

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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The First Resurrection

"Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." - Acts 23:6.

THE APOSTLE Paul before the Jewish Sanhedrim, points out the true criterion of Christian orthodoxy -- the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Men have always been ready to accept any hope of a future life rather than that of *a resurrection* of the dead. The theories of the ancient Greeks, or of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, or of Hindoo mythology, have been easier even for the average professing Christian to believe, than the real teachings of Christ upon the subject.

A good lady once remarked that she knew that she had an immortal soul-she had often felt it move within her! It is impossible to shake a faith (?) like that.

It is more flattering to the ego to think that within one burns a spark of immortal fire; that one's present life will persist through death because one is so good, or wise, or great through birth or accomplishment, that he cannot die. It seems to be humiliating to some to know that every man is wholly dependent upon the good will and power of God for life after death.

Yet the doctrine of the resurrection is truly the essence of the Christian faith. As its great Founder stood at the tomb of his friend Lazarus he embodied the hopes of all mankind; and He intimated His intention to there illustrate the ultimate outworking of His purpose and power on behalf of the dying race.

He had deliberately waited, before coming in answer to the sisters' call, until Lazarus had died, and the unmistakable evidence of his death by the corruption of his body had become apparent. Martha and Mary both greeted Him, in mingled grief and faith and reproach: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus replied to Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again." If Martha had had the belief of the great majority of professing Christians she would have said something like this: "But Lord, is he not alive and happy now in heaven?" Being better instructed, what she did say was: "I know that he shall rise again *in the resurrection at the last day.*"

And now Jesus has the great opportunity for declaring Himself which He had sought. However quietly uttered and spoken with tears and agony of heart, the tremendous words rolled forth from His lips like peal upon peal of thunder, laying down the fundamentals of the faith, "the substance

of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We are reminded of Isaiah's sublime description of another proclamation of Jehovah's glory, when "the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of Him that cried."

In answer to Martha's confession of faith, Jesus said: "*I Am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die. . . . Believe, and ye shall see the glory of God! . Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. . . . Take ye away the stone. . . . Lazarus Come Forth!*"

And he that was dead came forth! And with the removal of the stone from the tomb and the loosing of its prisoner, the stone is removed from every believing heart, fears vanish, tears are dried, hope gilds the future, and joyful anticipation takes the place of grief and dread.

The Glory of God

Glory is reflex; it is created in the minds of others by the excellence of the one who is glorified. God's greatest glory among men is and shall ever be His power to restore life to the dead. As man's greatest need is life, to him the most glorious being is the one who has the power of the bestowal of life. Thus Jesus before the tomb of Lazarus associates his awakening with the glory of God; and in harmony with this we read that Christ Himself was "raised from the dead through the glory of the Father." (Rom. 6:4.) "The glory of Jehovah shall be revealed" declares Isaiah (Isaiah 40:5), "and all flesh shall see it together." What an assurance of a general resurrection! This glory inheres in the Holy City which is coming to earth, "having the glory of God," to bring new life to man. - Rev. 21:2.

The Three Resurrections

Three different resurrections are spoken of in the New Testament: "The first resurrection" (Rev. 20:5, 6; Phil. 3:11); "A better resurrection" for the Ancient Worthies (Heb. 11:35); and the general resurrection. (John 5:28,) In reverse order these might be compared as good, better, and best.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6.) So superior and so desirable is this "first" resurrection that Paul declares that he has sacrificed every earthly interest and possession, and is eager to share the sufferings and death of Christ "that I may know . . . the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed unto His death; *if by any means I may attain unto the (out-) resurrection from the dead.*" (Phil. 3:10, 11.) 'The Apostle here uses a prefix in connection with the word meaning resurrection, used nowhere else, which has the significance of "out." He thus differentiates the resurrection he is seeking from the general resurrection, and so identifies it with the "first."

"Conformed"

It is interesting also to note the Greek word "summorphos," which means to make like, or jointly form, and which appears only twice elsewhere in the New Testament. It signifies a bringing into the closest possible identity or resemblance.

The Apostle uses this word in further explaining his desire to be joined to the Lord's death, in the 21st verse of this same chapter. "Our citizenship is in heaven," he writes, "whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation *into a conformity* to the body of His glory." (A. R. V. and Diaglott.) The Apostle is here stating what is so often reiterated elsewhere in other words: "If we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him;" "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

The third use of this word is in Romans 8:29: "All things work together for good to them that are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained *to be conformed* to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Thus we have the Apostle's complete thought: He desired to have fellowship with Christ's sufferings that he might through them be conformed to the "image" of the character of Him who was "made perfect through the things that *He* suffered;" and he sought to be conformed to his Lord's death, that he might be conformed in his (the first) resurrection to the fashion of His glorious spiritual body.

To those who share the Apostle's transcendent ambition, the subject of the first resurrection cannot but be of the greatest interest. They are among those to whom the Apostle refers in discussing this topic in his letter to the Corinthians: "Some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?" If these questions were asked in reference to the general resurrection, the answers would be comparatively simple. How are the dead raised? By the power of their Creator-and only "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." With what manner of body do they come? With a human body: "There is no work, wisdom, device or knowledge in the grave, whither thou goest." "As the tree falleth, so it shall lie"-until its essential elements go to form another tree. Mankind in general die as men; there is no change in the grave; in the resurrection they shall come forth unchanged in the essential elements of their personalities-their human minds, bodies, connections, and surroundings. They will know themselves as human beings; they could, not know themselves otherwise.

Metamorphoses

Not so with those being "conformed." The Apostle says in Romans 12:2 that *they* are being *changed* "transformed" or "transfigured" as the same word is translated in reference to Jesus on "the holy mount." It-is the Greek word "metamorphosis" that he uses; a word that has been transferred bodily to our own language in a very particular usage.

Paul, deeply versed in the life-history of the New Creature, calls its change from earthly to heavenly conditions a "metamorphosis." Entomologists, who spend their lives in studying insects, call the life-history of the butterfly, from the egg through the caterpillar and chrysalis to the "perfect insect, no longer disguised or confined," a "metamorphosis." It seems apparent that the Creator intended the latter to be a miniature allegorical picture of the life-history of those being "conformed to the image of His Son," the parallel is so nearly perfect and so beautiful. It is

significant to note also that the scientist calls the final and complete insect stage the "imago," from the same Latin word as "image."

The butterfly has no obvious or apparent relationship to the ugly caterpillar; but the connection is vital -- the *caterpillar comes from a butterfly's egg*. So of the New Creature it is written: "Of His own will [the Father] begat us of the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." "Begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God, which liveth and abideth." "To as many as received 'Him, to them gave He the right [life power] to become the children of God." - James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; John 1:12, 13.

