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Unforgettable Service Our Year Text for 1941

"God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward His name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister." - Heb. 6:10, A.R.V.

GOD'S MEMORY is perfect: He remembers only what He chooses to remember and completely forgets what He wills to forget. He who seeks to serve God in the imperfect vehicle of the flesh is glad indeed that God is willing and able to forget. With King David he prays: "Remember not the sins of my youth [immaturity] nor my transgressions; according to Thy loving-kindness remember Thou me." - Psa. 25:7, A.R.V.

The text suggested as a reminder for the coming year declares that God will remember something concerning His people, not as a matter of mercy or favor, but because it would be "unrighteous" for Him to forget.

This is one of the very few passages in the inspired Word in which it is even suggested that God might be unrighteous; and here as elsewhere (e. g., Rom. 3:5) it is immediately negated as being obviously inconceivable. It is apparent that this form of expression is used only to lend extreme emphasis to the promise of God's remembering; a form also used in verse seventeen of this chapter, where it is stated that, in confirmation of another immutable promise an oath was made by the Divinity, "in which it was impossible for God to lie"; "that . . . we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." It is evident that this greatly emphasized promise of remembering is given for the same purpose.

Why so Important?

Is not the continued ministry "to the saints" prompted by "love toward His name," the mark of the "perfection" which His people are urged in verse one of this chapter to attain?

The word there rendered "perfection" is from the same Greek root as the word in the verse immediately preceding (Heb. 5:14), there rendered "full age" in the Authorized Version, and "full grown" by the American Revision. The basic meaning in the original Greek root is the **goal aimed at, or completion**, used in a wide variety of applications, the precise significance in each case to be determined from the context.

With this understanding, then, the meaning of these verses is clear. To paraphrase, beginning at chapter 5, verse 14: Christian maturity brings the ability to discern between the highest and real good, and disguised evil-Satanic or carnal suggestions appearing as from "an angel of light." "The first principles of the teaching of Christ" are good for babes in Christ, essential to growth and easily digested; the means to an end-"perfection," or maturity. Even these pure principles may become evil if formulated into a creed, creating divisions between brethren who do not precisely agree on details; hindering progress from babehood to maturity in the Christ-likeness. Therefore, leave the "first principles"-foundation repentance, faith bringing forgiveness and justification -- these should be experienced "once for all"; leave also the constant repetition ("baptisms") of "words" or sayings regarding the laying on of hands (consecration and spirit begetting), resurrection and millennial age lasting judgment. "And this will we do, if God permit."

The Great Objective

To many, this might seem like "leaving" all that is important in Present Truth. Not so! These references are all to fundamental truths and experiences which, once received and acted upon, are forever fixed and settled. "Leaving" literally means to progress or **bear on**; the Greek word implies fruit bearing. Do not, the spirit is saying, be ever learning [studying] and never coming to the **knowledge** of the truth-that character likeness of the Son, as evidenced by fruit-bearing, is the great aim, the goal, completion, "perfection." This doctrine, indeed, is the "strong meat of the Word."

The following six verses -- four to nine inclusive -- are a warning parenthesis; of what will happen if the learner, upon whom so much cultivation has been bestowed, does not progress to the bringing forth of the fruitage desired by the Cultivator. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that belong to salvation."- A. R. V., margin.

Then comes (verse 10) the definition of this Great Objective, the attainment of which God would be **unrighteous** to overlook or forget, namely:

**"Your work and the love which ye
have showed toward His Name,
In that
Ye ministered to the saints,
And still do minister."**

This simple statement of God's desire and expectation of His people, uttered with such extraordinary emphasis, is worthy of the most careful analysis and closest attention. Why does He value this loyalty and this service so highly?

His Name Maligned

God's Name represents His reputation, His attributes, His authority. For six thousand years past, by angels and men, in Earth only of all His universe --

His reputation has been traduced;
His wisdom has been questioned;
His love has been denied
His power has been defied;
His authority has been flouted.

Members of the fallen Earth race of Adam who are not in sympathy with this rebellion against God can, in their degradation and weakness, do little indeed to effectually stem or oppose it; but they can show their love and loyalty "toward His name" by manifesting His disposition and His praise, particularly by loving service toward those who are themselves loyal and true to Him, and because of their adherence are suffering for righteousness' sake.

A Father's Love

Of those who are thus proving their loyalty our Lord said (John 16:27): "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and believed that I came forth from the Father." The word here translated "love" and "loveth". is the Greek word "phileo," meaning spontaneous, natural affection. This is the only place in the Scriptures where it is said that God loves any member of the fallen race, in this sense. It is written "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son"; but "loved" here is "agape," the meaning of which, as Strong defines it, "is wider [than phileo], embracing the judgment and **deliberate** assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty, and propriety, . . . the former [phileo] being chiefly of the heart and the latter [agape] of the head."

"For the Brethren"

The First Epistle of John, the apostle of love, is a treatise on his favorite topic. He writes: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, and every one that [so] loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. . . . Herein was the love of God manifested in our case, that God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. . . . Hereby perceive we love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. . . . In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." Service is the manifestation and the measure of our love; otherwise, it is only a form of serving self.

Therefore, as set forth in our text, everything in the Church-assembly, doctrine, knowledge-is to be directed to this end: the work of love, toward His name, to the saints. And this service must be because he is a brother, an adherent of God, an opposer of evil; not because he is congenial, and agrees with us on every point of doctrine and practice. "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye?" asks Jesus. The especial remembrance of God is of those who demonstrate their "love toward His name" by service even unto death for those who are **on God's side**, and therefore have "ceased from [being supporters of] sin" -- who are their brethren and comrades in "the good fight."

The brethren who need our ministry most are those who are weakest. This the Writer to the Hebrews points out further along in his Letter. (Heb. 12:12-17.) "Lift up the hands that hang down and the palsied knees" -- those who are discouraged, defeated, "wobbling." "Make straight

paths for your feet" -- straight back to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith--that they "may be healed." "Follow after peace and sanctification" -- not doctrinal uniformity. "Look carefully lest there be any root of bitterness springing up" -- in your own heart, or your brother's. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Yes, O insolent answerer to thy Creator; whether your indifference is manifested in words or in careless disregard of a brother's feelings or of his needs which you could remedy, his blood-his life, physical or spiritual -- will cry to God from the ground upon which it was spilled; and it will not go unavenged.

Are any selling their birthright, like Esau, for the price of any fleshly desire? Does some one quote: "Study to be quiet, and to mind your own business"? -- Ah, this too is thy business -- "look carefully" after it. God will not be unrighteous to forget . . . in that ye ministered to the saints -- and have not "become weary in well doing."

