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Tolerance of Christian Liberty

"Grace and peace to multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." - 2 Peter 1:2-12.

IN discussing this or any other subject dealing with divine truth, we should endeavor to be guided by the spirit of our Master, the spirit of kindness, the spirit of helpfulness, and so keep our minds and hearts void of antagonism, faultfinding, or judging in the sense of condemnation. As true Christians we must be motivated by the spirit of truth and righteousness; for it is only those who are led by God's Holy Spirit who can truly claim relationship with the Father as children, and so merit His approval as ministers to the flock.

The indications all about us make it evident that the saints of the Lord are being tested, more or less severely, along the lines of tolerance, of Christian liberty, and of brotherly love; and it is also evident that this testing is permitted of the Lord that the approved may be manifested, regardless of how they view this or that matter, provided their views are not such as preclude sonship.

Doctrinal Differences

Doctrinal differences on subjects more or less hidden in types, shadows, and figurative language, and consequently more or less subject to imperfect human reasoning powers, are the basis offered by some for withholding full fellowship from others who, on the plainly stated fundamentals and essentials of Holy Writ, are in full agreement. In some instances also, brethren against whom there is no fault to find either in doctrine or spirituality, are denied the privilege of service to the friends because of their cooperation with other brethren who do not see eye to eye respecting some teachings considered by the majority as "present truth."

In speaking of fundamentals and essentials, we here refer to those things in a Christian's belief and practice which are stated in the Bible in such a way as to leave no room for reasonable doubt in the mind of any earnest seeker after truth as to their meaning.

The question then arises, To what extent are we justified in hedging ourselves about with arbitrary rules which in their operation are intended to act as barriers to others of the Lord's people in the matter of service and whole-hearted fellowship?

In proposing a question of this kind we realize that it cannot be answered without due thought, because there are too many points that enter into the discussion; but if, as present conditions seem to indicate, most of us may sooner or later be required to decide this matter for ourselves, we should be able to take our stand in full assurance of faith. To this end let us consider some of the things that have a bearing upon the issue, and so prepare ourselves for a better understanding and guidance by the Lord's Holy Spirit.

Fundamental Truths

There are certain basic facts to which all true disciples of the Lord must agree, else they are not His disciples, and cannot be considered as brethren:

All must believe in God, the Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth,' and must acknowledge His right and authority over their lives and possessions.

All must believe in the Bible as being the true Word of God, and must accept its teachings as being the only authoritative standard of belief and practice -- the last resort in every argument.

All must accept Jesus, the Savior of mankind, as being their personal Redeemer from sin and its penalty, death; they must see in Him the only one able to give unto God a ransom for Adam and his race; and they must recognize that in the resurrection of Christ dwells their only hope for life in a like resurrection from the dead. . . All must have sufficient faith in God, in Christ, and in the Word of God, to cause them to make a full and unreserved consecration of themselves to do God's will and to follow in the footsteps of Christ Jesus their Lord.

All must realize their own fallen, sinful state, and must cooperate in the transformation of their own characters by seeking continually, through the infilling of God's Holy Spirit, to walk in accordance with the instructions given in His Word.

All must be loyal in their obedience to God's commands, and must continue faithful unto death.

Any true and enlightened child of God must assent whole-heartedly to these fundamental things of Christian belief and practice, and to the ramification of these as stated in plain and unmistakable language in the Scriptures.

In these things we may all see eye to eye; but when it comes to the interpretation of types and shadows, parables and dark sayings, figurative language and prophetic utterances, the Lord has left us room for the exercise of our sanctified reasoning powers, and so for differences of opinion. Manifestly, had God so desired, He could have made every statement of His Word so plain that it would not have been possible for differences of opinion to arise. He could have done this either by the way He worded the Scriptures, or by the illuminating power of His Holy Spirit. However,

He did not choose to do this. On the contrary, He has arranged the matter in such a way as to call upon our reasoning powers and force us to search (by comparing Scripture with Scripture) in order to gain an understanding of the details of His great Plan of Salvation.

God does not forcibly inject a knowledge of the structural and artistic beauties of His Plan of Salvation into our minds; we have to study in order to understand these things, just as we have to struggle in our fight against the world, the flesh, and the Adversary in order to be transformed into the character-likeness of our Lord. The course of a true Christian is not made plain and easy, but is often puzzling and hard to follow. Jesus said, "How narrow is the gate of life! how difficult that way leading thither!" and how few are they who find it." - Diaglott.

No Gain Without a Struggle

The Christian does not attain to the heavenly inheritance without a struggle. The butterfly that flits from flower to flower with such ease and grace, attained its development and beauty only because the larva stage of its existence had to struggle to break through the cocoon that enveloped it; and should any one, in mistaken kindness, (assist the larva to gain its freedom by breaking the cocoon, he would forever deprive it of the very thing that eventually enables it to fly. In like manner also God permits us to struggle to overcome the difficulties He sees fit to' leave surrounding us, for He knows that by the earnest endeavor to overcome these we will be made strong in character and in the will to do His will. Having predetermined that we should be free moral agents, God cannot force the issue in respect to our characters, and so is under the necessity of bringing about our development by requiring of us a willing and persistent effort to break through the cocoons of our natural tendencies and environment that eventually we may wing our flight to realms above.

Sectarianism in the struggle of the Church toward perfection of character is brought to our attention in the picture given us by the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian brethren where he speaks of wood, hay, and stubble in the building or superstructure we erect upon the foundation of our faith in Christ's sacrifice on our behalf.

In the first chapter, Paul chides them for their carnality and sectarianism; for some were claiming to be of Paul, some of Apollos, some of Cephas, and some of Christ; but Paul did not recognize any Paulite Christians. He denied having given any basis for such a thought. He declared that he preached nothing to them but Christ and Him crucified. Then in the third chapter he points out that their sectarian spirit shows them to be mere babes to whom he could feed only the milk of the Word. Then from the ninth verse on he says, "That as a master builder, he having laid the foundation of their faith in Christ and Him crucified," they were to build the superstructures; but he says, "Let every man take heed how he builds thereon." Paul, all through these three chapters is combating their sectarian spirit, and in this third chapter, warns them that such material entering into the construction of their building will cause its downfall.

"Individual Christian faith is a building, and as such must have both foundation and superstructure." The only foundation upon which to build, says Paul, is "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." This is the great rock foundation, the basis upon which faith may be firmly established and any man who builds thereon (whether or not he understands and can properly describe all the elements that go to make up that Rock) is a true Christian and will be saved, even though his superstructure may be such as to merit destruction. There may be room for argument as to what is meant by "gold, silver, precious stones wood, hay, stubble"; but whether these be hopes, doctrines or character qualifications which manifest themselves in right or wrong attitudes and treatment of brethren, the lesson is the same, and constitutes a warning to all of us even though we be building upon the Rock.