Not of another worm comes the egg from which the humble and ugly caterpillar is hatched, but from a creature of the upper air, of the sunshine and flowers. Not from any human origin comes the begetting which is the beginning of the New Creature. It is begotten and quickened of the Spirit of God; but it is found first in human form, in a "body of humiliation," hidden in a "worm of the dust;" and as the Prophet foretold of the Messiah, in this guise it "hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." "He was despised and rejected of men"; so also are His followers.

The caterpillar is chiefly notable for its voracious appetite for a particular kind of food-usually the leaves of a single variety of tree; and so feeding, it grows with astonishing rapidity. The New Creature has an insatiable appetite for the Word of God. Jesus said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. . . Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man [i.e., the Word of God] and drink His blood [His life] ye have not life in yourselves." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." And Peter says: "*Intensely crave* the pure milk of the Word, that ye may *grow thereby*." It is no ordinary appetite to which he refers; it is a passion that will not be denied-if the coming imago-image-is to reach full development; if the New Creature is to "ascertain what is the good and well-pleasing and *complete will* of God."

It is not to sustain its life as a worm that the caterpillar eats so ravenously. It is absorbing the elements needed to create the butterfly that is to come. It is not to preserve his life as a man that the believer "eats the flesh and drinks the blood" of Jesus Christ, but to assimilate the spiritual materials from which the new spirit-being shall be born in the first resurrection.

The Third Stage

But another stage is experienced by the butterfly before it comes forth as the imago. It enters into its pupa or chrysalis. It forms around itself a shell, and to all appearances it dies. There is no outward evidence of life. In fact, during the time it is in the chrysalis-it seems to have no individual life, but to be controlled by a sort of collective, creative mind of the species; for when it comes forth from its shroud-when its grave-clothes are loosed-it is no longer a worm, but a creature. of another world; no longer ugly and repugnant, it is beautiful; it no longer has an appetite for fodder-it sips the nectar of the flowers; it no longer crawls, it flies! It does not even have to learn to fly, as young birds do it knows how "instinctively." How did it learn this, alone in the dark and narrow chrysalis? Science would like to know; it cannot answer the question.

The spiritual man, the New Creature in Christ Jesus, candidate for the first resurrection, must also pass through a chrysalis stage. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation [against sin-the death sentence] be overpast. (Lord, Thou wilt ordain *peace* for us, for Thou also hast *wrought all our works in us.*) Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead." (Isa. 26:20, 12, 19.) Apply this language to the butterfly; how peculiarly it fits. The worm has dwelt in dust, but it is destined to "awake and sing"-rejoice-as a butterfly. Its "dew" or juices come from "herbs," but this Hebrew word also means light and prosperity, suggesting that the juices of the worm furnish the life-fluids of the butterfly, a creature of light and prosperity.

Turning to the antitype: "chambers" are identified with death in Proverbs 7:27; and the Psalmist prophesies of "my people": "God standeth in the congregation of God; He judgeth among the gods [or, the mighty]. I have said, ye are gods, and all of you children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." - Psa. 82:1, 6, 7.

In a mystic sense the Christian weaves his own chamber of death. Figuratively, he enters his chamber, or chrysalis, when he consecrates himself to God, to follow his Master even unto death. Thenceforth he is reckoned dead; and mentally, to an increasing degree, he is shut off from his surroundings, and the Holy Spirit is working in him to transform him from an earthly creature to an heavenly; as it is written: "*Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*" Thus the feeding (worm) stage and the transforming or chrysalis stage of the Christian proceed in part simultaneously. But like the worm's transformation, it is not a voluntary one which he in any sense can accomplish for himself. "Lord, *Thou* hast wrought all our works *in us.*" A higher mind-a superior, spiritual law-works in us, just as a higher, racial law works in the chrysalis to create the butterfly, and to *teach it to fly.*

Thus we see that as every stage of the butterfly's life is preparatory and contributory to the final imago, or perfect insect, so every stage and experience of the Christian's life is but contributory to his transformation into the "image" of Christ. This transformation will be completed in the first resurrection, the final operation of the creative Spirit of God in the Christian's behalf; as it is written: "And the God of all favor, who has called you to his aionian glory by the Anointed One, when you have suffered a short time, Himself to perfect you, will adjust and strengthen you"-beyond the suffering. - 1 Pet. 5:10.

"The earth shall cast forth her dead." The word here translated "dead" is "rephaim," meaning "shades," or spirit-beings. As the earth "cast forth" or released Jesus *as a spirit being, so* shall it be with these who are "following Him whithersoever He goeth." "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory."

It should be noted that these "rephaim" are not all that Isaiah declares the earth will release. "The earth *also* shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." (Isa. 26:21.) "All that are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth." (John 5:28.) These are references to the *general* resurrection.

The Great Example

The only example of the first resurrection that has been manifested in any way to human sense, is that of Jesus Christ. The description recorded of the risen Christ is meager. Two great facts

concerning Him stand out in the accounts of His post-resurrection appearances, as was doubtlessly intended:

(1) It was "this same Jesus" in personality and character, who died and had risen again;

(2) The risen Christ was a very different being, in bodily powers and conditions, from Him who died.

To impress the first fact upon His disciples' minds, He appeared in complete possession of human attributes, saying, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones *as ye see Me have.*" Yet, a few minutes later, He fulfilled His own definition of one who was "born of the spirit," by disappearing from sight. He came and went without regard for time, space, or the obstructions of human walls and locked doors. He ascended into heaven without wings or mechanical aid. The Apostles realized the completeness of the metamorphosis, for they declare: "We have known Him in the flesh, but now henceforth we shall know Him so no more." "He is the king, eternal, immortal, *invisible.*"

If we dwell upon the change which we anticipate from the standpoint of human reasoning, the prospect is terrifying. The darkness and cold of interstellar space, the complete absence of the comforts and physical associations of our human lives, are not attractive to the natural mind. It is a far and strange country, to which we journey.

But if we have learned well to know "this same Jesus," and remember that He has gone before; if we remember that *His* Father whom He loved as a man and to whom He longed to return, is also *our* Father who has assured us through our Elder Brother that He indeed loves us because we have loved and believed on His Son: then our faith will transcend our fears, and we shall be glad to "enter into our chambers." Many things in nature -- notably the metamorphosis we have been considering -- also reassure us, if we will meditate on them. The transition from the fleshly to the spirit conditions in the first resurrection will be as strange, as marvelous, as revolutionary as that of the worm to the butterfly; but it will also be as natural, as sure, as perfect and as altogether happy.

"O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will set thy stones in fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And' I will make thy pinnacles with rubies, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy border of precious stones. And all thy children shall be *taught of Jehovah;* and great shall be the peace of thy children." - Isa. 54:11-13.

