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The Battle of the New Creature

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil." - Matt. 4:1.

THE SCRIPTURES ware us of our great opponent, Satan, and of two avenues through which we as new creatures in Christ are tempted and tried, namely, the world and the flesh. These two avenues are more or less under the control of Satan, for the Scriptures declare, that he is the god or ruler of this world, and that "if *we* love the world, the love of the Father is not in us." "The whole world [we are told] lieth in the Evil One," therefore "the friendship of the world is enmity with God."

In Galatians 5:17 we read that, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would"; for, says the Apostle, "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing." We are tempted through the flesh and the world, but our real adversary is the Devil. In Ephesians 6:11, 12 Paul tells us to "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Peter (1 Pet. 5:8, 9) speaking of the god of this world says: "Your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith." "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." - 1 John 2:16, 17.

The Battle Ground

It would appear from the Scriptures cited, that the principle element in our consciousness that makes of these avenues ways and means of temptation and trial, is desire. Desire of itself is not sinful, and when rightly directed operates as a holy and right aspiration or ambition to build us up in Godlikeness; but desire wrongly directed becomes covetousness, lust, and greed, in connection with earthly things which identify those who condone them as being a part of this *world*, enemies of God and of righteousness, and destined to destruction. It is here on the field of desire that the battle is waged between the new creature and the old man. Here is where the battle is fought for

leadership; here is where the shield of faith must quench the fiery darts (burning lusts) of the Adversary. Here is where each member of the Body of Christ, beginning with the Head, has, through faith, "overcome the world," subdued the flesh, and put the Devil to flight.

Our Lord's Temptations

The Scriptures state that our Lord, immediately after the symbolization of His consecration in the river Jordan, was led by the Spirit to go into the wilderness to be tempted; and at the end of forty days of fasting and prayer, He did hunger. Satan was there and was not slow to take advantage of this natural and right desire, but he was too much of a master craftsman in deceit and temptation to suggest anything crude or repulsive to our Lord. Righteous and refined natures are not tempted by that which is crude or repulsive, at least not in the beginning. 'Our Lord had a desire for food, and through this desire Satan tempted Him to take a short cut, so to speak, and gratify that desire by using the divine power at His command to convert stones into bread.

Whether or not Satan appeared in person or simply operated through the mind of our Lord is of no moment; but we are deeply concerned in the manner in which our Lord met the issue. He recognized at once the trend of the suggestion, and the deceit that lay behind it. His answer from behind the shield of faith was a sword thrust of a principle of life set forth in God's Word: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Our interest in this victory of our Lord on the battlefield of desire, lies not only in the example He left us, but also in the fact that had He failed, we would not have been ransomed.

The evil in this suggestion of Satan's would not have been the turning of stones into bread, for our Lord on other occasions did things of a similar nature. He used divine power to convert water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee; and to multiply five loaves and two fish into enough bread and fish to feed a multitude of five thousand people. These were but two of the signs and wonders "which God did by Him" to prove His authority and Messiahship. The evil would have been the attempted short cut in ministering to His own fleshly wants through the misuse of divine power, power bestowed on Him for the work of ministry and the fulfillment of His covenant of sacrifice.

It is true that our Lord needed physical nourishment, but He knew how to obtain this in a lawful and natural way; whereas the trend of Satan's suggestion, if followed to its reasonable conclusion, would have defeated the purpose for which He had been sent into the world, and God's will would not have been done. There is no short cut to the fulfilling of the will and purpose of God. Life for the Spirit-begotten will be attained only through the suffering and death of these bodies-devoted to sacrifice.

There is no recorded instance where our Lord or any one of the Apostles used divine power to minister to their own physical needs. God even denied the petition, of Paul with respect to the thorn in his flesh, telling him that His grace was sufficient for him. When Timothy was troubled with indigestion, Paul advised him to use a little wine for his stomach's sake. The thirty-nine stripes received, by Paul on five different occasions no doubt hurt him just as they would have hurt any other man; and while he -did not complain or lament his sufferings, yet he gives us, to understand that they were real afflictions and that the Lord permitted him to 'suffer them. The fact that through God's grace he could rejoice in his sufferings, knowing that they were "working out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," did not make them any the less painful.

On occasion the Lord delivered certain of His saints from prison and from out of the hands of their enemies, but this He did for the sake of the ministry and not for the purpose of shielding them from suffering and death. Many of the early Church, including the disciples and Apostles of our Lord, suffered violent deaths at the hands of their enemies. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, was stoned to death. The Apostle Paul was beheaded at Rome about the time the Apostle Peter was crucified. The Apostle James was put to death in A. D. 44, and thus one after another suffered and died for their faith.

"If We Suffer with Him"

Many Christians today seem to have lost sight of the fact that "the disciple is not above his Lord," and that sacrificial suffering and death must be the portion of each -one who would follow in his Master's footsteps. Through the merit of Jesus, these old bodies become an acceptable sacrifice (Rom. 12:1), and must, in accordance with our covenant, be wholly consumed. This cannot be accomplished without suffering and death. We must realize also that the spiritual advantages we have, and the privileges of prayer and fellowship we enjoy, are not for the purpose of ministering to the flesh, but are for our development as new creatures; and this can be accomplished only at the expense of the natural man.

Satan realizes this, and as with our Lord, he tempts us to use our spiritual gifts to further our temporal interests. His suggestion that our Lord leap from a pinnacle of the 'Temple into the valley below in the sight of the multitude, and his quotation of Scripture to fit this suggestion, were calculated not only to have our Lord draw attention to Himself by a spectacular feat, but also to turn into a wrong course the righteous desire of our Lord to be assured at all times of the Father's power and protection. But here again Satan's dart was quenched by the shield of faith; and the thrust of the sword of the Word of God that cut the snare set for our Lord's feet was, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Our Lord's desire to realize at all times the presence of divine power and aid was satisfied by a faith that felt no need to tempt that power by daring acts. He did not yield to the temptation to exalt Himself and thereby follow-in the footsteps of. Satan who was cast out of Heaven because of this sin.

The third temptation suggested by Satan was that our Lord acknowledge and worship him in exchange for the kingdoms of earth: 'The account-says that Satan took our Lord up into an exceeding high mountain and there showed. Him all the kingdoms of earth. This of course is a symbolic statement, for no mountain of earth is high enough to view all' its kingdoms. But mentally, Satan gave our Lord a view of his kingdom, the kingdom and rule which he has. usurped over mankind, and in effect he said to our Lord: If you, will acknowledge and co-operate with, me, it will not be necessary for you to undergo suffering and death in order to uplift mankind; by joining forces with me you can begin your work at once, and see results immediately. Here again we see the attempt to turn a righteous desire into a wrong channel, and to have our Lord try a short cut. But our Lord, well versed in the Scriptures and protected from the assaults of Satan by the armor of God, answered, "It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." If our Lord had done as many do, He would have reasoned the matter out for Himself without regard to the Father's Word, and would have ended up by trying the "social uplift" plan just as Satan suggested; but having implicit trust in God, He realized that His own desires and efforts to be successful and permanent, must conform to the Father's plan and time.