The "Gifts unto Men"

The arrangements for the Church happily provide a wide variety of ministry for her membership, suited to different temperaments and abilities, so that every one may serve if he or she will. These various kinds of service are itemized by the apostle in three lists: Ephesians 4:11; Romans 12:6-8; and 2 Corinthians 12:28. Eliminating duplications, those enumerated are: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, exhorters, helps, governments, showing mercy, healing, miracles, speaking with tongues.

Of these gifts, the apostolic was limited to the twelve; "prophets" seems to refer to an office more nearly like that of the prophets of the old dispensation than to what would be implied by the literal meaning of the Greek word, i. e., public speakers. It appears to distinguish those special servants raised up by God to convey a message to the whole Church of their day--such as the reformers and the messengers to the churches. "Speaking with tongues," inspired by the Holy Spirit, has been made to "cease." (1 Cor. 13:8.) But among the nine remaining, surely every member of the Brotherhood can find some sphere of action in which he may expend his talent--even though he have no more than one. Activity in any of these ministries to the brethren, if prompted by "love toward His name," shall not be forgotten by the "Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

The compelling motive behind any ministry is all-important. The Master pictured (Matt. 7:22, 23) certain ones coming before Him in "that day" claiming that they had performed "many wonderful works [elsewhere translated "miracles"] by His name," only to be told, "I never knew you, . . . ye that work iniquity." What was the basis for this judgment? It is written: "All the workers of iniquity **boast themselves**" (Psa. 94:4); since the Lord was doubtless familiar with this scripture, it is not hard to understand from what evidence His judgment was, and will be, drawn. Those represented came before Him boasting themselves; He justly "forgets" such works, even though done "by His name."

"Boasting is Excluded"

No humble-minded "pastor" (feeder), "teacher," "helper," or "exhorter" (comforter) would ever be prompted to boast of such service as "great and wonderful." The more prominent gifts of prophesying and evangelism lend themselves more readily to fleshly satisfaction and self laudation. "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte," said Jesus to the Pharisees, "and when lie is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell [Gehenna] than yourselves." (Matt. 23:15.) These may seem harsh words, especially to apply to preachers of Jesus Christ. But the Pharisees were strict Jewish sectarians; and there are many equally narrow and zealous Christian

sectarians. Those who hold that evangelism -- by public meetings, or house-to-house distribution of literature, or street-corner preaching -- is the only or principal service, the criterion of orthodoxy, must have a standard or creed for the proselyte to accept, and an organization for him to join, whether creed and organization are admitted or camouflaged and denied. And the proselyte, as a "babe in Christ," must be safeguarded by his mentors; and, developed in such a hothouse atmosphere of organization, exclusive "truth," and feverish activity, the convert acquires a sectarian bias and spirit "twofold more" strong than his teachers.

The Most Effective Evangelism

All those who love the Truth and its Author and Channel (the Father through the Logos) will be evangelists upon every suitable occasion, heralds of the glad tidings. Our Lord said (Matt. 10:27): "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." The epigrammatic form of this injunction has caused the expression "preach from the housetops" to pass into general use as a metaphor for blatant publicity or proclamation, a justification for loud and intrusive evangelism, including bass drums, sound trucks, street preaching, sensational radio and newspaper announcements, etc., etc., which are far from the example and counsel of the meek and quiet Jesus and His apostles. "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets" was prophesied of our Lord and quoted by Him. (Isa. 42:1; Matt. 12:19.) The housetops in Judea were flat, usually with an outside stairway to the ground. In that warm climate it was the usual place for entertaining visitors in the cool of the day.* In your quiet conversation with your neighbors on the housetops, suggested the Lord, proclaim the glad tidings that I have revealed to you.

* See Deut. 22:8; Josh. 2:6; Neh. 8:6; Isa. 15:3; Jer. 32:29 Acts 10:9.

This method of evangelism is still the best and most effective, and is available to every follower of Jesus. Nor is it necessary to invite our friends to our modern sloping and hardly accessible roofs to tell them the glad message of the Kingdom and the High Calling. The usual visiting-room inside the house is more appropriate, and amply complies with the Lord's injunction as to place.

All this is not in disparagement of world-wide evangelism in the proper time and place, by one who has the heaven bestowed gift, ability, and opportunity. When one has had a message from the Lord for his generation or time, the way for its delivery has always been opened, without artificial or spectacular forcing. To feel that this type of evangelism is the only or even the chief sphere of divine service, or of showing "love toward His name," has led many astray as to the real goal of the Christian's striving, and entailed much wasted and futile effort.

A Typical Example

An example typical of the kind of service in which all may join, and which meets with the Lord's unqualified approval, is given in John 12:1-8, and (probably) in Mark 14:3-9. It is the story of Mary, who anointed Jesus with the precious cruse of ointment. There can be little doubt that it was the Mary who is referred to in Luke 10:28-42, as sitting at the Master's feet; and that there she learned that He was on the way to Jerusalem to die, and had listened to His explanation as to the necessity in the divine plan for His taking a course that invited this death. The sword of agony that was to pierce the heart of the other Mary (Luke 2:35) seems to have already entered hers. Evidently she knew that He was about to die, for He said: "She hath done a good work, she hath anointed My body beforehand for the burying."

She could not stay His destined course; she could not do any great work on His behalf; but the most precious of her possessions she could give, an expression only of her heart's devotion. The Master uttered at once her epithalamium and her epitaph: "She hath done what she could: ... and wheresoever the Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." The definite linking of this incident to the preaching of the Gospel-the making of it a part of the message-emphasizes its symbolic significance. We may not anoint Jesus' flesh, but we may anoint, with a ministry perfumed by

love for Him and His, the members of His mystic and greater Body. This "poor" we have ever with us -the blessed "poor in spirit" who "shall see God."

Love is Not Limited

"What a strength and spring of life, what hope and trust, what glad, unresting energy, is in this one thought-to serve Him who is 'my Lord,' ever near me, ever looking on; seeing my intentions before He beholds my failures; knowing my desires before He sees my faults; cheering me to endeavor greater things, and yet accepting the least; inviting my poor service, and yet, above all, content with my poorer love. Let us try to realize this, whatsoever, wheresoever we be. The humblest and the simplest, the weakest and the most encumbered may love Him not less than the busiest and strongest, the most gifted and laborious. If our hearts be clear before Him; if He be to us our chief and sovereign choice, dear above all and beyond all desired; then all else matters little. That which concerneth us He will perfect in stillness and in power."

