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Thanksgiving

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High; to skew forth Thy loving kindness in the morning and Thy faithfulness every night." - Psalm 92:1, 2.

THESE WORDS resound with greater force today than they did when uttered by the Prophet David in his own recognition of God's goodness to him. Thanksgiving is an open acknowledgment of benefits received; an outward expression of an inner gratitude. Smith's book of "Synonyms Discriminated" says: "Gratitude relates rather to the inner feeling; thanksgiving to the exhibition of it in words." Thanks and praise "belong primarily unto God, for He is the Fount from whom all blessings flow. With but few exceptions of the Bible usage of the words, "praise" and "thanksgiving" occur in recognition of God's goodness. Before true thanksgiving can be offered, gratitude must abide in the heart.

In these United States of America, the last Thursday of November of each year is set aside by federal or state executives as a day of praise and thanksgiving unto God for mercies and benefits received during the past year. This national observance was started in the early days of the New England Colonies, some years before independence from England was established.

The account of the institution of Thanksgiving would indicate that genuine gratitude was the motive that caused those early Pilgrims to set aside a day in which public recognition might be offered for 'blessings received. They had left home, friends, and country, and had journeyed to a far shore, there to brave unknown dangers in a wilderness land. To sail the ocean in their day, when ships were small and ocean routes uncertain, was a hazardous undertaking; but they willingly braved the hardships and dangers for they sought a place where they could be free to worship God in accordance with the dictates of heart and conscience.

Viewing the matter from the standpoint of our day, it would seem that God permitted persecution in their native lands in order that the love of freedom so ingrained, might cause them to establish here, a government that would be favorable to the spread of the Truth in the day of the latter rain. At any rate, God blessed them in their efforts; and being grateful, they were moved to an open acknowledgment of His goodness.

Only the Thankful Benefited by God's Favors

What a wonderful thing it will be when all will observe thanksgiving days in the spirit in which this one was conceived. At present the vast majority look upon it as merely another opportunity in which to gratify their desires in pursuit of the pleasures of this life, without pausing to render clue acknowledgment to "the Giver of every good and perfect gift." Many of the thoughtless, when their attention is called to the matter, will admit their indebtedness; others remain indifferent.

No one capable of appreciating blessings will question the appropriateness of giving thanks.

To appreciate a blessing means that we must realize that something beneficial has been conferred upon us which might have been denied; something that ministers to our well-being in a way that makes life more worth while. And if we recognize its worth, we will, if we are honest and just, experience gratitude and express it in some open way. To receive a favor for which we make no acknowledgment in return is dishonest, unjust; and this course, if persisted in, will lead to a wholly reprobate life.

When David said, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto the name of the Most High," he expressed not only a manifest truth as respects our indebtedness, but also a deep underlying principle governing the good we receive from the blessings of life. In other words, **only those who are truly thankful and appreciative can really benefit by the favors God has to bestow.** Others may derive a temporary satisfaction, but all real benefit to character is lost because of their utter selfishness in failing to make some return. Blessings showered upon the unthankful are as the beauties of nature to the blind or the harmonies of sound to the deaf-unappreciated.

An illustration of this is pictured in the life of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. The account shows that he was hard-hearted and unappreciative, and that the goodness and mercy of God served but to harden still further his heart. "Let favor be shewed to the wicked," says Isaiah (Isa. 26:10), "yet will he not learn righteousness: [even] in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord."

Ingratitude a Distinguishing Mark

When we come into contact with those who have no pleasure in the higher things of life, we usually find that gratitude and appreciation are lacking. Ingratitude not only causes men to lose the benefit of blessings conferred, but also renders them unable to joy in the things that afford the thankful untold pleasures. How pitiable is such a condition, how wholly out of tune with the spirit of God! How utterly impossible it is for such to have true friends, or to experience genuine happiness from the contacts of life!

Life, we are told in the Scriptures, is conditioned on knowing and appreciating God. Ingratitude must, therefore, be one of the distinguishing marks of the wicked, for it shows a lack of appreciation of . God and misuse or abuse of His favors. "The wicked know not God." Is it any wonder then, that God has decreed the destruction of the wicked? How could God be just, loving, and wise if He permitted the wicked to live on in a universe wholly at variance with themselves? There are circumstances and conditions in which life is not a blessing; and to continue on would be but to suffer torment and to become a menace to the welfare of others.

Apparently, the measure of our appreciation of God's goodness is the measure of our enjoyment of the blessings He bestows. We see an illustration of this in the realm of the senses. There are people who can listen to the playing of a grandly beautiful orchestral symphony and experience no thrill of enjoyment. To them it is only a noise, a disagreeable experience rather than a blessing. The same is true respecting those who have no appreciation for the wonders of nature. God's blessings must be appreciated to be enjoyed. A measure of appreciation brings a measure of enjoyment, and both appreciation and enjoyment will increase if encouraged and rightly cultivated; just as one can grow in the appreciation of good music. A full measure of appreciation gives unbounded delight, but can be attained only by those who reflect perfectly the glory of God.

Do we take God's blessings as a matter of course, and even, perhaps, feel resentment when they are withheld? Surely, those of us who have learned to know something of the goodness of God, should experience that sense of gratitude that would cause all our life to be a day of thanksgiving. How exceedingly kind and long-suffering our God is, to so long continue showering blessings upon the unappreciative and unthankful.

God Delights in the Heart's Affection

We cannot progress far in the consideration of this subject without realizing that there is a close relationship existing between appreciation and gratitude, praise and thanksgiving; and that all these ennobling qualities are but the kindling affections of the heart, stirred by meditating thought upon the goodness of God. Sentiment may not be a safe guide in matters of belief, but it is certainly indispensable in the offering of acceptable praise and thanksgiving. The Bible shows that God prizes and covets our heart's affections, our love. This is the only thing we can give Him that is of any value to Him.

We might spend all of our time in preaching, "speaking with the tongues of men and of angels"; and be so very able and efficient that we would understand all mysteries and all knowledge." We might have unlimited wealth and "give all our goods to feed the poor," and be so zealous that we would "give our bodies to be burned," consumed in the service of God; but without love, all would be valueless in His sight.