Some Day We'll Understand

TO EVERY sincere Christian's heart there comes a sense of real joy and peace with every remembrance of that glorious prospect, which, in words of inspiration, is called "that blessed hope." When all that such a blessed prospect represents is meditated upon, the troubled spirit can really enter into a rest of faith, fully assured that in due time all obscuring mists will roll away, and that when they have thus been lifted, and all things are fully revealed, then many things will appear "better than we thought they would," if we had only understood. But so long as even the most sincere and earnest hearts are circumscribed and handicapped by the imperfections of mind and body, so long will misunderstandings be an inevitable experience. The Scriptures are constantly reminding us of this fact, and therefore emphasizing for us another outstanding feature of a true saint's reactions to such misunderstandings; namely, "Love thinketh no evil," "believeth all things; hopeth all things." Its natural spirit is that of seeking for the better viewpoint, the perfect understanding, and the maintaining of a hope that a better state really does exist than may appear on the surface. Thus "love hopeth all things."

It is not a surprising thing that misunderstandings arise even amongst the sincere of heart. This, as we have said, is inevitable. The very air today is charged with apprehensions. Distrust prevails to an alarming degree in every phase of human associations, and in no small measure it is now true that "every man's hand is against his neighbor." Thus so many pledges become nothing but "a scrap of paper," because men do not trust each other. That this should be so among the men and women of the world is not surprising. They are blinded by the god of this world, whose spirit is that of selfishness and lovelessness. But among brethren in Christ this should not be so. Within the circle of those who possess a knowledge of the character of God, and who are so well informed about His requirements of those who are His children, it should be strikingly manifest that they are not of this world, or of its spirit of distrust and contention, but of His spirit of justice and love. Indeed, it is in this very thing that the children of God are to be specially distinguished from the unregenerate, and by this shall all men know that they are disciples of the Lord Jesus. - John 13:35.

But remembering the stress and strain of present conditions and realizing that all of the Lord's people are undergoing severe testings of their patience and devotion to the Lord and His Word, the brethren who are now in charge of the ministry of the Pastoral Bible Institute want it understood that they feel a deep sympathy for all who have been disturbed in any way over certain developments of the past few months; and that sympathy is as fully felt for all, regardless of whatever reactions each individual may have expressed, whether in approval or disapproval of our course. Thus, though we have been deeply grieved over certain activities which have misrepresented our position, and grieved over prophecies of what we may be expected to do later, when, as it is inferred, the opportune time comes, yet, we will continue to prefer to believe that most, if not all of these misrepresentations as well as the prophecies of what our policy will eventually lead to, have been sincerely offered, and we will therefore continue to keep the love that "hopeth all things" operative in our hearts and in our contacts and associations with all our brethren.

This present statement is therefore merely to assure the well wishers of our Institute ministry that it has been and still is our sincere intention faithfully to adhere to the determination to keep the "Herald" a "present truth" publication of outstanding merit, and to continue, by a careful supervision of all Institute activities, to maintain a service worthy of the confidence and cooperation of all our brethren in Christ. Our standards for the selection of teachers and our views as to the

importance of sound doctrine are those set forth in the New Testament and as expounded in Chapters V and VI of Vol. VI. of "Studies in the Scriptures."

Aside from this restatement of our position, we are making no further answer at this time to the criticisms being so generally circulated, trusting that the friends will find assurance in the service of the past months that we contemplate nothing of either service or teaching of which any need entertain any misgivings, or be fearful of bidding Godspeed. May we not hope that our brethren everywhere will appreciate our attitude in this matter and believe us wholly faithful to our trust, and thus continue to give us the joy and inspiration of, their loving confidence until the passing of time reveals us worthy or unworthy of it. This is our confidence in you, dear brethren.

"'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' (Matt. 22:39.) You would not want your neighbor to use brain and tongue in evil surmises and slanders against you; and you should not do so to him. The law of the Lord commands that all under His Covenant shall take heed not to utter one solitary suspicion against a neighbor: and that if suspicion beyond knowledge be forced upon the mind by associated circumstances, the new mind shall promptly, with its native benevolence, counter-balance the suspicions by suggestions of the possibility of misinformation or misinterpretation and always give the apparently guilty the benefit of the doubt. -Z. '99-72."-Manna Comment, December 1.

Acceptable Sacrifices

Part I

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." - 1 Pet. 2:5.

AMONG OUR readers are some who have expressed a desire to see more frequent treatment of what are usually designated doctrinal subjects in our columns, while there are others who would prefer that all our limited space should be devoted to the treatment of the more devotional doctrines, to the exclusion of the strictly "Plan" teachings. The publishing of this series of articles, or any other similar articles, should not be construed as taking sides with either group, but merely as a desire to see that each is given proper consideration. We will hope that each, in the spirit of brotherly love, will rejoice with his brother reader in that he is receiving the thing that seems to himself necessary to his spiritual welfare, thus giving a further exemplification of the beauty of brethren dwelling together in unity.

In view of the fact that the subject of the Sin offering has of late been having the attention of some of the friends, and we trust with profit, it has been thought well to review some of the Scriptures bearing on the matter in a short series of articles. And we are making an earnest appeal to our readers of both viewpoints on this particular subject, that they enter into this study with us, unprejudiced, and in the spirit of prayer and earnest searching of the Word. It is with no spirit of strife that we are examining this subject, and we trust that there will be no tendency through our presentation to "stir up strife among the brethren." We have as our great desire rather, to be peacemakers, remembering our Lord's words 'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.' - 1 Cor. 13:8, 9; Matt. 5:9.

Distinction Between Teachings of Plain Scriptures and Those of Interpretation

The series is begun with full realization that it is not our province, or that of any other man, to force any interpretation of Scriptures upon any one. In fact, even the rejection of a plain statement of the Scriptures would give no license to "begin to smite our fellow servants." We would, however, charitably hope that the eyes already opened to see some of the precious truths that sanctify, would later see all those things which we believe are Scriptural, though in the Lord's/providence some were for a time hidden from them. It would seem to us, however, a wise proceeding on the part of each one to very conscientiously re-examine any teaching which some other consecrated brethren believe to be based on plain Scriptures, to ascertain whether or not he may have been unconsciously changing, by human interpretation, any word or phrase, thus arriving at a "private interpretation," unwarranted by any Scriptural authority.

In studying the writings of any author, excepting of course the inspired Apostles, a sharp distinction should always be kept in mind between teachings proved by plain Scriptures and those which the writer endeavors to establish through an interpretation of Scriptures. In both instances danger arises because of the imperfection of the mental organism of the student; 'but in the latter instance, entire avoidance of errors, temporarily held at least, cannot reasonably 'be hoped for except as it shall be the due time for God to guide both imperfect instruments into truth. Then, too, all should remember that the time when the path is to be so plain that the wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein lies beyond the present dispensation. On the other hand, the picture

representative of our time is one of a tabernacle set in the midst of a wilderness and so swathed in coverings as to have had every trace of exterior light excluded, leaving those who walked there entirely dependent upon the inner light. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, hath shined in **our hearts**, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shined in the face of Jesus.' -- (2 Cor. 4:6.) "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." - Zech. 4:6.

