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## Gifts from on High

*"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." - James 1:17.*

THE EXTENT to which this season of the year has come to be associated with the bestowing of gifts is due largely to propaganda of commercial interests that have, fostered the idea and have taken advantage of the widespread sentiment associated with Christmas. As a consequence, the Christmas season has grown to be a burden with most people and so has lost much of its value as a happy and blessed occasion.

### Beginning of the Christmas Observance

According to the historian, the celebration of our Lord's birth, around which this custom of bestowing gifts has grown, began some time in the fourth century following the birth of Jesus. Being unable to determine the exact time of the advent of the Babe of Bethlehem, the Western Church, some time in the fifth century, tried to settle the dispute by decreeing that Christmas be observed on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol. This fit in nicely with the custom of the Germans and Celts, who considered the Winter Solstice the most important point of the year and observed "Yule Tide" to celebrate the return of "The Burning Wheel." Many of the things now associated with Christmas, such as the holly, the mistletoe, the yule log, etc., are relics of this Winter-Solstice celebration, and antedate the Christian era. It was the Eastern Church, however, that arbitrarily established the date of December 24, 25 as the night on which Christ was born; hence the German "Weinachten."

The origin of gifts in this connection seems to have grown out of the Italian "Bafana" (Epiphany) custom of displaying the figure of an old woman in shops where children's things were sold. This was meant to symbolize a mythological old woman of Palestine who refused to leave her household duties in order to see the Wise Men from the East bearing gifts to the young child Jesus, saying that she would see them on their return; but by reason of their having gone back by

another way, she is supposed to still await their return, and for some reason not clearly defined, to watch over little children.

### **God's Christmas Gift**

In seeking a precedent for the appropriateness of gifts, we need not rely upon this Italian custom, but can go back to a much better example. The great Eternal One has practised the art of giving, ever since the dawn of creation, and in the exercise of His grace in this respect He looked forward to that supremest of His love, the priceless, Gift of His first work of creation, the One through whom all things else were and are created. We are wont to think of the trials and tests that come upon man, designed (as respects the followers of Christ at least) to develop them in Christlikeness, as being hard to bear. But do we realize that the great Eternal One, who embodies in Himself all perfection, all excellence, all beauty of character, suffers trials and tests of His love and mercy and compassion daily, not only from the unregenerate enemies of righteousness, but also from those who claim to love Him? Have we any measure to determine what it cost the Father to make the supreme sacrifice of His love, the gift of His only begotten Son? Nothing of greater moment to man or more precious to the Father Himself could have been found with which to prove divine love and mercy. Real giving, therefore, originated with the unselfish munificence of God, and so to be Godlike in our giving, we must be wholly unselfish "Freely ye have received, freely give." If we needed any further basis for the Christmas spirit; we could find it in the Bible record of the three Wise Men from the East who came bearing "gifts to the young child Jesus; not that this is recorded to establish any such custom, but rather that it illustrates the spirit in which Jesus came.

It has been shown that the date established by the church in the fifth century as the time of our Lord's birth, is not correct, but more nearly corresponds with the annunciation of God's angel to Mary that she would have a child that would be the Savior of the world. But as neither Jesus nor the Word of God have anything to say about such a celebration, it does not seem important that the time issue be raised.

### **Right-giving a Fine Art**

The more we think upon the gifts from on High, the more we realize that "right-giving" is a fine art and should reflect the desire of the heart, the character of the giver, the joy of serving, and the thoughtfulness that takes note of the need or pleasure of the recipient. Such must be the motives which actuate our giving if we, as followers of Jesus, are to reflect the divine example. Only in this way can we derive the greatest blessing from giving, and put to its best use the opportunity which this universally observed Christmas celebration gives us. We do not follow the divine example by entering into the feverish spirit that pervades the most of Christendom at this season; nor by subjecting ourselves to the unavoidable expense and inconvenience necessary to the finding of gifts that will be acceptable to those whom we feel reasonably sure are doing the same for us. Realizing that there is much in the Christmas spirit that is good and that many derive blessings from, we would not be understood as condemning its observance, but simply point out that such giving is not the best way to follow the divine example.

It is stated in Acts 20:35 that Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The way in which this statement is put would seem to mark it as a principle or reaction underlying the grace of giving. All such principles are of divine origin and are of universal application; consequently, God Himself must be greatly blessed, for our text declares that "Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father." There can be no doubt but that the Father delights in giving, and in bestowing the kind of gifts that results in blessings to His children.