When the great Apostle Paul neared the end of his earthly pilgrimage, and reviewing his career, wrote a final message to his "dear son Timothy," he did not boast of his "great and wonderful works" and sacrifices for the Church as he once had boasted "foolishly," hoping thus to shame some who were boasting in self-satisfaction of far lesser works. (2 Cor. 11:16-12:7.) He did not mention in the presence of death, the long journeys he had made, the large public meetings he had addressed, the churches he had founded, the abundance of visions and revelations received, not even the tents he had made "with my own hands." His claim upon "a crown laid up" was simply his individual race-course, ending in the goal of predestined Christ-likeness: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith [in my Father and my Savior]." "Boasting is excluded."

Yes, Mary, Paul, and all the rest who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," in devotion to the holy name, "God is not unrighteous to forget" the love you have shown, "in that ye have ministered to the saints, and still do minister."

"Jehovah hath comforted His people, and will have compassion upon His afflicted. . . Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, these may forget, yet **will not I forget thee**. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me." - Isa. 49:13, 15, 16.

"Jehovah hath been mindful of us; He will bless us." - Psa. 115:12.

- H. E. Hollister

Compensation

Could I from Gospel pages choose
A privilege most sweet,
In quiet Bethany I'd sit
A learner at His feet.

What favor there to hear that Voice!
What "part" to listen well!
How would my loving heart rejoice
Devotion deep to tell!

I long to follow as He goes
Adown His weary road;
To lift by sympathy and love
A little of His load.

I view the azure lake, the shore,
The crowds that close Him in;
The hand that touched His garment's hem;
The faces marked by sin;

The crippled, blind, and deaf I see,
The poor, the weak, the wrong;
And then I gaze upon the Face
That sadly views the throng:

All that I need to know of God
Shines from that face so fair
Infinite pity, naught of scorn,
And boundless love are there.

But vain these longings now to share
The Master's love and care;
The long-stretched road of Time divides
From me His cross, His prayer;

And to those distant days alone
Belongs such service sweet
A Peter's zeal, a Martha's task,
The perfume for His feet.

Awake, my soul! those blessed feet
That, looking back, you'd free
From Galilee's hot dust, you may
In larger vision see.

They tread beside you in the street,
They limp along life's way;
On beds of sickness, worn and spent,
They lie in pain today.

I hear His voice, the "Inasmuch"
Its cadences yet thrill;
To minister to such as these
Is service to Him still.

O wayworn, stumbling, halting feet,
That tread in pathways dim
I break my alabaster box
On you-but unto Him!

- G. M. Harris

The Divine Slowness

"Wait." - Hab. 2:3.

FROM THE above verse we have selected the one word "wait" as a guide for our thoughts. This is the word which divine wisdom often seems to utter in rebuke of human impatience. Man is eager, hurried, and impatient; God is never in haste. The divine proceedings are slow. In Holy Scripture men are often counseled to wait; to wait upon God, to wait for God: language which supposes delay and the need of patience. So frequently does this language occur that it indicates that power to be still, to wait for the set time of divine action, is a habit of soul not common, and of high value where possessed. And the early recognition of this broad principle, of the important element of time in all divine procedure, will assist to that quality in the Christian commended of the Lord and expressed in the words: "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." - Lam. 3:26.

Let us examine in detail the divine slowness as it is revealed in nature, providence, and grace; all media through which God reveals Himself to man. We will find in all these manifestations consistency and harmony -- the same God. This is a great fact, full of light which will contribute to guide us safely through many a season.

The History of the Earth

As regards the heavens and the process by which they were peopled with the brilliances we now see there, we know nothing. But as regards the history of the earth, we have some knowledge of the changes through which it had to pass to become a fitting habitation for man. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." We are not told how far back that beginning was, but we are informed of six days, or intervals, which gradually brought the earth to the state in which man found it. In the solitude of those far-off ages, progressive change gave existence to progressive life. Mysterious forces from below burst through the crust of our planet and determined, according to divine forethought, where the hills should rise. Gigantic vegetation appeared through which monster animals, now extinct, roamed in search of prey. All things were developing to that point where man was to appear, although for him there is long waiting. But the Creator is from everlasting, and eternity is His. He may well be slow. As the handiwork of God unfolded before the observing spiritual hosts, much may have seemed crude, futile, and meaningless; but the Infinite could wait, as He has waited often since, And He would have us regard the operation of His hands, so that we also may know how to wait. "Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day." - Psa. 25:4, 5.

The Movement of the Seasons

These also remind us of this great principle of time in divine procedure. How slow, how gradual, how imperceptible are the changes of day and night! How gentle is the coming of light, and how slowly and silently does it give place to the darkness! There is a stateliness in the transition from the one to the other, which is as noiseless as it is gradual. These might have come with suddenness, as if from a hurried hand, but they do not. It is as if the will of a great King were being done, by powers which none can venture to resist.

We read the same lesson in the winter as it retires before the springtime; and likewise in spring as it in turn is succeeded by summer and autumn. This circle of change has been likened to a mystic dance wherein the figures, gracefully moving, blend their colors together as in a garland. An Intelligence has said that it shall be so, and to that Mind there is majesty in slowness. And while the seasons pass before our gaze as a procession in honor of the Great King, we seem to hear them whisper, 'Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and bath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain; be ye also patient.' - Jas. 5:7, 8.

The History of All Life

There is that in the life of all things that teaches the same lesson. Life, whether in plants or animals, is a growth, at once silent and gradual, so gradual as not to be perceived. This is indeed a mystery. Everywhere life grows up, man knoweth not how. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear"; these stages melt one into the other and cannot be marked. Once begun, life's course is a ceaseless onwardness towards perfection, and in each transition there can be nothing hurried or abrupt, but the end shall be attained with the steadiness and certainty of law. In all the marvelous handiwork of God and in the slow but sure development of living things, whether it be the flowers of the field or the smallest creatures of the air, our thoughts are lifted to the same Agency which works after the same manner, whether it be scattering gold dust over an insect's wing or shaping a world. "These wait all upon Thee." - Psa. 104:27.

Again in the individual life of man as it progresses from the apprehensions of childhood to the acquisitions of manhood, the wisdom of slowness is manifested. The human intelligence grows continuously to its three-score years and ten, but only by protracted toil in scholarship, science, and art, and through long waiting ere the goal sought for is attained. There is no perfection through haste.

And in the history of national life, how well is this same principle of slow development revealed. If the education of the individual be slow, much slower is the education of a people. The life of an individual soon runs its course, but nations live on through centuries. What labor, what self-sacrifice, what sad experiences must nations pass through to rise from barbarism to a state of comparative civilization. Much sorrow, many battlefields, many wretched prison-cells, and many bloodstained scaffolds have been the price paid by nations in the slow rise from rudeness and slavery to enlightenment and freedom.