"My son," He says, "give Me thine heart." It is the heart's sentiments of appreciation and love, motivating our thoughts and deeds in service for God, that make service acceptable through Christ, even though that service be crude and imperfect. We do not procure our justified standing with God by works or sacrifice; nor with a cold, intellectual faith. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." And not only is the heart involved in a justifying faith, but it must continue to motivate all growth in grace and Godlikeness.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." The Hebrew original of this word "issues" occurs just twice in the Bible, but comes from a word that includes in its various meanings the thought of "to issue out" or "to grow." "Out of the heart are the issues of life," the development or transformation that brings the approval of God.

"The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart"; that is, the object for which the commandment was given is the development of love.

And if our hearts are filled with gratitude and appreciation, we will give voice to this heart condition in words of praise and thanksgiving. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

When David prayed, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer," he was recognizing- the fact that acceptable praise and thanksgiving must issue from a heart filled with love and gratitude.

The Overflow of a Grateful Heart

A poem which we often echo in song very fittingly expresses the gratitude and thanksgiving that should issue from our hearts

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

"O, how can words with equal warmth
The gratitude declare
That glows within my inmost heart?
But Thou canst read it there.

"Through all eternity, to Thee
A grateful song I'll raise,
And my eternal joy shall be
To herald wide Thy praise."

It might be thought from all the foregoing that thanksgiving would always be a praiseworthy act. But no, we find, as with other qualities and accomplishments, it can be turned into a wrong use. All evil seems to be, more or less, the perversion of that which in itself is good. An illustration of this is found in the words of the parable our Lord spake to certain ones "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others."

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you," says Jesus. "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." - Luke 18:10-14.

This self-righteous Pharisee addressed thanks unto 'God, which is the right thing to do, but the sentiment motivating that thanksgiving was pride and self-congratulation and not humble gratitude for mercies and blessings unmerited.

As a nation, as a group of followers of Christ, and as individuals, we would do well to profit by this lesson. As a nation, we are prone to boast of our riches, our power, and our superior righteousness in our dealings toward other nations; whereas we should realize that the glory of these things belongs unto God whose bounty and favor we enjoy. As a Christian group, we have been blessed with a wonderful increase of light upon God's Word. Prophecy and type have been made clear, and the great mystery of God has been understood more fully, perhaps, than ever before, with the possible exception of the early Church. We have had pointed out to us evidence that indicates we are living in the time of the Lord's second presence and Kingdom. Has all this blessed light humbled us and filled our hearts with gratitude? Or has there been a tendency to glory in our knowledge-to flaunt our superior wisdom? Doubtless, we ourselves are ignorant as to what extent we may have been guilty of these things and of how far we may have gone in

despising less favored groups. The tendency toward Babylonish characteristics of bondage and organization became so marked that God's call of "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues," became again the test of true discipleship. And again we have been made to realize that no strong earthly organization can retain the spirit of humility and Christ likeness.

Are We Truly Grateful?

And now, to make the lesson of our Lord's parable still more searching, what about ourselves as individuals? Are we free from all pride, arrogance and self-complacency? Or, do we find ourselves prone at times to take credit unto ourselves and not render unto God the glory and gratitude of heart due Him? God grant that the knowledge, which He has so graciously given, may not puff us up and turn our thanksgiving merely into self praise; but that, realizing our own unworthiness, in spite of all that He has done for us, we may humbly acknowledge His benefactions and give Him all the glory for every praiseworthy thought, motive, and deed.

The following lines of a prayer verse by the poet should be the sincere desire of all our hearts

"Father, choose for me my way,
I need Thy guidance day by day.
O set my halting steps aright
And let Thy law be my delight.

"Be Thou my defender sure;
O touch my heart and make it pure.
And for Thy mercies, I will raise
A glad thanksgiving all my days."

Reckon Ye Yourselves

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." - Rom. 6:11.

THE APOSTLE Paul was characteristic and forceful in his arguments, as in this instance. . He laid his foundation, and then drew his conclusions. The purport of this chapter seems to be to urge upon the attention of this Roman Church a single thought, namely, the impossibility of those who have been baptized into Christ, living longer in sin, because if their baptism has been of the heart and not merely an outward form or ceremony, they have been planted together in the likeness of His death and shall therefore be raised in the likeness of His resurrection. This resurrection is not only the resurrection to life of which the Master spoke, but also, as the Apostle applies it, a potential change of nature experienced now by those whose life is inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. He makes use of this thought in his letter to the Colossians, where he says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." The Apostle preaches a marvelous unity of the Head and Body, in their experiences here; and he shows that if we are faithful in suffering with Him here, we shall reign as kings and priests with Him after this Age has passed and the new order has begun, and on into the ages of the ages.

To some, perhaps, the thought that the way to life is only through death, partakes too much of the mystical. A deeper insight into the Apostle's reasoning, however, makes clear that the potential new creature must pass through the process of death to the old nature and a spirit begettal to a new nature: the old must die and all things must become new, a death as real as the death of the soul, and often even more painful. Spirit begettal comes instantaneously at the time of the presentation and acceptance of the body a living sacrifice; but the transformation is a process of growth, which process can never cease as long as the sacrificer remains this side the veil. It is as the Apostle teaches elsewhere, wholly a matter of the will in placing oneself completely under the influence of the Holy Spirit and allowing God to work the transformation by the renewing of the mind.

This thought is supported in this chapter by such statements as "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, . . . Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body. . . Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin." These and other statements of the Scriptures indicate the need for a constant state of submission, of meekness, of teachableness. Then it becomes manifest that this development of the new creature is the gift of God, by the grace of God and not of personal worth, and that no man can boast.

The purport of the text seems to be that of teaching a truth by drawing a contrast between two opposites. It speaks of death and of life, both existing at one and the same time. If the decision is made as the Apostle urges, and the course is faithfully run as it was in his own life, how blessed to be able finally to say "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only but unto all them also that love His appearing." If such decision is not made by one who has been accepted in the Beloved and he has allowed himself to be deluded by the Adversary, how great the danger of the "sin unto death"! For such we are told not to pray, for he is like the dog that has returned to his vomit. He has crucified the Lord afresh.

The text chosen gives itself naturally to a division into four parts, namely: death, life, the channel through which one passes from the first to the second, and lastly, the reckoning of ourselves so. We believe these things are written for our admonition, and as conditions of salvation they have not changed since these early days. Though we should think we are faithfully doing what is here enjoined, yet we should always be in the attitude of the one who penned these words, who feared that he himself might become a castaway even after pointing others to the narrow way and making plain to them how they might walk that way to everlasting life. And again, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall." It is a matter of everlasting vigilance, with the whole armor of God worn constantly.