The Scriptures declare that our Lord "was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." We are tempted of the Devil through the flesh and the world. James says (James 1:14, 15, according to the, Diaglott rendering) "Each one is tempted by his own inordinate desire, being drawn out and allured. Then inordinate desire having conceived produces sin; and sin being perfected brings forth death." The meaning of the word "inordinate" is, "not limited to rules prescribed." (Webster.) Our Lord was tempted of the Devil through the flesh and the world just as we are, but his desires were not out of control as ours often are, and Satan is too wily not to suit the temptation to the degree; of Godlikeness possessed. 'The Captain of our salvation has led in

the fight,, and has shown us that faith and, obedience, motivated by love and by, loyalty to the Word of Truth, will win the battle at every point.

The more we study these' temptations of our Lord, the more we realize the cunning and deceit of Satan. Only those possessed of the Spirit and prompted by love to loyalty and obedience can possibly hope to escape the wiles of the Adversary. Our safety "in the ,battle lies in keeping close to our Captain, and the way to do this Is to be obedient to His commands. Our Lord has not given us commandments impossible for us to keep He is not expecting' perfection of the flesh or perfect works of us as new creatures so long as, we have to operate through' these' imperfect fleshly bodies; else would our battle be lost before begun. Our works in the flesh are important only in so far as they demonstrate the true desires and intentions of the heart. These earthly bodies in which' these new minds tabernacle while being developed are crucified with Christ; they are consecrated unto, death, and the will of the new mind is under the necessity of seeing that this covenant of sacrifice is faithfully performed.

In 1 John 2:1 we read, "My little children, these things write r unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And in 'the seventh verse of the first chapter we are told that, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the' light, we have fellowship one 'with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."!= Here it is evident that our Lord stands ready as our Advocate before the divine Throne to make good all the deficiencies of our mortal bodies. But let us not make the mistake of thinking that He is an advocate for the fleshly body. No, the old man is legally dead, crucified with the Lord, and will remain dead forever. The sacrifice has not been entirely consummated, but the contract is binding and cannot be retracted, therefore, the old creature needs no advocate. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh." It does not say that they that are Christ's are going to crucify the flesh, but that they have done so already; and that because of having given up all rights as earthly beings, through a consecration unto death, they have been begotten as new creatures in Christ Jesus to a hope of life on the divine plane. It is this new creation that needs an advocate because we as new creatures are being tried, tempted, and judged; and "if we live after the flesh, we shall die: but if, through the Spirit, we mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live."

John in this statement (1 John 2:1) unquestionably refers to the new creature, for he calls them children and speaks of God as their Father. "If we sin, we have an advocate with the Father." "This interpretation, however, might be questioned in the light of what he says in chapter 3, verse 9: "Whosoever is begotten of God doth not commit sin [practise sin, Diaglott]; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God." But on the other hand, in the first chapter, verse 8, John says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." We may be sure of one thing, and that is that John, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, does not contradict himself in this Epistle. If the new creature in us is the mind, will, disposition of God, as the Scriptures assure us,, then this new creature is unquestionably holy; and that which is of God, Godlike, holy, cannot sin.. But this new creature is in an old earthen vessel; it must operate through a brain and body that is as prone -- to sin as the sparks to fly upward."

The new creature itself does- not sin, nevertheless, it is held responsible for the deeds of the body, and these two, ,the Apostle says, "are contrary the one to the other." "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh,"- so we cannot do the things we would. It is evident then that we ere' overtaken in faults not because the mind or will of the Lord, begotten in us, consents to sin, but because of not being sufficiently alert and masterful in controlling the sinful desires of the natural man; the old mind and body breaks through the restraint placed upon it, and does and says things which implicate the new creature.

In all other creations so far as we know, the body, mind, and will have been without blemish or weakness to start with; but with the new creation, the perfect mind or will is under the necessity of expressing itself through a body that is imperfect and desperately wicked; and for this reason needs an advocate who can atone, make good all its unwilling imperfections.

God, in His wisdom, has seen fit to plunge the new creature into a life and death struggle at its conception, and to place it under the necessity of subduing, its own body at the same time it is battling to overcome the world and the Adversary. This would be a battle against impossible odds were it not for. -the fact that atonement has been made for all our unintentional sins; and for the fact that He has, not left us to fight this battle in our own strength. He provides grace and strength for every time of need if we, in a faith that will not doubt His Word of Promise, seek His aid. God does not force His aid upon us, in fact, He may even permit us to pass through' temptations that defeat us time and time again in order 'to teach 'us the very important lessons of our dependence upon Him, and the necessity for implicit obedience to His commands.

"Make No Provision for the Flesh"

Seemingly the battle. most difficult for us to win is that of successfully combating the desires> of our own flesh. The fleshly desires are strong and are not too particular as to how they are gratified. According to Paul (Eph. 5:29), "No, man ever yet hated his own flesh." Paul was under the necessity of "browbeating" his body in order that he might not be a castaway. He cites his own experience in order that we may know what is expected of us. Paul further says, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." it is so easy to fall short in this respect and to concern ourselves overmuch with provisions for the comfort and =indulgence of the flesh under the excuse of temporal necessities, but if we deceive ourselves in this matter,- we invite trouble and defeat in our struggle for life. From one standpoint, "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ" is an instantaneous work, accomplished through our consecration; but from the standpoint of actual accomplishment it is a daily task requiring unending vigilance.

This admonition of Paul's to make no provision to fulfill the lusts of the flesh is very aptly illustrated in a command, given by a famous general of past history to the rear guard of his army,, to destroy all bridges crossed in the line of march. He was determined that there, should be no possibility of retreat; it was win or die in the attempt. This is what each one who hopes to win in the battle of the new creature against its enemies must do. He must close all avenues of return to human desires and aspirations, and let no thought contrary to the determination to win ever enter his heart; he must never entertain the thought of looking back with desire for earthly things.

The battle in which we are engaged will not be a draw, but the side which has the active support of the will is the side that will win. It is not possible to divide loyalty and consideration between the new creature and the flesh and have either one satisfied. "The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." One who tries to satisfy both the flesh and the new creature deprives himself of all peace and happiness, and eventually of all hope for life; for sooner or later the mind of the flesh will assume full control of the heart. If the mind of the Spirit is given the active support of the will, it will, by divine aid, overcome the mind of the flesh, and will, to a great measure, be successful in bringing every thought, word, and action into subjection to the will of God. Then there will be peace and joy in the heart, and a gradual growth in grace, knowledge, and ability to do God's will.