These facts from nature and providence teach us to guard against impatience in judging the ways of God and to learn how to wait. "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry." - Psa. 40:1.

The Divine Slowness in the Redemption

And as we turn to revealed religion we are more than ever schooled to wait. Consider the long interval which was to pass between the promise of a Savior and His advent. With the entrance of sin into the world with its disastrous effects, evil triumphs in the consequent dreadful downward path of mankind. Death begins its reign, and sorrow spreads its mantle everywhere. But a Deliverer is promised, a Seed of the woman who shall bruise the serpent's head. Had this course of things been entrusted to our hands, we should surely have been eager, in haste, to further the coming of the Redeemer and the overthrow of the Evil One. But the Divine Mind does not evince this eagerness, this haste. Four thousand years pass, and the Promised One does not come. True the Infinite speaks from heaven by voices and by messengers. He inspires prophets to reiterate His solemn pledge. He originates institutions to be shadows of the great things to come. But

humanity has to wait through many centuries, for in this, the moral regeneration of the world, we find God exercising the same silent slowness which characterized the evolution of nature. The work of redemption, like the work of creation, has its stages also. This is difficult for hurried man to comprehend, who is prone to murmur and complain, but the man of faith knows that long preliminary steps are necessary for the accomplishment of the divine purposes, and will patiently wait, for God's salvation. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." - Hab. 2:3.

Again, in the manner of the Savior's first coming there was much to disappoint the man of impatience. The great work of deliverance began under humble and inconspicuous circumstances. Prophecy had depicted the advent in glowing colors. Were not the great kingdoms of earth to become tributary to Him, the greatest of kings in the greatest of kingdoms? But the Kingdom of God comes without outward show (Luke 17:20), and its Founder was to many as a root out of a dry ground, as one without form or comeliness. (Isa. 53.) How humble is His birth. He is homeless and poor. He attaches to Himself men from the humbler classes. He seeks not to be great. He is meek and lowly. Even with regard to His spiritual mission, the results are limited and unimposing and have stumbled many then and since. To ascribe salvation to so humble a source is offensive to human pride.

But all this is in harmony with the divine conduct as known elsewhere. God does not cause great things to become great at once. They must grow out of small things, and that by slow degrees. Atoms contribute to the formation of worlds, and substances change and become what they are destined to be in the process of ages. God's ways admonish us not to despair of the day of small things but to remember that under His rule the small is everywhere made to be as parent to the great. The Savior revealed Himself gradually and slowly to His disciples, for that was only in accordance with the divine law of things. The Church which is to fill the earth has its beginning in the hut of a fisherman and in the upper room in Jerusalem. The great forces of nature all move thus, without noise, without haste, so secretly that we never know their beginnings, and so slowly that we can never see their motion, though we know that they are moving. And so eventually God's salvation will be revealed to all. "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." - Isa. 25:9.

Slowness in the Christian's Development

In the spiritual history of the individual believer we learn again this same lesson of divine slowness. When we enter the Christian life, we naturally desire that it should mature speedily. But it does not so mature. We unlearn the evil slowly; we learn the good still more slowly. Weaknesses we hope to subdue quickly are not to be so overcome. Vanquished today, they return to the field tomorrow. The new and better habit of the soul does not settle and ripen as we had fondly expected. The sin most easily besetting us returns (it may be like an old associate offended and exasperated) from being resisted, spurned, commanded to be gone, and we even fall under it as Peter did and as many have done. All this is very humiliating and painful. "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." - Psa. 27:13, 14.

Yes, the Christian must often feel that the conflict between flesh and spirit in his case might have been less protracted, less alternating, less painful. But in time he learns that the character derived from this personal conflict between good and evil would be much less complete and less fruitful of good were his lot an exception to that of his fellow Christians. The new life, in common with

life everywhere, is a growth, and grows slowly, imperceptibly. The morning light shines steadily onward until day is perfected; so it is with the path of the just. But here, as everywhere, we are schooled to wait. "Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually." (Hosea 12:6.) Call to mind the experience in this respect of the saints of old.

Noah waited long for the fulfillment of God's judgment on earth in the flood. Abraham must wait many years for the coming of the promised seed and still longer for his inheritance of the land and the eventual blessing of all nations. Joseph endured many years of affliction and imprisonment ere his dreams from God were fulfilled in his rulership over Egypt. So also must Moses wait forty years in the wilderness for God to call him in His own time. The lesson is taught over and over again, and must be learned by all who walk acceptably with God. The grandest revelation of this divine principle of slowness in operation is to be found in the development of the New Creation class. Two millenniums have been set apart for this greatest of God's works, and when it is accomplished, all intelligent beings will marvel. To each Christian is vouchsafed the individual privilege of humbly and patiently submitting to the Divine Power as it slowly transforms him from the image of the earthly to that of the heavenly. More than all else must he learn not to be weary in well-doing, for in due season he shall reap if he faints not. Let us all, therefore, take closer to ourselves this lesson of divine slowness and learn to wait. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." -- Isa. 40:30, 31.

Conventions

The Gathering in Aurora, Illinois

On November 3 the visit of a pilgrim brother was made the occasion for a one-day gathering which, though originally planned for just a local meeting, developed into a sizable convention of one hundred twenty friends. The program of six discourses by capable brethren was appreciated by all, and harmonized with the spirit of Christian liberty, unity, and love which pervaded the assembly. The visitors came from ten different communities, and some from over one hundred miles away, and many comments were heard of gratitude to our heavenly Father for the spirit of His Son which was manifested during the sessions. We could indeed voice with the Psalmist the words of Psalm 133: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." May it be our portion to again experience a similar season of spiritual blessing and kinship.

Chicago, Ill., Dec. 31 and Jan. 1

A New Year's Day convention beginning at 8:00 p.m., Dec. 31 and ending about the same hour the next day has been arranged for by the Chicago friends. A watch-night service is to be included in the program.

Ithaca, N. Y., Jan. 19

The date for the fourth-Sunday gathering at Ithaca this month is the 19th, and the meetings, at 11:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., will as usual be held at 205 East Falls Street.

The Promises of God

"For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the Yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us." - 2 Cor. 1:20, A. R. V.