Dead to Sin

The Apostle is using the word "dead" here in an accommodative sense, but with a very definite meaning, for the word as used carries the thought of the opposite of life or the absence of life. Of the dead, one has said:

"These hearts were woven of human joys and cares
Washed marvelously with sorrow, swift to mirth,
The years had given them kindness.
Dawn was theirs, And sunset, and the colors of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music known
Slumber and waking: loved, gone proudly friended:
Felt the quick stir of wonder: sat alone
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended."

They are dead; and just so is the application of the words of the text -- "dead to sin," when applied to all who have consecrated their lives, to all who have been planted together in the likeness of His death, and who walk in newness of life. The new creature is incapable of being influenced by sin in any degree. Sin has no attraction for it. The new creature cannot be tempted by it in any form, and so we read: "Whosoever is begotten of God does not commit sin, . . . he cannot commit sin, because he is begotten of God." He is dead to sin-not dead in sin, as must be said of all who have not covenanted with Him by sacrifice.

Not Reformation but Regeneration

The Apostle recognizes the warfare which ever exists between the new creature and the old. He finds the old creature constantly asserting itself and demanding consideration in the affairs of life; hence he urges the keeping of the body under. There can be no compromise, for this is a matter of regeneration -- a **new** creature -- and not a mere reformation of the old creature. Doubtless the Adversary permits many to reform the old creature, for in so doing he possibly defeats any effort toward spirit begettal, producing in the mind of him so influenced the thought of a high morality, leading to where he may think more highly of himself than he ought, with the resultant loss of that meek and lowly heart which is so absolutely essential for a satisfactory spiritual growth.

He who hedges himself about with morality is too often a reformed old creature, merely, and not a new creature. If he be a professing follower of Christ, he may look upon this as an evidence of spirituality, and pride himself thereon. If he be really a new creature in Christ Jesus, he submits

himself to God's workmanship, realizing that if he is led by the Holy Spirit, the fruits of that Spirit will show forth as a normal consequence, and men know such by these fruits. In other words, if the truly consecrated will wholly submit to the leading of God, and eliminate himself entirely from human and self-effort, he will find that evidences of developing character will surely manifest themselves. The only effort the consecrated need make is to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, and the growth of the new creature will continue to the time of his spirit birth -- when he will be actually perfected and need no longer remain under the robe of Christ's righteousness, for then his righteousness will be his own because he has continued a servant of God, has had his fruit in holiness, and has the end in everlasting life.

This thought is very beautifully illustrated in the tabernacle where the under-priests are inducted into the holy. Having stooped low under the veil, they are now separated from the court, and they find themselves surrounded by those things which symbolize the life of consecration. They had taken the important step, had separated themselves from their brethren, the Levites, their lives now being that of the sacrificing priesthood, which sacrificing must be according to the strict instruction of God through His mouthpiece, Moses.

In the account of those under-priests who offered strange fire we have an illustration of how the consecrated may be led from the path of rectitude and be tempted to substitute the inventions of men for the Word of God; thus offering strange fire upon the altar, with disastrous results to themselves and to all who may be misled by these false priests, a case of the blind leading the blind and both perhaps falling into the pit. How circumspect must be the walk of him who has taken upon himself the priestly vows, in order that he may continue to be dead to sin. Since this thought is primarily so important in the lives of the consecrated, we might with benefit consider a little further the meaning of the Apostle in his injunction to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin.

Contrast Between Life and Death

What is the meaning of death as we know it in our daily experiences, what is the cause of death, and how does it apply when used figuratively, as the Apostle here uses it? Briefly we may call it a cessation of existence. The spirit has returned to the God who gave it-that principle which vitalized the ego has been separated. The identity has been destroyed. The functions of mind and body have ceased. The motives which once actuated the individual no longer affect 'him. He no longer lives, loves, hates, suffers, or is conscious of the things which so powerfully moved him in life. As one once said: "Soon I shall be dead, and they will bury me in my field: my flocks will come and pasture above me, but I shall no longer hear them, and I shall not come forth from my tomb to take them and carry them with me to my sepulchre." The penalty of sin has been complete; the individual becomes as though he never had been. There is nothing so futile or more pitifully useless than one who is dead. Such a one 'has received the wages of sin which have been meted out to the race since the days of the first sin-the penalty promised to the first man, Adam, and through whom it has been visited upon all men since. By one man's sin all the suffering and sorrow which all men have endured since the beginning, have come to pass.

With this understanding of the utter contrast between life and death, one may grasp the deep meaning which the Apostle wished to convey when he applied the term death in this figurative way. He takes advantage of the analogy between things physical and things moral or spiritual; and as physical death is a complete separation from life, so death to sin is a complete separation from sin in every aspect or phase. When he says "dead unto sin," he means just as thoroughly separated from sin as the physically dead are separated from life. The Apostle uses the expression

many times in his various epistles. To the Ephesians he wrote: "You path He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Again, "Ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, . . . without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Thus he conveys the idea that sin in God's people causes a separation between God and them which is a spiritual death; while on the contrary, to be reconciled to God is to be quickened or given life, and these are now dead to sin. Such a one is the new creature which cannot sin.

If this be true, why then do we see so often one who seemed to lead an exemplary spiritual life return to the old ways of living, again to be led not of the Holy Spirit but of the spirit of the flesh? The answer often may be that such a one has not been dead. The analogy in this case is that there are states or conditions which simulate death. One may be under the influence of some emotional state, his old nature may be merely asleep or in a coma; he thus may appear to be dead, but when such influence has been withdrawn, its effect soon passes and such a one awakes to the old mode of life. again inspired by the old spirit of the flesh. The old man is again dominant. These may be of that great number who have mistaken reformation for transformation. They have not really reckoned themselves dead to sin, and alive to God. There has been perhaps some recognition of the working of the Holy Spirit. They may have felt the drawing of God, but have failed to yield completely. They have counted the cost and found it too great. The gate was too strait and the way too narrow. They have built upon the sand instead of upon the rock. Their foundation has not been Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

In the Master is seen a complete exemplification of what it means to be dead to sin. How futile were Satan's efforts to tempt Him with the glories of this world. How prompt was His rejection of anything which did not come of the Father. In the light of His life and example, how paltry are the things of this life, how transitory are its joys, for it is that new life, that risen life of Christ, that we are called to share in even now, and we must be as dead to sin as He was, ever remembering that we have an inheritance and that we shall reign with Him only if we suffer with Him. Therefore let us heed that injunction. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin."