"Not Sufficient of Ourselves"

Accepting by faith the statement that "those things that were written before were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come," we come to our Bibles in high anticipation of the things to be learned there on this and kindred subjects, not because we are "wise men after the flesh" (1 Cor. 1:26), but because we have already learned through the history 'of the Church and 'by our own blessed experience that throughout the Age "God hath revealed 'unto us by His Spirit" things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."* To fail to give time to the study of any subject that gave promise of such revelations as are indicated here, would seem indisputable evidence of unworthiness of acquaintance with Him whom to know is life eternal. Whether or not then our searching' shall reveal any of the mysteries hidden beneath the darkening coverings of that tabernacle, if approached in the spirit of true meekness, it will at least give evidence of our love for Him and our desire to more fully know Him.

*--See Sermon, "Who may Know God's Secrets," page 5, "Pastor Russell's Sermons".

Let us in humility confess that we are approaching one of the many subjects of which our knowledge is meager, and that we have known many well developed Christian characters who differed with us on this or that point in connection with it. As the Scriptures plainly inform us that there are due times for the revelation of truths to God's people, are we not safe in inferring, or may we not say that we have definite evidence that our Great Teacher's method of dealing with each individual pupil is similar-apportioning each bit of knowledge according to his preparedness to receive it, and according to his present needs of strengthening and assistance?

Reasoning Together with Him

Few subjects demand greater care in our approach, to the intent we may always bear in mind' that we are not "sufficient of ourselves to think [Diaglott: "reason"] anything as of ourselves, but" our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. 3:5.) If He shall teach us "line upon line, precept upon precept," it will be because we are found "casting down reasonings [Diaglott and margin] and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and 'bring into captivity every thought to the obedience Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5.) Let us come then in acceptance of one of the most startling invitations ever uttered: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." (Isa. 1 :18.) It is regarding the washing of scarlet sins until they become as white as wool that He would have us reason **with Him**. How it should humble us to a realization of the uselessness of **our** reasonings as we bow in the presence of His perfection. Such humility was necessary that the Apostle might be faithful in the 'performance of his commission, and without it we cannot hope to learn the things he was appointed to teach us. We would listen to him, and learn of his spirit as well as of his teachings. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should

preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in Christ." - Eph. 3:8, 9.

Christ, the Center

If in searching we should arrive at any conclusions that, take out of the hands of our beloved Jesus any feature of that Plan, we may be confident that our efforts to reason together with Him have failed and that we have (we hope unconsciously), injected some thought of our own. Every finding should be "according to a plan of the ages [Diaglott], which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:11.) Note that it does not say that it was purposed in the Logos. We know that the man Christ Jesus was the Logos in His pre-human existence, and that the identity ever remains the same, but the thought we wish to impress, and which we believe the passage is intended to convey is this, that God's wonderful Plan of reconciliation was -dependent upon the Logos leaving the glory He had with the Father and becoming the man Christ Jesus. (See Heb. 2:14-16.) Christ means anointed; and He was not anointed in heaven but on earth. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in a form of God, thought not by robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." - Phil. 2:5-8 See Diaglott.

That God hath perfected all the details of the Plan of the Ages, every feature of which centered in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the earth, must ever lie beyond the grasp of our feeble intellects. Through this same One, His Holy Arm, God has seen fit to reveal this Plan. The messages of the Prophets testifying of the sufferings and humiliation of the Messiah, even to His ignominious death on the cross, were not believed. Proud of flesh, Israel could not look for such a Savior. No, theirs would be a great, an honorable, a glorious Messiah, a warrior to lead to the pomp of victory. Their pride so blinded them that when He came to His own, His own received Him not. The preaching of faithful Prophets over many centuries had not prepared them for the Messiah that came. Nor is the preaching of the Apostles and other consecrated saints to antitypical Israel rewarded with better success. The Arm of the Lord, the true Christ of the Bible, is revealed only to those who are meek and lowly-to those who are teachable as Jesus Himself was. Hear Him: "Follow Me, for I am meek and lowly"-an invitation the proud of heart cannot hear. His way will have no attractions for such; but "the meek will He guide in judgment, the meek will He teach His way."

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? [It is manifest they could not believe] for He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant [far too tender to find any place in any human scheming], and as a root out of a dry ground." (Isa. 53:1, 2.) What more hopeless picture from the human standpoint could there be than this?-nothing but a shapeless root, no beauty, no sign of life-only death in evidence, and no trace of moisture in the ground to revive any life that might happen to be there. They say, "**He hath no** form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

How apparent it is that it was Jesus' flesh, His humanity,-and all which that implies, that hid from the eyes of the people the Arm of the Lord, the power of His salvation, the means by which Jehovah was reconciling the world to Himself. Because He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief [Leeser: "disease"]" He was "despised and rejected of men . . . as one from whom men hide their face He was despised; and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs

[Leeser: "diseases"], and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. [Of all the billions of earth, only a little handful have believed His report. All others have turned away their face from Him, and even of that little handful, most have at times shamefully neglected Him but, though it was all foretold before ever He came to die] He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to His own way; and Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." - Isa. 53:3-6, R. V.

In our studies we will turn to the tabernacle picture for a corroboration of these findings as to the Father's means of concealing the true beauties of the "altogether lovely One" until the due time.

Meditations in 2 Timothy 1:1-12

In four parts*-Part 3

IN THE next three verses, 6, 7 and 8 (2 Timothy 1:6-8), the Apostle approaches Timothy's special needs. He has told him of his love for him, of his tender memory of Timothy's distress when Paul was torn from him, of the prayers he is continually offering on his behalf, and of the homesick yearning he has for yet one more sight of him on this earth.

But the main purpose, the solemn burden of the letter, cannot thus be satisfied; he must come now to Timothy's duty in the Gospel, and in view of this he must speak words of encouragement, words which will arouse Timothy to a holy courage to carry on the good fight after he himself shall have laid down his life as a martyr in the cause of Christ.

"Fear not Neither be Dismayed"

"Wherefore," he says, verse six, "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, His prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God.

What is there about the Gospel that Timothy should need to be exhorted here not to be ashamed of it? Why do we find, not here only, but elsewhere in the New Testament, this contemplated possibility that the Christian may be ashamed of the Gospel and of his Lord? Why did even the Apostle himself, when planning some years before to go to Rome, declare that he was not ashamed of the Gospel? Had the Apostle's mind been filled with the Gospel (?) of eternal torment we could understand how that might have made him hesitant. Indeed, if instead of the gracious message announced by the angels at the birth of Jesus -- Good Tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people -- Paul's Gospel had been the message of the Dark Ages bad tidings of great woe which shall be to most people -- a message still retained in the creeds of most of the sects of Christendom today, we would not have been the least surprised to hear him say that he was to a considerable degree ashamed of his Gospel, that he always blushed when he mentioned it, and the real reason of his long delay which had prevented him from visiting Rome was a secret fear that he might not be able to sustain such a message against the learned men who would be waiting to oppose it. But we know that in the Gospel Paul preached there is nothing of which he could be legitimately ashamed. What is there about this revelation of the heart of Eternal Love, this record of a life which is the light of men, of a death as majestic as it is infinitely pathetic, and then of a resurrection out of death, to occasion shame? Why, in view of this, should man be shy to avow his faith and to let it be known that this is all in all to him-his life, his peace, his strength, his surpassing interest and occupation?

