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The Shaking World--What "Does It Portend?"

"Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth." - Haggai 2:6.

ONE OF the old familiar hymns of the Church contains the following lines --

"Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me."

Change and decay have existed throughout the experience of mankind, and so, generally speaking, have no other significance than that, as a race, we are under the sentence of death and must suffer the consequences. But the changes now taking place are extraordinary and have a much deeper significance than ever before. In all the vicissitudes that have troubled man in former times, the world as a whole, with the exception of the period of the flood, has not been shaken; only portions of it have been made to tremble. But now all the world is being shaken, and the foundations of the present order of things are being moved. Even the standards of living and conduct are being questioned, and the things that seemed right and proper a generation ago are now considered "old foggy" and out of date.

There is no country or people so secluded that it can ignore the plight of the world as a whole. There is no nation that is not having to readjust itself to the changes taking place, and there is not one but that is fearful of the outcome. No well informed person can doubt these facts, for the evidence is manifest on every side. Thrones and kingdoms have passed away in the shaking, and the dictatorships which have taken their place give no evidence of permanency for they also are being shaken.

What Does This Shaking Portend?

The attitude of nations and mankind in general toward governmental changes is not one of submission, for they do not welcome them; but rather they have fear in their hearts and dread the events of tomorrow. In this fact we have one of the evidences foretold by our Lord that would mark the end of "this present evil world." The record of this will be found in Luke 21:25, 26. It reads:

"Upon the earth, distress of nations with perplexity; men's hearts [shall be] failing them for fear, and for locking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the **powers of** the heavens shall be shaken."

The expression "powers of the heavens" does not refer to the throne of God, for the apostle tells us that the things that are shaken will pass away (Heb. 12:26, 27); God's throne is eternal. By "powers of the heavens" our Lord had reference to the civil and religious ruling powers of earth as contrasted to the word "world," which refers to the social order of earth. And in this we have another one of the evidences of our day pointing to the overthrow of all present earthly ruling powers preparator to God's Kingdom. Certainly the civil and religious ruling powers are being terribly shaken.

The ruling powers of earth can see the handwriting on the wall, and this leads them to enter into federations, unions, and agreements for mutual aid in order to avert the changes they see coming. Such an attitude, in effect, resolves itself into opposition to the Lord. Some nations openly avow such opposition. God foreknowing the attitude that she rulers would take at this time, has this to say (Psa. 2:1-5)

"Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the **Lord and against His Anointed**, saying, Let us break Their bands asunder, and cast away Their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. He shall speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure."

Further along in this Psalm the Lord shows why this endeavor of the rulers and mighty ones to maintain their kingdoms in opposition to the changes now taking place, constitutes opposition to Himself: it is because the time has come for the establishment of His Kingdom in power to rule. He says:

"I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt **break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel**. Be wise now' therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

The kings and judges of the earth have not heeded this admonition of the Lord and so must suffer the destruction of their empires.

From the time of Abraham down to a hundred years ago there was very little change in conditions of the earth; each succeeding generation followed, to a large extent, the manner of life of their fathers before them, and there were comparatively few inventions. Almost everything was done by hand, and certain families would be famed for their skill along certain lines through a number of generations. Modes of travel and communication did not change much; Abraham, yea even Noah, could have adapted himself to the conditions then existing with very little change in his manner of life.

But how is it now? In the last hundred years science and invention have brought about changes so rapidly that it is almost impossible to keep up with the improvements in any industrial line.

Things become obsolete long before they are worn out; equipment that is the last word in efficiency today becomes waste iron and rubbish in a few short years. Construction that would have taken years to complete a few generations ago, is now finished in a few weeks time; and furthermore, this work which would have required hundreds of men is now accomplished mostly by machinery.

Over-production did not worry the nations much in our grandfathers' time, for man-power did nearly all the work; but now it becomes necessary to reduce days and hours of labor and to seek out new and further luxuries for mankind to enjoy in order to provide employment. But even so, in this the most favored country on earth, millions are unable to earn a living through lack of employment. Our civilization has increased its desires and fancied needs far beyond the standards of a few years ago; so much so, that the poor man, judged by our standards, today enjoys conveniences and luxuries far beyond those possessed by the rich ' a century ago. But do these things bring happiness? No! general discontent has grown apace, along with the increase of knowledge and the enjoyment of conveniences of which our fathers never dreamed.

Many attribute all this to man's genius; they think that we are far more capable and brainy than were our forefathers; but the Word of God does not endorse this view. On the contrary, it shows that the reason for this increase of knowledge and invention, which has resulted in multiplied blessings, is that we are living in the day of the Lord's preparation for the establishment of His Kingdom.

The increase of knowledge, due principally to the art of printing and the liberty from toil and slavery brought about by science and invention, is largely responsible for the troubles that threaten the kingdoms of earth; for man has not grown in righteousness in proportion to his growth in knowledge; and so is unable to properly use the blessings that it has brought.

The Lord, through the Prophet Daniel, has called our attention to the fact that the great increase of knowledge and invention would mark the end of this present evil order. He says, "**In the time of the end**, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Can we deny the increase of knowledge or the running to and fro? Mark you, it is in the time of the end that the Lord declares that these things should occur, not at some previous time.

From other prophecies it has been determined that "the time of the end" would have its beginning about the start of the nineteenth century, and would continue until the establishment of God's Kingdom in power. The most rapid means of transportation possible to men at the beginning of this period was on horseback; whereas now, trains, automobiles, air-ships, the telephone, telegraph, and wireless have brought cities, nations, and continents into such close touch with one another that all nations can know within a few minutes or seconds what is taking place in any other nation. Thus, in accordance with recorded prophecy, the nations have been assembled or gathered together. - Zeph. 3:8, 9.

Sir Isaac Newton is reported to have stated, on the basis of the prophecy of Daniel above quoted, that in his opinion, men would some day travel at the rate of fifty miles an hour. Voltaire, the great infidel philosopher, who died about fifty years after Newton, ridiculed this statement and declared that belief in the Bible had made a fool of the discoverer of the law of gravitation. But the events of our day have proved Sir Isaac's faith to have been well founded. Free schools were started as Sunday-schools about the year 1784, and thus knowledge began to increase mightily with the beginning of the "time of the end."

