first revealed to undone man outside the eastern gate as One who yet would bruise the serpent's head. Prophet, greater than Moses; Priest, after the order of Melchisedec; the Rod from Jesse's stem, the Branch from out his root; wise Counselor; strong Deliverer -- all shadowed forth in manifold distinction the greatness of the coming, needed Christ.

"For He decreed of old that those whom He predestined should share the likeness of His Son -- - that He might be the firstborn of a great brotherhood."

Prefigured in the Old Testament, revealed in the New, came Jesus of Nazareth in due time to the shore of Galilee where weary crowds pressed close and pleading hands touched hopefully His robe. Calling to lowly fishermen, He bade them leave their boats and, trusting, follow on, to witness of that Life to all the world.

The faith of Christ, at first confined to Jerusalem, spread on to Samaria--a town regarded by the Jew as half-heathen though situated in the very heart of Palestine. The Samaritans, returned Jews from Assyria, were touched by those elements of Pagan worship absorbed during the period of captivity. On to Antioch in north Syria, third city in importance in the Roman Empire, the message was carried, and to Damascus the other side of Jordan.

The Apostle John seemed to confine his efforts for the first twenty years after Pentecost to Palestine, and we find him one of those present at the council in Jerusalem in A. D. 50. Then we lose sight of him entirely until he is found in Ephesus and, later on, an exile to Patmos, dying in Ephesus about the year A. D. 98, around a hundred years of age. Three great events occurred in the late active years of his life -- the Neronian persecution of the Church, the fall of Jerusalem, and the growth of heresy. Peter, an intensely Jewish character, labored also in Palestine and as far north as Antioch, making a missionary tour through parts of Asia Minor and to Babylon. He, too, was present at the Jerusalem council and, hard as it had been for him to learn that Christianity was for all men, took his stand with Paul, breaking the bonds of Judaism for all time and nullifying its ceremonials as a necessary entrance to the Church. This placed on a common footing all Christian converts, whether tutored under the Jewish schoolmaster of the Law, or taught in the Academy of Plato; whether reaped from the field of unlettered slave, or drawn from freedman's home. Peter seems to have confined his labors to the East, leaving the West to Paul, and there is no historical proof that he founded the Church in Rome, that he was bishop of that

Church, or that he was ever in Rome at all, although there is the possibility that he reached there for a brief period and that he perished there under the persecutions of Nero about A. D. 67.

A Chosen Vessel to the Gentiles

At the tender age of fifteen years there came to Jerusalem an earnest student of the Law to be a pupil of the great Gamaliel. He was born in Tarsus about the year A. D. 4. His father, a Jew, and probably a man of means, had attained to Roman citizenship there. The boy had been reared in the strictest piety, schooled in Scripture and all Rabbinic lore. The city was a seat of Hellenist culture, its university second only to that of Alexandria. The teachers of this school were also zealous preachers, lecturing in the streets and bringing to the motley crowd the morals of the Stoic philosophy. Saul, an ardent worshiper of the one great God of the Hebrews, could not have been ignorant of the many gods worshiped by the people about him, and his writings show a familiarity with the Greek classical literature, though pure from any shade of thereby colored thought. He spoke Greek, the language of that part of Asia Minor where he lived, but loved best the holy tongue of his fathers, or next its Hebrew cognate, the Aramaic, language of our Lord. "It was a day," says one, "when people groped for salvation as a man gropes for a tinder box fallen in the dark. They craved a light to show them a way out of the horror which was existence, and no ritual was too strange, no religion too old, for them to inquire into it." And so not only to the Stoic teacher in the street came the Gentiles, but also to the synagogue of the Jew, peering half-persuadedly through the door, with but the few entering, for the threshold of the Law proved too high, and to step inside was at too great a cost. "God-fearers" they were called, and beholding such as these the devout and zealous soul of the young Jew must have been stirred with deep pity and with a compelling desire that all the world might be won to his God and to Israel's law.