Alive to God

Being dead to sin is only one step in the development of Christian character, although a very vital one, and based upon the philosophy of the ransom. One who is merely dead to sin and could be satisfied to remain such without progressing, would be in a very unsatisfactory state; he would be only a negative influence-an incomplete Christian personality, if indeed he could be called Christian at all. The Apostle does not stop at this point, but true to his characteristics lie immediately passes on to the next and logical step necessary if one would be pleasing to the heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.: To be properly led by the holy Spirit means both death to the old and begettal to the new, when the mind is filled with an active zeal, which properly guided leads to a filling with the Spirit of God-risen with Christ and therefore alive unto God, in thorough sympathy with Him and all that His risen life stands for. Thus will men see growth and development in the professing Christian if lie will only submit to the holy influence over the surrendered life, which is again symbolized in the holy, where the priest is completely surrounded by the divine influence, fed by the spew bread, and lighted by the golden candlestick-all sustenance and support from the outside world absolutely shut off. They are in the world but not of it, sanctified through the truth of God, possessors of the Word and hated by the world because they are not of the world even as He was not of the world. These are alive unto God. But when is

one really alive unto God, and when does he know that he is being led by the Spirit of God, having his fruit unto holiness, the end of which is everlasting life?

The redemption of the race by the death of Jesus Christ is a historical fact. By this transaction Justice was met. A corresponding price was given, and all men assured of an individual opportunity to come to a full knowledge of the divine Plan, in His due time, and eventually if obedient into perfect harmony with Him and a restoration of that relationship which the first pair enjoyed when He "walked with them in the garden in the cool of the day" and communed with them. The Christian's life must center upon a proper understanding of this work; with a faith which leads him to a condition which the Apostle calls "alive unto God through Jesus Christ," not in the future, but now in the flesh.

This is the answer to the question of Nicodemus, "How- can a man be born when he is old?" The Master answered "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. . . . that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." The evidence of this separation from sin and its consequences, this renewing of the mind, is a privilege which all in Him may experience, and which is made manifest by its influence in the life of the consecrated in several striking ways. The aspirations of such are no longer toward the fleshly things; he has put off the old man with his deeds and has put on the new- man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him and now Christ is all, and in all. As the elect of God, holy and beloved, he puts on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave him, so also does he, if he has above all things put on love which is the bond of perfectness. Then whatsoever he does in word or deed, he does in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

"For Me to Live is Christ"

The Apostle here sets forth the various features which characterize one who is alive unto God, and to such he says, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col. 3:4.) Such a man is always conscious of God's influence in his life; the peace of God rules in his heart, and the word of Christ dwells in him richly in all wisdom, increasingly so as he is filled more and more with the Holy Spirit of God, and more and more can he say with the Apostle, "For me to live is Christ."

If we have reached in our Christian life a point when we can truly and understandingly say this, then and only then do we know what the death of Christ meant for us. It meant our entering into that same death, and so does His resurrection mean our rising with Him, not only literally in the future, but figuratively in the present-dead unto sin. but alive indeed unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So must we reckon ourselves. that henceforth we shall not serve sin: "For the wages of sin is death: but the free [R. V.] gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

What a contrast, not only between death and life, but also between "wages" and "the free gift." The word "wages" implies something that has been earned by a service rendered to some one or to a cause, some reward for a thing done. The thought here is a service done to sin, therefore by implication to the author of sin, and the one rendering it is therefore not dead unto sin and alive unto God.

He who is alive unto God finds a compelling motive whereby the growth of the new creature is stimulated, and its true character will make itself known as the buried seed will work its way through the covering earth and show what it is. If the spirit of life be in him which was in Christ, the Christ-life will break through and show to others that he is risen with Him and is a partaker with Him of the Holy Spirit of God—a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Such a one "has been to the cross of Christ and there comprehended the righteousness and the love of God, and he has gone back into the great region of conscience, of reason, and of nature, with the lesson he has learned there, and can compel the cold impassive laws to murmur to him of pity, and teach conscience to be at peace with a higher revelation than the law and while his reason exults in God, he spreads out the ineffable love over the universal wisdom: he feels that the justice and mercy of God are two manifestations of the same God: he adores the compassion and exults in the grace of God, while he bows before His unsullied and eternal Majesty." He has learned the true character of God: He is no longer a principle, a theory, or a name by which phenomena may be explained. He is no longer a philosophic concept or the product of a theological mind, but a real abiding comfort: the inspiration of the new life, to whom every energy and vital principle of the newly begotten is devoted. He realizes what the love of God and the sacrifice of Jesus mean to him in a fuller sense. He comes to know God in a measure as Christ knows Him; he comes to know what dead to sin and alive to God means. He comes to know God as a spirit and he worships Him in spirit and in truth. Every place becomes a temple, every act of his life is done as unto Him, and every sin becomes a pollution of the temple, which temple he himself is also. He can, if his consecration has been true, withhold no portion and say, "This is mine." Every faculty he knows has been bought with a price. Self has been eliminated, his will is lost in God's. He has drunk of the water which Christ has given to him and it becomes a well of living water springing up into everlasting life. He thirsts no more for the fleshly pleasures to be found in "the broken cisterns of human inventions."

"Buried with Christ, and raised with Him too, What is there left for me to do? Simply to cease from struggling and strife Simply to walk in newness of life. Glory be to God."

The Channel

Dearly beloved, it is only through the death of Christ that one can be dead unto sin: it is only by the resurrection of Christ that one can be alive unto God. It was His death that cancelled the penalty. It was His resurrection that assures every man an individual opportunity to obtain eternal life.