The prophet Nahum was also given a vision of the "running to and fro" in the time of the end, but he called it "the day of His [the Lord's] preparation." The description of his vision would suggest our city streets at night. He says, "The chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of His preparation. . . . They shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways; they shall seem [look] like torches, they shall run like the lightnings." (Nahum 2:3, 4.) Divine inspiration alone would account for such a remarkable prophecy in the time of Nahum.

Reverting again to Daniel, chapter twelve, we note two other signs or links in the chain of evidence that marks our day as being "the time of the end." One of these is stated thus: "There shall be a time of trouble such as never was before." Our Lord, in quoting this prophecy, adds, "and never will be again." We do not want to misread this prophecy: it does not say that there has never been trouble before, for the world has had trouble ever since Adam sinned and brought condemnation upon his children; what it does say is that there will be a time of trouble **such** as never was before.

These words indicate that either the nature of the trouble, or else the degree of the trouble, would be so pronounced as to set it apart as being unusual. It must be manifest to every one that the trouble which started in 1914 and has continued in one form or another ever since, has been unusual, both as respects its nature and degree. The great increase of knowledge, the wonders of science and invention, and the gathering of the nations has brought about a condition similar to family life, so that what affects one affects all. These conditions have produced a trouble such as never was and never could have been before because the conditions that make it possible never existed before.

Another point of difference is the wide range or extent of the trouble: instead of being confined to one or two nations, it is world-wide and increasingly recurrent. In the language of Scripture, it has come upon the world "as travail upon a woman with child." The aptness of this scripture in describing the trouble-pangs that have come upon the world at this time is seen when we remember that earth is undergoing the pangs necessary to the birth of the new order, the Kingdom of God on earth.

Then in verse ten Daniel gives us the fourth sign. He says, "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but **the wise shall understand.**" What will they understand? Does Daniel mean that they will understand that there is great trouble upon the earth? This could not be the thought, because the wicked as well as the wise are cognizant of this fact. The answer to this question is seen only when we take into consideration the class to whom this word "wise" is applied.

Who the wise are is not hard to determine, for the Scriptures everywhere associate wisdom with the understanding of God and His Word, an understanding which results in righteous conduct. We read in 1 Corinthians 3:19 that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," for man cannot know God through worldly wisdom. The wise to whom Daniel has reference are not the wise according to the standards of this world, but the "wise toward God": those who have been made wise by giving heed to the instructions of His Word of truth.

It is manifest that the fulfillment of three of the signs given by Daniel can be clearly seen by **all** men. No man can deny the increase of knowledge, nor the running to and fro in the earth; and neither can men fail to note that the trouble which has come over the whole earth is "such as **never was before,**" for all nations are being shaken, and thrones and kingdoms are passing away; both Church and State are breaking under the earthquake that is shaking the whole social and religious order; **but the import of these signs is hidden from all except the wise.** Daniel says

that only the wise will understand. All men see these foretold events as facts, but only the enlightened child of God sees -in them the certain and indisputable evidence that the rightful King of earth, the Lord Jesus Christ, has begun to exercise His power and authority, and as a result, the nations are being "broken in pieces as a potter's vessel."

God's Word indicates that were the nations inclined to seek meekness and righteousness, the transfer of governmental authority to the rightful King of earth might be accomplished without all this destruction, but knowing that they would not be so inclined, He foretells how they would band together and set themselves against any change which they considered inimical to their power and authority. But their' opposition which, in its effect, is against the Lord and His Anointed, will not avail: all that their efforts will accomplish will be to bring greater trouble upon themselves and those over whom they hold sway.

Nations claiming to operate under divine rule and authority might be excused for their blindness with regard to the meaning of present day, events if the prophecies outlining these were meager and obscure; but there can be no such excuse, for definite warning of the destruction that is now upon the nations was given by God through all His holy prophets of the Old and New Testaments; and Christendom, 'having had this Word and the blessings of light it gives, is more culpable than heathen nations and cannot hope to escape the righteous judgments.

As natural Israel of old, the professed people of God, came into remembrance at the time of our Lord's first advent, to be punished for their sins; so Christendom, God's professed people of the present time, now comes into remembrance to be punished for her sins; and, as prophesied, this occurs at the time of the second advent of our Lord, whose power over the nations is first manifested in the great trouble which "breaks the nations in pieces as 'a potter's vessel."

Israel of old failed to heed God's oft repeated admonitions; and so Jesus, in great sorrow for their hardness of heart, exclaimed, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

We all know how absolute and utter was the destruction that came upon the Jewish nation; not that her people were all slain, but that **as a nation** she ceased to exist. The kingdoms of this world, and Christendom in particular, are facing the same kind of judgment. There were those in Israel who were righteous, who sought to stem the tide of evil, but could not. Likewise, there are many in Christendom who "sigh and who cry for the abominations that are done in her," but this will not save her.

In Zephaniah, chapter three, the Lord calls attention to the state of Christendom: how she has refused to obey His voice and has rejected His corrections, she has taken the name of the Lord but has not trusted or obeyed Him; and He cites the fact that she has had examples of what might be expected, in the destruction of nations cut off on account of their wickedness, yet she has not taken heed. And so in verse eight He says

"Therefore, wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them all Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger: for **all the earth shall be devoured** with the fire of **My jealousy.**"

Again, through the Prophet Haggai, chapter two, verse six, (Hag. 2:6) the Lord says:

"Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and **I will shake** all nations."

As already explained, such terms as "heavens" and "earth" and "sea" and "dry land" are used in prophecy to represent elements of this present evil world; they do not have reference to the literal heavens and earth and sea and dry land, but to ruling powers, organized society, the restless masses of mankind, and established or fixed organizations. And it is not just a part of this world that will be shaken, but all nations. The Apostle Paul, in Hebrews 12:26-29, quotes this prophecy of Haggai and calling attention to the words "yet once more," says: "The word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken [heaven, earth, sea, dry land], as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear; for our **God is a consuming fire.**"

Here Paul uses the same figure of speech as that quoted from Zephaniah 3:8, "a consuming fire," and our Lord used the same word, "fire," when foretelling the destruction of natural Israel. These scriptures prove conclusively that the shaking of the nations which we see taking place the world over, portends the destruction of the entire present arrangement here upon earth. Is it any wonder then that "men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth"?

Blessings to Follow

If prophecy ended here, if it told only of the destruction of the present evil order, and if we had no hope of life beyond this for the people of earth, the outlook would be altogether disheartening, but the Lord has not abandoned the people of earth to any such fate. The destruction of man-made governments and organizations does not include destruction of the people but is a necessary act on God's part in order that His blessings may flow unto the people.