But the question might be asked, Is it possible to believe that in the giving of His only begotten Son, the Father was more blessed than man? Yes, we answer, if Jesus spoke the truth when He said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John 7:16), then the principle must apply no matter what the cost. Some might be inclined to argue that this Gift did not cost the Father as much as we might at first suppose, because He knew that in the end His Son would be greatly rewarded and exalted; but the Scriptures indicate that this reasoning is not true. Take for example that most familiar of all verses of Scripture, John 3:16: the implication is that the Father looked upon His only begotten Son as being the most valued of all His creatures or possessions, for He cites His sacrifice in the giving of that Son as being the supreme evidence of His love for mankind. "God so **loved** the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

There are, no doubt, fathers so lacking in parental affection that they would sacrifice their children in order to escape suffering themselves, but this could not be said of God, for God is love. It has been demonstrated time and again that parents who truly love their children will go through suffering and death rather than have their children suffer; and if such love still exists in imperfect man, it stands to reason that the God who implanted such a quality in the hearts of His creatures, would not be deficient in that quality Himself. Therefore, had it been possible, God would much rather have taken upon Himself the suffering necessary to redeem man than to have sent His Son into an unfriendly world to suffer. It must be remembered that Jesus volunteered His life in this matter, with the thought of pleasing the Father in the saving of the world. Therefore to stand aside, as the Father did, while His most dearly loved Son passed through all the experiences He had to endure in leaving the glory He had with the Father that He might suffer an ignominious death upon the cross, and then at the end to have to deliberately break that Son's heart by letting Him think He had been forsaken, must have plumbed depths of feeling that the Father had never experienced before, and perhaps never will again. We who have never had that close fellowship and ever-abiding sense of divine presence to aid as Jesus had it, cannot possibly appreciate what it meant to our Lord to suddenly lose His contact with the Father.

According to the statement of our text, God alone is able to give gifts that are good and that are perfect. It remains, therefore, that any gifts we bestow will be found lacking in both these qualities. Our gifts are of necessity temporal and partake of the imperfections of both ourselves and our surroundings; and when given merely because we feel sure the recipient designs a gift to us, perhaps for the same reason, there is little if any blessedness attached thereto.

We, as Christians, should attempt to copy the divine example when we give, and to do this, we have to remember that God's gifts are characterized by the motive of, love without any thought of return; and that they are designed for the welfare, blessing, and pleasure of the ones on whom He bestows them. Perhaps the best way to understand Godlike giving is to observe a few examples of the divine munificence.

In Romans 6:23 we read, "For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (R. V.) How can we possibly evaluate such a gift. Adam had perfect life when created; but the right to a continuation of that life was conditioned upon his obedience to the divine will. However, when again God bestows life upon man, it will not only be free, but will be eternal, for those who receive it will have proved under ample trial and testing that they will always remain loyal and obedient to the divine will, and will make the proper use of such an inestimable gift. Such a gift can never lose its value, for the blessings of eternal life can never fade, and the enjoyments of eternal life will never lessen or pall, for ever instant of its possession will bring new joy, and will enable its possessor to make use of all the other endless blessings that divine love, wisdom, and power will take delight in bestowing.

When we read that "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent," we usually think of it as meaning that in order to gain eternal life, we must learn to know God by becoming like Him. This, of course, is true; but possibly there is the added thought that "to know the measure of God's goodness, one must live eternally." Along with eternal life there is also the gift of a perfect organism, adequate and wholly suited to home and environment which are also perfect gifts from on high. No matter from what standpoint these gifts are examined, they leave nothing to be desired; they satisfy. These, of course, are gifts of the future, and are enjoyed, as yet, only by faith and hope.

But there are also gifts of the present which do not so readily reveal their desirable qualities, but when scrutinized in the light of the divine purpose and the pressing need of man, prove their heavenly origin. The garden prepared for Adam and Eve was in every way suited to their perfect state; but when man's condition changed, it was necessary that his environment change too in order that he might not be eternally lost. The unprepared earth in its moods and periods of adjustment by storm, flood, and earthquake, and extremes of heat, cold, and wild life, was not so pleasant, but was far better suited to man's need of discipline and instruction, and so still reflected the goodness of God. It has been necessary, for man's own good, that he be subjected to the very conditions with which he has had to cope, in order that he might exist without losing the image of God altogether.

### **The Priceless Gift of Love**

The most wonderful gift God has to bestow, whether it be present or future, is Love, and all other gifts are but the outworking of that one inestimable grace. As already stated, the gift that most truly manifested that love was the gift of His Son.