Unquestionably, doctrines, as "precious stones," have an important place in the erection of the superstructure which we build. We cannot believe the doctrines which Satan has injected into Christian beliefs all down through the Gospel Age and expect our faith structure to stand the shaking it will receive during this time of trouble; but precious stones are not the only element that should go into our superstructure. The gold of a God-like character-love-and the silver of heavenly aspirations-hope-must adorn that structure also. Dependence placed upon leaders or on hopes derived from any source except God and His Word is bound to, result disastrously to our

faith structure. Certainly no one could object to being a follower of Paul upon any ground except that he was not the source of truth and wisdom, and our dependence and authority must be founded upon that source rather than upon the instrument used to acquaint us with divine truth. Carnality and sectarianism are not elements with which to build an enduring structure, and if we let even the spirit of these take possession of us we will be the losers.

Factions, in dealing with differences of belief in doctrine or practice, most always arise through ignoring the Lord's spirit and methods; and such factions always tend to hinder the character development of those who take an active part therein. Satan is always on hand to take advantage of differences between brethren and divert doctrinal controversies, which of themselves would not affect character one way or another, into contentions and divisions that do affect the character.

Personal Knowledge

In the Scripture reading with which we prefaced these remarks, Peter intimates that the greater our knowledge concerning God, the more grace and peace we will have. What does he mean? Is he saying here that the more we know about the philosophy of the atonement and the details of the Plan of Salvation the more grace and peace we will have? There is a class of believers to whom such knowledge appeals and who may have their appreciation of God's wisdom increased thereby; but to other minds, the fact of the atonement and the evidence of God's love and mercy, as revealed in the gracious provision He has made for His children, are sufficient to acquaint them with God's character and to call forth their own love and appreciation in response. Such Christians may be compared to the man, who, though he understands only in a general way the working and operation of an automobile, derives as much pleasure and benefit from its use as does the mechanic who is familiar with every detail of its construction. We can not all have the type of mind that will enable us to be "master workmen" in the mechanical details, so to speak, of God's great Plan. Some have minds more adapted to thinking upon the spiritual qualities of character development, and no doubt are equally honored of the Lord in their ministry.

Both Rotherham and Weymouth render this passage of Scripture in such a way as to make it evident that what Peter is speaking of is a personal knowledge or experience with God. Rotherham's translation says, "**Favor unto you and peace** be multiplied, in the personal knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." This is a knowledge which we gain through attaining to a measure of Godlikeness in our own characters; for in the next verse, the Apostle continues the thought by saying, "Seeing that His divine power has given us all things that are needful for life and godliness, through our **knowledge of Him** who has appealed to us by His own glorious perfections." (Weymouth) The Apostle here gives the same thought which we find emphasized by our Lord in John 17:3: "This is life eternal, that they might **know Thee** the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." This is the knowledge, which, above all knowledge, is essential to us in our development as prospective heirs of glory, honor, and immortality. A true knowledge of God comes only through experiencing a measure of His glorious perfection of character in ourselves; and the more we reflect that character by being transformed into the image of Christ, the better we come to know God.

Comparative Values

In the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians Paul points to a number of things that we might possess and do, which of themselves are very desirable, but which, apart from love, have no value in making us acceptable unto God. The Apostle is not making light of faith or a comprehensive knowledge of salvation; nor of zeal manifested in the giving of one's time, possessions, and life in the service of God, but is simply calling to our attention the comparative worth of these and Godlike love.

"Love," says the Apostle (Weymouth), "is patient and kind. Love knows neither envy nor jealousy. Love is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited. She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize herself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs. She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth. She knows how to be silent. She is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance." Then the Apostle continues by declaring that present languages (modes of speech), present knowledge and present prophesying will come to an end because they are imperfect, and so the things of real value that remain are faith, hope, and love, and of these the greatest is love.

The foregoing remarks must not be interpreted in a way to make light of doctrinal matters, for it is not possible to read God's Word with an understanding mind and not realize that doctrines are vitally important to our spiritual welfare. Paul, in his letter to Timothy says, "Take heed to **thyself** and to the doctrine." Paul took delight in Timothy, his son in the faith, and gloried in his ability to serve the cause of Christ, but he cautioned him to be ever on the alert to see that his own life be exemplary and provocative of good in those to whom he ministered, and also that he go not astray in his teaching of doctrine.

Manifestly, some teachings are of far greater importance than others to the Lord's people in the making of their calling and election sure, and such call for a definite and unhesitating stand; but our attitude in those things which we glean from God's Word through the process of reason and deduction, should be one of tolerance.

All down through this Gospel Age there have been Christians who have made their calling and election sure without understanding clearly many of the things relative to the sin-offering, the philosophy of the atonement, and other matters which we today look upon as present truth. Evidently then, these things are not indispensable to one's standing or acceptance with the Father, and perhaps we would more truly manifest God's Spirit if we would show a more kindly tolerance of those who do not see eye to eye with us in things which, though to us they be present truth, are not indispensable to our character transformation.

Minor Features

There can be no question as to the blessings received from the study of types and shadows that have been more or less hidden in God's Word until the time when He saw fit to reveal them—largely through Brother Russell. Had these been essential to our salvation, however, they would have been stated in the same plain and unmistakable language that garbs those things that are essential, and would then constitute tests of sonship and fellowship; but that they are not was quite evident to Brother Russell, who under the heading, "Relationship to the Lord not necessarily dependent upon knowledge of every detail" says:

"We wish to suggest here that none should feel unnecessarily annoyed if he is not able to understand all the items of the chronology or of the Tabernacle Shadows, or other minor features. Our relationship to the Lord is not necessarily dependent upon our knowledge of every detail. We are to remember that many of us were God's people before we understood any of these things, before we understood the philosophy of the Divine Plan. Hence we are to be trustful of the Lord and wait for the remainder, as He may open it to us. And we are to remember that the supreme test is loyalty to the Lord. This was the test upon our Lord Jesus: would He be loyal to the Father? And this is the test upon us. Will we be loyal to the Lord? **Whoever** is thus loyal is an 'overcomer.' He will strive to be faithful under all conditions, and will trust even where he cannot trace the Lord's providences."- *W. T. Reprints, p .R4746.*

Brother Russell here calls the chronology and the Tabernacle Shadows "minor" features, things not to be considered as tests of one's standing with the Lord.

Teaching Qualifications Outlined

What qualifications then are we to require as a basis for our judgment of those worthy to serve us?

Paul answers this question for us in his admonition to Timothy respecting the appointing of elders; he says (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Weymouth translation): "A minister [elder] must be a man of irreproachable character, true to his own wife, temperate, sober-minded, well-behaved, hospitable to strangers, and with a gift for teaching; not a hard drinker nor given to blows; not selfish or quarrelsome or covetous; but ruling his own household wisely and well, with children kept under control with true dignity. (If a man does not know how to rule his own household, how shall he have the Church of God given into his care?) He ought not to be a new convert, for fear he should be blinded with pride and come under the same condemnation as the Devil. It is needful also that he bear a good character with people outside the Church, lest he fall into reproach or a snare of the Devil."