Any one familiar with the prophecies that have been cited will have noticed that in several of them we did not finish the verse or quotation. This was done, first, to make clear just what the shaking of the nations portends, and, second, in order to cheer our hearts with the glorious message of hope which the Lord sets forth in His Word as being the panacea for all earth's ailments.

Man has been so in the habit of trying to work out his own salvation in respect to earthly government that most people would surmise that we had some scheme of our own to offer; but not so. There is an old saying that "man's extremity is God's opportunity"; in this case the saying is true. In man's present sinful state, he is wholly incapable of establishing a righteous government or of bringing about a state of peace and happiness; and, according to Bible prophecy, the trouble which started back in 1914, will eventuate in his being brought to a realization of this fact, and so prepare him to welcome intervention by the Lord.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven." In calling attention to the portent of the trouble that is upon the nations, viz., the overthrow of the present evil order, it has been pointed out that such a destruction is necessary to the establishment of God's Kingdom upon earth. Daniel's prophecy (2:44) that the breaking in pieces ("like a potter's vessel"-Psa. 2:9; Rev. 2:27) of the present kingdoms of earth would be

accomplished by God's Kingdom when set up in power, reads: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall **never** be destroyed: and the Kingdom shall not be **left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms**, and it shall stand forever." This is in full accord with the statement of Paul (1 Cor. 15:25) that "Christ must reign until He hath put down all rule and all authority."

Our Lord's first advent was for the purpose of providing redemption, but His second advent is for the purpose of restoring all who will become obedient under His reign, that is, restoring them to the blessings of life and happiness lost through the disobedience of Adam. This is brought to our attention by the Apostle Peter in Acts 3:19-21. The event of our Lord's ascension into the glory of the Father was fresh in the minds of the disciples, and they were troubled in spirit because He had left earth; but the Holy Spirit had come upon them just as was promised, and under this inspiration Peter assures them that the Lord would come again and bring about the fulfillment of the blessings promised. He says, "And He [God] will send Jesus Christ [again], which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive [retain] until the times of the **restoration of all** things spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Here Peter definitely connects the promised blessings of restoration with the second advent of our Lord, when He comes to reign. The pages of this journal would not provide room to cite all the scriptures that tell of the blessings that will come from the reign of Christ. The apostle declares (2 Tim. 4:1) that "He will judge both the quick and the dead at His appearing and **His Kingdom**"; and Jesus Himself said, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28, 29.) David also prophesied, saying, "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the people righteously." (Psa. 96:10.) And Isaiah declares that the people are waiting for His judgments: "For **when** the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." - Isa. 26:8, 9.

In Zephaniah 3:8, 9, following the declaration by the Lord that **He** would gather the nations and consume them with the fire of His jealousy, He says, "For then [when the nations have been destroyed] will I turn to the people a pure language [teaching], that they may **all** call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent."

Manifestly, the consuming of the nations in the fire of God's jealousy does not mean the destruction of the people in those nations, for they will be on hand to receive instruction that will cause them all to call upon the name of the Lord and serve Him.

During the interim between the first and second advents of our Lord, called the Gospel Age, there has been a class selected from among the nations of earth designated as the Church, the bride, the sons of God, etc., which has been fitted and prepared for the position of joint-heirs with Him in the work of the Kingdom. Paul shows (Gal. 3:8, 16, 29) that these constitute the seed of Abraham, through whom God, by His oath and word of promise, has assured us He will bless all the families of the earth. This promise will be fulfilled when these sons of God are manifested with Christ in glory (Col. 3:4), for Paul declares that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. - Rom. 8:16, 19, 22.

As in the scripture citation from Zephaniah 3:8, 9 we 'found that the Lord had promised blessings to follow the destruction of the nations, so also in Haggai 2:6, 7, we quoted only that part which told of the shaking, but the prophecy continues by declaring that "the desire of all nations shall come." The desire of all nations is life, health, peace, happiness, and freedom from want and worry. During the shaking, the outlook will be disheartening; but soon the Lord will speak peace

to the troubled waves of humanity, and then they will experience the blessings of a righteous government which will have the power and wisdom to uplift and restore not only man but all that was lost to man, for Jesus "came to seek and to save that which was lost. This restoration under Kingdom rule is set forth in Micah 4:1-4. Here we have a beautiful summing up of the points we have endeavored to set forth in this article

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

"And many nations shall come, and say, Come., and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

"And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nations shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

"But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." -*Contributed*.

STILL THERE

The headlines burned like fire across my eyes:
Tale upon tale of war and rivalry,
Of lands that smolder in calamity,

Of cities built on greed and wise men's lives.
Life is a game to cheat and brutalize,
I thought; when these words held me suddenly:
"At eight tonight," I read, "the tide is high."
And farther on: "At nine the moon will rise"!

- *Rachel L. Field*.

"Marrow and Fatness"

"Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee. Thus will I bless Thee while I live; I will lift up my hands in Thy name." - Psa. 63:3, 4.

NOT FROM the chambers of a king's palace, echoing with the festivities dear to the oriental heart, nor from the peace of the shepherd's hut, came these words of thanksgiving for the heavenly bounties of "marrow and fatness," but from the wilderness of Judea. David was hiding there from his envious son Absalom. Not liveried servants nor sainted Israelites served these bounties, but Shobi, "of the children of Ammon, . . . brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him." (2 Sam. 17:27-29.) Through bitter experience he can truthfully say, "Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee." Such praise is always "acceptable sacrifice." The pastoral calm of the shepherd Psalms was developed on the star-lit plains of Judea, but David must be driven to the wilderness to learn to pen the convincing simplicity, the inspiring majesty of such acclamations as this.

The expression here does not indicate a lack of appreciation for life, but it does indicate that life on any plane at any time is to be appreciated only because it is made worth while by God's dispensing of His "loving-kindness." Only under His direction does life lead to, "fulness of joy." "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

It is natural' that at this Thanksgiving season we should realize more clearly than ever our reasons for- thanksgiving as we compare our lot with that of those over whose lives the smoke-screen of war hangs heavy at all times. Indeed we are shamed by the messages of faith and rejoicing that continually come to us from them: food rationed, but "having food and raiment and therewith content"; knowing rest neither day nor night, but enjoying without cessation the "rule" of the "peace of God which riseth above every mind" (Rotherham); their loved ones every day in jeopardy, but their. God trusted to "work all things after the counsel of His own will." We who for a little season, at least, enjoy an outward peace they no longer know, should more seriously than ever inquire, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me?" One's ingenuity fails him as he endeavors to think of some one thing or a great aggregation of things that might be done to show a proper appreciation for the "marrow and fatness" furnished our souls.. Man's answer would always be, "I will do," or "I will give." David by inspiration gives the true answer, "I will take"; not, however, setting aside the thought of the "I will give," and "I will do," for both of these are also in the "cup" "I will take."