IN EVERY case where a promise is made, the point of chief importance is to ascertain the name and character of the promisor, and reliance on the promise will be great or small depending on what confidence we may have in his integrity and ability to perform. The promises of our text are the promises of **God**. This being true, there can never be a doubt as to their fulfilment. Our promises may sometimes fail, but His can never. When **we** promise, our intentions may be the very best, but we may fail to perform through sheer forgetfulness. Other matters come in and so press upon us that our attention becomes wholly absorbed in them, and our promise, without any such intention, becomes forgotten. Never is this so with the faithful Promisor. His most ancient promise is still fresh in His mind, and He means it now as He did when He first uttered it. As a matter of fact, while to us some of His promises may seem old, as reckoned from the time they were given, they are all, from His standpoint, fresh promises. A promise which He made a thousand years ago is but as yesterday to Him. Not only so, but to those possessed of faith, the old promises of God come as new every morning, for every word still proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord for our bread and sustenance, spiritually.

Again, our promise may have been made in error, and we may afterward discover that it would be wrong to do as we have promised; but God is infallible, and therefore His word will never be withdrawn upon the ground of a mistake. Infinite wisdom has set its stamp upon every promise; each word of God is registered by unerring judgment, and ratified by eternal truth.

Furthermore, the omnipotent God never promises beyond His power. We intend to act according to our word, but frequently we find ourselves mastered by overwhelming circumstances, and our promises fall to the ground because we are unable to perform them. It can never be so with the Almighty God, for His ability is without limit. All things are possible with Him.

Nor can the promise fail because of an alteration in the divine Promisor. We change-poor, frail things that we are. But the Lord knows no variableness, neither shadow of turning; hence His word abideth forever the same. Because He changes not, His promises stand fast like the great mountains. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?" Our strong consolation rests on the unchangeableness of God.

The Promises Are of Various Kinds

When we come to examine the promises of God, we find they are of various kinds. Some are general in their application, as, for example, the one we often quote from Psalms 25:9: "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way"; or, again, that one in Proverbs which reads: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." (Prov. 3:6.) These promises are not limited to a particular class. Any one who meets the conditions will find them fulfilled in his experience.

Again, some promises are earthly, others, spiritual; some relate to the present life, others to the future. No doubt when, in our text, the apostle, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, spoke of the promises of God, the first thought that would arise in his mind would be the promises to the people of Israel; the promises of dominion and supremacy; the brilliant pictures of the prophets; the glories

foreshadowed in the lives of David and Solomon; the majesty and excellence implied in the very fact that they were the people in whom God had chosen to display so much of His truth and love: but as these thoughts passed, as of course they must have passed, beyond the limits of Israel after the flesh, still the promises would be the same, only in a spiritual form; the glory which would fill his mind would be that of the new, the spiritual Israel; the Jerusalem which would engage his attention would be not the Jerusalem which now is, but the New Jerusalem which is from above.

A Promise or a Threat-Which?

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the inspired writer reminds us of one of His promises. It was given at the time when the old law covenant was inaugurated, at Mount Sinai. Speaking of that time, the apostle declared: "Whose voice **then** shook the earth; but now **He hath promised**, saying, 'Yet once more I shake, not the earth only, but also heaven.' " "And," says the apostle, "this word, 'Yet once more,' signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." - Heb. 12:26, 27.

This is a promise that, to our understanding, is today in process of fulfilment. Those who do not know our heavenly Father, and some whose acquaintance with Him is all too meager, think and speak and act as though it were a dire threat, but in reality it is a glorious promise. Others, again, who do not know the faithfulness of our God, are disposed to doubt and question if this promise will ever be fulfilled, although most thinking men are ready to confess that a greater power than man's is shaping earth's affairs today as never before. But we who love and trust the Lord (even though we may be experiencing all manner of suffering and hardship incident to the shaking time); we, who sometimes sing:

"Only waiting till the dawning
Is a little brighter grown,"

we know, that the long delay in fulfilling this promise has not been because of any reluctance on the part of our Father. No! the true reason is set forth by St. Peter in his second letter, chapter three, verses 9-13. There he writes: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." And after this has taken place, what is to occur? Hear him tell us in verse 13: "We, according to His promise, look for a new earth and new heavens wherein dwelleth righteousness."

It is unnecessary for us to affirm here that it is of the symbolical heavens and earth that the Apostle Peter speaks. Not the destruction of the physical heavens and earth, and their replacement, but just as that order of affairs which obtained on the earth prior to the flood came to an end and a new order commenced, so the present evil age will be terminated, and the times of restitution, long promised, be inaugurated in its stead.

The Promise of Promises

We have said that God's promises are of various kinds, earthly, spiritual, general, individual, present, and future. And the very least of them is of great value. But there is one promise amongst the promises of God which stands out preeminently above them all. Its worth can never be told. No appraiser could begin to estimate its value. It is the promise of promises, familiarly known to us as the Abrahamic covenant.

This promise is found in several places, and reads: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 22:18.) What a promise this is, and how sure and certain God made it! Even when a man makes us a promise, we usually rely on it, if the man is one in whom we have confidence; and how much easier it should be for us to rely on the promise of God we have already considered. But this promise is so very precious, its scope so far-reaching, that it seems as though the Almighty thought its very excellence might cause our weak faith to falter. So what did He do to assist us, in our weakness, to rest on it?

He did the same as we do when we wish to be quite sure of convincing another. He did as we do when we appear as a witness in court or elsewhere to solemnly testify as to the truth of any matter. He, whose every word is pure -- He whose words are so absolutely to be relied on that the Psalmist says they are as silver tried in a furnace, purified seven times--He condescended to our weakness, and confirmed this promise of promises with an oath. In Genesis 22:16-18 we read "By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

In the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews the inspired writer proceeds to unfold this stupendous promise. Note the language he employs: "When God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself, saying: 'Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. . . For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all dispute. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things [first His word and then His oath], in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec." - Heb. 6:13-20.

Whose Are the Promises, and More Especially, Whose is This One?

Ah! but some one may say, "To whom was that oath-bound promise made? Was it not made to Abraham and his seed? And if so, of what value is it to me?" We answer: "This promise is of great value to you, our brother, and to you, our sister, **if you will rely on it**; if you are amongst those who are trusting in Jesus for salvation, and who have gladly accepted His call to consecrate their lives to walk in His steps, and who, day by day, are seeking, by His grace, to faithfully perform their consecration vows. In the remarkable passage we have just quoted from Hebrews do you not see that not only does the author show that this Abrahamic promise is doubly sure, as sure and certain as God Himself, but that its fulfillment is inseparably linked with the resurrected Jesus, who for 'us' has already entered within the veil?"

But one may perhaps inquire: "Are there any other scriptures, New Testament scriptures, in addition to that one from the Epistle to the Hebrews, which make unmistakably clear that this promise is for me?" To which we would reply: "Yes, indeed, there are many such." Let us briefly note a few.