The Apostle places the emphasis here upon the character and behavior manifested in the Church, the family, and in the world, and then in addition thereto, he says they should have a "gift for teaching." This statement does not relate to a profound understanding of the doctrines, but to just what it says-"a gift" for teaching; the ability to impart the knowledge possessed; the ability to set forth what the Scriptures say.

In his instructions to Titus, Paul again outlines the qualifications of an elder, very much as he did to Timothy, but adds that he should hold "fast the faithful message which he has received, so that he may be well qualified both to encourage others with sound teaching and to reply successfully to opponents. For," says the Apostle, "there are many that spurn authority-idle, talkative, and deceitful persons, who, for the most part are adherents of the circumcision. You must stop the mouths of such men, for they overthrow the faith of whole families, teaching what they ought not, just for the sake of making money. One of their own number-a prophet who is a countryman of theirs,-has said, 'Cretans are always liars, dangerous animals, idle gluttons.' This testimony is true, therefore sternly denounce them, that they may be sound in the faith, and not give attention to Jewish legends and the maxims of men who turn their backs on the truth. To the pure everything is pure; but to the polluted and unbelieving nothing is pure, but on the contrary their very minds and consciences are polluted. They profess to know God; but in their actions they disown Him, and are detestable and disobedient men, and for any good work are utterly useless."

We have never known any one in the Truth, we are glad to say, who would fit this description given by the Apostle Paul: "Spurners of authority, idle, talkative and deceitful persons; teaching for the sake of money; always liars, dangerous animals, idle gluttons, polluted in mind and conscience." The early Church, having to contend with such characters in her midst as here described, had a very difficult problem to meet, and so needed the help that God gavel them through the Apostles and those whom the Apostles appointed as instructors and leaders.

The context of Paul's letter to Titus, including the portion above quoted, shows that the thing about which the Apostle was concerned was not mere differences of opinion respecting the interpretation of types, shadows, prophecies, etc., but rather that these opponents, adhering to the circumcision group, were blasting at the foundation principles of the Gospel of Christ. Those early Christians were called upon continually to withstand the opposition of Judaizing teachers who sought to take away the "grace of God" in Christ and leave in its stead the "requirements of the Law," thereby doing away with the very foundation principles of the Gospel of Christ; and the fact that their lives were so, obviously out of line with the character requirements of that Gospel was further proof of their unfitness as teachers. Paul says: "They profess to know God: but in their actions they disown Him, and are detestable and disobedient men, and for any good work are utterly useless." Such characters have no place in the Body of Christ and certainly should not be acting as elders or teachers to that Body. Therefore we see a good reason for the admonition to hold fast the faithful message which they had received that they might be qualified to encourage with sound teaching and to reply successfully to the opponents.

The gist of the matter then, as it seems to present itself through the various Scriptures set forth for our guidance, is that we should endeavor when choosing our elders or when inviting speakers and teachers to address us, to have such as are loyal to the Lord and to His Word of Truth—men whose daily lives in their association with the brethren and those outside, give evidence of having partaken of the Lord's spirit in that they manifest the fruit and graces of that spirit. As regards the fundamentals of the Faith, they should be well grounded and positive; but as regards those portions of Scripture that are couched in a manner to call for an interpretation by the reader or teacher in order to be understood, our attitude should be such as would convey a kindly tolerance, granting Christian liberty of thought even though we do not agree as, to the interpretation given. We should not have that narrow, sectarian attitude that denies a brother full fellowship; and opportunity for service when the differences under dispute do not jeopardize belief in the foundation principles of our faith.

Jesus told us how we might judge between false prophets or teachers and good teachers. He said, "By their fruits ye shall, know them." Without stopping to investigate, we might think that all fruit was good fruit, but not so: the nature or quality of fruit is determined by the character of the tree that bears it. Jesus said, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

There are just two masters: "the god of this world," and "our Lord Jesus Christ." If a teacher has the spirit of "the god of this world," it will be manifested in the evil fruit of that spirit in his own life and in the results of his labors; whereas, if he have the spirit of the Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ, it will be manifested in "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such," says the Apostle, "there is no law." When we find one who manifests these qualities, whether he agrees in every point of doctrine or not, we can know for a certainty that he is of God, for, says Jesus, "an evil tree **cannot** bring forth good fruit."

The Lord's people, until they imbibe a large measure of His spirit, tend toward dogmatism and intolerance, for they have very definite and positive views; consequently in "contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints" they are also apt to contend for beliefs which are either their own or some other man's interpretations. Naturally, being positive in their views, they are ready to defend them; but they should not forget that it is possible to be absolutely right in their interpretations and yet become ensnared by the Adversary through the wrong attitude they take in defending their views. There are subjects upon which, seemingly, it is difficult for all to see eye to eye. This may be due to the differences in our mental make-up, or in our education and emotional trend; but whatever the cause may be, it gives opportunity for the testing of our love one for another and for the exercise of tolerance.

One of our English brethren in writing of this matter recently, said that "In a class where there may be some who are known to hold different views, it is an easy matter to put them in the wrong automatically, so that they are ever conscious of this difference. It is a foregone conclusion that should they make any contribution to the meeting, it is bound to be out of harmony . . . or leading somewhere. The result eventually is that they are subdued into silence, or feel that their presence is a hindrance rather than a benefit and so quietly withdraw."

Brethren who attend a Class where something of this nature occurs are inclined to take sides in the matter, but in all probability, neither side is wholly to blame. And it is well to remember that such an unhappy outcome would not be possible if the love of Christ were ruling in the hearts and minds of all concerned, for then that which naturally tends toward trouble, separation, and heart-ache, would be turned into a real asset in character development.

In the Scripture citation at the beginning of this discussion, Peter speaks of being established in "present truth." This is a very familiar expression to most of the Lord's people, and when used by them has reference to the many teachings, which we believe to be truths, revealed to the saints in the last sixty-or seventy years. Peter, however, was not referring to these things when he made this statement, but rather to the Gospel Message-"the grace of God through faith in Christ" in contradistinction to the attempt to gain salvation by works under the Law. Peter says: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord."