The Cup of Experience

At every festal board the cup has been present through all ages as a cup of blessing, and always a symbol of blessings shared with others. Thus the apostle calls it the "cup of blessing which we bless, the communion [participation] of the blood of Christ." Mingled with this thought is also that of the vow of death, a vow sealed by the baptismal rite. In Jesus' time it was not customary to condemn criminals of state to such punishment as the ordinary man would undergo. If the sentence upon such a one was death, his would not be the death of the ordinary criminal. Instead, lie would be placed in a well appointed room alone; and, apparently for his added comfort, there

was conveniently at hand a -cup of wine. He well knew, however, that in that cup lurked death. He was not to escape the penalty, but to him was given the privilege of deciding the moment of his death, provided he would put forth his hand and "take the cup" before a certain hour. Whether it was a few moments or a few hours before the falling of darkness, he must "take the cup" in that time or go forth to die the death of a common criminal. How apt is the figure that has been chosen for us! Within the death chamber we may not know the exact moment at which the sun of opportunity will sink, but that need cause no fear, for we have but to put forth our hand promptly and "take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord," saying: "I will pay my vows unto the Lord **now** in the presence of all His people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. O Lord, truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid [covenant]; Thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord." - Psa. 116:13-19.

The Sacrifice of the Lips

The 'joyful giving of one's life, as represented in the taking of the cup in which lurks death, will not lessen but increase- one's faithfulness in "offering up the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, which make confession to His name." (Heb. 13:15.) "Ring out your joy, ye righteous, in Jehovah; to the upright seemly is praise." (Psa. 33:1, Rotherham.) This is not a sentiment merely for the testimony meeting but for the daily life. "If I remember Thee upon my bed and meditate on Thee in the night watches [also thinking of Thee throughout the day as well], my mouth shall praise Thee [as there is opportunity] with joyful lips."

"If I do not remember Thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth" -- is a sentiment perhaps more enlightening in regard to what has happened to most of us at times on prayer meeting night. It is hard to imagine that one who has spent seven days and nights meditating on God's goodness, could come to the mid-week meeting with a heart not overflowing with gratitude for the bounties received. A life fully devoted to praise and service, nevertheless, will be but an artificial thing, a counterfeit of the real, if it does not spring from a genuine longing such as the Psalmist graphically depicts: "I will stretch forth my hands unto Thee; my soul thirsteth after Thee as a thirsty land." And again, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, U God." (Psa. 143:6; 42:1.) We who do not know the desert have not seen its baked earth soon turned to rich pasture land and the dry beds turned to musical streams fringed with oleander, in grateful response to the fall of tropical torrents-, hence we cannot appreciate the Psalmist's symbology until we have known the reality of the overflowing measure of God's spirit. When God gives of His spirit, it is always with the purpose of a filling. Can one imagine the mighty ocean leaving even one of the curves of its shore untouched? or a soul whose sluices have been thrown open to His love feebly expressing its praise in thought or word or deed?

Israel, a Type

Jesus, when He took the cup the Father had poured for Him (not to force it on Him but to leave it where He could take it) undoubtedly had in mind not only the serpent in the wilderness but the many details of the difficulties it had been necessary for Israel to experience to give them even a chance of becoming a "nation of priests." Israel, too, were promised memories that will profit by

all -these things. "Thou shalt- remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee." If they had been humbled at the time, they would have been found praising God with all their powers, and He would not have had to have sought elsewhere for a seed for Abraham. All through the Gospel Age the experiences of the Church have been in accord with this type; but these words seem even more vividly to portray the testings of recent years! "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee to humble thee and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments or no." Praise God for all these humbling tests, and for those who have learned humility in them!

To one who doubts the wisdom of God's proving or the justice of His findings, it would seem hard. hearted to be found praising Him in hymns of thanksgiving as a thousand fall- at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand. But not one need fall who has sincerely taken the cup of salvation, calling upon the name of the Lord. Whether his hands are stretched forth in prayer or in the spread., ing of the Gospel, every thought and act will be guided by a spirit of thanksgiving to the righteous Judge. "Thus will I bless Thee while I live: I will lift up my hands **in Thy name.**" He who is "bringing to light the hidden things of darkness, making manifest the counsels of men's hearts," knows what is in the heart, of each one and knows the "one here, the one there" that can be taught humility. Though the cloud hang heavy over the Church's way; though the pillar of fire enter into their dark journey, shouts of joy, hymns of praise, should cheer every foot of their pilgrimage. Poor, weak, tottering faith has often doubted his God, has often thought that He has forgotten us. "Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord bath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they **may** forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." (Isa. 49:14-16.) Let us not fear our clouds, even though they should become "seven times" heavier than ever they have been before. Let us press close to them and reach the hand of faith into them and find God there. Let us place our hand in His and make the great discovery-our name graven there. Here is unbounded assurance that "no harm shall befall thee, "strengthened with **all might according to His glorious power.**" We praise Him, not for our weakness but for His power, not for our failures but for His victory, not for our pit but for His Rock, not for the faithlessness that causes every fall but for the faithfulness of the God who brings to light every hidden thing of darkness, so that in that Kingdom there shall be nothing to hurt nor offend. "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and he my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a **new song** in my mouth -[my song- shall 'be of Jesus], even praise unto our God. [The old song of self shall be heard no more.] Many shall see it, and shall fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed 'is that man that maketh the Lord his trust." - Psa. 40:1-4.

"O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless His name; show forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, Ills wonders among all peoples. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols [nothings: Rotherham], but the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before Him: strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. Give: unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto to the Lord the glory of His name: bring an offering, and come into His courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." - Psa. 96:1-9.

Fellowship and Eldership

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God." - Acts 20:28.

WITH THE world passing through the long predicted "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation," and with many of our brethren engulfed therein, it is not without considerable diffidence that we venture to occupy space in this journal for a discussion of such elementary matters as those reflected in the caption of this article. There are, however, sufficient indications in our correspondence and personal visits with the brethren to make it clear that the topic will prove timely to many, and we trust its consideration here, at this time, will not be without some measure of profit to all our readers.