At the very outset of the Gospel Age, after Jesus had completed His ministry, after He had faithfully performed His consecration vows even unto death, after He had been raised from the dead and had ascended to the right hand of God -on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit

was poured out on the waiting Church, St. Peter said: "The promise is to you, ye men of Israel, and to your children, and to all that are afar off [that takes in the Gentiles], even as many as the Lord our God shall call." - Acts 2:39; see also verse 22.

What is the Chief Blessing Under the Abrahamic Covenant?

Well, some one may yet say, there is no reference to the Abrahamic covenant in that verse from the Acts. The "promise" to which St. Peter refers is the "promise of the Father" (Luke 24:49), which promise had just then been fulfilled in their presence by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.- Acts 2:33, 38.

This difficulty is more apparent than real and easily disappears under examination. All that is necessary to dispose of it is to inquire: "Among the blessings to be brought in fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, which is the chief?" Our hearts will surely supply the true answer to this inquiry. It is the blessing of repentance from sin, of faith in our Savior, and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and lives. At times we are apt to forget this. Dwelling in the midst of a world at war, the blessing of peace-external peace-is likely to assume the place of chief importance in our thoughts. With pain, disease, and suffering experienced almost without respite by ourselves and others, the outstanding blessing, the one which would prove the most welcome we are tempted, at times, to think, must surely be their elimination. But while we do not for a moment minimize the value of earthly peace, while we long and pray earnestly for "His Kingdom" to come, when wars shall be no more, and when disease and pain shall forever come to an end; none of these things can come about, permanently, before the Holy Spirit is received. To paraphrase the words of St. Peter in Acts 3:25, 26: "Unto you, the children of the covenant which God made, saying unto Abraham, 'And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed,' God, having raised up His Son, Jesus, sent Him **to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.**" To such as did turn from sin then, God was pleased to grant the Holy Spirit. - Acts 5:32; 14:44-48.

Commenting on the outstanding importance of this great blessing of the spirit, Brother Russell, in a recent "manna," reminds us: "If the Lord's consecrated people could all be brought to the point where the chief aim in life, the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might have a larger measure of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of the truth, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of a sound mind, what a blessing it would mean! . . . The Lord has revealed Himself to His people for the very purpose of giving them this blessing; nevertheless, He withholds it until they learn to appreciate and earnestly desire it." "Manna," December 4.

The Promise is to as Many as the Lord our God Shall Call

Returning, however, to Acts 2:39, there may be some timid soul who yet may hesitate to claim this great promise made to Abraham. Such an one may say: "I can see that that promise applies to Israel, for it says so in verse 22, and it does seem as though Gentiles are meant, as has been suggested, in the words, 'to all that are afar off,' but did not the apostle add, 'even to as many as the Lord our God shall call'? How can I be sure that I am among these? Is there another scripture which would help me in this matter?"

We think there is. Let us turn to the third chapter of Galatians. In verse 16 we read: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made." When was this? We answer: Before he had any children (Acts 7:5); before he had been circumcised, even. It was therefore not made to him as the father of Israel. On the contrary, we might almost say that it was made to him while he was, so to speak, a Gentile. In the fourth chapter of Romans the apostle cites this fact to show that it is not

those who are the natural seed of Abraham who inherit the promises, but those who, whether Jews or Gentiles, share his faith. This thought is also presented by him in Galatians 3:7, as follows "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."

In Galatians 3:17 the apostle proceeds to remove another obstacle to our faith: namely, the old law covenant which God had made with the nation of Israel. That was a good covenant in many respects. Even though none of them proved able to keep it, the relationship to God into which it brought them was valuable, and their attempts to keep its terms worked to their advantage, and yet will. But was this covenant intended to replace the earlier one with Abraham, which we have been considering? No, indeed! Hear the apostle: "And this I say, that the covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ [that is to say, the Abrahamic covenant or promise], the law covenant, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."

Well, then, if that be the case, why did God make the old law covenant at all? In verse 19 the apostle answers this question: "It was added," he says, "because of transgressions, **till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.**"

And who was that seed? In verse 16 the apostle replies: "He saith not, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And thy seed,' which is Christ."

Then, in verse 22, he sums the matter up in this fashion: "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise, by faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe."

And yet once again, in verse 29, as though to remove all vestige of doubt which might linger in our hesitating hearts, he writes: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Concluding Thoughts

Let us therefore, brethren, rest in this Promise of promises, and in the One who gave it. It is ours, if we make it our own. We are amongst the many called, if we accept the call. So far as we have been able to determine, there is no case in the Bible where one believed a promise of God and then was told that the promise did not apply to him, that it was intended for some one else. On the contrary, the Bible does unquestionably record that the great difficulty with us all is that we are slow to believe and grasp God's favors. In the case of Israel after the flesh it is written, not that they entered in, and were told to get out, but "they could not enter in because of unbelief." - Heb. 3:19.

There is a story told of an incident in the life of Napoleon. It is said that one day, as he was inspecting a regiment of soldiers, the horse on which he rode took fright, and galloped madly away. Seeing the Emperor's life in danger, a **private** soldier jumped out of the ranks and, at the risk of his own life, succeeded in arresting the frightened animal. As Napoleon recovered his composure, he said, without realizing that the man was not an officer: "Thank you, Captain."

Many men, hearing such a statement, would have undertaken to inform the Emperor of his mistake, but not this man. Trusting implicitly in the Emperor's word, quick as a flash, he responded: "Of what regiment, sir?" Does one suppose the Emperor was displeased at this display of confidence in him? On the contrary, he was delighted. The story goes that he immediately replied "Of my guards," thus appointing this private soldier to the rank of captain in the crack corps of the army.

As soldiers in the Christian warfare let us not hesitate to appropriate to ourselves, similarly, the slightest suggestion of favor which we may find held out in the Word. We shall be neither censured, nor denied any blessing. On the contrary, let us fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us, through lack of faith, should seem to come short of *it*.

- P. L. Read

God's Inheritance in His Saints

"Making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, would give you a spirit of wisdom and understanding in gaining a personal knowledge of Him; the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." - Eph. 1:16-18, Rotherham.

THERE ARE three things that the apostle desires the people of God to gain. These are, respectively, a personal knowledge of God, a full realization of the hope of their calling, and a knowledge of the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

In order to know just what the writer is talking about, let us examine the word "inheritance." In the first place, the Jews were called God's inheritance because they were a people separated unto God, and God could use them for certain purposes of His own. Similarly, today, Christians are the Lord's inheritance because they are "a holy nation, a peculiar people," and have come into covenant-relation to God to be used by Him as He sees best. Thus the word has a different meaning in certain Scripture-texts from that which is given in the dictionary.