Gift of God: O Holy Child,  
Cradled where sin and death did reign;  
Thy source of life, undefiled,  
Sustained Thee, and pure did'st Thou remain.

So when in full to manhood grown,  
Life was Thy right by law divine;  
And glory was Thy very own  
A state that once had graced mankind.

But not to live on human plane,  
Did'st Thou Thy heavenly sphere forego:  
This earthly right Thou did'st but gain,  
That through Thy death the world might know

The gift of God-Eternal Life:  
When by Thy judgments reconciled,  
Men turn from sin and all its strife  
To praise their God and His dear child.

It is not possible for us here to mention many of God's good and perfect gifts, but His love was the basis for them all. Those with which Adam and Eve were endowed prior to their disobedience and expulsion from the garden, such as life, health, happiness, perfection of being, home and

environment, and their dominion over the earth, will again be restored to all who will demonstrate by loyalty and obedience their appreciation of such blessings.

### **Summum Bonum**

The most valuable gift we have to bestow is, likewise, love; and love is the fountain head from which all truly acceptable gifts emanate; in fact, love constitutes the "summum bonum" of all acceptableness. It matters not how many requirements there are to the Law, love fulfils them all; it matters not how many facets there are to the jewel of Godlike character, love is the sum of them all; for God is love. Only divine wisdom can fathom the magic of the mantle of love: "All things work together for good to them that **love** God;" so fear and apprehension find no lodgment in the heart and mind of those who truly love. No matter how heavy the load we may have to carry, love will make it seem light; and service and sacrifice that would be unbearable, become a pleasure under love's mantle.

"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. **Love never faileth.**"

On account of our own limitations and imperfections, the gifts of our love fall short of the divine standard; nevertheless, such gifts, when truly the expression of love and right intent, can and do bring blessings; and so, to some extent, reflect the grace of the Father's spirit in our lives. Such gifts may not have much intrinsic value according to this world's standards, but worldly standards are not the measure of their worth. Even a kind word, spoken in expression of such a love, may have power to bless and enrich some life at the critical time of need, more than we could imagine.

Such was the experience of a dear old Pilgrim Brother who had spent many years in the service of the Lord and the brethren. Through no fault or change of his own, he became the victim of the wave of intolerance that had laid hold on some of the Truth friends, and his kind, loving heart was torn because of the unwarranted distrust that was manifested toward him. He even wondered if he could have been displeasing to the Heavenly Father; for, after all, we are all painfully aware of our own shortcomings.

Then it was that he received a letter from a sister, saying that he had been much in her thoughts of late, and that when this occurred, she took it as a sign from the Lord that such a one was in trouble and needed the prayers of the brethren. She assured him of her prayers on his behalf, and of the blessings his service had meant to her and the Class of which she was a member. This gift of love did not cost that sister much, outside of a little thoughtfulness and the few minutes of time and effort necessary to write, but what it meant to this dear old wayfarer in his period of heart-ache and bewilderment, will be known only when the heavenly goal is reached and all such gifts of love are rewarded.

It is worthy of note that God's Word does not have much to say in praise of big or rich, worldly gifts; for usually such gifts have some motive other than Godlike love to prompt them. Exceptions to the rule, such as Mary's gift of an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard with which she anointed Jesus, can of course be cited; but more often it is the little things, such as "The widow's mite, the "cup of cold water," or some Samaritan's kindly acts-things which show the spirit that prompts them, that bless not only the giver, but also the one upon whom kindness and love is bestowed.

May God help us, one and all, to give freely, in accord with the dictates of a heart filled with love and the intent that strives to bless and to make glad those with whom we come in contact. And let us also remember, that no gift is too small to bestow if it has such a motive back of it.

## Early Morning Devotion

*"And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating." - Exod. 16:21.*

There is no time like the early morning hour for communion with Christ and pondering His words. Once lose that, and the charm is broken by the intrusion of many things, though it may be they are all useful and necessary. You cannot remake the broken reflections of a lake swept by wind. How different is that day from all others, the early prime of which is surrendered to fellowship with Christ! Nor is it possible to live today on the gathered spoils of yesterday. Each man needs all that a new day can yield him of God's grace and comfort. It must be *daily* bread.

All true prayer has a transfiguring influence. It brings us into the immediate presence of God. The holy of holies in the ancient temple, where the Shekinah was, was no holier than where you bow every time you pray. You are looking up into the face of Christ, Himself.

