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The Christian's Heritage of Peace and Joy

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. . . . And the peace of God, which passeth understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." - Phil. 4:4, 7.

IN order to get the full import of these texts, it is necessary to note the circumstances which led Paul to write them. In two preceding texts he has mentioned the names of two seemingly capable sisters in the assembly at Philippi, who have been estranged, over some unmentioned controversy, and he has asked the assistance of some brother whom he affectionately styles "true yokefellow," soliciting his aid in bringing, about a reconciliation. The nature of the appeal made to these two women, Euodia and Syntyche, suggests that their characters as well as their services were a real asset to the Philippian Church, "for," he writes, "they labored with me in the Gospel." We may think of them then as sincere, warmhearted characters, both of them revealing a spirit of true devotion to the Lord and His cause, and quite possibly it was this energetic spirit which caused the rift that had temporarily disrupted what we may believe had been a congenial and happy fellowship. But the disagreement had not been managed as well as it might have been, had a more tolerant and moderate view been taken by both. This is the import of the Apostle's words, "Let your forbearance be known unto all men"; or as the Authorized Version gives it, "Let your moderation be known unto all."

It is evident that from the very beginning of the Church's history, it has been difficult for all, even the most sincere of heart among God's people, to see eye to eye on every point of faith and practice. And alas, on far, too many such occasions, self has come in, coloring and deepening the disagreement until the breach is made permanent. No wonder that Paul, observing the havoc these misunderstandings can create, so tenderly entreated the Ephesian brethren to "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they had been "sealed unto the day of redemption." And to this end he urges them to "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." - Eph. 4:30-32.

What Record Are We Leaving?

What the question or issue was that brought about this disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche we are not told, and it is not important that we should know. Paul is not concerned with the question itself, but holds both sisters wrong in letting it be a cause of estrangement, and so addresses his entreaty to them, both in the same terms, namely, to "be of the same mind in the Lord," in other words, to agree in Christ and be clone with their disputings. We should 'be glad to know that two such splendid characters as these women evidently were, received this advice of Paul, and thereafter found that they could have a true unity of the Spirit, though perhaps of the same opinion still on the matter which nearly parted them one from= the other. We cannot but wonder what their reactions would have been had they been told at that time that the only thing concerning them to go into the records of Philippian Church history, to be read by future members of the Church of Christ, would be this quarrel between them over some matter unworthy of mention in the record. Surely they would have deprecated the fact that such was the occasion for placing their names before the entire Church of all the Age.

How then will it be with ourselves? Will our record be less regrettable? Will we have made the largest impress on pages being written today, by our unwise magnifying of matters relatively unimportant, or will we have made that largest impression 'by living so in the spirit of the truth that the record will be one to be read with joy and gratitude? Well indeed may we pray, "So let our daily lives express the beauties of true holiness," and earnestly desire to live and "speak and act aright," that future days may never be saddened by recollections of a failure to rise above inevitable differences of thought among even those of whom an Apostle could write, "they labored with me in the Gospel."

Christian Life Rises Above the Lesser Things

This incident comes to our attention immediately following one of the most beautiful of Paul's declarations of his own concentration on the things that are really vital. Turning to the previous chapter we find him telling of his own rejoicing in Christ, -and expressing the firmness of his purpose to press on until he has laid hold of all that for which the Lord has laid hold on him. To know Christ and the power of His resurrection is, he declares, his determined objective. And this vision of the great realities of his high calling in Christ was habitual with our beloved Brother Paul. In the preceding epistle, Ephesians, we see him lifted tip in spirit with this same elevating perspective,' rejoiced in heart by the very greatness of God's grace toward the sanctified in Christ Jesus. In Chapter I alone he uses the words "we" and "us" no less than nine times in eight verses, and in every one of these texts he is drawing attention to revelations of the matured Christian's heritage in Christ which, if rightly apprehended, will elevate our spirits and "guard our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus" against all the distracting influences whereby the things that matter most may be so easily eclipsed.

With such a vision of the true facts of Christian life, Paul could never be occupied with relatively unimportant things. Having seen the vastness of our intended inheritance in Christ, how inconceivable it would be to find him content to live within the limited boundaries which were far too often the limits of vision and -attainment of some in his day, even as it is in ours. In contrast then, to this spiritual perception which well qualified Paul to distinguish between greater and lesser things, we have in the case of Euodia and Syntyche an illustration of the commonest kind, showing how, when the mind of the Lord is not active in us, comparatively trifling things will assume a magnitude that does not belong to them. The remedy Paul offers for this impaired

spiritual vision is still the same: Call to mind your heritage, and "rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."

Christ the Center of Unity and Fellowship

Turning back the pages of Israel's history where much has been preserved for our edification on whom the ends of the ages have come, we find a record of fluctuating revivals and backslidings among that favored nation. The history of Nehemiah contains the story of one of these times when the presence of God became again a power in their midst. There we find the antecedent of Paul's confidence in the power of joy to give people a realization of inward strength against all outward circumstances. To Israel the word was, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." (Neh. 8:10.) Who that knows anything of real Christian life will dispute the fact that the joy of the Lord still retains all its invigorating power and that when joy rules the heart it minimizes the difficulties and gives peace. Does not Church history bear testimony to this same fact, revealing that the high spots in its power and effective testimony were those all too few occasions when by some providential leading of the Lord, there was a lifting up out of confining and vitiating circumstances, into higher conceptions of Christ's power and presence, which found expression in grateful song: "O how happy are we who in Jesus agree." The dark regrettable pages of Church history are there because it was not agreement in Jesus that held the highest place, but agreement in matters of very much less importance. Where this love for Jesus is strong in the individual or in the assembly, there we will find the happiest people, the deepest spiritual characters, and the beautiful verification of our Savior's words, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." - John 8:32, 36.

Practical Grounds for Fulness of Joy

Seeing then how consistent and effective for good this rejoicing in the Lord is, we may properly inquire as to what Paul would mean by his emphasized statement, entreating us to thus rejoice. We know him too well to think of him as suggesting anything vague and impractical. It is the glorious practical possibilities he invariably emphasized. In every epistle he wrote, there is a reference in one form or another to the abundant favors he has himself received, and for which he is supremely grateful. Frequently he looks backward, calling to mind the revelations and dispensations of special grace he has experienced, and if ever eyes of faith could look beyond the horizon of things seen and temporal, "and see the glories of eternity," such were the eyes of Paul. So we find him in all circumstances sustained by the joy and peace he urged upon his brethren as their possible present inheritance. And should it not be thus with us? Who, more than we, can say, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad"? Who, therefore, more than we, should be steadfastly offering up "the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name," praising Him for what He has already done, and for the great and unending blessings yet to be.