We will find it profitable spiritually to contemplate those closing scenes of the Master's life. For only by His death do we realize the marvelous love of God for man, His handiwork, and the equally marvelous love of the Master for His fellow creatures, even leading Him to experience the forsaking of Himself by His God. "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" reveals the depths of God's mercy to mankind, for there could be no greater estrangement from God than to be forsaken by Him. And yet the Master's sacrifice reached even to so great a depth as to include all so forsaken. Does it not impress us with the magnificence of that death on the cross, and does it not arouse a feeling of our own unworthiness? Do we not find ourselves, as the four and twenty elders, falling down before Him and worshiping Him that liveth forever? Will we not cast our crowns before the throne, and say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power"? Are our hearts not softened and rejoiced when we think of that scene witnessed by John

when "he beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." And again: "And bast made us, unto our God, kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

John also said: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. . . . And I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

This slain Lamb then represents the perfect One who once walked the earth in company with other men. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life: (For the life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." The Apostle here exults in the One who is the channel through which we pass from death unto life. We know that this is true, that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. It is faith in the propitiatory work of this slain Lamb which becomes the foundation upon which the edifice of Christian character is built. Upon it little by little the structure grows until it is perfected in love, until it is completely blended with the unbounded love of God, that love of which the poet sings:

"O love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee:
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

Reckon Ye

The Apostle's use of this word "reckon" here, carries the thought of something definitely accomplished now. Not something to be attained at a later time-not something for which one hopes or possibly expects. There is no uncertainty about it if we are buried with Him by baptism into death, and if we are walking in newness of life, that is, raised up from the dead (in sin) by the glory of the Father.

The failure to live up to this thought, "dead to sin and alive unto God," is due perhaps in every instance to the fact that faith fails to identify the relationship between God and the consecrated through the office of the crucified and risen Lord. This accomplished fact is not constantly held before the vision. We fail to note that we are crucified with Him (ver. 6), dead with Him (ver. 8), buried with Him. (ver. 4), alive with Him (ver. 8)-identified with Him in His crucifixion, His death, His burial, and His resurrection.

This of necessity makes the true Christian life one of sacrifice as expressed by another

"But all through life I see a Cross,
Where sons of God yield up their breath:
There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except by death.
And no full vision but by Faith,
Nor glory but by bearing shame,
Nor Justice but by taking blame:
And that Eternal Passion saith,
'Be emptied of glory and right and name.'"

Another, in speaking of self-elimination calls it "casting yourself at the footstool of God's Throne." "To live or to die forever, as Thou wilt, not as I will. Brother, hadst thou never, in any form, such moments in thy history? Thou knowest them not even by credible rumor? Well, thy earthly path was peaceabler, I suppose. But the highest was never in thee; the highest will never come out of thee. Thou shalt at best abide by the stuff, but the battle and victory's fire chariot shall never be thine. I pity thee."

"The great obdurate world I know no more,
The clanging of the brazen wheels of greed,
The labored hands that build the miser's store,
The stony streets where feeble feet must bleed,
No more I walk beneath thy ashen skies,

With pallid martyrs cruelly crucified
Upon thy predetermined calvaries:
I, too, have suffered, yea and I have died!
Now at the last another road I take
Through peaceful gardens, by a lily way
To those low eaves beside the silver lake,
Where Christ waits for me at the close of day.
Farewell, proud world! In vain thou callest me.
I **go** to meet my Lord in Galilee."

Life's Empty Victories

The following article, reprinted by request, was written, just prior to his death, by a regular contributor to a secular newspaper, namely "The Minneapolis Tribune" (December 19, 1932). It is commended to the thoughtful consideration of our readers as full of heavenly counsel.

AS A MAN grows older, yet has not reached extreme old age, when, presumably, all his past is mellowed and softened in the pleasant, tranquil light of sunset and both mistakes and right acts are equally overspread by the thought that nothing has mattered much, since the whole thing will be soon over; when he arrives at the stage in life's journey where he reviews the past, not alone for the gentle pleasure of reminiscence, but also to seek guidance for his remaining future, and while he still imagines that it is possible for him to mold his character into the secret ideal which he has all along vainly struggled to perfect, there comes, at least to the man of the average temperament, in this pause of review, this moment of rest before he completes his destiny, the thought of how much happier, and better and altogether pleasanter his life might have been had he avoided, as he might easily have done, certain complications and conflicts which, at the time, seemed to him mightily important.

When they occurred, he was absolutely certain that the triumph of his opinion was a matter of tremendous consequence; it was essential that he should override the opposition and impress upon his opponent the pre-eminent truth and right of his position; and so he went at him, hard and strong, and in the heat of the controversy, which ripened into a feud and perhaps ended in the permanent estrangement of one who might once have been counted a friend, he said or did things which were hard and bitter, and better left unsaid or undone.

Perhaps he gained his point; beat down his antagonist and sent him, humbled and mortified, from the contest, to nurse his grievance ever after, and nourish to the end of his days a smouldering hate of the man who got the better of him; or worse, to cherish the feeling that he had been hardly used.

* * * * *

Strange it should be that, in his later years, the outcome does not seem to have been of very great consequence. What remains permanently is the memory of the incident, and a regret that it should have occurred.

Looking back, he realizes the exact moment when he might have refrained from pressing his man to the limit, have perhaps sufficiently satisfied his self-respect and vindicated the justness of his contention without sacrificing a possible friend. Probably it would puzzle him now to state exactly what it was all about then, this famous victory, but he remembers it was a great fight and he was in it -- and he is sorry.

Not sorry that he stood up stoutly in defense of his positive convictions; no man ever regrets that, but sorry that he should have esteemed it necessary to go so such lengths in pursuit of his ends that it put reconciliation and ultimate restoration of friendship beyond the bounds of the possible. He remembers these incidents with a vague discomfort. No matter which of the two was in the wrong, he holds himself responsible for the outcome.

Did he convince the other of his error? Scarcely. "He that complies against his will is of his own opinion still." Did the encounter seriously contribute to the upbuilding of his own character? Hardly, unless it was desirable to encourage in himself the love of fighting for the fight's sake. His later calm and deliberate conviction is that it was not worth while, and he grudges the vitality and energy he put into it, which might well have been conserved to later, more mature and far better use.

* * * * *

The thing the man remembers at this particular point in his life with the most satisfaction is not such a fruitless contest, but rather the time when, by conceding a point, by some exercise of forbearance in pressing an advantage, he made a friend of his opponent, although they differed irreconcilably. Touching these other encounters, which at the moment it seemed so necessary to win, but which in the end were so barren of real gain, he says, somewhat sorely, "Let them be forgotten and forgiven."

He recalls with secret gratification not his paltry and vainglorious victories, but his flabby and perhaps sentimental concessions: the small foolish, kindly things that he did, rare enough, he admits, but fruitful in pleasing memories. For, after all, we are men tarred with the* .same stick; more or less good, bad or indifferent, as the case may be, yet all capable of doing something kind for each other. He draws from his past the lesson of tolerance, for the future that is left to him, and resolves, perhaps vainly, but at least, for the moment, sincerely, that henceforth, while he may never falter in defense of a principle, he will try hard to so moderate his attacks upon the other man as to leave no sting past healing.