More than one explanation of the matter, which we all know to be a fact may be suggested; but we believe the true solution lies near the words, sin, pardon, self-surrender. The Gospel reveals the eternal love, but under conditions which remind man that he has done his best to forfeit it. It tells him of a peace and strength sublime and heavenly; but it asks him, in order to receive them, to kneel down, and take them, unmerited, for nothing. And it reminds him that he, thus delivered and endowed, is, by the same act, the property of the Deliverer; that not only the highest benefit.,

of his being is secured by giving himself over to God, but the most inexorable obligation lies on him to do so. He is not his own, but bought with a price.

"Let us Hold Fast the Confession of Our Hope that It Waver not"

And who does not at times need to have his gifts quickened, his powers stimulated, by a full and fresh confession of his Lord? Natural courage will prove quite unavailing—that was abundantly demonstrated in the case of Peter, who though ordinarily courageous, found his courage gone just when he needed it most. None of us can afford to ignore this word of Paul's to Timothy: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." On the contrary it may be seen from our Lord's own words that the maintenance of a clear and constant witness to Him and His truth, is vital to our spiritual life and health. "Whoever shall have been ashamed of Me and My teachings, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed, when He comes in His own and the Father's glory." - Luke 9:26, Weymouth.

The power to let our light shine, and to tell forth on all suitable occasions, the glorious Gospel, will be given us by God. Where our witnessing is performed not as a mere duty, difficult to avoid, still less when it is done under fear of dire punishment if omitted, but when it is performed because of a flame of love burning within, it will be characterized first of all by an absence of fear. God hath not given us a spirit of cowardice, or timidity, or fearfulness. On the contrary, the spirit He gives is one of power, of courage, of strength.

"Speaking the Truth in Love"

But if that were all, if the spirit God hath given unto us were one of power merely, it might not work to our highest good. We recall that of this very Church at Ephesus, in which Timothy was serving as pastor, there came a time later, when they displayed great strength and courage, but still did not meet the Lord's approval. "I know thy works," said our risen Lord to the angel of the Church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:2), "and thy toil, and thy patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles and are not, and didst find them false, and thou hadst patience, and didst bear for My name's sake, and hast not grown weary." Such a record took a liberal supply of the spirit of power, of courage, of strength, to make it true. And yet with all that to their credit, this Church failed to secure the Master's approval. For he goes on to say: "I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love."

God hath not given unto us the spirit of fear, or cowardice, but of power;—that is true and important, and very necessary that Paul should reassure Timothy of it at just this time. But the spirit God hath given us is also one of love which must be blended with the power, the courage, the strength, and harmonized with the spirit of a sound mind. Some translators use the word, discipline, or self-control, instead of sound mind. "God hath not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but of power, and of love, and of self-mastery."

In his own strength Timothy would have been unable to stand against the tests which confronted him in his day. In our own strength **we** cannot hope to fight the good fight of faith in our day either. But just as we have every reason to believe that in the power of God Timothy came off more than a conqueror against the powers which assailed him, so we may confidently rely on the same mighty One who strengthened him, to give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Redemption no After thought of God, but Long Planned

Still intent on encouraging him to a full exercise of the courage of faith the Apostle proceeds to urge upon Timothy four considerations to this end. First, the grandeur of the Gospel; second, his own -example; third, the example of faithful Onesiphorus; and lastly, the sure hope of the Christian.- 2 Timothy 1:6-2:13.

The first of these considerations, the grandeur of the Gospel, St. Paul develops in the next two verses. After reminding Timothy that he is not to attempt to share in the afflictions of the Gospel in his own strength, but in the strength of God, or, as the Authorized Version puts it, according to the power of God (2 Timothy 1:8), he goes on to say, (2 Timothy 1:9-10), "God who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who bath abolished death, and bath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

There is nothing so likely to steady our faith and revive our courage as the reflection that our salvation and high calling are among the eternal purposes of God. This was an old subject with Paul, and it is impressive to see him now, in this his last message, taking up again, one by one, very briefly, with little of his old wealth of words, but with all the calm assurance of one who knew whereof he spoke, the truths which glowed so brightly as he unfolded them in other days to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Ephesians. Rising above the things of time and sense, closing his eyes to the prison in which he was confined, and to the martyr's death which awaited him, his mind soars upward, and then travels back into the past, before the creation of man, before age-measured times, and it comes to rest in the divine purpose. Our salvation, embracing as it does the twofold result of deliverance from the consequences of sin and the transformation into the likeness of Christ, is not according to our works, but according to God's own eternal purpose. How sure and certain, then, it must eventually be! Not only so, but already it has passed beyond the stage of a plan or purpose. The purpose is in process of accomplishment. And so the Apostle adds the word "grace." "Not according to His purpose only, but according to His grace as well-according to the active, redeeming, love of God. In due time Christ had died, and now the call has gone forth, a high and holy calling-the call of the Father to joint heirship with Jesus, to the special privilege of the Gospel Age, of walking in the footsteps of our Lord. Dimly the Father's purpose had been seen in the early days of our race. Gradually the gracious Plan had unfolded as the centuries had rolled by, and the light thereon had grown brighter; but what a revelation of the Father's heart was brought to light at the appearing of our Lord!

Some expositors have deduced from this passage that prior to the first advent of our Lord there was no light at all on the hope of life. This, however, is not true; and is not what the Apostle here declares. What he says is that Christ illuminated life, poured light upon that hope, so that that which before had been only dimly seen, now fairly dazzled with brilliancy.

How was it that our Lord was able to cast so great a light on this hope of life? Ah! it was by His abolishment of the death sentence by the sacrifice of Himself. Our hope of life would today be just as dim as was that of those who lived in the days before Christ had He not laid down His life for us. Therein was the great light shed upon our hope of life. As the poet has written:

"Peace, perfect peace,
Death shadowing us and ours;
Jesus bath conquered death,
And all its powers."

The Provision of the Ransom and the Work of Restoration Distinguished

Our Lord's perfect life was given to redeem all the race of men from condemnation to death, and to enable them to return to human perfection and everlasting life, if they will. But while the Man Christ Jesus by giving His life to be a ransom for all, abolished or rendered powerless the death - sentence passed upon our race, and thereby threw a flood of light upon the world's true hope of life, not all are yet able to see this, nor in what sense this is true. Every funeral service seems to them to speak in contradiction of the Apostle's statement that Christ has abolished death. Moreover, did the Apostle himself not speak in another place as though the final destruction of death was still a long way off in the future? "For He [Christ] must reign," said he (1 Cor. 15:25, 26), "till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," and that, the context plainly indicates, is to be at the end of the Millennium. How shall we reconcile the passage in Timothy with this one in the Corinthian letter, and how shall we reconcile it with the stern realities of death on every side, with which we are encompassed?