In the early Church, the strife between Judaizing teachers and those who held fast to the Gospel message of grace was very keen. The Epistle to the Galatians was largely written to counteract such teachings and to keep the Galatian brethren from being brought under bondage again through the admixture of the Law. Paul says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel: which is not another; but there be some who trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ." One commentator has said, "The test of the Gospel is grace. If the message excludes grace, or mingles law with grace as the means either of justification or sanctification, or denies the fact or guilt of sin which alone gives grace its occasion and opportunity, it is 'another' Gospel, and the preaching of it is under the anathema of God." So, after arguing the matter, Paul says, "Brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

May it not be that there is a message here for us at the present time also? Satan has never let pass an opportunity to enslave the Lord's people. It has not been many years since the most of us escaped from the bondage of sectarianism; then slowly but surely, many were again brought under bondage through subservience to a dictator over an earthly organization; but by God's grace we were able to cast off that bondage and again stand free from all restrictions not authorized by

the Word of God. True liberty is the result of the Lord's Holy Spirit controlling our minds and hearts, for Paul says (2 Cor. 3:17), "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."

True Christian liberty consists in having that freedom of thought and action that is limited only by the rules and regulations that are laid down in the Word of God; but whenever we subject our thoughts and acts to the opinions of men, or rules other than those laid down in the Word, we lose our liberty.

The rules and regulations that pertain to the Church were given by our Lord for the good of all, and should be carefully heeded; but when we add to these either by Church ordinance, or custom, or even opinion, we usurp the sole prerogative of our Lord and Master. We need to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and have nothing to do with rules and regulations not authorized by the Word of God. Manmade rules always tend to sectarianism and divisions among brethren, and are a sign of carnality and a lack of spiritual growth and discernment. Let us remember too that our reasoning powers vary as do our temperaments, and that "now we see only in part," and so should not be intolerant or dogmatic about things upon which we do not have, in plain language, a definite "Thus saith the Lord."

Annual Report of the Pastoral Bible Institute

IN presenting a report of another year of our Institute's activity, we are happy to believe that the Lord's rich blessing has attended our combined efforts, and made fruitful in an encouraging measure that which we know would be but labor in vain without His approval. At this our Annual Meeting of 1939, which closes another year of our congenial and mutually beneficial association in the Lord's vineyard, we may with both gratitude and pleasure look back over some of the privileges granted to us and indulge the hope that all cooperating in this ministry through the small or great opportunities afforded to each, have been in the past year adding to their treasures laid up in heaven, particularly those treasures which accumulate to such as labor' on in the service of others until the day of toil is ended.

The past year reveals much of the Lord's interest in us and in the endeavor made to serve and please Him. Knowing that no flesh may glory in His sight, and remembering that at best we are "unprofitable servants," we feel no disposition to magnify the importance of what service we may have performed. Rather would we rejoice with the Apostle in contemplating the loving-kindness of our heavenly Father and His beloved Son in giving us such opportunities as we have enjoyed in His employ, and glory in our infirmities since His wisdom makes these a means of revealing His strength.

"Giving All Diligence"

Limited as to resources, and realizing as of supreme importance the encouraging of one another to "give all diligence" to the work of erecting the required superstructure of "gold, silver, and precious stones," we have given special attention to this branch of the ministry. True to the Bible portrayal of the time in which we live are the circumstances surrounding all the Lord's children today, and thus all recognize the urgent need for giving the utmost diligence to those all important virtues necessary to an abundant entrance into the presence of the Lord as overcomers. This is indeed an honored service-to have any part in assisting those who are faithfully seeking to so run

as to obtain the "sweet well done" of the Master. From the testimonies and various expressions of appreciation from many of our scattered brethren, we believe that the Lord has richly blessed our efforts on their behalf.

We have likewise endeavored to use every opportunity of encouraging any found ready to "lay . . . the foundation of . . . doctrines," and thus assist such to know "the way of the Lord more perfectly." In this also we have occasion to rejoice in the manifest favor and 'blessing of the Lord.. Such privileges have been fewer in recent years, but we have learned that out of what seems in our measure of things to be small, the Lord can, and often does, produce even greater and more lasting results. Our Lord Jesus lost no opportunity too break the 'bread 'of life to even one attentive listener, and many of His most fruitful labors were the result of dealing with individual hearers. Thus it is not discouraging to us now that because of limited means and other circumstances over which we have no control, we cannot engage in as extensive a work of this kind as we might delight to do. By tracts and other means we have tried to do what our hands found to do, and give thanks to God accordingly. The cards for introducing the Truth would be ordered more freely we believe if the friends realized the good results coming from their use. These are supplied for distribution by whatever method seems best. Then if the individual receiving the card is sufficiently interested to sign his name and return the card to us, literature is sent him, including a second card offering further literature. The return of this card we may take as a fair indication of unusual interest. About five per cent of these have been returned.

None of our activities, as we trust all understand, has been with the intention of drawing followers to any man or human institution, thus forming another sect; but merely that in coming closer to all who are the Lord's we might all together draw closer to Him, and so be in a position to be more blessed and more of a blessing. Efforts to serve the wider field by advertised meetings, tracts, cards, and other means, have as usual been a blessing to many thus served. We urge upon all a larger use of the tracts, etc., designed for those who have as yet no adequate knowledge of the divine plan of salvation; and for some who have been delivered from a more recent bondage, we have some very suitable special issues of the "Herald" which we can heartily recommend for use among these dear friends.

The Pilgrim Service

From the correspondence received, we would judge that the friends in general have been equally blessed with the ten brethren who have given of their time to the Pilgrim service. It is our desire that this fellowship might be of even greater benefit, and the friends are urged to feel free to accept it, regardless of the smallness of their number or their inability to assist with the expense involved in such a visit. This service is offered freely to the ones and the twos. Our announcement of willingness to provide for the entertainment of the Pilgrims where Classes are not so situated as to do so, has, we are happy to report, extended this service slightly further than formerly, but our hope is that there may yet be a much further extension.

In addition to the Pilgrim service our Institute has been privileged to carry on in the United States and Canada, it will be remembered that one of our brethren was absent from our Annual Meeting last year, making an extended Pilgrim tour through Great Britain. Some reports of this pilgrimage appeared in several issues of the "Herald," and from these reports it is known that much of the Lord's blessing attended this lengthy journey in other lands. The ties that bind together in the bonds of Christian love brethren on both sides of the Atlantic, we feel assured were materially strengthened by reason of this time of fellowship and service. And blest indeed is the bond that

binds us to one another, and to Him whose sacrifice constitutes the foundation of our wonderful unity and happiness. Similar evidences of the Lord's blessing on the recent western trip of the same brother were apparent, your prayers on his behalf and on behalf of those he served being abundantly answered.