The assets he counts up with the most satisfaction are the friends he finds about him. What they may expect of him is the animus of his future. He will endeavor to be true to them and to his own convictions, but he will avoid the useless multiplication of enemies. This is his hope, as he takes stock of what lies before him.

Perhaps the writer could offer no suggestion to his readers, touching the form which good resolves, customary at this season of the year, should take, that would be better for ourselves and for the world we live in, than that we will lead kindlier lives; that we will be less sure and less harsh in our judgments; that we will refrain as far as in us lies from giving the other man "a piece of our minds;" that we will leave room for him to be convinced of his error, if he be wrong and we right, not through the might of our pounding, but rather through the gradual change in his own convictions; that we will finally try to proceed on the way that we esteem the right and only one with less friction, believing that which is true and right will prevail anyhow, and the surer and swifter if it be not enforced by contention.

In a word, to resolve to make friends, not at the sacrifice of conviction or principle, but by conceding to others the simple right of learning the truth in their own time and in their own way, helped perhaps by our, of course, pre-eminently wise suggestion and example, if truly they be such, but at least not hindered by our over-emphatic dictum. . . .

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
The word we had not sense to say
Who knows how grandly it had rung?"

Our Lord's Great Promise of a Hundred Fold

"And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold ["now, in this time "-Mark 10:30], and shall inherit eternal life." - Matt. 19:29, Am. R. V.

THERE is one other feature of this promise, mentioned in St. Mark's account, which ought not to pass unnoticed. The hundred fold is to be, he tells us, "with persecutions." "Verily I say unto you," says Jesus, "there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for My sake and for the Gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundred fold, now, in this present time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the Age to come, eternal life." - Mark 10:29, 30.

With Persecutions

When we first read these two words, "with persecutions," it comes with something of a surprise to find them included in the long list of gifts and treasures with which Christ promises to reward those who endure losses and make sacrifices for the sake of truth and righteousness. Are persecutions, then, to be reckoned amongst our treasures? Are we to account the very trials and losses we endure in the service of Christ as part of the reward which He confers on us for serving Him? But while these words, in such a connection, may at first occasion perplexity, yet the truth they teach is mentioned not in this place only but is expressed in various ways and in other connections of thought, in many passages of Scripture. Indeed it is but an abrupt and condensed expression of a principle which pervades the whole of the New Testament, a principle so frequently iterated and reiterated by our Lord and His Apostles, that it must be reckoned among the very rudiments of our Faith. We need not quote many passages in proof of this assertion, since a few will serve to suggest many more.

Among the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, then, we find this: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake"; and, again, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake." St. James echoes the teaching of his Master and ours, his Brother and ours, when he writes, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials," and pronounces him blessed "that endureth trial," since, when he is proved by trial and approved, "he shall receive the crown of life." St. Peter echoes it when he writes, "'But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye"; and St. Paul when he bids us "rejoice in tribulation also," and invites us, by his own example, to "count all things but loss that we may win Christ and be found in Him." - Matt. 5:10, 11; James 1:2, 12; 1 Pet. 3:14; Rom. 5:3 (Am. R. V. Margin); Phil 3:7, 8.

"With persecutions," therefore, does not stand alone; it is but a brief and abrupt expression of a pervading principle, of one of the first principles, of the Faith. What that principle implies, and how it may be vindicated, and brought home to us, we shall discover if we examine with care any one of the passages we have just cited. Let us take the "beatitudes," and ask Christ to be His own interpreter.

The Supreme Importance of Character

In the Beatitudes, then, our Lord raises and answers the question, "What is man's chief end or good?" He places our chief good not in that which is **outward**, but in that which is **inward**; not anything that a man **has** or **can get**, but in what a man is-in the qualities and disposition of the mind. In other words, here, as elsewhere, he stresses the importance of character. The first element of blessedness, He says, is **poverty of spirit**, an inward sense of unworthiness and emptiness, which prompts us to expect nothing from ourselves, but to look for all from God. But when we are thus freed from the self-dependence and self conceit which would hinder the incoming of divine truth and grace, we are not to be content with that whereunto we have attained; we are to **mourn** over this inward emptiness, to be sorry and ashamed that we have fallen so low and have lost so much. If we are thus conscious that we are unable to satisfy the vast desires of the soul, and are sincerely mourning over our incapacity and emptiness, we shall be of a **meek**, teachable and receptive spirit. Nay, more, we shall be devoured with an intense craving, **a hunger and thirst for righteousness**, a sacred inextinguishable longing to become right in our relations to God and man. As this craving is met, we shall grow merciful -- gentle and compassionate -- in our judgment of our neighbors, making the most generous allowance for the emptiness and weakness from which we ourselves are being delivered only by the grace of God. This kindly consideration for others will react on the heart that feels it, making it **pure**, and set it on **making peace**, on bringing into our neighbors' hearts the peace with God and man of which we have been permitted to taste.

The Value of Trial

Now if we thus connect the beatitudes pronounced on the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, we see that our Lord is laying down the lines of a very high and noble character; and that He places our chief good, our blessedness, in attaining the several virtues and graces of which He speaks. But what is any grace or virtue worth until it is tried, and has stood the trial? Any quality of excellence of character which has not been put' to the test is one of which we ourselves can never feel sure. It is by use and exercise, by enduring hardship and encountering trial, that we at once assure ourselves, that any virtue and grace has become ours, that we give others assurance of it, and that this virtue or grace is trained, developed, brought to perfection. What wonder, then, that our Lord crowns the beatitudes He had pronounced on the distinctive virtues and graces of the Christian character with a blessing on the trials by which they are put to the proof, by which they are exercised, and confirmed? The list would have been incomplete without this. Our gifts and blessings would have lacked the last perfecting touch had not the trials by which they are tested and approved been included among them. "With persecutions," is a necessary and noble part of our reward as servants of righteousness, since it is by these tribulations that the various elements of the Christian character are fused and welded into a compact impregnable unity. What do **we** think of a man who will risk nothing, and sacrifice n thing, for his principles, and that a noble and righteous character may be unfolded within him? And why should Christ think better of him than we do? No man can account himself faithful and true until he has been tried. The world itself calls no man faithful and true until he has been tried and has borne the trial well. And, therefore, the "persecutions" which try us, which put our principles to the proof, may be justly reckoned among our chief blessings.