To know the riches of the glory of His inheritance is a big thing. Not only do Christians themselves belong to God, but the divine promises belong to them. They are prospective inheritors of the heavenly treasure. So the apostle prayed that the Lord would give the brethren the spirit of wisdom and understanding, in order that they might know the things essential to their salvation.

In the first place, a personal knowledge of God is necessary, for "this is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." In order that we may know God, we are given a new mind. Our body machine, for years operated by the old-mind engineer to carry out the dictates of our heart's desires, was geared up to do things not in accord with the divine will. Then God took possession and created in us a new mind., capable of understanding His higher ways and actuated by His spirit. That new mind, with spirit guidance and driving-force, is the earnest of our inheritance in the Beloved, mentioned in Ephesians 1:13. Just as the Israelites were told to take possession of Canaan and to refuse life to the former possessors, so these new minds are to take possession of our bodily powers, refusing life to the old possessor, and permitting God to take control. Our Lord said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." It is not merely something to **know**, but something to live. It brings to us the meaning of the Christian's crucifixion-the old impulses hung up to die, while the new ones grow in action and control.

New Creatures in Christ

But gaining a knowledge of the principle involved is only the first step toward gaining experience in working the machinery in accord with such principle. The new creature is commencing life now; and just as the human mind is born a blank, only receiving impressions from outside and reasoning around them, so the new mind (though with higher powers of understanding God's ways) comes into existence blank, and has to receive all knowledge and understanding outside itself. Its knowledge of God's ways is limited to that impressed on the brain by the old mind, which led to consecration. How vividly we need to keep this before us as we go on. Our Lord's words imply that all the called ones who fall short of the divine requirements do so because of accepting something not of God, and are thus brought to a wrong conception of His ways, and consequently, to wrong views of Himself. Considering Matthew 24:24 and 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14, it would seem that all except those finally found in Christ will be deceived in some way. And to be deceived means that error has been accepted as truth. Whether of belief or action, the deception is vital, for we either fail to understand God, or we act in ways that are not His ways.

How earnestly Paul implored the Corinthian church to take heed to this. These friends thought themselves very great and wise, but there had come a drifting away from the Lord. Paul begs them to "cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5.) All our thoughts are either of God or against God. None of us is able to create seed thoughts; we get them all from a source outside ourselves, reason around them, and develop them in various ways, according to the heart attitude. That is one of the greatest tests of the new mind. Paul says, "Be not wise in your own conceits." (Rom. 11:25; 12:16.) Our Lord twice warned that if we do not have His thoughts, we cannot help having those of the devil. (Matt. 12:43-45; John 8:38-44.) In one case the mind of a man was cleansed, but empty. The Lord's words did not occupy him, and he had none of his own; so there was a fine vacant place for the evil one. There again, our Lord showed clearly that if our thoughts are not directed by Him, they are subject to the great Adversary.

So we begin to visualize ourselves as new creatures placed in charge of something that God has entrusted to us. And we are not to permit the old possessor (still present) to give the least help. "Old things have passed away, and all things have become new." And so absolutely is this true that the best and purest help from the old mind may be enmity to God. We remember the loving desire of Peter to protect our Lord from insult and injury, and our Lord's reply, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." (Matt. 16:25.) How it makes us properly appraise the "lamp" provided, for early therein we find guidance for our first prayers. "Show me now Thy ways, that I may know Thee," (Exod. 33:13.) How abundantly He has shown them for those who desire to know them.

Importance of Waiting on God

Considering these things, the new mind will probably say, "Have I to learn every detail of the Word before I commence acting as one of our Lord's inheritance? Am I actually on trial for knowledge?" Of course we are on trial for the things that we ought to know. Indeed the new mind is certainly on trial during its period of inhabiting the old body, to prove its faithfulness to the Lord and to His Word. The control and the test both commence at the time of the creation of the new mind. One of the greatest tests is that of refusing to act unless assured of the divine will. It is far harder to stand still than to act, especially when a case seems urgent and others are looking to us for action. The Father has promised to guide our every footstep, and if He has not instructed us on any particular point (after our diligent study and prayer), it shows that He is testing our faithfulness in waiting on Him. Experience proves that soon afterward He shows that He designed

dealing with the matter in a way unseen by us, and that any action of ours would have been a hindrance. King Saul was unfitted for the leadership of God's people through acting without instruction. Moses also got into trouble in like manner, and was forbidden to enter into the land of promise.

We have three similar tests recorded as occurring to our Lord. The ridicule of natural brethren (John 7:1-9); the dying call of the loved and loving Lazarus, and the wonder of the disciples that Jesus did nothing for two days after receiving the message (John 11); and the invitation of the Greeks. The first was a minor trial to a sound mind, but the other two were strong appeals to a loving heart. Then there was our Lord's desire at the age of twelve to be about His Father's business; and even at that time He would make no move until sure of a complete understanding. It was no mean test to be shown that another long eighteen years must pass in "waiting upon God" before the work would even commence. Satan's false church has been constructed and prolonged by those deceived into thinking that they must act at once or things would go wrong. When we trace our Lord's walk and compare it with the "pattern shown on the mount," we see that any impulsive movement of our Lord would have made it impractical for every feature of the plan of God to be accomplished on time.

When Moses acted without instructions, the Lord said to him, "You have not believed Me." And this analyzes any action into a basic belief that God will guide every footstep, as He promised. Surely this is one of the strongest proofs that action without the Lord's guidance comes from a deception of God's enemy. Can we not rely upon His wisdom that sees the end from the beginning, and trust that all will be accomplished perfectly although we are not commissioned to act? Ah yes, it could all be managed without our help, and the Word shows that unless we are content to wait on Him, the Lord will have to anoint another in our stead, as in the case of Saul and David. Our Lord's words in Matthew 7:21-23 show that some will be astonished at finding the Christ completed without them, and will enumerate the works done which they will be deceived into thinking will make them acceptable. Paul's words to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved--rightly dividing the Word of truth," apply to the walk as well as to a knowledge of dispensations; for in 1 Corinthians 11:18, 19 Paul says that divisions will come, which will manifest who are approved, and Paul is speaking as much of the walk as of the beliefs.

We do well to note the meaning which the Lord attaches to "iniquity," for with God it means anything not in accord with His instructions, however good in themselves the works may be.

Our Father is now producing His masterpiece of creation. Former creations produced life and character from inanimate matter; but now He is producing **His own love** in matter already developed in depraved ways and loves. For this reason no picture can properly present the reality, for the Israelites dispossessed strangers, but we have to dispossess our old selves. In this grandest of all His works, He has privileged us to have a free-will share. Is the task a burden or a work of love? Did our hearts mean it when they said, "What can I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" We shall have more high stiles which separate those who love God with all their heart and mind and being, from those of weaker love who think the stile too high. Test after test separates those whose hearts are wholly the Lord's from all who fall short.