In Jerusalem Saul came in contact with the followers of Jesus. To him they seemed a menace to all that he had loved and hoped and sought for, and the doctrine of a Stephen, who was no ignorant Galilean but a learned Hellenist like himself, a subtle, poison thing. And at the age of thirty as he witnessed Stephen's death, the pure life and the angelic countenance arousing no pity, no regret, in his intolerant, Pharisaical heart, he determined to root out this devastating faith and drive it far from the precincts of his loved Jerusalem. Accordingly we read, in the Book of Acts, "Saul made havoc of the Church." Not content with this, he armed himself with special authority and hurried on to Damascus to arrest all of the hated ones there. A few miles from his destination, still breathing forth his murderous threatenings, the strange thing happened, which resulted in the blinded Saul, being led humbly by the hand, entering Damascus gate, with those kind, reproving tones, "Why persecutest thou Me?" to ring forever in his contrite memory. And so the hateful name of Saul, a name that still filled Christian souls with dread in spite of his conversion, was - changed to Roman Paul, a name to be enshrined throughout the Age on every pious heart, and carved for all eternity upon the twelfth stone of the New Jerusalem.

"I have fought a good fight . . . I have kept the faith."

Poor in personal appearance, afflicted by some unnamed "weakness, encountering treachery in various places, his very life in danger on sea and land, slandered by false brethren, hated by the Jews, treated coldly by some of the Jewish Christians for his utter disregard of Jewish ceremonials in the new life, that which he had tried to destroy he sought now to carry to all the world. How he traveled we do not know, probably on foot, choosing water routes whenever possible as more comfortable and less hazardous in spite of the uncertainty of the elements. Some twelve years, if not longer, he labored, toiling over rocky places and through the briers of the

way, crust in pocket, staff in hand. On he went through Cyprus, Asia Minor, and Greece, the Book of Acts closing abruptly with Paul a prisoner in Rome, his end shrouded in mystery except as reasonable tradition tells of his martyrdom in Nero's reign. And in such a way, perhaps, closed the 'career of the most outstanding of all, the Apostles in character, zeal in learning, in selflessness without equal-his earthly life ended, his work continuing on. He had endured slander as the best of the saints must oftentimes endure, the distress of his heart showing forth on some occasions in the force and irony of his defense, but in the main ignoring it all with that forgiveness born of Christlike love

"Assailed by slander and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life,
And he that forged and he that flung the dart
Had each a brother's interest in his heart."

But his hard and weary pilgrimage had known its joy and comfort in the fellowship along the way: There was Timothy, his spiritual son, his beloved companion; Tychicus, faithful to the last; Gaits of Derby, one of his first converts; Jason, his fellow-countryman from Thessalonica. There were those three happy months, in Corinth where he found fellowship with Titus, Luke, and many of the Christians of that city, among them Gaius whose house was always open for the hospitality so necessary at that time to the Church. We can share in imagination those happy evenings, the high, pure intercourse of Christian minds and hearts, the consolation given one to another, the joyous dwelling upon that greatest of all topics -- that One had lived and died and lived again, triumphant o'er the grave. What heartfelt praise, what fervent prayers, what nameless acts of brotherly devotion, and then the last God-speed as Paul, departing, bade farewell.

". . . a holy nation . . . honest among the Gentiles."

And so by the labor of the Apostles and many nameless evangelists the churches were established here and there. Against the larkness all around they shone as beacons, heaven-lit, along a wave-washed shore. The daily lives of the Christians, testifying to the beauty of holiness within them, contrasted greatly with those, of their Pagan neighbors. The Pagan amusements were cruel and degrading; the Christians asked nothing more than their happy little meetings together. Paintings on the uncovered walls of Pompeii bear shameful witness to the traveler of today of a people morally sick unto death; on the walls of the Catacombs the Christian pictured forth his faith and hope and joy. The Roman practiced infanticide; the followers of Jesus had as their example One who, taking little children into His arms, tenderly blessed them. The Pagan detested the institution of marriage, looking upon it as a hindrance to desired freedom; the Christian regarded it as holy, ordained of God, and inviolate. Pagan society was composed of unhappy slaves and cruel masters; amongst God's children there was neither bond nor free, all were brethren with *no* lines of distinction in Christ. In the Pagan heart dwelt hopeless dissatisfaction; in the Christian heart was shed an inward joy, and hope of a blessed future, earthly sorrow they had, to be sure, but to them it endured for but a moment. The heathen was coldly callous; his Christian neighbor, often with little of this world's goods himself, shared with the needy.