To be specific, let us consider some special reasons why this rejoicing should never be absent from our hearts. Noting these, it will surely reveal that this joy is not to be considered incompatible with outward circumstances, or incapable of producing the "peace of God" regard-less -of environments such as the Apostle outlines as being his own experience, when he was "troubled" on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, "but not destroyed." - 2 Cor. 4:8.

Worthy the Lamb!

If there should be any doubt as to what should take first place in this rejoicing in the Lord, such uncertainty will surely vanish if we "lift the parting veil" and in vision see the redeemed Church as in the presence of God. When that veil is lifted by the Spirit in the Word, do we not invariably catch this outstanding note in all their praise, "Thou art worthy, . . . for Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" "The Lamb that was slain" is the song of a Bride saved by grace, as it is to be the theme of a universal chorus when "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth," will hail the Lamb once slain, "and crown Him Lord of all." And let us then, while that veil is lifted, listen with the deepest interest, for we will hear not one single note in which there is any mention of what those once sinners "saved by grace," have done for God and the Lamb. We will hear no strain of competitive worthiness being sung, no discordant voice raised to mar the tribute of praise due "unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." "Salvation! O the joyful sound," is thus the keynote of heaven's song. Let it then be ours also.

The great songs of the Bible are songs of deliverance. Commemoration of great occasions when God wrought in power on behalf of His people, mark the high spots in Israel's history. So from the day of their song on being saved from the sea and from Egypt's host, until John leaves us listening to all creation singing a hallelujah chorus, it is the same great gladdening and unifying theme centered in the same great attribute of God -- His abounding goodness.

And is there power in praise to sanctify and unite? Indeed there is! Can we let imagination play long enough to bring the power of that hallelujah chorus into our spirits, and reveal its potency for good? Let us then imagine ourselves as one of, say as few as one hundred thousand of the redeemed of earth soon to experience deliverance from sin and death. Every one of that number we will think of as living in the consciousness of a full redemption from condemnation and the power of death, and all fully awake to the place the sacrifice of Jesus had in securing that deliverance for them. Imagine, **if we can**, every grateful heart in that vast gathering overflowing with the joys of salvation, and voicing their gratitude in the words of that grand old hymn, "Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him, Lord of all." What would it mean? Ah, it would mean that the power of that heartfelt song rising from a sense of adoring devotion to the person of God's beloved Son, would sweep away all littleness, all meanness, all selfishness and lovelessness, all wrong perspectives, like the frost of night before the rising sun. Is it any wonder that Paul tells us to "Rejoice in the Lord always"? Is it strange that he recommended this antidote for the broken fellowship and consequent loss of power at Philippi?

Then, beloved, let our songs abound. Let us sing His worthy praise, and truly rejoice in His salvation. Surely our song can henceforth oftener be, "Hear what the Lord hath done for me," and thus we can strike a higher key in the sacrifice of praise. Let us sing more about redeeming grace, more about the majestic sweetness enthroned upon the Savior's brow, more about His all-embracing love, and prove the health-giving merits of the remedy so fervently urged upon two of our sisters long ago. And let us not forget that Paul prescribed large repeated quantities: "Rejoice, and again I say, Rejoice."

Relationship with Christ a Joy

Another very special cause for rejoicing is the extraordinary heritage we have in our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. For though the greatness of our redemption from sin and condemnation represents a marvelous display of divine love, it by no means exhausts the heritage into which forgiving grace has brought us. But where shall we begin to enumerate our blessings in this grace wherein we stand? Before the multitude of His benefits what can we say more than,

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I'm lost
In wonder, love and praise."

Paul is equally transported and lost, as he attempts to appraise his inheritance in Christ. He comes to the end of his powers of calculation several times, when he goes as far as thought and word will carry him, and he can only point to unlimited possibilities "exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think." He has, however, mentioned so many of the great features of this inheritance of joy in Christ, that we may gather these before our minds and ask ourselves, "O, how can words with equal warmth the gratitude declare"

Suppose then we choose but seven of the outstanding things Paul was intensely interested in, and unspeakably grateful for, as revealed in his letters. Many more might well be mentioned, but these seven are sufficiently comprehensive to suffice: First, being made a favored recipient of the unmerited grace that is in Christ Jesus, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. 1:7.) A little meditation on verses 3 to 11 of this chapter must serve to bring home to one's heart the extraordinary nature of the grace we have had bestowed upon us. Surely it is "an inheritance' incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us" in His marvelous love. Here we have mentioned, all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, adoption into the family of God, chosen by Him for this signal honor long before the foundations of the world were laid. We are made acceptable through the beloved Son, being made the righteousness of God in Him. The riches of God's grace is our estate, and we are privileged to know the hidden things of His will; and all this inheritance is made secure to us according to His eternal purpose. What a heritage in grace! Will such sublime possibilities not fill us with abounding joy, humble and mellow us, and produce a 'maturity in spirit and vision lifting us far above lesser things? Surely so! These weighty and vital facts accomplished much in making Paul mature in spirit and understanding, and so they will do for all of us, if we "think on these things."

Second, being transferred out of Adam into a new life in Christ "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." (Gal. 2:20.) What emphasis the Apostle put upon this feature of Christian life and privilege. How very definite and decidedly important are his statements, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," and "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of His." This resurrection life with its standing of "no condemnation" and its atmosphere of separation from the old self-life filled Paul's zealous heart with overflowing joy. And to know that in this new life there is the realization of a supernatural power, such as raised Christ from the dead, was of such absorbing interest to Paul, that he was no mere theoretical exponent of doctrinal tenets, but occupied both himself and others 'with the practical possession of **the experience** of the Spirit's power. Immaturity 'can, and often does grasp the theory, but fails utterly to experience the power of the

Word. The usual result of truth without this power is contention and disunion, but truth received and loved for its power to make all things new, brings "peace and joy in the Holy Spirit," giving clearness of vision regarding the facts of vital importance, and producing stability of true Christian character.

Third, the inestimable privilege of being counted worthy to suffer with and for Christ's sake: "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." (Phil. 1:29.) Over and over again we find Paul rejoicing in the privilege he had of 'being thus identified with Christ. He could count such things all joy, and "reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:18.) Who that sees the grandeur of such a privilege with its future results of closest association with Jesus, could not say, "Gladly will I toil and suffer. only let me walk with Thee." Again, it is the fact and not the possible ramifications of the theory with which our mature Apostle is occupied habitually. Thank God this is still, as it has always been throughout the present Age, the important fact. The statement is beautifully clear: "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." There is no intimation that any elaborated philosophy must be understood before the suffering has merit in the sight of our great and wise, loving and impartial God.