Two questions will be considered in the following order:

- (1) The basis of our fellowship as brethren, and
- (2) The qualifications and ministry of elders.

Under the second heading we hope to offer a few remarks with reference to the three doctrines now being made tests of eldership by many of the ecclesias, namely:

- (1) The Covenants
- (2) The Sin-offering, and
- (3) Our Lord's Second Presence.

We had hoped to consider also a third main subject, namely, "The True Principle of Christian Liberty," but space will not permit, so it must wait for another occasion.

As we take up the consideration of these questions, it is hardly necessary to remind ourselves of the fact that the spirit in which we attempt their solution is all-important. Not only must we see to it that no root of bitterness or feeling of ill will towards any one is permitted to dwell in our hearts, but, in addition to a large measure of Christian love for each other, and a disposition to be "easy-entreated" along any proper, that is to say, scriptural lines, we should each have a very definite conviction of our own insufficiency and be seeking from above that wisdom which in ourselves we lack, but which to all men, and therefore to us, God has promised to give liberally, without chiding us for being so needy and without impoverishing Himself one iota.

Fellowship With the Brethren

First, then, let us consider the basis of our fellowship as brethren. This is very simply told. It consists in a belief in the existence of the one only true God, and in a firm conviction that Christ Jesus is His Son, and that, after laying down His life as a ransom for us, He was raised from the dead by the Father's power. It consists further of a confession that this risen Jesus has become our Lord; that is to say, He has been entreated by us each individually, and has graciously consented to exercise lordship of our life; and finally, it consists in an outward manner of life which makes it plain that these beliefs and confessions are not false but are the sincere sentiment of our hearts. To quote the language of the inspired apostle: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord [that is to say, as thy Lord, no matter who else rejects Him], and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9, 10.) This is our own glad confession of faith, and all who share it we rejoice to recognize as brethren; and it is an honor and satisfaction to us to have the assurance that they, on their part, hold a reciprocal sentiment of brotherly interest in us, and that, regardless of whatever other affiliations, if any, which one or another of us may have, we are nevertheless able to meet, able to worship, to praise, to pray, to fellowship **whole-heartedly** with each other on this common ground of consecration to our heavenly Father and His dear Son, remembering that One is our Master, even Christ, and that all we are brethren.

All Elders Are Not Teachers

We pass, now, to our second main question, which takes up and discusses the qualifications and ministry of elders.

From time to time we meet with friends who seem to be under the impression that all elders should possess the qualifications of a teacher. The Scriptures, however, do not support this view. Neither did Brother Russell. The Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 4:11, 12, after telling us that when our Lord ascended on high, He led captivity captive and received gifts for men, goes on to enumerate these gifts. "He," that is, our Lord, "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and some teachers."

Commenting on this passage, Brother Russell wrote: "All who attend to the spiritual ministries of the truth are properly described by the term 'elders,' whether otherwise they are doing the service of an apostle, or prophet [that is to say, public speaker], or evangelist, or pastor, or teacher. To fill any of these positions of service properly, one must be recognized as an elder in the Church." -S. S. 6 : F243, F244.

Again, on this same matter, he wrote: "As elders of the Church are all overseers, . . . so also each, according to his talent and ability, might serve the flock, one as an evangelist, whose qualifications fitted him and those conditions permitted him to go about preaching the truth to beginners. . . another serving the flock as a pastor (or shepherd) because of special qualifications of a social kind, enabling him to look after the interests of the Lord's people personally, individually,-visiting them at their homes," etc. " 'Prophets' [that is, public speakers] also had their special qualifications for service."

Again, in another place he wrote: "Others of the elders, perhaps not so apt to teach [note the expression carefully], may be just in their element in prayer and testimony meetings, which should be a feature amongst the various gatherings of the Lord's people. He who finds himself possessed of a good talent of exhorting should exercise that talent rather than let it lie dormant while endeavoring to exercise a talent which he does not possess in any special degree. The apostle says, 'He that exhorteth, let him wait on exhortation,' that is, let him give his ability and service in that direction; 'him that teacheth' [that is, who has a talent for exposition, for making the truth plain], 'let him give attention to teaching.' "

While we are on this point, it maybe well to distinguish "clearness in the truth" from "aptness to teach." One might be very clear in the truth, himself, and yet possess little or no ability to impart his knowledge to others. Another, not nearly so well informed, might be very apt to teach to others the little he does know.

An Elder's Primary Qualifications

The primary qualifications of an elder, which Brother Russell calls an elder's "real" qualifications (S. S. 6:247), are: "that he be sound on the basic doctrines of the Gospel, namely, the atonement, that is, redemption through the precious blood of Christ, and full consecration to Him, His message, His brethren, His service."

We can easily see why these are his real qualifications when we stop to consider the grand objective which the elder should have always in mind, in his ministry, whether it be a ministry of exhorting, public speaking, teaching, or some other form of service. And what is that grand objective? Again we quote our late, beloved Pastor in his advice to elders (Reprints, R4346). To **them** he says, "Remember that the principal thing is love in all; and, while not neglecting doctrines, give special heed to the development of the Lord's spirit amongst the various members of His body, that they may become 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.'"

Here, in this quotation, we see that Brother Russell did not overlook doctrines, 'but gave first place to the principal thing, namely, love.

An Elder Who is a Teacher

In another passage (Reprints, R4503) he considers the special qualifications of an elder who is a teacher. "Of course," says Brother Russell, "a teacher should be apt to teach; he should have the natural faculty or ability to make plain matters which he understands. Still more important is it that if he have the ability to teach, he shall be clear in the truth, and so the truth, not error, may be set forth with clearness. Humility and piety should be considered **paramount and primary** qualifications for eldership. However able a teacher, **however** doctrinally clear, no one is properly fitted for this position except he have humility and piety, and unless his words, **and deeds** have manifested his love for the brethren. For, as the Scriptures set forth, these are qualities of great value in God's sight." (Bold face is ours.)

Is an Agreement With Pastor Russell's Views on "The Covenants," the "Sin-offering," and the "Second Presence" an Essential Qualification for Eldership?