Can Christian idealism then present that early and visible Church without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing? Not so, for from the darkness of the Pagan world they came, many of those converts, poor, ignorant, and despised, and in that coming brought with them its marks upon the flesh. But with all their faults and weaknesses they were as the arresting salt in an earth whose general corruption was bringing surely and swiftly its course to a close. They tended the sick, relieved the poor, and regarded every soul for whom Christ died as precious, no matter how degraded. The same failings however were theirs that have beset the Lord's people all down the Gospel Age.

They triumphed as we triumph; they failed where we fail; they were inconsistent and not free from party-spirit, trying to force upon others their own prejudices and thereby falling short in love. They were intolerant, and magnified the importance of the flesh, which at its best can never glory in God's presence, some holding forth a banner with the name of Paul and others crying out the name Apollos, forgetting that the basis for all Christian unity is Christ -- the All-embracing and the Indivisible.

The Testimony of the Catacombs

A deep glimpse into the lives and aspirations of the very early Church may be had in the paintings and drawings of the Catacombs. These excavations, perhaps some 400 miles in all, are hewn in the under-soil of Rome, known to geology as "granular tufa" which lends itself readily to such tunnelings, there being sometimes from three to five galleries one above another. Although they were at times used as places of refuge and worship, they were not formed for such a purpose, but were places of Christian' burial, the Pagans burning their dead while the Christians, following the practice of the Jew, buried them. The earliest inscription that has been found in the Catacombs is A. D. 72, and the latest bears the date of A. D. 410. The comforting hope of the Christians, as shown in symbol, inscription, and fresco, gives evidence that they had already received by faith the oil of joy for mourning and that the ashes of their loved ones by the same power blossomed forth in beauty.

They pictured not the sadness of human bereavement, but that abiding peace which the sorrows of their earthly life could never take away. They touched the earthy, gloomy walls with life, not death; in vine and blooming flower, not in broken wheel and column: the rose peeped out from thorny stem, the purple cluster of the grape hung heavy from its twisting vine-symbols these of life and hope and 'beauty, never of despair. And o'er their dead they carved such gentle thoughts as these: "Eternal peace be with thee, Timothea, in Christ"; "The sleeping place of Elpis" "Agape, thou shalt live forever while all along the words, "In peace", are touching, in the sweet monotony of their repetition. The very word of death was studiously avoided on the graves of the martyrs - there was but one Death and that had swallowed up all other deaths in victory. Quite marked in contrast are the thoughts carved on memorials of the Pagans: "Farewell, farewell, oh most sweet, forever and eternally, farewell"; "Our hope was in our boy; all is ashes and lamentation "Once I was not; now I am not; I know nothing about it; it does not concern me."

On the frescoes a scene depicts the raising of Lazarus and another the healing of the paralytic, but most of them are from the Old Testament. There is one of the three Hebrew lads in the fiery furnace; Daniel safe amongst the hungry lions; and Jonah spewed upon the shore by a creature long and uncouth, probably to show victory through Christ over death. One of the most favored pictures is that of the Good Shepherd; there is nothing of the merciless judge and the Infant in Mother arms which later on in the Church's history the brush of an Angelo and the canvas of a Raphael so earnestly exulted in. In the Catacombs the symbol of the Cross is also impressively absent, its earliest appearance being on the tomb of an empress of the date A. D. 451. There is no real picture of the crucifixion, such conceptions dating rather from the ninth century. The Christ of the primitive Church was a glorious, living person, a brief glimpse of whose resurrected glory was all but fatal to the eyes of Saul, and it would have been but sacrilege for them to dwell upon and blazon forth the dead body of One arisen. Better far to enshrine the living image of that glorified Lord in their hearts and refrain as from an impiety to set it forth by chalk and *brush*.