Fourth, and fifth -- to be made like Christ, and to have Christ formed in us. Both are blessed possibilities! "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," and so put on, that having Him formed in us, we will then be "unto God a sweet savour of Christ." - Rom. 13:14; 2 Cor. 2:15.

That I May be Found in Him

As a sixth feature of Paul's great principles and causes for rejoicing, we cannot do better than let him express it in his own words, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, . . . And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law [of works] but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. 3:8, 9.) What a maturity of spiritual vision! What a concentration of life at the true and vital center! How well he knew that it was not doctrines about Christ that saved him, but Christ Himself -- that no means to an end could ever be substituted for the end itself. To stop short of this standard would have been to approach life's consummation clothed in the rags of self-commendation, to say, Lord, Lord, behold what we have done! Such objectives can never bring to any -one the inward joy Paul experienced, and which he advocates as being so consistent a habit with the Christian. To sing of what **we** have done has no music for the ears of those about us, much less has it any charm for the ears of God. But when the knowledge of Christ Jesus becomes the magnetic influence in a life growing in grace and knowledge, then there is a joy otherwise impossible, and a song of what great things **God has done**, which is contagious and inspiring.

Seventh -- to reign with Christ in the future was a hope of real importance to Paul. It could not be otherwise with one who possessed so much of the love and sympathy of Christ. It was a joy set before him that gave strength to endure steadfastly to the end of an unusually strenuous life.

How wonderful are these seven possibilities! Surely if they are comprehended by us as they should be they will continue to be an increasingly sanctifying and elevating influence in our lives, and because of their very greatness give us a larger measure of the mind of Christ. Is it not these very things kept in their proper ratio of importance with other matters, that will bring to us today

the same results Paul had in mind when long ago he urged two sisters "that they be of the same mind in the Lord"? Would it not be just such all comprehensive facts as these that he believed sufficient to dispel a misunderstanding, and start them to rejoicing and doubly rejoicing in the Lord? We think *so!*

- *Contributed.*

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Not Understood

Not understood, we move along asunder,
Our paths grow wider as the seasons creep
Along the years; we marvel and we wonder
Why life is life, and then we fall asleep --
Not understood.

Not understood, we gather false impressions,
And hug them closer as the years go by,
Till virtues often seem to us transgressions,
And thus men rise and fall and live and die --
Not understood.

Not understood, poor souls with stunted vision,
Oft measure giants by their narrow gauge.
The poisoned shafts of falsehood and derision
Are oft impelled 'gainst those who mould the age --
Not understood.

Not understood, the secret springs of action,
Which lie beneath the surface and the show
Are disregarded, with self-satisfaction
We judge our neighbors, and they often go --
Not understood.

Not understood, how trifles often change us,
The thoughtless sentence or the fancied slight
Destroys long years of friendship and estrange us,
And on our souls there falls a freezing blight --
Not understood.

Not understood, how many breasts are aching
For lack of sympathy. Ah! day by day,
How many cheerless, lonely hearts are breaking,
How many noble spirits pass away --
Not understood.

Oh, God! that men would see a little clearer,
Or judge less harshly where they cannot see;
Oh, God! that men would draw a little nearer
To one another! They'd be nearer Thee --
And understood.

- *Selected.*

The Father of the Faithful

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." - 2 Cor. 6:17.

THE WILD Bedouin of the desert and the modern Englishman-the conservative East and the progressive and swift-moving West the Mohammedan and the Christian-find in the tent of the first Hebrew a common meeting ground, and in himself a common origin." Abraham by nature had much in common with Orientals in general, who do not hesitate to misrepresent in order to gain a point or to avert a disaster. So those whom God now calls will be found to have by nature many of the traits of their neighbors. God's call, however, is to separation. "I called him alone" is said of Abraham (Isa. 51:2), and had he had faith sufficient-obedient faith that would enable him to go out "alone" in harmony with God's command, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy **kindred**, and from thy father's **house**," instead of taking with him his father, Terah, and his nephew, Lot, he would not perhaps have lost the precious years in Haran, nor experienced serious dangers from going down to Egypt for help.

Doubtless these failures were permitted that the beginnings of faith which enabled Abraham to leave Ur with his loved ones might grow to the faith that could stand with the sturdiness of the oak the shock of the strife which pleasant pasture lands engendered between his herdsmen and those of Lot, and strengthen him for the breaking of the remaining family ties.

Our heart's dependence must be withdrawn from all earthly ties and supports if we would learn what it is to trust in the eternal God with simple and absolute faith. No pasture land could be so fair but that one would take joyfully the spoiling of his goods when he fully realized that thus he would be enabled to fix more firmly his anchor beyond the veil where is reserved for him "a better possession and an abiding one. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." - Heb. 10:34, 35, R. V.

Abraham's failures came to him when following in the ways of fellow man; his successes, when "leaning on the everlasting Arms." We do well to frequently examine as to whether our walk is under divine or human guidance; whether our faith is in any measure in the wisdom of man, or entirely in the power of God; whether our conduct is a mere following of the example of others, - or fitly represented by the sheep that know their Master's voice; whether we are merely propped up by the example and influence of our fellows, or sustained by personal faith in God and guided by His Word. Terah and Lot **left** Ur of the Chaldees -the one to delay the journey for years and the other to fall in the plains of Sodom. The call of God had not reached their hearts nor the promised inheritance filled their vision. Selah.

Divisions "Manifesting the Approved"

The ostensible cause of Lot's fall was strife among herdsmen, but the real cause must be sought in the heart. "The strife no more produced the worldliness in Lot than it produced the faith in Abraham; it only manifested, in the case of each, what was really there. Thus it is always: controversies and divisions arise in the Church of God, and many are stumbled thereby, and driven back into the world in one way or another. They then lay the blame on the controversy and

division, whereas the truth is, that these things were only the means of manifesting the real condition of the soul, and the bent of the heart. The world was in the heart, and **would be** reached by some route or another; nor is there much of moral excellency exhibited in blaming men and things, when the root of the matter lies within. It is not that controversy and division are not to be deeply deplored: assuredly they are. To see brethren contending, in the very presence of 'the Canaanite and Perizzite,' is truly lamentable and humiliating. Our language should ever be, 'Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, for we are brethren.' "

In every religious movement there have always been individuals who cast in their lot with it, but without knowing the power which inspires it -- the separation from the world and to God that sustains the faithful. The mere excitement soon ends, and having no principle to take its place, such characters become hindrances and disturbers of the peace. Let us examine ourselves whether we be in the faith--this faith that knows God, and has appropriated His promises, present and future. We need to know whether we are guided by the love of God or by the fear of man. "Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself." (Psa. 4:3.) Though we live in a monastery, with no sound to break upon the ear but the summoning bell of worship, if we take Lot with us there, the true life of separation to God can not be lived, the intended growth in faith can not be experienced. The block must be separated from the quarry bed, ere the chisel can fashion it for its place in the temple. So must we be willing to die to the world and its censure or its praise, to the ambitions and schemes of the flesh, to the self life and its friendships, if we would be prepared for a place in the great antitypical Temple of God.