This reconciliation is not difficult if we do but remember that the work of recovering Adam and his race from the power of sin and death, while based on the ransom sacrifice, goes beyond the mere provision of the ransom. While the provision was made now nearly two thousand years ago, it is manifest that the work of recovering Adam and his race has not yet been accomplished; in deed, has scarcely begun. The only disposition thus far of the ransom has 'been to make it available for the Church, and this only by faith. Only by faith has even the Church passed from death unto life; not even this little flock has been fully recovered from the power of sin and death, still less has the rest of the race. Manifestly, then, it will require a considerable time-the Scriptures indicate the entire thousand years of Messiah's reign-to restore, to deliver, to set free, from the power of sin and death, Adam and his children. Evident it is that the work of restoration for which the foundation was laid nearly two thousand years ago is still to be accomplished. In order that any of the race of Adam might profit by the sacrifice of Jesus, it was necessary that He should rise from the tomb, on the divine plane of life, that He should ascend to the Father, and deposit the sacrificial merit of his death in the hands of justice, and receive from the Father "all power in heaven and in earth." As relates to the world it was necessary also that in the Father's due time He should come again to earth a glorious divine being, then to be to the whole world a Mediator, Prophet, Priest, and King, to assist back to perfection and to harmony with God all who will avail themselves of the wonderful privileges then to be offered.

"GOD'S METHOD WITH MEN"

We may be very confident that we hold the truth; but the surest way to deny its power is to be bitter and unloving toward those who differ with us. Let us remember that Truth is Christ, and Christ *is* Truth; and that Christ is [the revelation of] God, and God is Love; therefore Truth is love, and love is Truth. In proportion as you may hold the Truth, you will become loving toward those who differ with you. All the wrangling, ostensibly for the sake of Truth, which split and divided certain sections of the Church, until men scarcely know where they stand, is evidence that Truth has never been proper

ly understood by them. Truth should not be stored as a commodity or as something of which to boast. While we feel that the teaching of the Word of God is very clear, let us remember that we are only scholars spelling out the alphabet in the school of Jesus Christ. We may rest assured that, in the day when we have full knowledge granted unto us, we shall discover that the men of whom we were the most afraid, have held Truth which we, perchance, have never known. Our duty toward our brother and his toward us, if we be loyal to Christ, is that we love each other still, though we may not agree in all our views. -- *Selected.*

Obedient to the Heavenly Vision

"Rise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to make thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen Me, and of the things wherein I will yet appear unto thee. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." - Acts 26:16, 19.

NO ONE can reach a higher level than the ideal or vision set before the mind. No life can attain to greater things than the objective around which a man's life centers. He who is of the earth earthy will mind earthly things, and conclude that "a man's life consists in the abundance of the things he possesses." But the one whose eyes have been opened by a "heavenly vision" and who has not been disobedient thereto, discovers that such an earth-bound horizon is not life at all, but "vanity and vexation of spirit." The one lays up treasures on earth where moth and rust eat and destroy, leaving him poor indeed; the other, with a vision of the brevity of earthly life, and with a heavenward look, bends his effort to lay up treasures in heaven, and finds it blessedly true that "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," and that there is a daily drawing of the whole character in the direction of that heavenly treasure house. Thus Jesus set forth the fact that "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he"-so he will become through the force of his habit of thought, his habit of thought being determined by the aim and the pursuits of his life.

This, then, is the reason why Paul is able to testify to the fact that his whole life and outlook were changed by the vision granted to him. He wants it clearly understood that it was a vision of Jesus Christ that revolutionized his life. That was the "heavenly vision" by which the bigoted, persecuting Saul was halted and humbled, and transformed into a servant of the Church, with a heart of compassion like the Master whose slave he became. It was that vision that henceforth made what he had previously counted as gain, now but refuse, loss and dross. It was because of

that vision that his ministry became stabilized, Christ-centered, that Christ crucified, Christ formed within the hearts of believers, became the supreme objective of his life of unsurpassed devotion to Christ and His Church. Would we know the secret of his patience and confidence in the midst of unparalleled oppositions -- why, though persecuted by bigoted Jews and by false brethren within the ranks of those called believers, and why, though deserted by co-workers in crisis hours, he, could yet remain undismayed and undiscouraged? He himself tells us: "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision," therefore, "none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:24.) In ordaining him for service the Lord had said, "I have appeared unto thee, to make thee a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen Me, and of the things wherein I will yet appear unto thee." Thus it was that Paul was qualified and so energetically fitted for the ministry committed to him. He had seen the Lord, he had felt His power, and what he had seen and heard he was consumed with zeal to make known.

Paul was a man of vision, a man with experiences, "whether in the body or out of the body" he could not tell, but they gave him a vista of the purposes of God so wide and deep, so grand and wonderful, that in his own day and ever since he by precept and example rebukes all lukewarmness in service, all narrowness in concept, all unloving selfishness within the circle of the family of God. His personal vision of the Lord was essentially important to him in his appointed sphere of service; and it continues to be the divine rule, each servant, "according to the measure of the Spirit given to every man," must go forth commissioned by the Lord to be "a witness of the things wherein thou hast seen Me."

No Vision, the People Perish

If we turn to Prov. 29:18 we will find an inspired emphasis on the vital importance of having a true vision of the will of God. There we are told, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." - In the original meaning of this word "perish," it has the significance of "become naked," or to be "uncovered" "to be exposed," or still another meaning is "to cast off restraint." A paraphrase of this text would then be, "Where there is no vision at which the eyes gaze intently, the people cast off restraint; they are made naked and exposed." A very marked illustration of this is found in the words -of Jesus addressed to the Church at Laodicea, and to all Laodicians ever since, "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and blind and naked; I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." (Rev. 3:17, 18.) And be it noted that the Lord has but one remedy to offer for this sad state in Laodicea, "Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Can there be any more unfortunate state of mind in the professing Christian than this self-deception? Laodicea's lukewarmness was the effect of which her boast of being "rich, and increased with goods, and needing nothing," was the direct cause. Her vision was limited now to "the abundance of the things" she possessed. She looked at self and was satisfied, and grew lukewarm. Paul looked at Jesus and saw that which swept his own righteousness into utter discard, and urged him on and on to lay hold of all that for which the Lord Jesus had laid hold of him.