The fact is, that, whereas we too often account a man blessed if he is exempted from trials, our Lord and His Apostles account him blessed only when he can meet the most searching trials and surmount them. And whom does even the world itself esteem to be men of noble character, save

those who have achieved great and difficult tasks, who have braved much and sacrificed much for the sake of some great cause, for the defense and furtherance of some neglected truth, who have endured hardship and suffering, defeat and difficulty, with an unbroken and dauntless spirit? Hence, because of its bearing on character, which is man's chief possession both in this world and in that which is to come, Christ and His servants have ever taught men to value the trials and sufferings of this present life, to find joy in them because they find good in them.

Persecutions in the World

But it may be thought that "persecutions," at least in the original sense of the word, are no longer among the trials to which men expose themselves by loyalty to the truths and commandments of Christ. Even if they are not, still "persecutions" were only a form which the trials of those who followed Him in darker times assumed; the forms which our trials take may be quite as keen and penetrating. But is it true that those who follow Christ honestly and resolutely are exempt from "persecutions" even now? We doubt it. No man, indeed, no man in America, can now be sentenced to prison or to the axe, to the halter, or the stake, simply because he believes in Christ. But to be exposed to the hatred, the suspicion, the contempt of our fellows is the very sting of persecution. And of those who faithfully follow Christ it is doubtful if there are any who permanently escape this. **To call and profess ourselves Christians** may provoke nothing more or worse than a smile and a gibe even from those who are most dominated by the law and the spirit, of this present world. **But if any man act out of his confession**, if he carry Christian principles into his trade or profession, if he show a regard for the claims and interests of his neighbors even when they clash with his own; if he will tell the truth even when it tells against him; if, in brief, he will be scrupulously upright, generous, considerate, will he suffer no loss, and awaken no hostility? Will those with whom he has business relations utter no complaint, think no scorn, take no advantage of him? Impossible! Even now no man can be 'true 'to Christ, no man can act on Christian principles even in the world which calls itself Christian, without having to pay for it, without exciting much suspicion and resentment and contempt. Even those who profit by his "weakness" will despise him for it. But there is this great comfort for us, if we thus expose ourselves to the contempt and hostility of the world: Christ regards, and we may regard, these "persecutions" as benedictions. They are the trials which put our principles to the proof; and by proving, strengthen and confirm them. If they are endured with patience, and courage and good humor, they help to form in us that pure and lofty ideal of the character which Christ at once commended, exemplified and demanded. We are not to be pitied for them, therefore; but rather to be congratulated on them. Because they help to make us perfect, they are part of the "hundred fold" with which our Lord has promised to reward us even in the present time.

Persecutions in the Church

The persecutions of primitive times came at least as much from the Church, that is, the Jewish Church, as from the world. Does the Church still persecute those who follow Christ? If we consider how the case stands amidst the numerous jarring sects of Christendom, including the various groups of "Truth" friends, we can hardly doubt it. Do those within one group never look down with contempt and dislike on their neighbors in another group? Do they never suspect their motives, their sincerity, or even their very right to the Christian name? And those in the other groups, in their turn, do they entertain no suspicion of the members of the first group, no ill-will toward them, no resentment of the superiority they assume? Do they feel no surprise when they find certain members of another group to be as simple, as sincere, as devout, as themselves? Do

they never suspect its worship of formality, or hint that its elders serve for reasons other than pure love of Christ and His people? Thank God for those in all groups who are free from this persecuting spirit. But if suspicion, dislike, hostility, be the very sting of persecution, can we say that even in the midst of the professing Church of today, there is no persecution

The Ministry of Sorrow

Finally, as the years pass, and our relations with men multiply, and we look more searchingly behind the fair outsides of life, as our faith grows more settled and calm, trials are apt to accumulate upon us. Of those whom we love, some pass away from us, and some fall into lingering sicknesses; some disappoint the fond hopes we had cherished of them, and others suffer much that is good and admirable in them to be blighted by a secret vice, or propensity, which threatens to be their ruin; cares of business and domestic cares throng in upon us; our health declines, perhaps, or we grow conscious that the spring and elasticity of earlier days are gone, and that all tasks are harder to us, and all burdens heavier to be borne. There are times when one feels as though his heart were turned into a kind of hospital, with a sick-bed for this friend, and another for that, until the whole heart is taken up with cares and solitudes, and the strain becomes well-nigh intolerable. If this be our experience -- as at times it is the experience of most kindly and Christian men and women -- yet why should we complain? This, like every other trial, is Christ's gift to us; it is part of the reward He bestows on them that are His. We have served Him in easier tasks; and now He honors us by asking us to serve Him in a task that is harder. We have met the common tests; and now He applies a still severer test, **that, being tried to the full, we may also be blessed to the full.** When we thank Him for having called us into His service, and say that for aught we have done for Him we will ask no reward save that we may serve Him still and better, do we mean what we say? Very well, then; in giving us harder tasks, and trials more severe and searching, He is but taking us at our word, and giving us the very reward we have asked. Rather than complain, therefore, that life grows heavier to us, we will remember Him who had room in His heart for every man that breathed, and grace for as many as were sick, (and strength for as many as were weak, and comfort for all who mourned. We crave to be like Him, do we not? And we can become like Him who learned obedience and was made perfect by the things which He suffered, only by partaking of similar experiences, by bearing our trials, whatever they may be, with a patient and cheerful heart.

Gird up the Loins of Your Mind

A clear alternative is before us, therefore. We cannot escape the inevitable burdens and sorrows of life; but we may either sink under them, or rise through and above them. They are not to be escaped by grieving over them, but we may subdue and conquer them by taking them as Christ's gifts to us, as tests of our strength and obedience; tests designed, not simply to show what manner of spirit we are of, but also to raise and invigorate our spirits by exercising them. We may take our trials as wrongs, as undeserved calamities, and resent them; or we may say of every trial as it comes to us: "This is the gift of Christ. Because it is one of my trials it is also one of my treasures. It comes both to put me to the proof, and to make me better than I am. I must play the man, therefore. I must show that I am equal to all things He would have me do, through Him who strengthens me, whose grace has been and will be sufficient for every time of need."

"Verily, I [Jesus] say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for My name's sake and for the Gospel's sake, but he shall

receive a hundred fold, now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the Age to come, eternal life."*

*This is the second of two articles the first of which appeared in our last issue. For much of the material it contains we have again drawn liberally from the writings of Samuel Cox.