Miles traveled	56,967
Meetings held	848
Attendance	10,091

Our Correspondence

Less personal, and less limited in its power, but giving us connection with the far distant corners of the world, is the correspondence department. Not all of our correspondents find time for more than a business note in connection with their sending of lists, subscriptions, or orders, but the greater depth of spirituality on the average in the letters received is very apparent; if any portion of the credit for this growth is due to some phase of our activity, as the writers often indicate, we consider it a cause for great joy and encouragement. From the beginning of our work in 1918, it has been a blessing to keep in touch through correspondence with the friends, their development, their trials, and their faithfulness in making use of the means the Lord has placed at their disposal for Bible study, for fellowship, and for witnessing to the glory of the Father thus revealed to them. It was only to be expected that in connection with all of this there would be disappointments, such as the discovering of some who are allowing things which they confess to be of minor importance to interfere with those things which are Scripturally essential to our preparation for the eternal inheritance. Among all we hear from, the proportion of such cases is smaller than we might have anticipated; and then we are glad to hope that many of these may be merely stumblings, and that the correspondence of the coming year may tell of the revival of some who for a time have been drawn aside to the will-o-the-wisps of human ideals and earthly hopes.

Number of letters received	3,347
Number of letters sent out	5,424

Other Forms of Service

This opportunity is taken to thank our brethren who have cooperated in the service by sending us lists of addresses to which we have sent three months' trial subscriptions to the "Herald." Conditions indicate that there are many opportunities at this time, for this service -- many brethren who are seeking the "old paths." We would urge all the friends to be awake to their privileges and responsibilities in assisting these. This form of service, especially in the last few months, has borne most encouraging fruitage. Nothing more helpful can be found for these brethren than the First Volume of "Studies in the Scriptures." Of our convenient pocket edition of this Volume, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," we still have on hand about 900 copies. Considerable interest has also been shown in the set of Revelation Volumes published by our Institute. There are still over a thousand copies of the first volume of this set in stock. Equally interesting to these brethren is the volume, "Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah," of which we also have a similar quantity. The advertising of public meetings, using the old familiar topics, has brought good results in getting in touch with brethren of our former association.

Giving all diligence to make our calling and election sure, let us not look to past attainments for our encouragement, but to the evidence of the Lord's interest in that past, and above all, to the present for every least indication, of His will regarding it, as well as for His blessing on whatever He shall guide us to undertake. Knowing that "the blessing of the Lord maketh rich," let us now enter upon the richest year of our experience, having turned from all human sounds to listen only for the tender accents of His guiding voice.

The Annual Meeting

In accordance with the provisions of our charter, a meeting of the members and other interested brethren was held June 3 in the offices of the Institute-the twenty-first of our annual gatherings.

Following the devotional service a letter was read from Brother S. D. Bennett expressing regret at being unable to attend the meeting, owing to the serious illness of his wife. A chairman and a secretary for the meeting were elected, after which minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports next followed, both of which were accepted. These appear elsewhere in this issue, with the Auditor's Statement, which was also read and approved by the members.

After the reading of the list of new members, the election of the new Board, the business for which the meeting was primarily called, followed. A testimony and praise service occupied the time during the absence of the tellers for the counting of the ballots, after which the following brethren were announced as elected: S. D. Bennett, M. D., J., J. Blackburn, H. A. Friese, J. C. Jordan, P. L. Read, C. E. Stiles, and P. E. Thomson.

A night letter was authorized by the members to be sent to Brother Bennett, expressing to him and Mrs. Bennett our sympathy and the assurance of our prayers.

Praise and prayer closed a meeting in which the Lord's spirit prevailed throughout.

Illness and other causes preventing the presence of a quorum of the new Board, the brethren at present serving as Officers, Editors, and Pilgrims are therefore continued until a meeting of the new Board is possible. Officers: S. D. Bennett, M. D., chairman; C. E. Stiles, vice-chairman; P. E. Thomson, secretary; P. L. Read, treasurer; H. E. Hollister, assistant treasurer. Editorial Committee: S. D. Bennett, M. D., H. E. Hollister, J. T. Read, P. L. Read, P. E. Thomson. Full time Pilgrims: J. J. Black burn, H. A. Friese, P. E. Thomson.

Financial Statement

Income:

Contributions	\$4,145.29	
Subscriptions	1,179.30	
Books and Mottoes	430.05	
Interest on Securities	30.00	
Legacies	499.49	
Rentals	657.00	
		<hr/>
		\$6,941.13

Expenses:

Printing and Mailing Herald	\$1,292.59	
Free Tracts	133.16	
Cost of books and mottoes sold	376.75	
Pilgrim Expense	968.35	
Pilgrim Salaries	1,200.00	
Office Salaries	820.00	
Other Expense	62.60	
Office Expense	242.09	
Interest on mortgage	350.00	
Maintenance of real estate	554.51	
		<hr/>
		\$6,000.05
Excess income over Expense		\$ 941.08

Statement of Auditors

The undersigned auditors have examined the books of account of the Pastoral Bible Institute and have found them correct and in good order.

Respectfully submitted,

GEORGE W. JEFFREY
LOUIS NEWMAN
WALTER HUNNABLE

The Brooklyn Convention

"The annual convention of Bible students held June 3 and 4 was attended as usual by brethren within a radius of several hundred miles. The opening address, delivered by one of the local brethren, in terms of love extended to all present a warm welcome to the convocation, and expressed the hope that the gathering would be a means of edification and of rejoicing to the hearts of the friends.

"The first speaker used the subject, 'The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon.' In interesting manner he told the story of Israel's subjection to the Midianites and how the angel of the Lord came to Gideon and said, 'The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor.' Gideon replied, 'If God is with us, why are we thus oppressed. Show me a sign of God's approval.' Then the angel touched Gideon's sacrifice and fire came out of the rock and consumed it. 'Thus does God give assurance to His people that He is with them even when the circumstances of life seem against them. The Lord reduced that army of Gideon. He took a small number--only three hundred men, with trumpets, lamps, and pitchers to win a victory over a mighty host! Even so does the Lord today lead His people -- few though they be -- to battle and to the final and glorious triumph of their faith.

"On Sunday morning a praise service was followed by a discourse on 'Break Thou the Bread of Life.' The value of the written Word, as it reveals the Living Word, was emphasized: 'Unless the truth makes Christ the one great reality in our lives, we have failed to receive it aright. The food upon which we feed determines our degree of health, both in the natural and the spiritual realms. The most Scriptural theology we can hold will do not give us life, for only Christ can do that.'

"A helpful discourse on 'The School of Christ' followed:

"Ours is the greatest of all schools,' the speaker said. 'Here we learn about arithmetic, music, law, medicine, astronomy, botany, etc. The very first thing we learn is how to read the Word of God aright and thus to extract the elements of real nourishment from the printed page. After we have engaged in subtraction -- taking the world out of our lives -- then God enjoins addition, and gives us the greatest of all things to add, such as y faith, fortitude, knowledge, etc. Words of encouragement and exhortation were also given to the four candidates for immersion; this service, which was beautiful and impressive, being held immediately after.

"Following the noon luncheon a praise and testimony meeting was held which was wholeheartedly participated in by the brethren--no time being lost. The review of 'Faith's Triumph,' which followed, set forth the great tests placed upon the members of the Church of Christ during the Gospel Age, when they are called to go forth, not knowing whither they go.