Enduring Hardness as Good Soldiers

As every one knows who has tried to place himself entirely under the will of God, the flesh dies hard. Finding itself circumscribed and deprived of the unrestricted satisfaction of its desire, it dissimulates. To carry out the will of the new creature it sees will mean a lifelong battle, as well as the risk of breaking every tender tie, and the overthrow of all cherished hopes and ambitions. It realizes that such a course will seem fanatical to all former friends and loved ones, and this it finds hard to bear. It will urge that it also has rights and will suggest that the mind of the Spirit control in matters relating to religious worship, outward deportment, etc., while it be given control in secular affairs.

The only way to meet such suggestions is to make the flesh understand once for all that no matter what earthly ties are broken, what long cherished hopes and ambitions are ruptured, what it may cost in self-denial and sacrifice, or who may point the finger of scorn, it shall have no voice in the matter and must bow to the control of the new mind.

That the flesh dies hard is not to be wondered at; nor is it strange that in spite of our best endeavors to mortify our earthly members, we find that they often revive and assert themselves, and that thereby we are overcome. But should this discourage us? Should we contemplate giving up the battle because we can not keep evil thoughts from entering our minds, or fleshly desires on occasion gaining the upper hand? By no means. Our Father knew full well the difficulties we would have to meet, and He permitted us to enter the battle under these difficulties in order that we might learn hardness as good soldiers, and thereby become thoroughly fixed and settled in our love for righteousness and our determination to do His will at every cost. Our heart loyalty to righteousness is not proved or measured by our having no besetments from evil thoughts and desires, nor because we are never overcome; but our loyalty and faithfulness are proved when, in spite of defeats that would discourage any but the wholly determined, we renew the battle again and again, until by God's grace we are established in righteousness.

How could we overcome if there were no difficulties? and how could we develop strength of character and determination of will if these were not hard? He who thinks he succeeds in winning all the battles with his flesh either deceives himself or else has a very low standard as an ideal in Christlikeness. We manifest the greatest measure of the Lord's Spirit and growth in Christlikeness when, doing the best we can, we acknowledge our sins and confess our inability, in our own strength, to meet the standard held up before us. The publican who confessed his sins went down to his house justified; the self-righteous one did not.

It might be well to ask ourselves whether or not we are stronger to overcome the weaknesses of our flesh now than we were a year ago. By all the rules of practice and endeavor we should be. But if not, it shows that we are not really trying, or that if we are really trying, the temptations must be more severe. Let us be sure that we are not deceiving ourselves. 'The battle is not to him who says he would like to overcome but shows no courage or determination in the fight. The one who will be pleasing unto the Father is the one who in spite of his many failures faces the issue squarely and tries a little harder each time. There must be the determined spirit. The understanding Christian does not complain of the weakness of the flesh or of the hardness of the battle, for he realizes that these are the means of trial and testing necessary to our growth; rather should we thank God for the privilege of overcoming the flesh and the world.

The fight of faith is an aggressive fight and no quarter is to be given to the enemies of the new creature. If we are not sufficiently zealous, then God will turn us over to Satan for the destruction

of the flesh in order that the spirit may be saved. Let us not become discouraged if our trials and temptations seem more severe than formerly, but rather thank God that we are counted worthy to suffer for righteousness' sake. The reason harder trials are permitted is that we are more able to stand them. The Lord delights to see in His children the unwavering trust and determination of will that never gives up the fight.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

"For He Is Our Peace"

Peace is love in flower -- it is love reposing on the green pastures and beside the still waters. It is that sweet restfulness that can leave everything in a Father's hand and be satisfied. I believe that "everything" means *every* thing, and that nothing is excluded. Peace is, that calm confidence that trusts the Lord's goodness and wisdom "at all, times." (Psa. 34:1.) It is the abiding sense of His love that does not lose heart, because others are disturbed or unreasonable. It is the "very" peace God puts into the heart; an-d can that be ruffled because circumstances are trying, or because people don't suit us, or because our wills are crossed? No! God's peace is not a happy sensation coming now and then, but it is an abiding thing, a habit of soul and mind which makes the possessor wondrously independent of man.

- *Selected.*

I Am My Beloved's, and My Beloved is Mine

[Song of Solomon 6:3.]

RIGHTLY understood we find the Bible to be a love story of surpassing interest. No earthly love story will compare with it. First, we have the Father's love for our race, which, originally created in His likeness, fell by disobedience under just condemnation. What a wonderful story of parental Love blended with divine Justice is conveyed to us in the narrative of how God so loved the world while we were yet sinners, that He gave His only Begotten Son to be our Redeemer, that He might restore again to divine favor and blessing whosoever wills to return after learning of His loving provision.

How different this view of the divine character and Plan from the one which once terrorized us-- when we thought of God as almighty in power and knowledge, but destitute of love and sympathy; when we thought of Him according to the universally accepted false teachings as having, with cold indifference, sat in the councils of eternity, before the creation of the earth or our race, and there planned our creation and everlasting destiny; that He there deliberately arranged ("according to the counsel of His own will," as the catechism expresses it) that He would place us as a race under such unfavorable conditions that only a mere handful, comparatively, would ever attain to a life of bliss, either in the present world or in that which is to come. Deciding also that the vast majority, ignorant (whom the god of this world hath blinded), steeped in inherited sin and degradation, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, should, nevertheless, be so constituted and preserved that they could never end their miserable existence; and, withal, providing, we were told, a great place for their eternal torture, from which would ascend for ever and ever, alike futile and unheeded, their prayers, their curses and their groans.

Relief to Know that God is Really a God of Love

What a relief do we experience as finally we awake to a better knowledge of God and -of His precious Word, to find that all these teachings of the Dark Ages were but a horrible nightmare, as unreal as they were cruel and unjust-as unscriptural as they are contrary to every reasonable conception of every reasonable mind, of the proper exercise of justice, Wisdom, Love and Power -- the divine attributes. We are reminded .of the nursery tales of childhood, told to children by parents and nurses who, with grossly mistaken ideas of wisdom and propriety, used them, as a lash of terror with which to secure a frightened obedience. As the bugaboos of infancy faded from memory, or at least ceased to inspire terror, as we grew older and began to take note of the deceptions which had been practised; so as children of a larger growth we have learned that many of the "terrors of the Lord"-which, however severe, are reasonable and just-have been distorted by theologians and others who would fain exercise a terrorizing influence upon the world, to restrain from evil. We have learned, in the language of Scripture, that "their fear toward Me is taught by the precepts of men," and not by any of the divine precepts. - Isa. 29:13.

Oh, what a relief it has brought to, our hearts to know God as really and truly a God of love, who is not only willing to save unto the uttermost, but able to, save unto the uttermost all who put their trust in Him! and who is so willing thus to save that He has made abundant provision that every member of Adam's race must come to a clear knowledge of His grace and to a full opportunity by obedience to the extent of his ability to attain eternal life through Christ Jesus.