The Way of Faith not Obstructed by Earthly Attractions

Abraham was conscious perhaps of the ill effects of his association with Lot, and may have traced the sins committed in Egypt to the worldly influence of his nephew, yet knew no way to rid himself of the encumbrance. But God knew the appeal of fair pastures to the worldly mind, and He also knew that he who had come forth from Ur of the Chaldees "not knowing whither he went," would still look to His leading. Abraham, as well as Lot, had a heart that could appreciate well watered plains, but his was the heavenly wisdom that lets God choose for him. Thus does faith always work, and is always satisfied with God's choice. Faith will always say to the world, "Let there be no strife between me and thee. . . Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." - Gen. 13:8, 9.

Abraham's decision was wise, avoiding contention; and magnanimous, resigning his undoubted right to first choice. But, more important still, it was the course of faith. His faith was beginning to spread its wings. The God who had promised could be trusted to choose for him. There was no fear that Lot could rob him of what God had assured him would be his inheritance. One who holds firmly to the things of the world has little hold on God. Let nature seek where it will, let it take its boldest, its highest flight, there is never danger that it will appropriate faith's treasure. Faith is perfectly safe, as well as beautifully disinterested, in allowing Lot first choice.

When "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere," he, as well as Abraham; knew that Sodom was also there, and knew its wickedness, though they could not know it was about to be judged. Herein was manifested Abraham's righteousness. his wisdom, and his faith. No earthly attraction could induce him to fail to leave the decision with the One who knows the end from the beginning. Abraham and Lot, standing together on the heights' of Bethel, saw to the southeast the well-watered valley of the Jordan "as

the garden of the Lord. The Euphrates had been forsaken long ago, and the wealth of the Nile more recently. Doubtless Lot consoled himself with the thought that one who could not appreciate this opportunity of "making a fortune" for himself and his family would not know how to take care of such opulence if he should get it. Then there was his own family that must be provided for. How little did he realize the dangers to which he was exposing them; how little did he comprehend the actual lovelessness of the father who would provide fleeting wealth at the loss perhaps of eternal happiness. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," saw the garden, but not the serpent; chose to forget that the men of Sodom were "sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Far better would it have been for Lot to risk leading his children into abject poverty in following the guidance of the Lord, rather than to "pitch his tent toward Sodom," thus taking them into the soul-beggaring influences of that moral wilderness.

Love of Riches Root of All Evil

Undoubtedly as Lot's tent was pitched toward Sodom (not within the gates at first, of course), there was no thought in his mind of anything but good coming from any contact he and his family would have with the Sodomites; but how swiftly he was drawn into the vortex. He saw; he chose; he separated himself from the only uplifting influence of all that land; he journeyed east; he pitched his tent toward Sodom; he dwelt there; he rose to prominence in the city; he sat in the gate; his daughters married men of the city; he and his family were Sodomites. His righteous soul might vex itself with the filthy conversation of the Sodomites, but could be saved from the blight and penalty of Sodom only through the pleading of the one he had thought to rob of the choicest of his inheritance.

They who seek a name, a place, and a portion in the earth must expect to participate in this order's upheavals and vicissitudes. Lot probably had no part in the revolt of Bera and his three associates against Chederlaomer, but he did share in the losses, for "they took Lot, Abraham's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed." In the paying of tithes, the revolt, and the war that followed, Abraham had no part. His tent and his altar furnished no attraction to the cupidity of the "four kings." Only with his eyes did he "behold and see the reward of the wicked." The reason is that his separation was not merely that of the tent, but also of the altar -- separation **from** Sodom, it is true, but also separation **to** God.

Satan's Bribes no Temptation to the Faithful

There are three things faith may be depended upon to accomplish-it "purifies the heart," it "works b)? love," and it "overcomes the world." In Abraham we find all these results beautifully manifested-Sodom's pollutions could not entice his purified heart, he exhibited true -love for "his brother," Lot (Gen. 14:14), and he overcame the representatives of the world's spirit and pomp that had carried captive his brother. This very victory, however, must be made by Satan the occasion of a still more subtle test of his faith, using the King of Sodom to make a plausible offer of "the goods" of Sodom as his reward for the return of "the persons" Chederlaomer had carried captive. The test was safely passed; but because a tender and thoughtful teacher had prepared him for it. The King of Sodom, hearing of Abraham's victory over the "four kings" came quickly to him with his offer of "the goods," but he was not permitted to proffer his gift until Melchizedek, the King of Salem and the priest of the most high God, had blessed Abraham, and had strengthened him, bringing forth bread and wine, and had reminded him that he who was blessed of God had no need of human aid. This lesson was taught in the phrase, "Possessor of

heaven and earth," a description of God heard there for the first time. It was the Possessor of all things that had said to him, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." What offer could dim his covenant with such a God?

God's dealings have not changed. When we come wearily from some fight to meet other tests, if we are but willing to receive Him, the Prince of Peace is there with fresh revelations of "the Possessor of heaven and earth, " to remind us of the numberless precious promises that are ours, and of our ever present Help in time of trouble, who ever liveth to make intercession for us. When the great Tempter comes to us with the bribes of an ungodly world there need be no danger 'of our falling' a prey to his arts if the beauties of our God and of true holiness are held close to us and are thus filling a larger place in our hearts than "deceitful lusts," deceitful human desires. Rather, we may learn to accept Satan's tempting offers as definite evidence that he has been disappointed in that some crisis has been successfully passed. Whatever he has to offer, either for ourselves or for our loved ones, can be of no interest to us since the "Possessor of heaven and earth" has promised, "all these things shall be added unto you." If, however, we cannot wait for His time and means, then our hands will surely be soiled with Satan's bribes.