-Contributed.

Next of this series - THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH

GERMAN HERALD DISCONTINUED

Difficulties encountered because of Government restrictions make impossible the continuance of the German Herald, which has for many years been published in Germany. Brother Lauper, who has been very diligent in this service, regrets that because of a considerable deficit he finds it impossible to make a cash refund of unexpired subscriptions. He has a stock of literature in German which includes some Scripture Studies and portions of the Sixth Volume in pamphlet form, and back issues of the Herald -- all in the German language, which he will be glad to supply in exchange for unexpired subscriptions. Payments for subscriptions still due, and orders for any of the literature mentioned above may be sent to Mr. Samuel Lauper, Degersheim, Switzerland.

Letters of Interest

[Our readers, especially those who have had the privilege of acquaintance with Brother Friese, will be interested in the following letter, and we doubt *not* will appreciate the privilege of joining their prayers with ours that, if it be the Lord's will he may be restored to active service. - Ed. Com.]

My dear Brethren:

Warm greetings in the Beloved. One.

Following last night's, telegram to you, I am very reluctant to be compelled-to break any engagement in the service of our beloved Lord, which is a very precious privilege to me, and I, do *so* only by doctor's imperative orders.

Slight cerebral hemorrhage occurred suddenly Friday eve, while on the street, resulting in numbness of right side of body. Doctor's decision is, *must* heed warning and cease activity for at least a month.

Please inform those friends immediately interested. Thank you, with love to *all*. Also please bear me up at the throne of grace that only the Lord's dear will may be done in all things.

If it be in accord with *His precious will*, I trust He may grant sufficient recovery to visit and serve His dear flock later, as it may please the beloved Master. Am praying this incident may not cause any serious disarrangement in the Lord's work, and that the dear Father will overrule all to His glory, and the blessing of all according to *His precious will*. I know *not* the outcome, but "*I know that my Redeemer liveth*", and Rom. 8:28.

Please pardon more at this time, as hand is somewhat "wobbly," and numbness still persists.

'The Lord bless you all and keep you' ever in His secret pavilion.. (Num. 6:24-26.) "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Amen. - Rev. 22:21; Isa. 63:7; Psa. 84:11, 12; Psa. 68:19.

Much love in Christ to all the "staff." Ever in His great love,

Your brother in His love and service, HARVEY A. FRIESE.

Dear Friends:

We feel constrained to write a few, words expressing our appreciation for the encouragement-we receive through the many wonderful articles contained in the "Herald."

The dire predictions that the "Herald" would be used by the brethren in charge to disseminate fantastic ideas of their own and thus becloud the refreshing truths have not materialized and we behold the "Herald" growing better as each issue appears.

How wonderfully the Lord does provide the meat in due season to His truth loving and truth hungry people. The series just ended,* entitled "Signs of the Master's Presence" should awaken a renewed interest in the signs of the times, and the clear expositions in these five articles should bring much comfort to the weary pilgrims traveling toward Zion.

We enjoyed greatly' the recent visit of Brother Arnold and we feel that he was a blessing to our little Class. Brother Arnold is a real representative of the truth, and of Christ our King.

May the heavenly Father continue to bless you all, and may you all continue to be true to, the truth and to Him, and may we all finally meet in that great assembly beyond the veil is our prayer.

Your fellow servants,

Class of Pen Argyl and No. Bangor.

*Editors' Note: The series of articles on "Signs of the Master's Presence" has not ended with the fifth installment published in the December 1936 "Herald." As our readers are doubtless aware, a large part of our ministry is performed by "spare time" workers, and pressure of other matters frequently interferes with the regularity of their "Herald" contributions. It is our hope that the series will be resumed in the not far distant future.