It does us good at times to look back and vie-a, not only the horrible pit and miry clay of sin out of which Jehovah lifted us when He placed our feet upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, but also to remember His mercy toward us in the anointing of our eyes, now in the end of the Age, that we may see wonderful things in His Word; that we may realize how He has graciously brought us "out of darkness into His marvelous light," in permitting us to brush away the veil of superstition, misunderstanding and mistranslation which has befogged His Word, beclouded our understanding and bedimmed our view and appreciation of the great Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift. - James 1:17.

Not One, but Many Individuals Chosen to be Bride of Christ

But our text deals specially with another part of this great love story of the Scriptures. Our loving Father, having provided a redemption for all our race through Christ Jesus, did more: He highly honored and glorified our dear Redeemer as a reward for those things He endured faithfully through obedience to the Father (Phil. 2:8-11), and in addition to this arranged to select a Bride and joint-heir in glory for His Son, our Lord Jesus. It was not an individual that was chosen to be the Bride, but many individuals, and yet in all, compared with the world, a "little flock," the "elect Church, called and in process of selection and perfection, to be "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife."

Of all the plots and peculiarities of love stories which have been conjured up by human 'brains, none will compare with this story of how Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her-redeeming her with His own life; and how, being rewarded with excellent glory by the Father, these who would be His companions, are invited to share His cross, His suffering, His death, and to be received up into glory with Him, to share His love and His throne and the Father's favor. We will not go into details here; we have done this before and our readers are familiar, with every feature-so, instead, we pass on to consider some of the conditions of acceptance with the Bridegroom, and how we may make our calling and our election sure to this position of honor and blessing to which He has invited us.

Only a Few can Say from the Heart, "I Am My Beloved's"

Our text briefly, yet very pointedly, states the entire matter. (1) "I am my Beloved's. There is no possibility for any one to get into this special elect class, "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife," without knowing it. There is therefore no possibility that heathen philosophers or others who lived and who died without a personal knowledge of Christ as their personal Savior, can ever be members of the elect Church, the Bride; all who are of it will be able to say, " I am my Beloved's." Very manifestly also, for the same reason, many who are Church members "in good and regular standing," have neither part nor lot in this matter; for only a few can say, from the heart, truly, "I am my Beloved's." This union with the Beloved (Christ) implies that the step of justification through repentance and faith in the precious blood has first taken place; because only the justified are "called." (2) It is implied that the one who can say, "I am my Beloved's," has not only heard of Christ but has made a definite, positive compact, or contract with Him. And this contract -- to be His in every thought, and word and deed, to the extent of our ability, if He will accept us and be our Bridegroom, is our marriage vow or covenant.

The Scriptures assure us that in the present time, while evil prevails and the god of this world blinds the minds of the vast majority, none can come to the Lord Jesus, except as the Father draws them. (John 6:44.) The Father is not drawing all mankind now, but only believers. He is

leaving the general work of drawing the worldly for the next Age, the Messianic Age, when Christ and the Church glorified shall, as God's agents, cause the whole earth to be filled with the knowledge of the Truth. Whenever the Truth reaches the heart and understanding, its influence is, to draw, although the drawing may be resisted not only in the present Age, but also in the Age. to come. (Acts 3:23.)

But, it is only the few who are being drawn to Christ by a knowledge of the truth now, because only a few have a knowledge of the truth. And while many resist the truth and refuse the opportunity of union with the great Bridegroom, some have gladly accepted and given themselves wholly to the Lord, thus sealing the covenant binding themselves to Him and by His grace binding Him to them.

If Faithful It is the Privilege of Each to Say, "My Beloved is Mine"

It is proper that each one should decide for himself positively, whether or not he has ever accepted the divine invitation to give himself (Prov. 23:26; Rom. 12:1) to the Lord, to be ultimately accepted as a member of His Bride if he continue faithful to his engagement to the end. If we are faithful, and so long as we continue to be faithful, it is our privilege to 'look up with confidence and be assured of the second part of our text, "My Beloved is mine." And if we will, it is possible for -us to continue in this attitude, "faithful unto death"; and so doing we may know that in the resurrection we shall be with our Lord, and be like Him, and share His glory and His throne. - Rev. 3:21.

How much is implied in this statement, "My Beloved is mine"! We are reminded of the Scripture which declares, "He that hath the Son hath life" - eternal life. More than this, the Apostle assures us that those -who have Christ, who can truly, Scripturally say, "My Beloved is mine," are really possessors of "all things." For since Christ is the heir of all things, if we have become associates with Him, then, indeed, "all things are yours [things present and things to come] for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3:22, 23.) If it lifted from us a great load to know that our sins were graciously forgiven through the merit of the precious blood, how much more of a load of care does it lift from us to know that we are vitally united with the illustrious Son of the great King of the Universe - the Son in whom the Father is well pleased and whom He has made His sole associate in the glory and dominion of the universe.

Nor does this promise of 'blessings in Christ apply merely to the future. The glories and honors truly are not now, but by and by to be revealed; but the Bridegroom's care, protection, •provision, and comfort belong to His betrothed even now, while we are in this tabernacle; so that while we are passing through the "valley of the shadow of death," we need fear no evil, for He is with us, and His rod and staff comfort us.

All who abide faithful to Him, all who truthfully can say, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine," have not only the promise of the life that is to come, but also the promise of this present life. They hear the Master's voice saying, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the Age," and in the end of the Age He is to be specially near, specially precious, and is to reveal Himself to His faithful in an especial manner, even before she is so changed as to behold Him in His glory.

All the "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" Belong to This Class

It is the privilege of these to apply to themselves, and to realize as properly theirs, all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of the divine Word. These may hear the voice of the Lord, saying, I will be with thee in six troubles and in the seventh I will not forsake thee. "My grace is sufficient for thee." "Call upon Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee." Indeed, we are assured and "know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to His purpose [to be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife]." - Job 5:19; 2 Cor. 12:9; Psa. 50:15; Rom. 8:28.

These promises of the Lord have been well summed, up in the expression of the poet:

"In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth,
At home and abroad, on the land or the sea,
As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply,
The flames shall not hurt thee-I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine."

What a blessing of peace, quietness of spirit, ability to endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ, and sustenance and strength in time of trial, lies behind these precious assurances of the Bridegroom to those who can say and realize unquestionably, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine," no tongue can express. It has in the past permitted His faithful ones to pass through many dark and trying experiences with a fortitude that has surprised the world, which has seen them in the fiery furnace, but has not seen that there is with them the form of the Son of God. (Dan. 3:25.) They have endured as seeing Him who is invisible. (Heb. 11:27.) The poor world who know not this invisible Friend above all others, and are unacquainted with this Heavenly Bridegroom, and know not His sustaining grace in every hour of trial are, indeed, to be greatly pitied, They must largely bear alone those 'burdens which the Lord's people, His betrothed, are privileged to lay at the feet of the great Burden-bearer, whose invitation is, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

But, if the case of the world is a sad one, because it knows not our Bridegroom, how much worse is the case of those who having once known Him, and having once experienced His tender care and helpfulness in all of life's affairs as a Counselor and Guide, have wandered off, having lost their first love having forgotten that they were purged from their old sins, and become deaf to the "exceeding great and precious promises" pertaining to the present as well as to the future life; and are now striving merely for the things which perish, and which at most are but for a moment. (2 Cor. 4:17, 1.8.) These are in a much worse condition than the world.