Prepared by King of Peace for Further Tests

Safety, too, lies in our recognizing in each trying experience of our course an indication that our loving Teacher is only strengthening us for, some greater test. Our castle is being provisioned for the enemy's attack. The Owner of all things -- the cattle that roam the hills, the treasure that is 'buried there, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all are His, and His, promise to give us "all things" stands sure; but how often we must meet the King of Salem in life's highways that we may be kept reminded of this fact. The weariness of forced marches, the letting down after the victory, the dusty journey back to our routine of daily tasks-perhaps any of these, surely all together' would be too great for us if the King of . Peace did not intercept the journey to set before us refreshment of His own preparing and to remind us that the victory gained had been in the strength of the Lord God of hosts.

But will He meet us? Can we find Him? "If with all your heart ye truly seek Me, ye shall surely ever find Me," is His unfailing promise. Not when we are pursuing the enemy, but when he pursues us, does this incident lead us to expect these special manifestations. It is His strength always that gives the victories, but it is when they are gained that we especially need the reminders of that fact. A clear vision of the "Possessor of heaven and earth" will dim to nothingness the glories of all "the goods" of the kings of earth. This vision comes to us in our numberless victories and in our meetings with the Prince of Peace and with those who have walked in His way of sacrifice-apostles, pastors, teachers, evangelists -- every joint. Help from these sources will never come too late, for "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro, throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." (2 Chron. 16:9.) The boldest Christian knight errant would be but a poor, timid, routed warrior before his feeblest foe were not Christ his "shield and strength." It is He who will "cover our heads in the day of battle," who will "teach our hands to war, and our fingers to fight"; yea, impossible though it sounds to our doubting ears, "He will bruise Satan under our feet shortly." "This is the victory that overcometh" -- and this alone -- faith, the faith of Father Abraham-the faith that separates from all else; to be joined with the God of hosts.

The One Use of Savorless Salt

In drawing the heart from the earth, there are two methods which God uses: First, giving a vision of the glory and permanency of things above; second, revealing the hideousness and instability of "temporal" things by experience and observation. This twofold work is accomplished also by the "lamp that shineth as in a filthy place" (2 Pet. 2:19, literal reading)-'revealing the glories of the divine purpose, as well as the frailties of the flesh. For several years Lot seems to have dropped out of Abraham's life, but in all that time he continued in Sodom, his righteous soul being vexed with its filth, but doing nothing about it. The one thing there was to do was too much of a sacrifice for ambitious flesh. But not all this time in Sodom was to be wasted; for Abraham, though at a distance, was to behold the "reward of the wicked." Not only their possessions, but also the people of Sodom went into a destruction that pictured the "utter destruction reserved for all the works of darkness. Vividly Jesus pictures this same destruction and the blessed 'benefits it will work out in the Father's Plan. The account is in the fifth chapter of Matthew, where sacrificial salt (a fragrant variety from Lake Asphaltites) which because of exposure to the air (Satan's domain) has lost its savor is said to be **still** useful for one thing -"to be trodden under foot of man." The scattering of this "insipid" salt upon the slippery pavement of the temple court seems to picture the making of "the highway of holiness" more sure to the world of mankind because of the record left them regarding those who had lost the sacrificial spirit. "But if the salt become tasteless, how shall it recover its savor? It is of service for nothing any more, except to be cast out and trodden under foot by the men." (Matt. 5:13, Diaglott -- See also footnote.) Abraham finished his journey in greater safety because of the lesson taught him in the destruction of Sodom; as every member of the royal priesthood will have come off conqueror partly because of this and similar pictures, as that of Nadab and Abihu who lost the sacrificial spirit. They are savorless salt cast in our pathway.

The Secret of the Lord with Them that Fear Him

While Lot sat in the gate of Sodom, a man of authority, "by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise,- as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles." "And the Lord [and two angels] appeared to him by the oaks (R. V.) of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day." Graciously Abraham ran to greet the three men "that stood by him," inviting them to the hospitality of his shade, and they as graciously accepted. We pass over the main incident of this scene to note that on leaving, the Lord told Abraham that it was his purpose to destroy Sodom, indicating that His reason for telling Abraham of this was "to the end that he might command his children and his household after him, that they might keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; to the end that the Lord might bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. (See R. V.) Then follows the beautiful scene that has been the inspiration of all that have interceded for their brethren from that day.

Does it seem strange that Lot, who should have been the better informed of the two' as to the needs of the Sodomites, was not the one given this opportunity of intercession? No, it is ever thus. He who has heard the call to separation from the world, is the one whose voice reaches heaven's throne. They who do not hear the call, though not blind to the world's condition, are unable to intercede as do those who follow in the footsteps of the "father of the faithful." Abraham endured "as seeing Him who is invisible." Lot looked at "the things which are seen," the temporal. His work was burned, but he himself was "saved so as by fire." The example of Abraham is for those

who would have "an abundant entrance ministered unto them into the everlasting Kingdom of our 'Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Abraham's intercession failed, for Lot's many years in Sodom had not produced even one righteous soul. Doubtless, however, the experience was not wasted on Abraham. He, as always, was learning his lesson of faith. Wisdom, personifying our Lord represents Him as having "delights with the children of men"; but not with the kind that lived in Sodom. Of the three who visited Abraham, the two angels alone were sent to Sodom. The Lord Himself talked with Abraham, but sent His messengers to Lot, "and the Lord went His way." "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Isa. 57:15.) And how wonderfully does He reward those who welcome Him-for the use of Peter's fishing boat, a load that filled it to the gunwales; twelve baskets full in exchange for the loaves and fishes; jars brimming with the best wine of the wedding feast; and to Abraham, a son, in whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

The Bitter Results of Worldly Affiliation

The breadth of divine love is shown in the promise to save the wicked city if ten righteous souls could be found in it. It is impossible for the world to realize that it is even now saved from destruction because of the presence of "the salt of the earth"-that the four winds of destruction cannot be loosed until the "saints of God are sealed in their foreheads." The tares are left in the field in order that the wheat may continue to grow. The two angels that were sent to Sodom had previously freely accepted Abraham's hospitality, but now were loath to enter Lot's home, preferring to sleep in the street. This was not from fear of contamination, for that street was no holier than the house, but that a testimony regarding the necessity of separation might be borne to Lot. The bearing of a similar testimony is still our privilege, whether or not the results be any better.