"Next came a discourse on 'Walking with Christ,' from the text Col. 2:6-8: 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.' The value of letting Christ take the lead and of following Him, the importance of faith as an element that keeps us in the right pathway, the necessity for building *up* ourselves in the truth so that we may be able to stand in this evil day was emphasized, as also the advisability of our feasting on the words of the Lord rather than on those of man.

"The subject of 'God's Jewels' was listened to with much enjoyment: 'Each jewel in the High Priest's breastplate had its position and each jewel had a name engraved on it. The engraving of the name points out that our characters are what we really are, for the word character signifies an engraving. The names used were those of the twelve tribes of Israel. Each one had its own meaning. Thus there are different types of Christians according to the different kinds of natural dispositions.'

"The theme song of the convention was that beautiful hymn, the first stanza of which is,

"Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.'

"With the singing of 'God be with you till we meet again,' a very enjoyable and edifying convention was brought to a close."

"Many Infallible Proofs"

No. 4 -- and last

A short series of meditations, both devotional and doctrinal, on "Jesus and the Resurrection."

"Changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." -- 1 Cor. 15:51-52

IF WE were attempting an exhaustive consideration of the Apostle's argument as presented in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, it would require more than a "short" series of meditations for its accomplishment. Our purpose, however, will best be served if, omitting some parenthetical observations he introduces, we follow closely the main theme, and make this the last meditation of this series.

The Apostle has established first the resurrection of our Lord, and then the general principle of a resurrection and its applicability to all mankind, because the redemption accomplished by Jesus was a ransom for all! -- and not for a chosen few. Let us now follow him in his discussion of the "first resurrection"; that resurrection in which the Church -the Church at Corinth, the whole Church everywhere-is especially interested. His words, found in verses 42-44, describe, as clearly as it is possible for us to understand things so far beyond our plane of existence, the grandeurs and perfections of being which will be ours when we shall have experienced this great change of the first resurrection. We shall no longer be weak and imperfect, with dying tendencies and animal bodies, but shall be incorruptible, powerful, and have spiritual bodies. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." - 1 John 3:2.

"Flesh and Blood Cannot Inherit the Kingdom of God"

What He now is like, "it doth not yet appear" to our finite minds. However, we know that He is no longer a human being, for as a human being He gave Himself a ransom for our race. Indeed, it was for this very purpose that He became a man. (1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 10:4, 5; Heb. 2:9; 1 Cor.

15:21, 22.) He is now highly exalted (Phil. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:27), the express image of the Father's person. (Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15.) No longer is He to be known "after the flesh," even by those who once knew Him so. (2 Cor. 5:16.) Put to death in flesh He was raised in spirit, -- a life giving spirit-being. (1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 15:45.) And we, the Church, are to be like Him! What a glorious hope is thus set before us! No wonder the Apostle John declares: "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." - 1 John 3:3.

In the 50th verse, where the Apostle declares that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God," we are not to suppose, as some have done, that while "flesh and blood" cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, "flesh and bones" can. We are to recognize that the Apostle, in the use of these words "flesh and blood," signifies human nature, just as our Lord did when He said to Peter on the latter's confession of his belief that Jesus was the Messiah, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee." (Matt. 16:17.) Our Lord did not mean to say that His Messiahship had been revealed to Peter by "flesh and bones." **His** evident meaning was that this revelation had come to Peter directly from the heavenly Father, without the *instrumentality* of any human being. So, also, with the Apostle Paul in the passage before us. His declaration, properly understood, is that human nature cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.

This is in full accord with his other statements and the statements of the other Apostles that we must become new creatures in Christ Jesus, partakers of the divine nature, if we would be sharers with our Lord in the coming Kingdom, and its great and glorious work. This is in agreement also with our Lord's words to Nicodemus, when He declared Except a man be born again, [begotten to a new nature and born in the resurrection], he cannot enter the Kingdom of God, and cannot even see it. (John 3:3, 5.) Earthly beings of human nature, "flesh and blood," can see earthly things, but as no man hath seen God at any time (John 1:18), likewise no man can see the glorified Son of God, and for similar reasons, none will be able to see, with the natural eye, the glorified Church, for all these in their resurrection change will be spirit beings, and like their Lord, the express image of the Father's person. We must keep in mind the fact that the Church is entirely separate and distinct from the world, and that in many particulars their hopes are to be differentiated from those of the world.

"We Shall not All Sleep"

The Apostle next proceeds to note a difficulty which might arise in the minds of his readers. Those members of the Church who have died will be raised incorruptible, immortal, in the end of the Gospel Age. That much his readers may realize. But how will it be with any who may chance to be still in the flesh at the time of the second presence of the Lord, and the setting up of His Kingdom, and His awakening of His sleeping brethren? Will these living ones pass over into the Kingdom with bodies of flesh and blood?

This mystery the Apostle undertakes to solve. "Behold," says he, "I show you a mystery," or, as Weymouth translates the passage, "I reveal to you a truth hitherto kept secret: **we shall not all sleep.**"-Ver. 51.

Note the expression carefully. He does not say that we shall not all die, but that we shall not all sleep. Death comes in a moment; sleep, on the contrary, occupies a period of time. When, therefore, the Apostle says that we shall not all sleep, he is to be understood as saying that we shall not all remain in the condition of unconsciousness that is styled in the Scriptures "sleep." "But," he goes on to say, "we shall all be changed." It will be as impossible for the human nature,

the "flesh and blood," of those living at the close of the Gospel Age to participate in the spiritual Kingdom which Christ will then establish as it will be impossible for the "flesh and blood" of any of the brethren of the past to do so. How, then, will these get rid of their "flesh and blood," their human nature? We answer: The Scriptures are most explicit on this point. None need err in the matter. All who will be partakers with Christ in this, **His** resurrection (the First Resurrection), must be sharers with Him in **His** death. As He Himself expressed it: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." - Rev. 2:10; 20:5, 6; Phil. 3:10, 11; Rom. 6:5, 8.

Changed in a Moment

The change from corruptible to incorruptible, from mortal to immortal, from weakness to power, from ignominy to glory, from human nature to divine nature, in the case of these last members, will be so sudden as to occupy no appreciable space of time, and so the Apostle illustrates it by saying that it will be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the instant of their dying will be followed the next instant by their change.

Again, the thought of some, that this resurrection change has come to each individual at the moment of dying, all down through the Gospel Age, is contradicted by the Apostle. For, after having said that "we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," he goes on to tell us when that is to be. It is to be "at the last trump" "when the seventh trump shall sound." Then it is that the dead, that is to say, these special dead, the dead who are under discussion, the dead brethren, the dead in Christ, shall be raised incorruptible. Then it is that we, that is, those of the Christ's members who will be living, shall be changed.