It may be, however, that some of our readers are disposed to say: "We would agree very well with what has been said in this discussion, insofar as fellowshipping another as a brother is concerned, but when it comes to electing him as an elder, should we not expect him to measure up to certain doctrinal standards, over and above, the basic, fundamental doctrines of faith and consecration? There are three particular doctrines in the teachings of Brother Russell to which, it seems to us, a brother should subscribe before he should be considered qualified, doctrinally, to serve as an elder, namely, (1) the Covenants, (2) the Sin-offering, (3) the Presence of the Lord. In attaching this importance to these three doctrines we are supported by Brother Russell himself, are we not, both in his teaching and practice?"

That question, we think, is a proper one, so let us give it some consideration here. In the first place, we would ask our questioners: "Are you quite sure that Brother Russell approved this position in his teaching?" To our mind the contrary is true. Let us read his exact words from R5968. He is discussing this very matter of why elders should be carefully chosen. After speaking of the Apostle Paul's zeal in proclaiming the good tidings, he says:

"This should be the spirit [that is to say, this zealous spirit of St. Paul should be the spirit] not only of the pilgrims, of the elders of the Church of Christ, but the spirit of every member of it for in a large sense each one of us is privileged to be a minister, or servant, in writing the message of God's grace in the hearts of others. But let us not forget that we shall not know how to write in the hearts of others what we have not already had written in our own hearts. Hence the propriety of great caution in the choosing of elders -- to find those who already have the writing of the Lord in their hearts, and who therefore will be competent assistants, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for the writing of the Lord's character-likeness in the hearts of the younger brethren. And what is the message, what is the epistle, that is written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit through various agencies? Is it the knowledge of Chronology? Is it the unraveling of types and shadows? Is it the cracking of hard theological nuts in respect to differently understood passages of Scripture? Is it the knowledge of the history of the Jews, the history of the world, the history of the Church? Is it the understanding and appreciation of the different covenants, past, present, and to come? No, it is none of these. All of these subjects have more or less of value, and are more or less used of the Lord in connection with this writing that is to be done in the hearts of His people. But writing the epistle of Christ is different--the writing, the tracing of the character likeness of the Master in the hearts of His people His meekness, His gentleness, His patience, His long-suffering, His brotherly-kindness, His love, His joy, His peace. . . With these characteristics of the Master deeply engraved upon our hearts, we shall be granted an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.' - 2 Pet. 1:8,11."

Now in this passage Brother Russell specifically mentions the Covenants, past, present, and future. He mentions also types and shadows, in which, of course, would be included his understanding of the Sin-offering. He does not specifically refer to the Second Presence of Christ, but he does refer to Chronology, which is one of the chief helps we have in determining the due time for our Lord to be present. He thus, in effect, mentions all three of these much-discussed doctrines. He has not forgotten them or overlooked them but holds them up to our view for the deliberate purpose of contrasting them with the all-important writing of the Lord's character likeness in our hearts. He says the message that is to be written in our hearts which will produce this character-likeness is "none of these." Moreover, this was his word at the end of his ministry, after all the bitter, controversial years had passed. It appears as his last word on the subject, just before he died, in the October 1, 1916 issue of the journal he edited for so long.

What Was Brother Russell's Practice?

But the question is still only half answered. As stated it read: "In attaching this importance to these three doctrines we are supported by Brother Russell himself, are we not, both in his teaching and practice?"

We think we have shown that this position is not supported by Brother Russell in his **teachings**. But some one may still have difficulty in harmonizing this with Brother Russell's **practice**. The question may present itself: "Is it not a fact that during those controversial years many did actually separate from Brother Russell on account of those very doctrines, especially that of the Sin offering?"

Again we must answer: No, that is not true. There was, of course, a separation at that time. That is a matter of history. And many have supposed that it was because of doctrinal differences. But, dear brethren, where the spirit of Christ, the spirit of 'brotherly love, prevails, people do not separate for any reason. Doctrinal differences, except on the fundamental items of our faith, have never in themselves brought about a division, and they did not do so then. Bitterness of spirit, manifested by some, but not by all, on 'both sides of that controversy, brought about the separation which' took place. There was no need for any one to separate from Brother Russell on account of a different understanding of the Sin-offering type. Nor was any pilgrim brother retired from the ministry on that account. Not only so, but many who stayed with Brother Russell erred as much on the subject as those who left him. Note his words, in R5285, where, in discussing this point, he says: "In our judgment many err in attaching too much value to the Church's sacrifice; whereas other dear brethren err, we think, in that they do not see any value in the Church's sacrifice, nor that she is permitted a share in the Master's sacrifice at all. To us this seems like the swing of the pendulum from one extreme to the other; whereas our view lies in the center, as we have stated the matter in our several publications. If, after fully considering these matters, a class finds that it cannot agree, and would make better progress as two classes, we would concur in that conclusion as a wise one, as much as we would deplore the necessity of a' division. Such a separation would not necessarily alienate either class from the Lord's people, nor from the Society, because both acknowledge Jesus as their Redeemer, and both acknowledge that His blood is primarily efficacious."

Let us apply these words to any given case. Here is a class, we will say, which, much as Brother Russell deplors it, separates on these issues. What course does Brother Russell pursue? Does he say: "I'll serve the one, and not the other"? Does he say: "I'll find out which of them seems to be closest to my view, and serve it, forsaking the other"? No, indeed! He says their separation from each other will not necessarily separate either from the Society; which, since he controlled all of the Society's property and activities, was his modest way of speaking of himself. If one or both classes became alienated from him, is it not clear that, whatever the reasons given, the true cause was something else and not these doctrinal matters themselves?

We trust it has been made clear to any who may have had some question in their minds on the subject, that these three doctrines were not suggested by Brother Russell as tests of eldership in the ecclesias, nor were they considered by him as proper tests to apply to a brother who was a candidate for the pilgrim ministry.

So far as the writer of this article is concerned, he has yet to see -or hear anything which appeals to him to be better supported than the exposition of these subjects given by Brother Russell. But

this writer does not think they should 'be made tests of fellowship or of eldership. Nor do the other members of our Editorial Committee, or of our Board of Directors, or the brethren engaged in our pilgrim ministry. Nor did Brother Russell, as we understand his writings. Brother Russell also continued a brother in the pilgrim service who had a decidedly different view from his own on the Anti-Christ-see Reprints, R5865-R5867. Similarly with the question of "That Servant." It is our belief that 'brethren who are elders, as well as brethren who are not, should be free to believe whatever interpretation of the Matthew 24th passage appeals to them as being best supported. Some of the brethren associated in our ministry believe the reference is to Brother Russell, while others do not. No test is made, however, on the subject, and this seems to us the better way.