There were four to be saved from Sodom, and two angels to save them-one sinner for each hand to drag forth. And that actually was necessary, for they were so wedded to that wicked city that no other method would accomplish that purpose. The years of wickedness and that last frenzied night had not taught him the needed lesson, for when instructed to flee to the mountain, like a frightened child, half bereft of his wits, he "begs, "Oh, not so, my Lord: behold now, Thy servant hath found grace in Thy sight, and Thou hast magnified Thy mercy which Thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me and I die: behold now this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one oh! let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." What a sad picture! God's mountain feared; the hold of man's city still upon him! The visible is all to be taken from him., and he has no consciousness of the invisible. The years when he might have been cultivating an acquaintance with God and the things "not seen" were wasted in clinging to the things that gave no satisfaction, but only vexation of spirit. He cannot flee to God's mountain as long as there is one little city to be found! He went to Sodom under the excuse of providing for his own. Dragged from the city's destruction, his wife was left in the plains, a pillar of salt; and his daughters, all sense of decency lost in their years in debauched Sodom, drugged their father, disgraced themselves, to become by him the mothers of the Ammonites and the Moabites-scourges of God's chosen people!

Could a more vivid picture have been painted than that of Lot's experience to teach us to "love not the world"? "Lay not up for yourselves treasure on earth." Rather, let us step forth boldly upon the promises of our God; let our dwelling place be in the tents of Abraham; our household, the household of faith.

Report of the London Convention

As we go to press, the following is received from our British brethren:

"A wonderful time of encouragement and spiritual refreshment by the way was experienced at the London Convention at the beginning of August. The spirit of the Truth was manifest in the faces and voices of those who for three days were assembled together in a very happy fellowship. A goodly number of friends, representative of practically every part of Great Britain, attended, whilst the London friends themselves were well in evidence. Messages of greeting came from Australia, America, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany, as well as from various parts of England.

"Two overseas brethren as well as five British brethren ministered the Word of Life, and now that all is over and the convention is in the past, sincere prayers are ascending that those ministries may be richly blessed both to the hearer and the speaker, and that the influence of this happy week-end may extend far and wide as the work of God in the hearts of His people continues."

The History of the Church

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - September, 1937)

No. 7

St. Augustine

AUGUSTINE WAS born near Carthage in A. D. 354 and of all the Fathers of the Western Church exerted the greatest influence by his teachings. Up to his seventeenth year his father was a heathen who, of moderate means, educated his son. But Monica, his mother, was a sincere Christian, herself born of Christian parents, and the love and reverence of the illustrious son for the saintly mother and the testimony of her influence upon him, have carved her name in deepest characters on the pages of the history of the Church. "I joyed indeed in her testimony," writes Augustine, "when, in her last sickness, mingling her endearments with my acts of duty, she called me 'dutiful,' and mentioned with great affection of love that she never heard any harsh or reproachful sound uttered by my mouth against her. But yet, O my Lord, who madest us, what comparison is there 'betwixt that honor that I paid her and her slavery for me?'"

Earnestly indeed had Monica prayed for years for the wayward boy who, in answer to an awakening intellect, after a careless, sinful youth, made a step in a better direction by joining a sect called the Manicheans. Though claiming Christianity, this belief was Oriental in origin, and it was the claim it made to superior knowledge and the solution of mystery that led the young Augustine, seeking hungrily for truth, its way. The Manicheans, holding that all matter is essentially **evil** and that the soul is divine and therefore holy, sought to free that soul from its unfavorable association by abstinence and asceticism. Boldly advocating these doctrines, so contrary to the Gospel his mother loved, Augustine abandoned sin, at least in its grosser forms, and for nine years was a flattered and admired member of this sect. But his faith that truth was in these teachings was already gone when at thirty years of age he moved to Rome, where, at the same time though unknown to Augustine, St. Jerome was teaching high-born ladies who gathered around him, such as Paula, Fabiola, and Marcella, the meaning of the Scripture of God. But in Rome Augustine heard the Christian "bishop, the great Ambrose, speak. According to his own statement he was drawn at first only "by the great beauty of the words of the speaker, oblivious to their meaning, but, "While I opened my heart to admire how eloquently he spoke," says

Augustine, "I also felt how truly he spoke" and, abandoning forever the error of the Manicheans, "whose falsehood I detested," this hungry hearted seeker for truth sought again and again the help of the bishop whose great kindness to the inquiring Augustine testifies convincingly of his Christian gentleness and love. But, with all the assistance of Ambrose, Augustine felt he had but reached the vestibule of truth, when suddenly it dawned within his longing heart in blessed light, that light shed forth from that which he had heretofore ignored as but a simple thing -- the writings of St. Paul. He had searched the teachings of Plato but there had found no revelation of the lost state of man; within his soul was bred no conscious need for a Redeemer; now in this illuminating fountain he had found what all the wisdom of the proudest lore came short of -- the blessed, ever living, ever loving, ever needed Christ! The insufficiency of human righteousness so clearly demonstrated in the history of Israel, the insufficiency of human wisdom as exemplified in the Greek, was met and set to naught and yet satisfied in the glorious assurance of a risen Lord!

At the age of 33 the great grief of his life came to this proud philosopher who had become the humble Christian-his beloved mother died at Ostia, "but with her ardent prayers now answered, her dearest wish fulfilled. Asked on her death-bed by a friend, "Would you not dread to leave your body so far from your country?", she answered, "Nothing is afar from God; nor need I fear lest He, at the end of the world, should forget whence He should wake me from the dead."

Selling his paternal estate, reserving nothing for himself that he might serve his God without any added hindrance, Augustine gave what he had to the poor. His dress was simple for he did not deem rich apparel as becoming to the lowly office of a Christian bishop. He "believed also the Scriptures taught that he should wear no shoes, but this proved detrimental to his health and so he comforted himself with the thought that Christ wore sandals and therefore it was excusable that he provide his feet with a protecting covering. At his table, meat was ordered only for guests, or for the weak, and no slanderous gossip was ever permitted to besmirch his hospitality. Money left to the Church at the expense of bereaved relatives was not accepted, and this in a day when the greed of the clergy had become so great as to force passage of laws to protect heirs. A box for the poor in the church received any voluntary offerings used to relieve distress and save debtors from imprisonment, and when this proved inadequate he, even as had the good Ambrose, melted the church plate. His sermons were simple and evangelical, no mitred brows, and impressive robes adorned Augustine, although we see the bishops so attired in the art of the Middle Ages. Even when presented with a new cloak, he continued to wear his own shabby one and gave the price of the new one to the poor. Although the bishops had begun to usurp many rights, and costly vestments were already being given to the churches, such spiritual men as Ambrose, Augustine, and Basil coveted none of these.