As the Apostle declares, "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment." - 2 Pet. 2:21.

Let us who have named the name of Christ, who have assumed His name, abide in Him -- by continuing in faith, in love and in zeal, to walk in His footsteps and thus make our calling and our election *sure*.

- *The Watch Tower*

The Father of the Faithful

"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." - Gen. 15:1.

FOLLOWING THE overwhelming defeat of Chedorlaomer came the leisurely journey to home and the flocks. The excitement and stimulus of that quick campaign ended, the quiet of the familiar pastoral scenes in contrast placed upon Abram the greater test. There was time now to meditate on the strange experiences of the last few days, and to consider the possible dangers of the future. The question could not fail to intrude: "Why?"-God had -promised; Abram had left his boyhood home, had buried his father in a strange land, had journeyed many weary miles into this strange country to live among hostile peoples-yet over ten years had gone by and still the land was not his, "no, not so much as to set. his foot on." And that promised seed?-daily the reason to abandon hope increased.

Evidently these were dangerous hours of meditation; but we read: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." (Rom. 4:20.) A weaker faith would have failed perhaps, though Abram came nearer to failure in this test than lie ever knew; for, while there is no record of a cry to God, "Help Thou my unbelief," we do read, "The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying,. Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward"-not your strength, but Mine delivered Lot; not the vigor of your body, but the unchangeable promise of your God will give the Seed. Your present security depends not on the swords, the spears, or the shields of human fashioning -- "I am thy shield." Is the future uncertain? "I am thy exceeding great reward." The reward cannot be less than "exceeding" when God makes Himself that reward.

The Depth and Significance of the Promise

With what astonishment Abraham will learn that in the above assurance God was carrying the promise into the very courts of heaven to bring down to earth His own, His only, begotten Son and that the bringing of a seed from the dead womb of Sarah had but feebly pictured the divine power that would open the grave itself. And then the promise exceeds his anticipation in another way almost equally astonishing: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye [Gentiles] Abraham's seed."

"And He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy -seed, which is Christ. "That ye may know . . . what is the **exceeding**. greatness of His power to usward, according to the

working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to 'be the head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:19-23.) No one can measure the joy that will come to Abraham when the depth and significance of those promises burst upon him, when he realizes the full 'beauty of the Plan that will be consummated only when every tongue shall be heard praising God, when every knee shall bow.

God Himself Our Exceeding Great Reward

These were not vague assurances that God was giving Abram. There was vividly before his mind the absolute necessity of a trustworthy shield; and his entire life was devoted to the securing of the reward, first dimly promised in Ur. From that day his faith, divinely nurtured, had been sufficient to each test. Now he was a rich but childless old man, beset by marauding tribes and the wild beast of hill and plain to which his widely scattered flocks could fall an easy prey. His danger, however, lay not there, but in doubting God and trusting self, as later events proved. It is the test of all ages; but God's promises are eternal, and as in this instance His sustaining grace always ready at hand. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." (Isa. 54:17.) "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday." "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

The reward, nevertheless, should -not 'be thought of as pertaining to the future alone. "I am thy exceeding great reward," not "I will be." Does not God seem to be saying: When you have learned to think of Me as thy exceeding great reward, a reward inestimably more valuable than all the land that your eye could reach -- from the highest mountain *top*, a reward exceeding even that of having at your side the child I have promised and that you have so longed for -- when you have learned to know Me as thy "exceeding great reward," then will it be safe to fulfill My promise, safe to give you these lesser things. Then will there be no danger that any gift will usurp the affection due the Giver, no danger that any test can come to you that will be too great for your faith.

So it is now with every believer. His present peace, his present joy, and all his hope, to be eternal must be **in** the Eternal. The cutting of every tie, the losing of all earthly treasures, may be necessary for him to learn to set his affections there, but if he is able to "take joyfully the spoiling of his goods, knowing that he has in heaven [not will have] a more enduring substance," the intended lesson is being learned. Though he be a defenseless pilgrim with no stockade or walled city to defend him, down the centuries comes to him the assurance, "Fear not. I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." "Our God, who is love, and love in its purest, divinest essence, has given us much, and promised us more; but still His best and greatest gift is His own dear self; our reward, our great reward, our exceeding great reward. Hast thou nought? Is thy life bare. Have lover and friend forsaken thee? Art thou lonely and forsaken of all the companions of earlier, younger, days? Well, answer this one question more, Hast thou God? For if thou hast, thou hast all love and life, all sweetness and tenderness. all that can satisfy the heart, and delight the mind. All lovely things sleep in Him, as all colors hide in the sunbeam's ray, waiting to be unraveled. To

have God is to have all, though bereft of everything. To be destitute of God is to be bereft of everything, though having all."

The Blessedness of Waiting upon God

Abram was quick to appropriate God's assurance of friendship and readily responded with the petition that had evidently been weighing upon his heart: "Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house Is this Eliezer of Damascus? Behold to me Thou hast given no seed; and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir." Abram uttered no complaint, but that he had hoped for a greater blessing than it now seemed evident' was to be his, is apparent. God's promises had led him to hope that a child of his own flesh should inherit his house, but now it seemed he had misunderstood God-the promise only meant that an alien should be his heir.

Often we, too, thus mistake God, and understand His delays as denials. Every servant and every son of God, when he has attained the station intended for him, will rejoice to tell of the lessons learned in seasons of waiting. Forty years on the back side of the desert, weary days of waiting and uncertainty in Egypt, again forty years-of wandering with the promised land near at hand, death on a mountain top with that fair prospect full in view -- what a tale of waitings and disappointments for that faithful servant, Moses; but how trifling all will seem when perfected he has entered that promised land! "So He delays still. It is the mystery of the art of educating human spirits to the finest temper of which they are capable. What searchings of heart; what analyzing of motives; what testings of the Word of God; what upliftings of soul-searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of God signifies! All these are associated with those weary clays of waiting, which are, nevertheless, big with spiritual destiny. But such delays are not God's final answer to the soul that trusts Him. They are but the winter before the burst of spring., 'And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him saying, This shall not be thine heir; but thine own son shall be thine heir.'"

It was in a vision that God's message of the shield and the reward came to Abram, and evidently a night vision, for in response to the patriarch's eager plea, he is taken out into the night to be taught as a child would be taught, 'by a picture. And=that picture was one that would be repeated in that oriental sky every night of his pilgrimage.. "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou he able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be." That 'promise was made to dead nature. The land lay before him hearing continual witness to God's loving provision -of fertility, but Abram well knew that his body and the womb of Sarah were alike dead, and indeed that there had never been a time when. they could bring forth anything but a dying posterity. But herein was the majesty of God's power and wisdom to be shown. The (lead body and the dead womb were to have fruitage, and thereby God's method of teaching by pictures was to be continued. As we look today to that unparalleled pageantry (of heaven, by faith we may see the antitypical Isaac marshaling not their hosts alone, but also the still higher creation they represent. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." - 1 Thess. 4:17.