The Power of Love

God demands love of His people, because He Himself is love. Peter tells us that all who fail to reach the perfect, self-less love, do so because somewhere they see only themselves and the present. They close their eyes so that they cannot see afar off, and have forgotten what was done for them in the past. Then they begin to lose their joy. Jesus desired that His joy might be in us and our own joy filled full. Let each one of us examine his heart to see if his joy is in full action, or whether some minor and insignificant joy has been, installed in its place by the deceiver. The Word shows many ways in which such can be developed unknown by those who have left their first love. That vision that we had when the Lord brought us into His "large place" and showed to His inheritance His love for a world in the making as a whole, needs to be ever in view as a **whole** from the heights of the mount on which He has placed us. The deceiver will seek to bring us down into narrow worlds of thought and action; but we are immune while we remain high up with the Lord, and see every statement and action as an integral part of the whole. Many have set their minds on one portion and have lost its relationship to the rest; but the Lord sees the complete work from beginning to end.

What a living, pulsating work is ours, for every part of the Word represents the workings of God's own love; and any part that we get wrong means a misrepresentation of our Father and His love. Let us be content to go slowly, to be sure that we are building from the foundation upward, so that "we show forth His praises" correctly both in doctrine and in action, that we are setting up no part that will have to be pulled down. The later parts of the building will be much more rapidly constructed, because the part below is firm and sure..

Paul pictures our bodies as temples of the living God. What a further vision it gives us, and what a clearer idea of the Lord's desires. A temple full of intricate and wonderful machinery, to be used by Him, and only by Him. What a glorious position is ours as stewards, priests, doorkeepers of these temples. Again we see the test of forcing the old mind to stand still completely until it dies, and this in addition to the restraining of the new mind from action till instructed. Can we realize ourselves as guardians of that temple, seeing that none enters without the Lord's authority, watching the old and the new minds inside, and watching every suggestion that comes from outside? It is not easy,, and it means ceaseless watching and never-ending calls on the telephone of prayer for guidance and help. At the same time, we have to learn to use our machinery in His way, and learn to distinguish between His agents and His enemies. It may seem that the difficulties are being enhanced and the promises put in the background; but if we see it all as a whole, we find that the promises were only made on account of the difficulties. Indeed, each promise is attached to a difficulty.

Openly declared enemies are easily opposed; but not so are enemies that work clandestinely and in the background of life. It is ever a safeguard to us to remember that we are not our own, but are bought with a price. The love of God in our hearts will make all other loves take a secondary place. As we go on, the tests from brethren will increase in intensity. At first we think of all called brethren as genuine members of the Lord's inner circle, but how soon we are shown by word and deed that "all are not Israel who are of Israel." The whole Book of Jeremiah tells how the prophet started out with God's people and ended through separating tests, by being alone with God.

(To be continued)

- J. L. Lewis

Gleanings from "Green Pastures"

"The Lord Will Provide"

Write deep in your heart this New Year's Day this word of sublime confidence, Jehovah-jireh. It tells you that you can trust God always; that no promise of His ever fails; that He doeth all things well; that out of all seeming loss and destruction of human hopes He brings blessing. You have not passed this way heretofore. There will be sorrows and joys, failures and successes, this year, just as there were last year. You cannot forecast individual experiences; you cannot see a step before your feet. Yet "Jehovah-jireh" calls you to enter the new year with calm trust. It bids you put away all anxieties and forebodings-"The Lord will provide."

Serving in Love

Work in Christ's vineyard, charities dispensed to the poor, money given to good causes, ministries among the sick and the needy-these things please Christ only when there is in them all love for Him, when they are done truly for Him, in His name. We need to look honestly into our hearts while we crowd our days with Christian activity, to know what the spirit is which prompts it all. "Lovest thou *Me*?" is the Master's question as each piece of service is rendered, as each piece of work is done. There is no other true motive.

The Hiding Away of Self

No grace shines more brightly in a Christian than humility. Wherever self comes in it mars the beauty of the work we are doing. Let us seek to do our work noiselessly. We should not try to draw attention to ourselves, to make men know that we did this beautiful thing. One should be content to pour a rich life into other wasted, weary lives, and see them blessed and made more beautiful, and then hide away and let Christ have the honor. Work for God's eye; and even then do not think much about reward. Seek to be a blessing, and never think of self-advancement. Do not worry about credit or about monuments; be content to do good in Christ's name.

Patient Love

"As I have loved you" means love that is sweet, fragrant, and gentle to men who have many rudenesses and meannesses, who are selfish and faulty, with sharp corners and but partially sanctified lives and very vexing ways. If all Christian people were angelic, and we were too, it would not be hard to love all; but as many other people are not yet angelic, we will still have need of patience, even if we are angelic ourselves-which probably we are not.

Items of Interest

The Photo Drama of Creation to be Enlarged, Revised, and Revived

A letter from Brother Dr. L. W. Jones, of 1020 Central Avenue, Wilmette N Ill., states that the Photo Drama of **Creation** is being enlarged, revised, and revived, which will give opportunity for many of the friends to have a part in again exhibiting those beautiful pictures, upon which Brother Russell spent so much time, labor, and money, and which was the means of doing such a fine witnessing work for the Truth. Brother Jones will be pleased to send further information to any who will write him at the above address.

The "Plan" in Verse

"The Divine Plan of the Ages" has been put in verse quite clearly, and in considerable detail, by one of our readers who has been an earnest Bible Student for many years. The poem "Paradise in Eden" is printed on "egg shell" paper and neatly bound in heavy paper cover, making a booklet of 73 pages. It is not being sent out with the thought of enlightening the friends, but that it may be of service in comforting and enlightening those who have never seen the Plan of God. The price is 25 cents per copy, or five for \$1.00, postage paid. Single copies' free to those unable to pay. Send all orders to M. H. Black, 1112 North Second Street, Monroe, La.

Recently Deceased

Mr. John G. Alston, Magnolia, Ala.-(Apr.).
Mr. Cousins, Richmond, Ind.-(Dec.).
Miss Agnes Gaylord, Santa Monica, Calif.-(Nov.).
Mrs. Mary A. Gentry, Asheville, N. C.-(Sept.).
Mr. B. O. Newell, Kirkwood, Mo.-(Dec.).
Mr. Thomas H. Peters, Utica, N. Y.-(Dec.).
Mrs. Mary Scott, Santa Monica, Calif.-(Oct.).
Mrs. Barbara Smith, Kansas City, Mo.-(Nov.).
Mr. Austin White, Ithaca, N. Y.-.(Dec.).