The Word of God Alone Must Decide Every Matter

In presenting the foregoing discussion for your consideration, we have quoted repeatedly and at length from the writings of our late, beloved Pastor. We have felt quite safe in doing this because our readers, for the most part, constitute a group of people whom we have every reason to believe hold him and his ministry in the same precious memory as we do ourselves. But neither writer nor readers should be satisfied with anything less than a "Thus saith the Lord" on all questions relating to our faith and practice. Nor, we are sure, would Brother Russell approve anything less. We dare not close this discussion, therefore, without reminding both you and ourselves that the qualifications of an elder are quite simply set forth in the Scriptures, in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-11, and 1 Peter 5:1-3, and that any brother, or organization of brethren, of any ecclesia, that lays down qualifications different from or additional to-those given in these inspired writings, is adding to or taking from God's Word. The infallible Word of God, the holy Scriptures, and these alone, are to constitute the test that must decide every matter for the Christian who is free indeed. Any set- of doctrines imposed on a church or imposed by a church, no matter how apparently well-meant, actually take away from an appeal to Scripture, becoming themselves the only permissible appeal. If there should be error in such a creed, that error will have to be maintained as carefully as the truth which may be in it. If there be defect in the creed, the Scriptures cannot be allowed to even supplement it. They are thus completely displaced from their rightful supremacy over men.

If we look back over history,-from the great Reformation onward, we will discover that every revival of a study of God's Word, every earnest effort at evangelizing, every effort put forth to draw and unite true Christians in the bonds of brotherly love, has, when persevered in, had the effect of breaking down the 'barriers of sectarianism-and of liberating the people of God; but alas, history and experience show that the imitation class, the tare element, is always found wherever there are true wheat, and out of such bold moves for Christian liberty and freedom there almost invariably develops a new sect, which becomes dominated 'by the same partisan spirit of bondage, resulting again in the taking away of personal liberties in Christ. These reform movements have originated, generally, outside denominationalism. The most important movement of this kind since the great Reformation, has occurred in this present, the Laodicean, period under the leadership of our late Pastor Russell, but like all the other movements of the past, it ended in sectarianism; and having accomplished its purpose, the usual testings and siftings have come. They are present today in still more subtle forms. (He that readeth, let him understand.) These tests are designed of the Lord, at least in one particular, to manifest those who possess the Philadelphian spirit of brotherly love, and loyalty to Christ and His Word.

To sum up what we have said on the qualifications and ministry of elders, then, we would say:

(1) Brethren maybe-satisfactory elders who are not teachers.

(2) Clearness, in the truth is one thing, but agreement with any particular view of a scriptural proposition which may be differently understood is quite another.

(3) Clearness in the truth is one thing; aptness to teach is another.

(4) Both these latter qualifications are important, but are not the most important.

(5) The chief question to be determined concerning a brother who is a nominee for elder and who is sound on the basic doctrines of faith and consecration is: Is his character and disposition such that the effect of his ministry will be to develop in our hearts a greater character-likeness to the Master? Will his ministry tend to make us more like our Lord? If he should be taken from us, will we be able to look back over his labors in our midst and say, "Thank God, we were privileged to have him here. We have grown a little meeker than we were, since we learned to know him. We are more gentle than we used to be, because of his gracious example. His word of cheerful exhortation, his encouraging testimony in the mid-week meetings, his loving sympathy and noble support in times of difficulty, his helpful word in our studies, his promptness to confess error when mistaken, his willingness to admit wrong when overtaken, as he sometimes was, in a fault - - if that is what we can confidently expect from his share in the oversight of our ecclesia, he shall have our vote, and not only our vote but our wholehearted, loyal support, even if his views on some matters which, while important, do not seem to us essential, differ materially from ours. On the other hand, if he lacked these qualifications and it was quite evident he was not striving to attain them, we would not vote for him no matter how well he agreed with us in matters of doctrine.

In conclusion we commend our readers, as we commend ourselves, to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build us up and to give us an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. - Acts 20:32.

Crumbs from the Atlantic City Convention

AS WE eagerly assembled for a short day and a half together, there was a note of unrest and sadness in the world about us, every newspaper headline telling of tragedy in Europe, every radio of the apparent victory of sin, and of suffering being vented upon the innocent. The Lord's people all the while are praying, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." But we know His way and His time are the best. By faith, above "the tumult and the strife, we hear the music ringing; since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, how can we keep from singing?" A strange paradox, that we should be able to "lift up our heads and rejoice" when we see these things coming to pass.

Our human sympathies go out to those in distress, and it is necessary that we "cast our burdens on the Lord" if we will "bear a song away." "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." "Go bury thy sorrow, the world has its share; . . . give others the sunshine; tell Jesus the rest."

The first speaker on Saturday afternoon gave a comprehensive summary of the Divine Plan of the Ages and the glorious hope for the Church and the world. If we boast in anything, boast in the Lord, who is worthy of our boasting.

The second talk was based on our Master's words: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." God is love; and the earth is full of His praise. The drone of the bee, the soft coo of the dove all tell us of the love of God for His creatures. In the springtime we see a universal resurrection. The grass leaps forth and covers the earth with green, and the leaves come out to provide us shelter. The righteous are like a palm-tree, and the righteous man is like a tree planted by the rivers of water. The sun reminds us of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His beams. We, too, are to let our light shine before men that they might see our good works and glorify God on our behalf. We are admonished to walk in love and be rooted and grounded in love. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God."

The Saturday evening talk inspired us to emulate Paul and Silas when the Philippian jailer heard them singing, rejoicing in their tribulation. So simply and lovingly was the mind of the poor heathen jailer later led from the vain philosophies he had known that that very night he and all his house were baptized. It would be a real pleasure to have a lot of persecution and misrepresentation if it would work that well every time. You, however, are the most ignorant person in the world as to the effect of your life as you sing with a heart full of praise to your God, a spectacle to men and to angels, while other people spend time complaining. You do not know about the men; surely you do not know about the angels. Some day you may have the privilege of shaking hands with more than one angel over there who may say to you: "I saw your devotion to the Lord, walking the way of sacrifice, saw your love for the brethren, and I realized how foolish I had been; your example brought me back."