"Abraham Believed God"

Abram's response was immediate, and it was not, I will make a chart of the heavens and go over it in detail to count every star. No: "He believed in the Lord, and He counted it unto him for righteousness." Note that Abram's attitude was a more noble one than even that of believing the promise: "He believed in the Lord. He had already learned to believe in God's promises; but here was a heart condition that could be rewarded with a personal gain greater than just land and family.

He believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him, for righteousness." The dead had been brought to life-the life of fellowship with God. And, "It was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed unto him: but' for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" As with Abram, in order that one may be blessed with this imputation, not faith in the promise alone, but faith in God and His; life-giving power is necessary. It is the God of the resurrection in whom we must believe. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations), before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." - Rom. 4:16, 17.

Often the inspired writers of the New Testament have turned for their inspiration to the two phrases, "he believed," and "it was counted unto him for righteousness." "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham." (Gal. 3:7-9.) In the fourth chapter of Romans (Romans 4:9-21) Paul reasons from this incident that it is not works that justifies, Abram's faith having justified before circumcision was instituted and it is to the subsequent events in the life of Abraham that James (James 2:20) turns for his proof "that faith without works is dead." "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." - Ver. 23, 24.

"Staggered not at the Promise"

The inspired historian says (Gen. 11:31) that it was Terah that brought Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, but we read that "the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." The primary cause for that migration is given in God's own statement to Abram: "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to .give thee this land to inherit it." (Gen. 15:7.) Does this not suggest to every one of the Lord's people the tender providences that have surrounded us, individually, not only since we "believed" in the Lord, but even before that time, when perhaps our faith was in the promises more than in the One who gave them. A youth in Ur, Abram, "believed" ' in the promise, and with his father left that home; but now an old man without land or child, though promised a seed as the stars of heaven to inherit that land with him, his, faith does not falter -- "he believed in the Lord."

If Abraham had turned to the world for counsel, their advice invariably would have been, -- It cannot be. How wise was his course, "who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb: yea, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God." (Rom. 4:18-20, R. V.) He was "fully assured that what He had promised He was able also to perform." Faith that was unfaltering in the presence of promises, the possibility of whose fulfillment was 'utterly beyond human comprehension,' was ready for still greater tests; and as we follow, the story of this wonderful man, we find that the testimony that, at this stage, "he believed in the Lord," does not mean God's work in him had been completed. The gem had been found, but the lapidary must yet polish it. Fifteen years from the giving of the promise must be spent in waiting before faith would be rewarded with the heir.

"He believed in the Lord; and He counted it unto him for righteousness." "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; 'but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on Him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." (Rom. 4:23, 24, R. V.) Here is a miracle beyond our comprehension, but, not beyond our faith if we have learned this lesson -one of the greatest our Bible was given to teach. This imputation of righteousness is not that we may be freed from the need of a Savior, but rather it emphasizes the necessity of our abiding in Him, as "Abraham rejoiced to see His day; and he saw it, and was glad." As the Apostle has revealed, it is the God of the resurrection that is working in us. One then cannot claim even this standing of imputed, righteousness long, if the life 'of Christ is not manifested in him. And this need be in no small measure, but "according to the power [His power] that worketh in you." "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." With the Apostle we should be able to say, from experience, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless **I live**; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." -- Gal. 2:20.

It takes long, 'however, to learn the lesson that like Father Abraham we must look not at our dead bodies but at the promise of the living God. The eternal stars, the innumerable sand, are but feeble pictures of His illimitable power. Little wonder that there are so many long periods of waiting necessary while our faith, as the faith of Father Abraham, is growing to the proportions necessary to receive the assurances of His abundant grace. Whether abiding under the stars of Palestine, or enduring the monotony of a sick-bed or the grime of a shop, the years are not wasted if it can be said of us, "He believed in the Lord."

The Resurrection Power of God

No footstep follower of the Lord has been asked to walk in more forbidding paths than our Fore-runner; no one has been asked to wait under more trying circumstances to "see the travail of his soul"; nor can any one be with Him in the bosom of the Father who is not ready to joyfully accept the privilege of being with Him on the cross and in the grave, "crucified with Him," "dead with - Him,"- "that we may live with Him." "You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, bath He quickened together 'with Him, "having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13); and that quickened= life will bring forth fruitage as surely as there was fruitage from Abraham's dead body.

Sonship is founded on resurrection. "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved) and hath raised us' up with Him." (Eph. 2:4-6, R. V.) One's standing now and, in the resurrection depends not on how great he has been, but on the boundless grace of the One who raised him. The prodigal son can no more be permitted to sit in rags at his father's table than can that other son. When the prodigal "was yet **a great way off**, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him... . The father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry; for this my son **was dead**, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." There were other things that father could have said, but what he did say was, "This my son was dead, and is alive again," (Luke 15:20-24.) It took faith in the father to start in rags and unshod on that long: journey from the "far country" -- to the home his deprivations had taught him to love; but as- always, faith has its reward -- he is received into the same standing as the elder son. Death is said to be the great leveler; but equal power reaches down into the grave that each one there may come forth to newness, to fulness, of life. For each member of the Church this means not only the resurrection of justification, but a begetting to sonship, both simply and beautifully arranged for in our loving Redeemer.

"If so be that we suffer with Him."

The History of the Church

No. 8 The Reformation

JOHN LORD, that most gentle historian, ever ready to pay tribute to the good that may exist even in the manifestation of much that is evil, divides Roman Catholicism into its two parts, that of a religion and that of a ruling government. In this dual role, he declares, it imprisoned the European nations while at the same time it sheltered them; and it did defend the foundation principles of faith and morality, namely the personal sovereignty of God, salvation through the death of Christ, and the necessity of a holy life as taught in the Sermon on the Mount and voiced by the inspired Apostles.

On the other hand we quote the earnest declaration of another regarding this same Papal power: "Its reign has been long, its sphere has been wide, its power has been vast. It has usurped the headship of the Christian Church, and the titles and prerogatives of the Deity. It has corrupted the Gospel, suppressed the Bible, and turned Christianity into a baptized heathenism. Idolatries and false doctrines have been inculcated and promulgated throughout Christendom by its instrumentality. For centuries it made war with the saints and overcame them. Millions of evangelical martyrs have been slain by its authority. It has injuriously affected countless myriads of human beings. During its course of more than 1200 years, thirty or forty generations have suffered under it, either in the way of corruption or persecution. In a word, it has vindicated its title to, be considered that system of supernatural and soul destroying error, that dire and dreadful apostasy revealed by prophecy as the principle power of evil to arise between the first and second advents of Christ.