John was not nearer to Him, lying on His breast, than you are in your praying. One cannot thus look up into the face of Christ and not have some measure of transfiguration wrought in him..

Then prayer is the reaching up of the soul toward God. It lifts the life for the time into the highest, holiest frame. A prayerful spirit is full of aspirations for God. Its longings are pressing up Godward. It is the transfiguring of the spirit which purifies these dull earthly lives of ours, and changes them, little by little, into the Divine image.

Rise earlier to be more alone with Christ in the morning. Let neither the pressure of business, nor the allurements of pleasure, nor the tendencies of the flesh, nor the drowsiness of spirit, keep thee from thy morning interview and converse with the King of *kings*. - *Selected*.

## The Secret

I met God in the morning  
When my day was at its best,  
And His presence came like sunrise  
And a glory in my breast.

All day long His presence lingered,  
All day long He stayed with me  
And we sailed in perfect calmness  
O'er a very troubled sea.

Other ships were blown and battered,  
Other ships were sore distressed,  
But the wind that seemed to drive them  
Brought to me a peace and rest.

Then I thought of other mornings  
With a keen remorse of mind,  
When I, too, had loosed the moorings  
With the presence left behind.

So I think I know the secret,  
Learned from many a troubled way  
I must seek Him in the morning  
If I want Him through the day.

- *Ralph S. Cushman.*



## Guarding the Heavenly Treasures

*"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" - Heb. 2:1-4.*

LET US go back some nineteen centuries and imagine ourselves members of that early Church in Palestine, born and reared according to the Jewish faith, firmly believing in the divine supervision of Jehovah over the Jewish peoples, with a culture and a civilization dating back to the days of Abraham, when his faith in the promises of Jehovah caused him to be called the friend of God, and with the Law and the Prophets centering around us as a nation which will be a great factor in the working out of a Plan of Salvation. We are still worshiping with them in the temple—we are attached by ties of family and of blood and of tradition. We have believed that out of Zion should come the Deliverer. Moses, the temple, and the old tabernacle in the wilderness, with its system of priesthood and its sacrificial ceremonies are all a part of our very being. We have been zealous above the average; we have honestly striven to serve God, and because of this there has been vouchsafed to us a deeper understanding of these things. A little window has been opened, and we have looked out and seen that a new epoch has dawned, that anew dispensation has come, that prophecy is fulfilling before us, that the Messiah has come, and the long looked for deliverance is about to be accomplished.

As we study the situation in the light of greater knowledge, we see the old order was but a pattern of the real, the better thing, that the Aaronic priesthood was inferior to the new order of priesthood, that Levi while in the loins of Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec.

Our hearts rejoice, and we cast our lots with those of similar mind and conscience. We are living now above the clouds, and we see that those sacrifices of the Atonement Day were significant of new sacrifices by and necessary to the consecrated follower of the Messiah. All else seems like loss and dross—the pride of life and the desires of the eye, and the desires of the flesh are seen in their true relative value. We experience the ecstasies of that first love and we determine that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus—"neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature." - Rom. 8:38, 39.

### Character of the Times

This briefly is the state of mind of those early Jewish Christians. Then comes the test. Nero sits upon the throne and his persecution of the Jews arouses a hatred which grows until over the horizon looms the black cloud of revolt. The Jewish people recall the magnificent prophecies concerning the nation—God's care over them in Egypt and His final deliverance, the evidence of His presence at Sinai, His leading in the wilderness, and all their later experiences. Priest and politician are scheming for independence, they recite the deeds of the Maccabees, and they sing the war songs of David. They recall the prophecies concerning the nation as the supreme ruler of the earth. They remind them that they shall rule the nations with a rod of iron. They do not see, nor do they care to know the true significance of those songs and prophecies. They desire only to

kindle to madness the minds of the people against the Romans. We see the people fired with ambition and rushing on to that awful disaster which destroyed every vestige of national life -- on to that tragedy of blood and of horror which came with the advent of Titus when he destroyed their temple and slaughtered thousands, the hand of Rome finally reaching to every corner of their national home and the Jew becoming almost a slave to the powers that then were.

In this state of the Jewish mind the teachings of Jesus became a crime not only against their faith, but against their nationalism; not only a heresy, but a base betrayal.