The last trump, or the seventh trump, just alluded to, like the previous six trumpets, are all symbolic, as students of the Book of Revelation are aware, and represent seven great periods of time, and their events. It is sufficient here to say that we find ourselves today in the midst of the very events which mark the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The increase of knowledge, the angry nations, taken in connection with time prophecies, establishes this as a fact. Its fulfillment extends through a period of 1,000 years. Its events mark and coincide with all the various features of the Millennial reign of Christ.

Death Swallowed up in Victory

After this change of the Church has been completed, after this first, or chief, resurrection has been accomplished, then, the Apostle goes on to tell us, the prophecy written in Isaiah, (Isa. 25:8), will meet fulfilment: "Then shall he brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." - 1 Cor. 15:54.

Here again the Apostle's statement is generally misunderstood. Most readers get the impression that he means the victory over death and the grave is already accomplished. Others, a little nearer to the truth, infer that the victory will be fully accomplished in the change of the Church, the Body of Christ, in the first resurrection. However, neither of these views meets the scope of the statement. On the contrary, the first resurrection, the change of the Church, will be but the beginning of the great victory which Christ is to achieve over death and the grave. This will be merely the bringing forth of the first-fruits, as St. James declares: "A. kind of first-fruits of His creatures." The force, then, of the Apostle's statement is seen to be that then, at the first resurrection, this prophecy of Isaiah, of victory over death, will **begin** to have its fulfillment. It

will require all of the Millennium to accomplish victory over death, and Christ and the glorified Church will be the victors, as it is written: "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. 15:25, 26.) To accomplish this complete victory over death and the grave will be the very object of the establishment of the Kingdom, and will require a thousand years, as it is written again, respecting the reign of those who have part in the first resurrection: "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." - Rev. 20:4.

O Death, Where is Thy Sting?

Glancing down the corridors of time, and taking his place at the close of the Millennium, seeing the grand culmination, the Apostle takes up the words of another Prophet, Hosea, and exultingly exclaims: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (Hosea 13:14.) His thought here is that death has been stinging our race, blighting it for six thousand years, and sending it ignominiously into the tomb, but that God, who justly condemned us as a race, has looked down upon us in compassion, and beholding our impotence, has provided a Savior, even Jesus, our Redeemer, and that His Kingdom, with which the Church is graciously permitted to be associated, shall destroy, at one and the same time, death and the grave, completely delivering from their power all who will obey the requirements of that Kingdom. While the sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law, yet, under the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, the sins of the past will be forgiven because of the atonement accomplished; and the perfect law of God, having been met by the Mediator, will be applied to the ransomed race only in such proportions as they can receive it -- in proportion to their knowledge and ability to obey. Thus the Mediator of the New Covenant will ultimately bring off conquerors all who will obey Him.

Thanks be to God

With such a glorious vista unfolding before his prophetic mind, when men will be actually lifted up out of sin and imperfection, - yea out of even death itself, small wonder that his argument ends in a note of praise and gratitude: "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." True, it will not be until the close of the Millennium that this vision will be fully realized. But the Apostle does not feel like waiting until then before voicing his song of thanksgiving. Nor will we, if our hearts are in tune with his. While we have not yet actually triumphed over death and the grave, this victory is reckoned as ours already, by faith; for by faith the consecrated have "passed from death unto life." (John 5:24.) The word "giveth" is in the present tense and means that He giveth us, the Church, now by faith the victory over death. Our victory over death is a gift of God, won through Christ; and though yet enjoyed only in foretaste, it is sure. With appropriate solemnity the Apostle names the great Victor in full -- our Lord Jesus Christ -- and with this shout of triumphant gratitude, the splendid argument closes.

The Practical Conclusion

And now what are the practical results which, to St. Paul's mind, should follow in the case of those who are convinced that "his" Gospel is true; who are assured that this life does not end all; but that, in God's plan and purpose, there is held out the hope of endless life

Knowing St. Paul as we do, we have no doubt at all but that he will draw a sober and practical conclusion; for it is characteristic of him that to whatever height he rises on the rising sequences of his logic, however wide the sweep of his impassioned rhetoric, he invariably comes back with gathered force to the simple duties of the Christian life. As we would say today, he was always a man who, though his head was in the clouds, kept his feet firm on the ground. And therefore we need feel no surprise at finding him descend from his rapturous song of victory over death and the grave, to so sober a conclusion as an exhortation to faithful and stedfast labor in the Lord.

From him we should have expected a sober and practical conclusion, but his conclusion is not quite what even those might have expected who are familiar with his habit of thought. The resurrection of our race as guaranteed by the resurrection of Christ; -- our victory over death as assured by Christ's victory, has been his leading theme. And when we remember how novel, how strange, his theme was to the people of his time, with what a shock of surprise it struck athwart the hopes and fears in which they had been bred, we might have expected that instead of drawing from it an incentive to stedfast labor in the Lord, he would rather have dwelt on its power to comfort and sustain men in prospect of death. And indeed he does thus conclude the earlier and briefer argument on the resurrection which he had addressed to the Church at Thessalonica. After having taught them how the dead would rise, and the living be changed, when the Lord should return, he adds: "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." - 1 Thess. 4:18.

Fervent in Spirit, Serving the Lord

The reason for this different conclusion is obviously "because the need of his readers was different. The Thessalonians were sorrowing without hope for brethren in Christ who had fallen asleep. They held that only those who were alive and remained to the coming of the Lord would behold and share His glory. They needed comfort, therefore, and St. Paul met their need. But the Corinthians were not mourning hopelessly over them that slept. They were busy with a multitude of speculations on the meaning, the possibility, the manner of the resurrection. They were expending on these doubtful and unprofitable disputations time and energy which should have been given to the activities of the Christian life. They needed, when once their doubts had been met, to be recalled from the barren arena of speculation to the fruitful fields of stedfast and patient service. And therefore, instead of saying to them, as to the Thessalonians, "Brethren, be comforted for your dead; Christ will bring them with Him," St. Paul meets their need by saying: "Brethren, live out your life; be active, be stedfast, be immovable, abound in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye now know-now, after this lengthy presentation of the subject I have given you, even if you knew it not before -- that labor in the Lord is not, and cannot be, in vain."-Ver. 58.

The Glory of the Lord

This, the more appropriate, is also the loftier lesson of the two, and therefore fitly closes the loftier argument. For to live an active, faithful life is more and better than to have comfort in our death; it is also the way to secure, not comfort only, but triumph in our death. What we think or fear our future state will be, when we are dying, will not greatly affect our future, though it may trouble and oppress our heart at the moment; but how we use our life-this will shape our future for us; for our future life, on whatever plane of existence it may be, will be only an extension, along endless and widening lines, of the life we now live in the flesh. The more we abound in faithful, joyous, zealous service for the Lord here, the fitter we grow for service on an ampler scale on the other side. The more steadfast and immovable we are in the work of the Lord so much the more fully shall we share the glory of the Lord-when we enter into the fuller, the more abundant, life; for **His** glory, as we well know, is the glory of service. - John 13:15; Matt. 20:26-28.

"Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

A Friend in Need - A Friend Indeed

"A friend loveth at all times." - Proverbs 17:17; 1 Samuel 20.

HISTORY records noble examples of friendship; 'but supreme amongst these is the story of our lesson-the friendship, the love, of Jonathan, son of Saul and prospective heir of the throne of Israel, for David, his rival in the hearts of the people and in the divine program. The purity and unselfishness of his friendship demonstrates to us a nobility possessed by some in those days, which we might not have suspected and which is quite in conflict with the Evolution theory.

The loving spirit of Jonathan stands out all the more in contrast with the jealous spirit of his father, King Saul. Apparently his first meeting with David was after the latter's victory over Goliath. Instead of thinking of David as a rival, who should be crushed, the noble Jonathan took off his own princely robe and gave it to him, together with his sword and his famous bow.

Rev. Alex. Whyte remarks, "Jonathan was the eldest son of Saul; and he was thus the heir-apparent to the throne of Israel. Handsome and high-mettled, full of nerve and full of heart, Jonathan was the pride of the army and the darling of the common people. His comrades, for his beauty of person and swiftness of foot, were wont to call him The Gazelle. But for his father's great and disastrous transgressions, Jonathan might soon have been the second king of Israel, second in succession to Saul, but second to no king that ever sat on a throne in those great qualities of mind, heart and character that give stability to a throne and add luster to a crown."

Well was it written by one of the ancients, "Life hath no blessing like an earnest friend"; and a poet has written:

"Life offers no joy like a friend;
Fulfillment and prophecy blend
In the throb of a heart with our own
A heart where we know and are known."

"A Friend in Need, a Friend Indeed"

Jonathan's friendship, love, was not of the effervescent kind. It was the genuine article. He did not love merely in word, but in deed and in truth -- not merely when his father favored his friend and when the public acclaimed him and when he would thus have favor- with others; but he loved him just the same when the king became the enemy of his friend and sought his life. Indeed, it may be said that no friendship could 'be surely counted upon until after it has been tried. The friendship which will not endure trial, testing, the friendship which will make no sacrifices is not the kind to be modeled after.

Jonathan had love of the kind the Lord admonishes His followers to have-the love which in honor prefers one another. While other loves have been great, this one doubtless stands preeminent above earthly love, especially because it was founded on a religious basis. It was because David loved the Lord, and sought to be guided by His will as that will was manifest at that time, that he would wait-that he conducted himself with wisdom, as the record declares. And it was because Jonathan discerned this spirit of wisdom, because he realized David was guided by the spirit of righteousness, that he loved David.

Indeed, we may be sure that in proportion as we understand the Bible and receive the spirit of the truth, in that same proportion we shall be able to appreciate and to copy and to exemplify the best there is of principle-whether of friendship, or of duty to a monarch, of duty to our family relationship, or of duty toward our God. There are many influences operating toward a spirit of selfishness, avarice, jealousy, while the influences making for true friendship, true love, all the best qualities of heart and head, are from the Lord.

We have already noted in a previous lesson how Jonathan. acted as peacemaker between his father, the king, and David. Today's lesson brings to our attention another occasion on which Jonathan acted the part of a true friend. David realized that his life was in danger and mentioned his fears to Jonathan. The latter was at a loss to believe that his father would break his word, yet was impressed by David's attitude. The feast of the new moon was at hand; and David was expected to sit at the royal table, King Saul at the head, Prince Jonathan at the right hand, the captain of the host at the left, and David occupying the fourth place, opposite the king. In harmony with an arrangement made between' the friends, Jonathan was to ascertain his father's intentions definitely and to communicate these to David.

On the first day of the feast the king said nothing, although Jonathan, to attract attention to the matter and thus, to draw out his father, chose a convenient time for taking David's seat. Finally the king asked for the "son of Jesse," as though he hated the very name "David." Jonathan replied that David had gone' to keep the feast at Bethlehem by his permission.

The king had apparently been foiled in his intention to kill David at this time and vented his wrath upon his son, whom really he greatly loved. He addressed him as an unruly son, unworthy of his mother, thus implying that he ignored him as his own son. In his anger he threw a javelin at his

son, probably not with the intention of striking him, but merely of venting his ferocious jealousy. Jonathan's speech in return shows that he was thinking less of what he himself was risking for his friend and more in respect to the injustice being done that friend. "So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month; for he was grieved for David, because Saul had done him shame."

It is a beautiful friendship which in stress forgets self and thinks only of the interests of the friend. As though in contrast with all the human loves and friendships, we read of Jesus, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Nevertheless, in the case of Jesus, it meant more than any earthly love or friendship; for "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The Apostle declares that the Lord thus set an example to all Christians, that they should "lay down their lives for the brethren," be ready to die the one for the other. This is the Heavenly love, the divine friendship, of which the love of Jonathan may be taken as a sample, next to the example of our Lord and the Apostles.

"Is It Not Beyond Thee?"

The next morning David, having returned from his home, was to get Jonathan's judgment respecting the king's sentiments. The agreed upon signal was that Jonathan with his bow and arrows should go into the field near to a great rock; and in connection with his archery would call out, "Is it not beyond thee? Make haste!" if the message was that David should flee. And so it was done. But the two friends could not think of parting, perhaps forever, without having personal contact. Jonathan went over to the rock behind which David hid. The two embraced, after the manner of the East, kissing each other Goodbye-true lovers, with a manly, noble love.

Here it was that Jonathan indicated his faith in God's providence in respect to David, and asked him to make a' covenant with him that whatever should occur he would deal graciously with him and his family, saying, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, forever. And he arose and departed; and Jonathan returned to the city."

Bible history shows us that David never forgot the obligation he thus undertook, to be a friend to the family of Saul. The custom of the East at that time was that a new dynasty coming into power should utterly destroy all the males of the dynasty which was being overturned. But this was not so in David's case.

It was on the occasion of Jonathan's death with his father on the field of battle shortly after, in conflict with the Philistines, that David expressed the beautiful words

"O Jonathan, on thy high places thou wast slain!
I am distressed for thee, my Jonathan, my brother!
Pleasant hast thou been to me exceedingly!
Wonderful was thy love to me, passing the love of women !"

We trust that none can read this story without being influenced favorably toward friendship, to be a truer, a nobler, a more faithful friend than otherwise; but especially should Christians get a blessing from this story of Jonathan's love, leading on as it does to the love of Christ and to the injunction that they should be copies of God's dear Son; and that their friendship should be loyal, true, enduring, especially one for the other, as the Apostle exhorts, "Doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially unto the household of faith." - *Watch Tower, 1915.*