The corner-stone of all Papal encroachment is the boastful assertion upon which all the prestige and power of the Roman pontiffs rest -- the doctrine of Apostolic succession. To Leo the Great, born of noble parentage in the latter part of the fourth century and numbered even amongst the Fathers of the early Church, may be traced some of the important developments that transformed that body into a ruling institution. The haughty and astounding declaration that the Church at Rome was presided over by a man who was, by virtue of his very office, the successor of St. Peter was the foundation dogma upon which the long train of errors that followed its promulgation were constantly conceived and placed upon their unholy platform. The superstition to which the professing Christian world had sunk furthered the acceptance of such doctrine, so contrary to the Gospel -- that Gospel which so clearly declared Christ to be the foundation Rock and never man; that Gospel which is the source of all Christian truth and spiritual law to the child of God, and which, neglected even for the best good works of men must ever mean a loss, for bit by bit the Enemy begins his encroachment. This we find to be true as we scan the pages of history.

But, leaving the Church of the fifth century when some virtues still supported it, when Leo (whose exalted character even Gibbon praises) believing that a new central power, a theocracy, would restore civilization, settle disputes, depose tyrants, and establish a common standard of faith and worship, had urged that visible unity so remote from that real unity built on faith alone, we turn to the Roman Church of the fifteenth century whose encroachments and corruptions had so reached the full that in all directions earnest voices were raised in indignation at the perverted institution.

Arrogant was the ruling church. One of the strangest facts of history is that picture of Henry IV, German Emperor, standing three days and nights in the cruel snows of winter, barefoot and clad

in a scanty woolen garment, begging in tears, as lie kneeled, the favor of Hildebrand. But all efforts to bring about a reformation in the Church had so far failed, for the attempt had always been to remove the branch of error rather than to strike at the root itself. We find in nearly every age the Mystics laboring to turn men from the empty forms of outward worship to the soul's inner peace with God. In silence, holiness, and communion they sought that peace for themselves, but with no clear view of the necessary and important doctrine that must rally the faithful to the battle that was to be inevitable-"The just shall live by faith." The Waldenses, from the summit of the Piedmont Alps, joined them and purified their doctrines, calling to their minds Scriptures damaging to Rome; but the primary truth of justification was not made prominent. In England, Wyclif lifted up his voice. John Huss, called by historians the John the Baptist of the Reformation, appeared in Bohemia. He stressed the wrong in the clergy rather than the error of doctrine, and, summoned before the council at Constance under a deceitful promise of safety, he was imprisoned, burned, and his ashes were cast into the Rhine. In Italy, Savonarola paid with his life at the stake for his attack on the vices of Rome.

Breaking Down of Strongholds

The great drama was destined to begin in the very heart of the Empire, its cradle the University of Wittenberg, founded by Frederick the Wise of Saxony, close friend of the Emperor. Providence chose this firm, tolerant prince to play an important part in the Reformation, the historian, D'Aubigne, comparing him to a tree under whose nurturing shade the sprouting seed might be sheltered and grow. To Staupitz, the Vicar-general, Frederick remarked one day. "All sermons made up of mere subtleties and human tradition are marvelously cold. . . . Holy Scripture alone is clothed with such power and majesty that, shaming us out of our rules of reasoning, it compels us to cry out, 'Never man spake as this.'" Many others, men of learning and piety, had added their share in preparing the field for the breaking up of the hard, unfertile soil of established precedent and sectarianism., as seen in the oft-repeated words of the Bishop of Meissen: "As often as I read the Bible, I find there a different religion from that which is taught us." Word of God! As precious and necessary today as in the time of the Reformation to the breaking clown of strongholds and exposing every error substituted for its life-giving truth. May we hold ever open its priceless pages, jealous lest even the best of mail's interpretations might occupy our minds and tongues to the neglect of the message fresh from the lips of holy men moved by the Spirit of God, the unspeakably precious tidings of great joy which, please God, shall yet he to all people.

It was necessary that the interest and love for the Holy Scriptures in the original Hebrew and Greek be revived, that the truth fresh from the lips of inspired men might refute and clear away the rubbish of misinterpretation and additions which had long obscured its healing light. And so God prepared His servants.

Reuchlin

Foremost amongst these was John Reuchliu, he had been chosen as the proper instrument for a certain work and it came to pass after the ways of Providence that the sweet voice of this boy singing in the choir so attracted a prominent official of the town of Baden that lie chose the lad to accompany his own son to the most celebrated school of the West, the University of Paris. Here under the best of teachers he studied Greek and Latin, which he was destined to carry to Germany, becoming there the first professor of these languages. The two-edged sword which is the Old and the New Testaments might now be brought out of the (lust. and sackcloth where it had lain for years and be restored to the hands of Christian soldiers, who would not lay it down. Some six years after Christopher Columbus had first sighted land in the New Hemisphere, Reuchlin studied Hebrew in Rome under the learned Jew, Abdias Sphorna. He now translated and

expounded the Psalms, revised the Vulgate, and published the first Hebrew-German grammar and dictionary. Adopting a young cousin, he changed his harsh German name of Schwarzerd to the soft and musical Greek one of Melartcthon -- that Melancthon who lives in every account of the Reformation as the illustrious friend of Martin Luther.

One of the strange little twists seen in history is the welding of the Christian faith with classical knowledge in the Reformation day and the opposite condition in the day of early Christianity, when" a world of letters stood arrayed against the humble message of the Christian. Thus in strange, mysterious ways God has ever moved, bringing to pass His high designs, His sovereign will. We, as Christians, can not despise ignorance allied to a true heart of faith, for of such were the humble fishermen of Galilee, nor can we any less despise the union of the cultured intellect and the consecrated heart, for this latter shines forth so glorious in the recorded annals of the progress of God's true Church, as it emerges from the clouds, the mildew, and the frost of its enforced wilderness.

Erasmus

When John Reuchlin was but twelve years of age t sere was born in Rotterdam, out of wedlock, the greatest genius of the Reformation age. His name I was Gerhard, after his Dutch father who later *became* a spriest, but it was later translated into the latin, Desiderius,, and still later into the Greek, Erasmus, by which name he is known to historians. Sent to school by his father at the age of four, then orphaned and left poor, he grew up to tear the veil from the vices of the Church by his brilliant satires, thus paving the wail for one destined to be the real reformer rather than himself. Powerful were some of the princes and prelates Who protected him in his combating of the vices of the Church, but the monks whom he attacked in his "Praise of Folly" vowed vengeance. Erasmus, offered ease and wealth, even to the hat of a cardinal, chose instead to earn his living correcting the proofs of a printer. "I any firmly resolved," said he, "to die in the study of the Scripture. In that is *my joy* and peace." And again. "The sum of all Christian philosophy is reduced to this: -- to place all our hope in God, who, without our deserts, by **grace**, gives us all things by Jesus Christ."