The followers of Jesus now became the objects of a propaganda to recall them from their deflection from the Jewish ideals. Ostracism and persecution became the order, and upon those who were none too well grounded they had their influence. They turned their eyes from that unfailing Source of strength and power. The Greater than Moses and Aaron began to dim before their eyes, and they were influenced by the things of the earth and the flesh. The spirit of fear became dominant in their minds; the spirit of love and of power and of a sound mind was becoming feeble.

### **The Culmination of Their Scriptures**

It was to these Jewish Christians of Palestine that the writer of the Book of Hebrews says, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

The entire message is written from the Jewish standpoint and can be properly understood only when we study it from that angle. They knew of the inspiration of the Word. They understood the feast days and the holy days to be divinely ordained. They knew that God at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, that is, He had from time to time given them the measure of His revelation which they were able to receive and which He wished them to have. Much was not understood by them, but was spoken for the benefit of those coming later, those upon whom the ends of the Ages should come.

There was no danger of these Jewish Christians turning away from the living God to the gods of the pagan. They were not asked to accept another and a different faith. They could readily understand that Christianity was the outgrowth of Judaism. It was the culmination of their Scriptures, the blossoming of the flower from the bud, into its full beauty and grandeur.

If the Adversary could persuade them that they had been a little over-zealous, that while it was commendable in them to serve God -- surely it was -- why not do as God Himself had ordained in the Law? This was the creditable thing. God commends loyalty to His Word and rewards right living. This Nazarene was a zealot and unfaithful to the very Law of God. Being a Jew and showing this degree of disloyalty, He deserved the fate which befell Him, as did those active in spreading His doctrines and making proselytes. These and similar arguments were doubtless dangerous to their eternal well being, so the writer draws his comparisons of the greatness of the Law and of Moses with the greater glory of Jesus, for he says that God in these last days bath "spoken unto us by His Son, whom He bath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds: who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

## **Admonition to the Faltering**

Great as were the former things in glory, how insignificant when compared with the new. The old order was by divine authority, but was not intended to be permanent. The new order was by divine authority, and is intended to be permanent, for He hath spoken by His Son whom He has made heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds. The attempt is made in the Epistle to make the contrast as great as possible that those faltering by the way should be aroused to their danger-shocked, if you please. Hence the admonition to give the more earnest heed to the things which they had heard-put the two side by side, the old and the new, measure them from every angle, weigh them well and act according to the measure of a sound mind within them. Earnestness is urged, for it is a matter well worth their consideration in view of their eternal welfare. They had covenanted with God to sacrifice their all upon the altar, and a failure to do so was to be followed by the most serious consequences. Restoration to the favor of their fellows meant estrangement from God. They could not recede from their former stand without entering into the Second Death. Failure to give more earnest heed to the things which they had heard would result in their letting those things slip. The meaning of the word slip in the original is to lose the contents of a vessel as by means of a leak; thus without replenishing, the entire contents would be lost; or again as though a ship were tied to something in the midst of a swift current, so that the vessel should remain steadfast and should not be carried down the stream by the current to destruction.

## **All Need to Give More Earnest Heed**

These were momentous times for these Jewish Christians and it has always been a matter of earnest heed in all the years since the Age began. But may there not be as great danger to the Church of today as there was to this early Church in Palestine?

We believe that this admonition was written for the benefit of all, and that we can receive great good if we will follow it with the early Christian Churches in mind, and their particular attitude and training in relation to the old order of things.

Our spiritual life depends upon our experiences with Christ in our own lives. Christianity, as well as other religions, easily drifts into formalism or ritualism, and this means death. Ritualism belongs to the Law and the Law is dead so far as the Christian is concerned. Ritualism, passing as Christianity, has caused more suffering in the world than any one other cause. The bloodshed, the hatreds, the bigotry, the racial and religious prejudices and their results have largely been caused by this instrument of Satan. We are in danger of the spirit being supplanted by the letter. Works are among many replacing faith. Love, the crowning virtue on them all, seems to be an ever diminishing quality, even among many styling themselves as followers of Jesus. Pomp and ceremony, self-pride, adulation, and exaltation are ever present, while meekness and humility is rarely found. Summed up, the whole list of sins of the Church as well as the world at large is selfishness.

In our struggle to reach the ideals set by our Master our first object is to conquer self, and until this is done, there can be no true growth or development in Christian character; for we are not Christians in Christ's order of things until we have laid down our lives upon the altar, which is so well, illustrated by the brazen altar of the tabernacle and its sacrifices. The expression, "When He had by Himself purged our sins," called to the mind of these Jewish Christians the sacrifices of their Law and the cleansing from sin and impurity which these sacrifices accomplished. The writer of those words did not mean the purification of man by instruction in Christian doctrines or by example. He referred to the sacrificial death of the Savior, the antitypical Bullock. We as

Christians must be able to say with the Apostle Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." - Gal. 2:20.