The solemn lesson the Spirit would teach us is that Laodicea's boasting self-deception may be reproduced in us also, and will assuredly be so reproduced unless our eyes are kept widely opened to our own worthlessness by the eye-salve the Lord applies to eyes fixed intently on His work for us, and opened to "the riches of His grace, wherein He hath abounded toward us in all

wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which he has purposed in Himself." (Eph. 1:7-9.) Paul's vision was one that was focused on the fact that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom he considered himself chief, and in the fact that the simple Gospel of Christ was "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." He visualized a "high calling of God in Christ Jesus" open to as many as the Lord shall call from Jew and Gentile, whose hearts have been touched as his own had been, so that there is a willingness to "count all things but loss and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. He saw a Church purchased by the blood of Jesus, a precious treasure to Him who loved her and bought her, for whom He died, for whom He stands in the presence of God, and for whom He comes again' in the end of the Age to receive her unto Himself "a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." He visualized a Church enthroned in power with Christ, fully qualified by present life experiences to judge the world in righteousness, in patience, in longsuffering, in tender mercy, when present days of probationary training are over, and the world comes forth from the prison-house of death. This was his vision, this the impelling force behind his years of suffering and devotion, and this the vision that made him a man of determination, of warm heart, of mature discernment, and an epistle of Christ "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

Would we be so molded in our own Christian life? Would we leave behind a similar record as Paul? Then surely we may look constantly to him and grow like him.. Ah no! While we may be followers of him even as he also was of Christ, yet we too must have our gaze fixed on the same One that filled his vision. He tells us plainly that to fix our eyes on him will mean in time a carnal mind, a limited perception, and a stunted growth, but "looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith," like Him we shall be, and out of this vision will come a growth in grace and knowledge, in outlook and character, in service and fruitage, such as will glorify God, bless His people, and enable us to finish our course with joy.

True Consecration Depends on such a Vision

It is a precious boon, a blessing of inestimable value to have the eyes of our understanding opened to see the grace of God in Christ Jesus. And how possible it is to have but a partial vision of this grace. As a matter of fact we have not really had such a vision until we have seen ourselves as Paul did, the chief of sinners. Not until we have seen that all our own righteousness is as filthy rags, and all our own works as unprofitable service, will we reach the place where all boasting is excluded, and not until "nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling," becomes a fixed conviction in our heart, can we enter into the realities of true consecration. Love must be the power that draws us to Christ, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," -- everything "that no flesh should glory in His presence."

Nothing short of this vision of our own real poverty will keep us always humble in heart. No other viewpoint will save us from thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, and thereby fall into that sad state of spiritual blindness where one's own standing in divine favor is judged by comparison with the sayings and doings of others. We remember Paul tells us of "some that commend themselves; but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." (2 Cor. 10:12.) The unwisdom of such a course is obvious. It betrays a beclouded vision, and tells all too plainly that the eye has been taken off the Lord Jesus, before whose example of self-abnegation, devotion, obedience, love, and sympathy,

our own is seen to fall so very far short of perfection, and we are made to see that "by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." - Eph. 2:8.

As a concrete proof that true consecration must spring from, and continue to have its roots, in a real heart affection for Jesus Himself, we should carefully consider the Lord's message to Ephesus. (Rev. 2:1-6.) And inasmuch as this deep affection has its start in the sacrificial love of Jesus for us, it follows that the vision of Christ crucified must never be dimmed before our eyes, but it must be with us as with Paul, a "heavenly vision" constantly leading us to say, "All for Jesus, all for Jesus, all my being's ransomed powers." They were surely "consecrated," and "in the truth," in that assembly at Ephesus! Measured by all the rules the church membership of that day and our own would apply, they were unquestionably the Lord's true saints. They had much to their credit. Their "works" proved that they had not grown weary in well-doing. They had "patience," a virtue of outstanding merit. "Hatred of them that are evil," they also had in commendable measure. They were well versed in true doctrine, so much so that they were alert to detect the false position of any "who say they are apostles and are not." And it could be said that they had suffered much for Christ's sake, which as we know is a very important feature of true consecration.

But for all of these, which to most of us are the real facts of Christian life, these Ephesian brethren were plainly told that they had lost the very thing that alone makes one's dedication to the Lord of any merit whatsoever-"Because thou hast lost thy first love." Evident it is that it was not a loss of love for the truth they had received, or any loss of zeal for its defense and promulgation, but they had let slip a personal devotion to Christ Himself, and this loss, in the eyes of Jesus was far too vital a matter to - overlook. And in this connection it is well that we now-remember that this Ephesus message is directed to us as well, for thus it is written, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith until the Churches."

Open Thou Mine Eyes

Thus we see that the true center of the dedicated life is Christ Himself. And it is the center of those two all-important features of Christian life, namely, the unity of the Spirit as pertaining to our fellowship, and the service of the Lord and His people. This is the reason why it must be with each one of us a personal, vision of Christ. Paul might have been able to say that the risen Jesus was seen "by Peter, then by the twelve, after that by five hundred brethren at once, after that seen of James, then of all the Apostles," but if he had not been able to say, "Last of all He was seen of me," not only would the proof of his apostleship have been greatly affected, but how absent would have been that impelling power which so greatly influenced his daily life and ministry. It was out of that vision and its never-to-be-forgotten revelation of the love of Jesus in opening his eyes to the fact that in his mistaken zeal he was proving himself disloyal both to Him and His saints, that "our beloved Brother Paul" became an outstanding example of brotherly love, and of "lawful striving." It was the secret of his Spirit-directed ministry, and his burning with -one all-absorbing desire to see Christ formed in the heart of every believer. It was because he had this personal vision so deeply stamped on his character that he left the Church that gem of Love's supreme importance, beauty, and operation-the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. It was because of that unerasable vision that above all other things he longed to see the Church cleansed and purified, a "chaste virgin" for Christ, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." O, that we too may see as clearly as he saw. May we too have our eyes fixed on the eternal realities, those vital facts of faith and practice, and like Paul, obediently follow the heavenly vision, and inspire

in others the same determined purpose, that we and they might "know Him and the power of His resurrection."

"What Seest Thou?"

The epistles of Paul are full of illustrations of the varying degrees of sight possessed by brethren in his day, and thus reveal the possible degrees of spiritual vision. How few there were who seemed to get beyond a first stage of sight! How few saw things in true proportions! It was natural for many to elevate ordinances into a place of supreme importance, and easy for some to make such things more vital than being clothed with, humility, or being so indwelt by the Spirit of Christ that the life of Christ might be manifest in their daily walk. We recall the experience of the blind man, who received the healing touch of the Savior's hand, and then on being asked "What seest thou?" said he saw "men as trees walking." He had sight certainly, but things were all out of proportion. But with a second touch, he was able to see "every man clearly."

This incident teaches us plainly that we may see much, yes very much more than we had seen before, but yet see only very partially-see "men like trees walking." And it is quite reasonable to suppose that if there had been no second touch given this man's eyes, he would have gone his way thinking himself seeing just like other men. It required that second touch to convince him that previously his sight had been but partial. So it is still. It is only when mature sight is really possessed in spiritual things that a former partial sight is fully realized. This explains why Paul felt so grieved over the immature sight of so many of the brethren of his day. He had so clearly seen the lengths and breadths of the love of Christ, had so visualized the power of the Gospel to elevate men and women into maturity of mind and transformation of character, that it constituted his most trying experience to see the Corinthian Church at best but babes in Christ, when for the length of time they had professed to be following Christ, they should have been not only ready but eager for the strong meat of the Word. Up to that time their sight was like that of the blind man, only partial, but doubtless to themselves it seemed a full-orbed vision.