What Shall Be Our Attitude?

AS DISCIPLES of Christ whose lives are pledged to His service and who desire above all else to learn and do His Will, there must often come to our minds a realization that the whole life and outlook of our fellowship is changing. It is not just that the forms of words which express our articles of faith are remoulded and expressed anew; not just that in many matters of doctrinal belief there are doubts expressed and objections raised. These things have always been a feature of our assembling together and always must be while free and healthy research into the Fountain of all Truth continues. Besides all this there is the indisputable fact that various features of "Present Truth" have permeated the structure of present-day Christian thought, and that this has borne fruitage in the shape of many separate schools, each holding to some peculiarity of belief or expectation, yet withal manifesting a very definite appreciation, first of the basic truth that God *will* in due time bless all the families of the earth, and secondly, of the dispensational features of the Divine Plan. Whereas fifty years ago that understanding of the "two salvations" and the "Ransom for all" which then came to light was confined virtually to one movement directed by one master mind, the assiduous witnessing to these, "Harvest Truths" which was carried on for forty years has borne fruit in a hundred ways, and today one may find a number of movements and proclamations, all outside the scope of "Present Truth" as we know it, and yet manifesting very plainly that in conjunction with much that would be considered undesirable relics of Dark Age theology there is combined a clear appreciation of some aspects of Truth which we ourselves consider to be of prime importance at this time.

What is the right attitude to adopt towards this development? Is it right to follow the example of those disciples who "forbade them, because they followed not with us." Or should we acclaim the truths we find expressed in such movements, ignoring the error, and join with them in their work? These questions are not idle ones, for in many places our brethren find that with perhaps the breakdown of their local group, the opportunity of worship and fellowship with adherents of some such enterprise offers a satisfaction to the heart that yearns for Christian fellowship and the joy of association in a common purpose, and to an increasing degree the lines of demarcation between ourselves and movements of this nature are breaking down. How then are we to answer the question?

Not by ruling out of the purposes of God those whose studies in His Word have led them to other conclusions than our own, for that implies the denial of the very principles for which we should stand. And most decidedly not by concluding that in professing the name and service of Christ it matters not in what organization we serve Him nor what is the precise character of the message we proclaim. For whatever developments the future may hold, and by whatever means the divine revelation may come to man, tomorrow, it still remains true that the knowledge of God's Plan which is our inheritance carries with it a responsibility which can not be ignored if we would continue to bear the honorable title of ambassadors for Christ.

There lies the answer to our question. As a company of Christians we have a clear outline of the Divine Plan and the fundamentals of Christian teaching which it is our duty to keep alive in our midst. Without impugning the sincerity or the sterling character of many whose lives are devoted to other movements it still remains true that, unless we are grievously mistaken, that which is called "Present Truth" is far in advance of present-day thought among Christians generally. If that is so, then we are in the position of Watchers in Zion, and our place is on the watchtower looking for further signs of the day of "He that shall come.", Let those in the city go about their business and serve as seems good to them. Those who are the "Lord's remembrancers" (**Isa. 62:6** margin) have a higher calling and a sterner duty to perform. Let us then continue as a separated people, not in the spirit of the man who thanked God that he was not as other men but in an attitude of sober realization that in this great day, we who have received the grace of God in revelation of His Plan are called to be like John the Baptist; a voice crying, in the wilderness to be sure, but crying nevertheless in the certainty of imminent fulfillment -- "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." -- *Bible Students Monthly. London. Eng.*

Convention Echoes

Dear Friends:

I want to say how our little Class enjoyed the Convention. As we met yesterday, each one spoke of how he enjoyed meeting the dear friends and called to mind things that the different brothers had said in their talks. It lifted our hearts and minds above the toils and trials of this earth to that "Glorious hope of heavenly love."

Your sister in our dear Redeemer,
E. E. H. -- N. J.
Secretary Atlantic City Ecclesia

Dear Brethren:

After enjoying such a blessed season of convention feast and fellowship at Atlantic City it is only fitting that you should have some expression of appreciation from me for the exceptionally helpful program. I thank the Lord for it all. The way the discourses followed each other in such harmonious and continuous thought it seemed as though the Lord had designed a certain message for this time. And I noticed that the lessons were the same as individual friends had been learning through their experiences, as expressed in their testimonies and in letters I have recently received.

So this convention was to me another evidence that the Lord is doing a certain work of grace among His people; that is, they are being drawn "nearer to the heart of God," and into closer fellowship with Christ, and in complete dependence upon Him alone.

Some of the very helpful thoughts for me were, that our salvation depends not only on believing in the Lord Jesus Christ in its initial stage, but that this believing is to mean to us an "abiding in Him"; a complete surrender to His will; a continual growth, allowing His Spirit to operate unhampered in our lives by prompt obedience. Thus our believing will not be mere theory, but a reality in our daily experiences. The further development of this thought was good, of how this salvation is brought about by the death of the old nature, and in our receiving new life in Christ. The old man, though reckoned dead, will assert itself unless kept under constant vigilance, by living the sacrificial life, by walking as Christ walked.

I was impressed too with the thought of how death is the gate to life-a life of sanctification; death the lawful things the way to the life of surrender; and death to self the way to the life of sacrifice. Surely it is true, as brought out, that when the heart is filled with praise to God, every bitter and trying experience is hallowed, and it gives us perfect submission to God's will, causing us to say, not "What shall we receive?" but "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me?"

I was more than thankful for the closing remark which were especially appropriate- and gracious-a fine example of how love can bring every thought into obedience to Christ, and break down the lines that divide His people, smoothing out minor differences that mar fellowship, and how love is the true ground and bond of unity in the spirit among God's people.

The outpouring of happy hearts in exceptionally joyful song and in fervent testimonies gave proof that it was indeed a blessed season for those present. The fervency of spirit in the fellowship between meetings, the hearty expressions of appreciation for "the best I ever attended," and the real enthusiasm carried away to home Classes far and near, made me glad, and assured me that the power of His resurrection is still at work in on midst.

The closing moments were most impressive. "Lore plant my feet on higher ground," was the united prayer of all present. Their faces shone as they sang heartily and one felt that the prayer surely ascended to the heavenly throne. I pray that the good work will continue, and His ministry have free course until the last "member" has been gathered Home.

Thanking you again for all your services on our behalf
Yours in the One Hope,
L. O. -- N. Y.