The reason Paul and Silas's testimony was effective that night was that Paul could say, "I take pleasure in weakness," in infirmities. O that we had many Pauls in every class today. Do not be surprised if it takes you quite a while to learn to sing hymns with the same fervor as Paul and Silas.

The Lord's miraculous keeping-power was shown us as the first brother took the platform on Sunday morning. He was ill and weak. Immediately upon reaching the platform, he asked each one of us to pray for him that he might have the necessary strength to go ahead. After perhaps half a minute, he was beaming at us in his own loving and cheerful way and continued so throughout his entire talk. Yes, the Lord was at our convention! And, very appropriately, the topic for this talk was: "My Grace is Sufficient for Thee."

Though there may be in the flesh thorns that grieve us sorely, yet the Father's answer is often similar to that to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." *"The God of all comfort"*; "Grace and peace be unto you"; how closely these messages are linked with "the peace of God that passeth understanding" and the legacy that Jesus left His disciples: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." The Lord "who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who delivereth thy life from destruction," is the Father of mercies. All along the way we can trace and distinctly point out His loving-kindness and tender mercies, can we not? Consolation is one of the sweetest words in the English language. In the war-torn lands, how they long for consolation. He comforteth us in all our tribulation so that we may be able to comfort with the comfort wherewith we have been comforted.

A few words of grave admonition followed, regarding the little things that concern the private lives of our brethren, pointing out that it is wrong to accept circumstantial evidence, that even in our minds we should not think accusingly of our sister or brother. Often Satan uses circumstances to give the impression they have gone about purposely to persecute us.

On Sunday afternoon there were two discourses. The first of these was very practical and helped us to understand with increasing clearness the Parable of the Sower given in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. How necessary that we receive the Word into good ground, that it be watered and fertilized, and in due time -- time is an important factor with the farmer--after the season of development, we shall bring forth fruit.

The second speaker moved the friends to deep pity, as he pictured the cruel, unnecessary viciousness and brutality of the crucifixion and what our Lord meekly suffered that we might live, so that for us unworthy human beings might be filled, - through His ransom, the great chasm lying between God and ourselves. Jesus' last words on the cross were for others. Let us, forsaking all, commit ourselves into the hands of the Father, knowing that He doeth all things well.

Two Men Went up to Pray

"God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are." "God, be merciful to me a sinner." - Luke 18:11, 13.

TWO MEN went up into the Temple to pray. . . ." A story so well known that it needs no repetition. Yet how often do we stop to consider whether we ourselves are become like the man who, fasting twice in the week and giving tithes of all he possessed, found cause for glory, not in his separateness to God but in his separateness from his fellow-men. "I thank Thee that I am not as other men are." What a miserable confession to make. In looking upon his fellows he saw nothing to emulate, no characteristics or virtues which he could desire for himself, but only the sordid evidences of evil. The reign of sin and death was a very real thing to this Pharisee; and with an exquisite nicety he carefully dissociated himself from it all and explained to the Almighty that, living perforce in an evil world and amidst sinful men, he was nevertheless not of them nor with them, and that he at least was one to whom had come the superior inward knowledge which, separating forever from the plebian multitude, rendered him a fit companion for the One who dwelt in the inner sanctuary.

We read the story, we smile pityingly at the vivid picture of this pompous Israelite, and mentally place ourselves with the publican standing afar off, as we continue our reading. But what of the lesson behind the parable? Is it not true that many times in the individual Christian life we find ourselves thanking God that we are not as other men? Does it not often happen that this wonderful separateness to God which we call consecration degenerates into a mere smug and self-satisfied separateness from the world? And worse still, at times the suggestion is made that in this latter day, when the purpose of God in calling from the nations a people for His name seems to be on the brink of completion, a still more exclusive and narrow-minded outlook is called for: - - to wit, that our age -- old mission as witnesses of Jesus and ministers one to the other must be abrogated in favor of an individual contemplation of the sacred mysteries and a refusal to extend the privilege of fellowship and the Word of Life to all but the favored few who are accepted as being likewise the "sealed of God." Alas, that the fruit of a one-time zealous response to be "not conformed to this world" should be, not a transforming by the renewing of the mind, with all the marvelous light of spiritual understanding that transformation can bring, but a gravitation to the lowest depths of bigotry, of self-delusion, of utter spiritual blindness which separation from our fellows must mean when we are not separated to God.

The spirit of exclusiveness is amongst us-we must fight it. It is within our hearts -- we must root it out. No matter how discouraging our experiences with those to whom we bear the Word of Life -- no matter how disappointing our efforts to serve and strengthen our brethren-we must not become narrow or bigoted. The glorious Truth of God is too precious a heritage to be made the tool of personal theories and party politics. Our mission is not to evolve novel expositions and ordered theologies from the Sixty-six Books and demand acceptance of these man-made creations as the way to God. It is not to build a creed wall behind which is defined the only hope of salvation. We are exhorted to be sure of our foundation and to have a reason for the faith that is in us, by all means. We are expected to be rooted and grounded in the knowledge which has come our way and we are warned not to compromise our understanding of Divine Truth for the sake of outward harmony. But above all things we are impressed, time and time again, with the necessity for continual progress and advancement in our personal understanding of Truth and it is in recognizing this basic principle that we shall be able to take our stand in the Temple, with open face and open heart worshipping the Father who dispenses His blessings upon all who come to Him in spirit and in truth. There may be many things-there must of necessity be many things-

upon which various disciples do not see eye to eye, and because of differences of thought there must upon occasion be a physical separation into groups for orderly worship and service. But that mystic common-union which binds together all who truly name the Name of Christ, transcends such temporary divisions and triumphantly demonstrates the fulfillment of the Savior's prayer "I will . . . that they may be one." Stand then upon this sure foundation, and we shall have cause to rejoice, not in work of righteousness which, we have done but in that common standing in Christ which is our privilege and seal of divine sonship.

- *Bible Students Monthly (Eng.)*.

A Helpful Hint

"The temper and irritability that too often spoil a useful and educational discussion is due to the presence of the preconceived idea, as we resent with passion any attack on the person of this cherished inmate of our mind. So let us try to be more willing to *entertain* the new viewpoint for a while if only as a casual caller, before showing him the door. When a bad reputation has preceded the stranger there is very little chance of his obtaining even justice-at our hands." "The shortest way to many a heart in whose spiritual, well being we are deeply interested, but which constantly eludes our efforts to reach it by' even the tenderest appeals, is round by the Throne of Grace, where we ask God to do what we cannot do."