But doctrinal questions were raging at this time, and the bishops of the western churches were forced to give many opinions in these controversies, these opinions often wavering and uncertain, but becoming for centuries after the infallible orthodoxy of the Church. And it is most regrettable that this continual disputation brought about in time a dogmatism in Augustine far removed from the charity that marked his former days. Much less gentle with his fellow Christians than with the Pagans, his expressions and arguments became such that they were flaunted later on by the worst Inquisitors, for in his controversy with the Donatists-that sect that had begun as rigid Evangelicals and ended in a fury of party fanaticism-he had reasoned at first as a tolerant Christian, a kindly churchman, but ended as bitter, dogmatic, persecuting, while his opponents in their turn tried to ambush those who opposed them, beating and wounding them, filling their eyes with vinegar to blind them (these Donatists who were members of the same Catholic Church, not heretics but bigots, magnifying the rite of baptism to a saving ordinance in itself until the importance of the doctrine or dogma depreciated that of well-doing, an evil from which Christianity, true Christianity has suffered through the Gospel Age) --in short we see here the stark tragedy of the

resultant effect of controversy amongst the followers of Him whose fruit of every doctrine must be but that of love, that all-embracing love, within whose cradling arms all other virtues lie.

In his arguments against the Donatists, Augustine uses Scriptures that speak of the Church as referring to his own visible congregation exclusively -- rare are other Christian souls who have not at times so limited it -- and he is credited as the first to use the words, "**Compel** them to come in," that sad principle that led to the slaughter in the Netherlands and the massacre of St. Bartholomew, yea, that even in the horrors of the Inquisition were quoted as authority for atrocities that caused men to regard the religion of Christ, which that Church claimed to represent, with aversion and horror.

In its attempt to suppress the Donatists the Church appealed to the civil authority and obtained such persecuting measures that many of that sect found it expedient to be converted. Elated at this success Augustine seemed to find the end quite justifying the means, but how far removed was this later decision from that which he had held forth in his earlier career: "If we are dragged to Christ, we believe against our will. . . . Hear the Apostle: 'With the heart man believeth unto justification'. . . . Since he who is dragged seems to be compelled against his will, how do we solve the question, 'No man cometh unto Me except the Father draw him'?"

The Forge of Error's Chains

In our brief perusal of the lives and teachings of some of those men who, following the Apostles in point of time, left so marked an influence upon the Christian Church that they are termed the Early Fathers of that Church, we have seen that the primitive period was marked by simple government, its few offices and orders derived only from the Scripture. In the end of the first century when the Roman bishop, Clement, wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians, there was no difference between the bishop of a congregation and the presbyter, the pastor. Originally the church group itself elected its bishop and invited the neighboring bishops in for the consecration ceremony, but by the middle of the third century, the election of a bishop was confirmed by the votes of the other bishops of the province, 'but in the presence of the "laity" and by their consent. When, however, the Council of Nicea gave this right to the bishops alone, with no voice of the congregation, this mode of election became popular only in the West, the Eastern churches still continuing their right to veto and to directly elect (as in the case of Cyprian who was chosen by a popular demand of the people, and the clergy were obliged to submit). But the bishop was still only a spiritual guide, of limited powers, for the decision of doctrinal questions was not left to him, but to the vote of the clergy summoned together, and the government of the church was in the hands of the 'congregation itself. When from a parent church there radiated other lesser congregations, its presbyter was esteemed as over all the bishops, but with no greater powers than the humblest one of them.

In time, the word "Metropolitan" (the word does not appear to have been used prior to the Council of Nicea) was applied to six of these important centers, or parent churches, namely: Rome, Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Ephesus, and Corinth, for in these cities had the Gospel been planted and from these had it spread.

Pre-eminence of Rome

Cyprian had declared each bishop to be equal and each church a unit at the time when Stephen of the Roman Church vaunted the place of his episcopate and maintained that he held the position of successor to Peter. "Be it so," cried Origen, when he heard the new claim made by Rome that the church there was founded by this Apostle, "but if Peter is the only one on whom the Church is

built, what becomes of John and the other Apostles? Is Peter forsooth the only one against whom the gates of hell shall not prevail?" Irenaeus also spoke in this same vein. But still the trend continued towards the sure and steady centralization at Rome, each new Roman bishop going beyond the claims of his predecessor. Had not its faith been "spoken of throughout the world"? Had not Paul resided there, and was not Peter supposed to have preached in Rome, and did not this greatly sanctify it? Had it not been firm in its stand against heresies and was its equal to be found in alms-giving and missionary zeal? Thus did many reason as the office of a humble bishop reached higher and higher, until with "a mouth speaking great things," the Roman Church declared its head Vicar of Christ on earth.

Martyrology

We have noted the great reverence for martyrdom that had developed in the early period of the Church, a reverence that continued to grow until it became customary to speak of the day of a martyr's death as his "birthday." Processions to the scene of the martyrdom were held and churches erected over the remains, while a special day was set aside to preach memorial sermons for such dead. Dangerous indeed seem the smallest observances that give to human ashes anything of that reverence and glory that belong but to the Lord in spirit. Superstition had grown rapidly after the first four centuries of comparative naturalness and simplicity among Christians, and it flowered into such practices as the holding of the Lord's Supper on the Memorial day of Martyrs that the living Christians might have fellowship also with those who had died for the testimony of Christ. But it was not until some centuries had passed that Martyrology became a part of the order of the Church.

The Mass

From more or less faint beginnings we find in the ninth century the bold declaration in open treatise that the bread and wine, mere emblems to the early Church of the body and blood of the slain anti-typical Lamb, mysteriously and actually became that blood and that body to be offered in fresh sacrifice for the sins of the people, yea, even in benefit for the dead.

Graven Images

The erection of special buildings for worship is not mentioned until the close of the second century. Then they were simple, with a few pictures of Scripture events on their walls, but nothing of portrayal of Christ, for, as Clement of Alexandria expressed it, "The custom of a daily looking upon the divine Being desecrates his dignity." When early art began to picture our Lord, it did not do so in beauty and sweetness as later artists have done, for Tertullian had fancied that Christ could not in His person have manifested on earth the beauty that was rightfully His else He would not have been despised and rejected by men, and Origen thought His whole body to have been repulsive. This latter view the Eastern Church still holds.

We remember that one of the causes that led to the separation of East and West was the use of images in the Roman Church. This setting up of images had been gradually attained, first by raising a hand or a limb in relief on an otherwise smooth painting. In time the object itself was reached, an image stood forth in cool marble, before which the penitent might bow, even as the heathen might prostrate himself before the representations of the many false deities. Thus from small and subtle beginnings did Satan lead away the Church from that primitive purity which had at first distinguished it, from the faith once delivered to the saints.