Lessons from the Past

Today the principle embodied in the words of Erasmus must ever be instilled into every earnest Christian consciousness, clearing with one majestic sweep the shadows of all subtle doctrines of works instead of faith, placing in its stead that doctrine of heart-holiness without which we may not please the Lord. Let the Christian not be deceived, nor point with pride to aught of his own good and desirable effort, nor boast of invincible standing in his previously accepted minutia of interpretation and creed, pointing the finger of scorn with more or less refined anathema at some. humble, trusting saint of God who does not see quite eye to eye with him in each dogmatic conclusion of parable and prophecy and type. All such stand out in unmistakable prototype on the pages of the Reformation day. And no less do we see beside them on those same pages those who, count not their lives dear, if they must, in such preservation, cease that clarion cry of the awakened lovers of truth divine, "The just shall live by faith." Nay, not by any works of our own, not by any superior minutia of orthodoxy of belief, but by the washing of the blood that seals the New Covenant, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which indwelling in the natural order of things must purify the earthen vessel in which God has been pleased to let it dwell. By the grace of God and not by anything of our own-thus are we saved, dwelling here in the secret place of the Most High and under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty.

A year previous to the usual given date of the Reformation a New Testament was completed by Erasmus, and accompanying it was a Latin translation which corrected the Vulgate fearlessly, and defended those corrections with notes. In this, learned men, holding positions in the Church, might read the Word in its original language. Erasmus had done for the New Testament what Reuchlin had accomplished for the Old, and now the means of exposing error having been put, into the hands of the learned, another phase of the divinely-controlled work of cleansing the sanctuary of Truth was already on its way, its instrument prepared and ready for the giving of that uncovered truth, not to the learned alone but to the people.

-- *Contributed.*

Next of this series
MARTIN LUTHER

"The Place"

"There is a place where thou canst touch the eyes
Of blinded men to instant, perfect sight;
There is a place where thou canst say, 'Arise!'
To dying captives, bound in chains of night;
There is a place where thou canst reach the store
Of hoarded gold and free it for the Lord;
There is a place-upon some distant shore --

Where thou canst send the worker or the Word.
There is a place where Heaven's resistless power
Responsive moves to thine insistent plea;
There is a place-a silent, trusting hour
Where God Himself descends and fights for thee.
Where is that blessed place-dost thou ask
'Where?' O, Soul, it is the secret place of prayer."

Messages of Encouragement

My dear Brethren:

Greetings of love, in the Lord! I think that my subscription to your excellent little magazine, "The Herald," expires either this month or the next. I have looked forward each month to the coming of this messenger and have been helped and encouraged by the reading of the various thoughts which you have expressed. Please accept my grateful thanks for your kindness in sending this without payment from me.

My physical conditions are unchanged. I am still a prisoner in my little room and chained to this bed by invisible chains, but none the less secure. So they will remain until our dear Father in His mercy calls me Home. Never mind, if that be long or short, I rest in His will, for there and there alone is the peace that passeth understanding as far as the world is concerned, but very real and precious to those who have it in their hearts. We prove daily, "My grace is sufficient for thee," so that while the physical is deteriorating, the spiritual is progressing, and under great difficulties it is possible to rejoice in the Lord.

So you will see, brethren, that it is still impossible for me to pay for my "Heralds." You have very kindly sent me two copies. Both of these have gone out to others regularly with the prayer that our Father will bless the messages that are in them. After my copy is read I send it to a dear brother who cannot afford to pay for his;- so both of them are used. If you can renew, I will be grateful. If not the two, please do so with the one according to your good offer, and I will be grateful, because that is an account of my stewardship to you. There are others too who kindly give me a share in the work offered as unto the Lord and to the brethren.

Some day we will all be united in the "unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace." Then our joy will be complete and all our differences swept away. But till that good day comes, we have to live here, and happy are we if able to say, "For me to live is Christ." So we press on from day to day.

From some quarters there is much reaches us that can by no means be called truth, and we do well to be careful and examine all things by the aid of the truth that we know and the infallible Word of God. Herein is safety. I do hope and pray that you dear brethren will be able to keep the "Herald" as free from error as it has been in the past. You will get opposition, but that is a sure sign that you are trying to please the Lord. May He continue to guide you all in your difficult task. Be sure of our prayers.

With many thanks and much love in the Lord to you all, I remain, by His grace,
Your brother in Christ, - F. S.-Eng.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in the Lord. I am writing, for the second consignment of your Sunday School Lessons. As -for my experience in using the first consignment, I dare say we are progressing very nicely. The first two Sundays I had two little ones; the third Sunday there were six; and so-up to this time I have three that, come regularly. Instead of piano music we have two guitars, and we have a grand time singing: hymns. The first song the children always choose is, "God *has* promised a glorious' day." I feel that- not only the children are, getting a blessing, but I as well. It does one's heart good to see some one taking an. interest in the things we love, doesn't it.

I hope this little message will encourage you in your labor in the Lord, "that your joy may be full."

With warm Christian greetings,
Your sister by His grace,
A. M. -- Pa.

[A number of the friends are finding the Sunday School Lessons, mentioned in the above letter, profitable, and we are glad to announce again that we are able to supply these to any desiring them. A systematic study of the various features of the Divine Plan is taken up for the benefit of the younger minds. In ordering, please specify the number of children in your Class.]

Dear Brethren:

I wish to thank you for the fine article in the "Herald" on the subject of "Life's Empty Victories." -- How true and searching the writer has portrayed our empty victories. Probably the reason this article appealed to me, or shall I say applied to me, is because I could look back and see similar experiences " in my own life-experiences to be regretted long, long after, for which many a prayer has gone up, claiming the mercy of God. How such experiences cause one to thank God that we have our standing before Him in grace and not in our own works. Victories-empty victories-victories that we are ashamed of and desire to be forgotten because they stirred up envy, strife, bitter feeling, and made enemies of those dear to us, and with whom we had sweet communion.

If we had not the assurance of God's Word that even these experiences, bitter and painful as they may be, are included in the "all things that work together for good to those who love the Lord," these empty victories of life would be despairing. How thankful these experiences make us for the promises in the Word of God. Yes, we need the valley experiences to appreciate the preciousness of our loving Savior.

May God continue to bless your ministry.
Your brother in Christ,
F. F. -- N. J.

The following is a second letter received from one living in the vicinity of the school disaster which occurred some months ago, in Texas. This is the result, of some tract distribution done by one of the friends, living near there:

Dear Friends:

I have read your "Herald" on the subject of Hell, and also your tracts, and they have given me much consolation. I like to read them and am passing on to others. I am enclosing ten cents for another Herald, and I want the "Revelation of Jesus Christ" as soon as I am financially able to get it. Please send my "Herald" and any other, literature as soon as possible.

Yours very truly,
Mrs. M. S. - Texas.