The Church at Corinth evidently had seen much. It is worth while noting how Paul opens up his first letter to them. He thanks God on their behalf because of the grace they had received, he compliments them on being "enriched by Him, in all utterance, and all knowledge," and he is encouraged by their coming "behind in no gift." Yet this epistle reveals that in this Church there were contentions over a number of things, as for instance over the relative value of the ministry of Paul, Apollos, and Peter. They disputed over ordinances of one kind and another, no doubt contending vigorously for personal rights and opinions, and logically reaching the sure result of such contentions-being "puffed up for one against another." But an outrage of common decency goes unchecked and unjudged in their assembly. Sticklers for opinions they were, but how sadly lacking in that deeper sight which sees that righteousness, purity, godliness is the prime requirement of saints.

This, then, is another reason why we need the "heavenly vision." "The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are, and if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." (1 Cor. 3:17.) A deep underlying principle is emphasized in the statement, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Only the pure in heart do see God, therefore only the pure in heart have spiritual vision. How could the Lord impart any heavenly vision, or impress His revelations on a heart not thoroughly cleansed from carnal defilements? ' And it is all too possible to sit under God's deep truths, yes, and rehearse them over and over, and yet not really see this law of God which requires first of all a "single eye," "clean hands and a pure heart."

We are concerned when using a camera to see that nothing overshadows the film whereby the picture would be marred or utterly spoiled. With how much greater care we need to see that no "roots of bitterness obscure our vision of God and His Spirit. How necessary it is to remember now that it can be true that "Greater than the fault you condemn and criticize is the sin of criticism and condemnation. We recall the character created by John Bunyan to represent this absence of vision, the man with the "muckrake" with head bent earthward, while overhead hangs a crown he never sees. Is it possible that he had deceived himself into believing that his diligent use of the rake would eventually merit the crown? Possibly so! But Bunyan was right in concluding that in no more certain way would the crown be utterly forfeited.

What, then, do we see today? Are our eyes fixed on "heavenly" things, beholding "a land that is very far off"-far off from all earthly standpoints? Can we say with Job that we have heard much by the hearing of the ear, but now, due to the providences of God, and His Spirit's leading, " my eye seeth Thee." Have we been led to that high vantage ground where men no more seem as large as trees, and where things of little eternal importance no longer becloud the vision of His face? Do we see that the most important thing today is to so walk with the Lord as to receive the impress of His character on our own? Do we see that above all other things this is a day in which "to be purified is to have sin burned out; to be made white is to have the glory of Christ burned in the one as cleansing, the other as illumination and glorification"? These are the important things, for surely

"There are voices in the air, filling men with hope and fear;
There are signals everywhere that the end is drawing near."

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? In no better way can we be prepared for the change we so fervently desire than to do as Paul did, commit ourselves wholly to Christ, let Him have full dominion in our hearts and lives. Then His influence will be a power controlling our thoughts, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." His example will become the directing force in our daily walk, and His character-likeness the ultimate goal of all our aspirations, as it is the objective in God's predestined purpose for His Church. Well, indeed may we pray, "O may no earth born cloud arise, to hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes," and daily seek to walk in the light of His countenance. Let us not . be disobedient to the heavenly vision of His love and grace, but faithful to that vision, until the good work He has begun in us has been by His own love and power completed and we pass in to see Him face to face. - Contributed.

Annual Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute

Due to be Held June 5, 1937

Members of the Pastoral Bible Institute are, hereby reminded of the privilege which is theirs of nominating in thee pages. of this journal the brethren they wish to elect as directors for the fiscal year 1937-1938. While the attention of new members is especially drawn to this matter, we desire to emphasize in the minds of old members also, not only the privilege, but also the responsibility which continued association with this ministry brings.

All should be aware of, the fact that the affairs of this Institute are in the hands of seven brethren who are elected from the Institute's membership to serve for a period of one year or until their successors are elected. In accordance with the, by-laws the next annual meeting is due to be held on Saturday, June 5, 1937, and arrangements will, be made to hold same at 2 p. m. in the parlors of the Institute, 177 Prospect Place, Brooklyn, N. Y.

The seven brothers whose term of service will expire next June are:

Bennett, .S. D.

Jordan, J. C.

Blackburn, J. J.

Read, P. L.

Boulter, B.

Stiles, C. E.

Thomson, P. E.

The brethren named above are pleased to report that a spirit of Christian love and harmony exists in their midst; and they have reason to believe that the Lord has seen fit to bless their association in. this ministry. The pleasures of this service they would gladly continue, sharing is joys and responsibilities if that be the Lord's will; and they earnestly pray that His will may be expressed in the vote of the members. The present directors realize that those carrying on any work often fail to **see** opportunities for improvement and expansion apparent to others not charged with such responsibility. For this reason changes in office not infrequently have beneficial effects.. They desire above all things that the work of the Lord (for the furtherance of which this Institute was formed) be prosecuted with the greatest possible efficiency, and to this end are ready cheerfully to step aside for others whom the membership believe to be fitted for the work. They therefore urge upon all the members of our Institute that they make this a special occasion of prayer.

If after prayerful meditation you are led of the Lord to nominate other brethren and will forward the names and addresses of such brethren so as to reach this office on or before April 15, 1937, such names will be published in the May issue of the "Herald," that all members may have an opportunity of voting for them.

Letters of Interest

Dear Brethren:

I am grateful for the kindness shown me by inserting **in** the "Herald" [January, issuer, a request for letters from the friends, and the generous response to that request by friends from various parts of this country, Canada, and a few from England and Scotland.

I am now entirely helpless, confined to my bed, making reading much more difficult than formerly. I am trusting in the Lord, who doeth all things well, to see me through to the end. Continue to remember me at the throne of grace.

I hereby gratefully acknowledge each letter received, .which T cannot do personally, and be assured they have been the source of much comfort and encouragement to me. ,May the Lord bless you all richly.

Your brother in Christ,
W. F. Beneditz,
1015 Eighth Street, Wausau, Wis.

Dear Sirs:

An old issue of the "Herald" fell into my hands recently and I am enclosing stamps for a recent issue or two. I would like also to have a list of your publications.

Yours truly,
E. M. - Ohio

Dear Sirs:

Your leaflet, "What is the Soul," has been handed me to read, and I find so many good points in it that I Would like very much to have other leaflets you may have. 'I recently consecrated my life to Jesus and I cannot do enough for Him. I realize more every day how narrow is the Christian life, but how much happier one is by being a Christian than to be otherwise.

Enclosed find thirty cents for which please send me the instructive book entitled, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," **I am** so anxious .to read everything I can of the Truth.

H. H. - Ohio