Monasticism

The unscriptural vaunting of celibacy, the exaltation of penance and fasting for sin, grew into the vast system of Monasticism that held sway until the Reformation and is still maintained by the Church of Rome. Beginning at first, innocently enough, with individuals seeking relief from the political corruption, the poverty, the persecution of the times, it developed, into such a multiplicity of rigid orders that it is declared there were at one time as many monks in the desert as people in the cities. Of these the Pillar Saints, a separate class of hermits, reached the pinnacle of astounding fanaticism. Their founder, St. Simeon, after living ten years in a monastery then removing to a hut for a shorter period, mounted a pillar 72 feet high and 4-feet in diameter. Here he is believed to have remained for thirty years, dying at Antioch, and being buried with all religious pomp and ecclesiastical ceremony. The poet, Alfred Tennyson, gives a pitiful portrait of this mistaken one after years of such penance-this sadly mistaken one who thought by torturing his body, temple of the Holy Spirit, he could atone for his sins and do his God a service. Beautiful, transcendent, beside such error, afflicting Christians in varying degrees through the centuries, is the watchword of a then coming awakening, the banner of a Reformation-"The just shall live by faith"! Let us thank God for so clear an understanding of this glorious cardinal truth as He has been pleased to grant us in these Gospel closing days!

"O Lord, Lord, Thou knowest I bore this better at the first;
For I was strong and hale of body then;
And though my teeth, which now are dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagged with icy fringes in the moon,
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh.
I hope my end draws nigh; half deaf I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognize the fields I know;
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;
Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,
Have mercy, mercy! take away my sin!
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?
Who may be made a saint if I fail here?"

- *Contributed.*

Next of this series

WICKEDNESS TO THE FULL - THE REFORMATION

Trust in God

THE HAPPINESS of the Christian is always in proportion to the sincerity and depth of his trust in God. He may be overwhelmed by affliction, his plans may be thwarted, his good name assailed, his hopes for this world blasted; and yet, if he has an unimpaired, serene, loving trust in God, his peace will be as a river, whose pure depths and strong currents are undisturbed by the things that vex its surface. Nowhere in the Bible is this trust more powerfully and sublimely depicted than in the prayer of Habakkuk: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

The sublime poetry of the Orient is in these words, but they are not too strong to express the feelings of one in any clime or age, whose mind and heart are truly "stayed on God." It is when trouble comes, and all earthly supports fail us. that our faith is put to the test. If then our trust does not fail us, happy indeed are we. Such faith is not too dearly purchased by any earthly calamity or loss, and to many doubtless it never comes through any other process. Any trouble or affliction that brings us near to God, and leads us to cast ourselves unreservedly upon Him as our strength, our providence, and our eternal hope, is a blessing for which we should be profoundly thankful. Such a faith exalts and ennobles all the virtues and graces of humanity, deepens the sources and widens the domain of character, and fits us for the highest usefulness and happiness in any sphere of life. Such a faith gives us power over men to win them from selfish and worldly ways, and bring them to Christ. We may have a creed of unquestioned soundness, and know how to defend it by arguments that no man can impeach; but if we lack the sweetness and light that are born of a pure trust in God, and a sense of intimacy with Him, our influence as Christians will be poor and small.

It is well to preach Christ in our words, but far better to preach Him in our example, and by all the influences that flow out of a character formed upon the model of His life and conduct. The trust in God, of which we speak, will cause our faces to shine and our eyes to glow with a heavenly radiance, and our lives will distill an aroma so pure, that men, taking knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, will be drawn toward Him by an irresistible attraction. Trust in God is a well-spring of joy and peace in the heart, springing *tip* evermore unto , eternal life. Having this divine inheritance, knowing God as He is revealed in Christ Jesus, and having no will but His, we can appreciate as descriptive of our daily experience, the precious lines of Faber --

"He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost;
God's will is sweetest to him when
It triumphs at his cost.

"Ill that God blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His dear will.

"When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,
I do the little I can do,

And leave the rest to Thee.

"I have no cares, O blessed will!
For all my cares are Thine;
I live in triumph, Lord, for Thou
Hast made Thy triumphs mine."

Our hopes have laid hold upon the Rock of Ages, that towers above the flying vapors. Let us then be strong; for our future is not a dim peradventure, nor a vague dream, nor a wish turning itself into a vision, but it is made and certified "by Him who is the God of all the past, and of all the present. It is built upon His Word; and the brightest hope of all its brightness, is the enjoyment of more of His presence, and the possession of more of His likeness. That hope is certain. Therefore, **let us** live in it, and "reach forth unto the things which are before." - *Selected*.

Messages of Encouragement

Dear Friends:

Just a line of appreciation of your fine paper-"The Herald." I note with interest your decision to include in its columns articles devoted more to doctrinal subjects. This is gratifying, especially as there seems to be a pronounced movement away from the precious truths which a few years ago we were "assured of." I feel this is due largely to a lack of familiarity with the Scriptural support of what we came to recognize as harvest truths.

Your Annual Report was interesting. My impression is that a great deal was accomplished with very little, and I trust it will not be necessary to curtail the work in any way.

I have a suggestion which occurs to me might be helpful. Almost any one knows that the greatest cost entering into any publication as far as the printing end of it is concerned is for the typesetting or composition. Once the type is all set up, several thousand copies can be run off almost as cheaply as a thousand.

Almost any of your good readers knows some one who might be benefited lay your publication. If each one would send in such a subscription, it would greatly reduce your publication costs. I think all who appreciate your efforts would like to see the good work continue. To start the matter I am sending \$1.00 herewith for the attached subscription, and I am leaving it with you to give the above any consideration you see fit.

With Christian love,
Sincerely,
E. I. A. -- N. Y.

Dear Brethren:
Greetings in the Redeemer's Name.

Thank you for your kind inquiry regarding the reason for not renewing my subscription to the "Herald." For a long time I have felt your journal has not given sufficient space to the great doctrinal truths which are so vital to our faith, and that the present truth has been kept very much in the background. After reading the reasons for the division which has recently occurred in your midst it seemed to me that this condition would become steadily worse, and quite frankly this is the reason why I decided not to continue. However, I must say I was greatly impressed by the article, "Acceptable Sacrifices, Part III," in the copy which you enclosed with your letter, and regard it as one of the clearest expositions concerning this subject which has appeared in your journal for many years. I must say I am somewhat puzzled, as I was under the impression that this was one of the subjects over which you divided. In view of this, therefore, I have decided to renew my subscription for one more year, to date of course from when my previous subscription expired, as I do not wish to make any hasty decision, but if at the end of this period I do not send my renewal, you' will know it is because I do not consider your publication is serving the best interests of the brethren.

With warmest Christian love,
Your brother by His favor,
T. W. W. -- Eng.