### **The Former Days of Illumination**

There are several thoughts contained in the passage we have selected for study. First, the urge to give more earnest heed to the things they had heard lest they let them slip-that is to the promises, the prophecies, and all those things which they at one time accepted without question as true; the relationship to God through Christ which they had once so strongly experienced.

Second, the warning against the neglect of so great salvation.

Third, the reasons given why they should not fail in their Christian privileges.

The second point seems to be the center of the argument around which other things turn the neglect of this, so great salvation; and we will consider this before the rest. What does the writer mean by this neglect of so great salvation? We recall that these to whom he writes were not of the world, profane and irreligious, but were the professed followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, members of the priesthood. They had yielded their all on the altar of sacrifice. They had tasted and seen that the Lord is good. They could recall the former days, in which after they were illuminated, they had endured a great fight of afflictions, partly while they were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly while they became companions of them that were so used. They took joyfully the despoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

Their faith was growing dim. They had lost their first love; their old habits of life and of thought were again reviving in their hearts. They were growing weary of the long wait for the fulfillment of their hopes. They had expected the setting up of the Kingdom long before this, and their disappointment was causing the things which they had once heard and believed to slip. They were drifting with the adverse current of their day away from these things, out into the broader waters which would lead to destruction. There was a strong tide running toward Judaism, which they had once repudiated, and unless they gave more earnest heed, they were in danger of being swept *away* from their Christian faith, away from Christ Himself.

### **The Dangers that Beset Them**

This was the neglect which was menacing them -not a rejecting of the Gospel, nor opposition to the doctrines and teaching of Jesus and the Apostles, but a neglect of which those were guilty who had trodden under foot the Son of God and had counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing and had done despite to the spirit of grace. Their danger was a passive sin, not an active sin. They were becoming lukewarm. They were neglecting the true means of grace. They no longer found joy in the "assembling of themselves together" as they once had done. They failed to consider one another "to provoke Unto love and good works." They were casting side glances at the old Jewish pattern, forgetting the glory of the substance in the dim light of the shadow. The fear of men was crowding from their minds the fear of God. They were neglecting. And to even the human mind this is a humiliating experience.

Is it possible that there may be a similar heart condition in some of the Lord's people at this time? It is true that the evil influences to which we are liable are not the same. We are in no danger of the proselyting influence of Judaism or any other religion new or old, but are we in danger of

being carried by adverse currents into mere worldliness and neglect of the divine ordinances? Are we liable to the strong delusions of our times? Our Lord said that we would be, and the Apostle Paul reiterated it. We see the effects of these delusions upon the nominal church and the world. Various philosophies, and ethical systems, mysticism, theosophy and psychology, higher criticism, and evolution are being taught and accepted by millions among so called Christian peoples; and we see thousands and tens of thousands falling by our side. We are perhaps in no danger of these grosser evils and deceptions, but may we be turned aside by the stress of the times in other directions? May we by these be in danger of letting slip the things which we have heard? The constant stress of occupation and line of thought from contact with which we cannot escape may be our danger unless we are able to rise above them. Matters of lesser importance to our eternal welfare may gradually be substituted, until we find our love of Christ waning and our minds becoming of the earth, earthy. It may be trouble which threatens to overwhelm; it may be peace and happiness in undue measure; it may be the struggle against poverty and misfortune; it may be the pressure of business or the intoxication of success; or it may be even an abnormal activity in religious work itself. Any thing which occupies our minds or demands our time in such measure that we have little strength or inclination to give earnest heed to the things which we have heard, places us in the same dangerous position in which the Jewish Christians found themselves. We are as likely as they to drift away from that first love which also endangered the Church at Ephesus.

### **How Shall We Escape if We Neglect**

And then to us may come the question, How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? The answer is found in the first part of the passage we are studying -- "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard." We who have made a solemn covenant by sacrifice dare not neglect so great salvation. "For if after we have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with us than the beginning. For it had been better for us not to have known the way of righteousness, than after we have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto us." - 2 Pet. 2:20, 21.

It was a happy moment when we ceased to do evil and learned to do well, but it is only by patient continuance in well doing that we can hope to receive that crown of righteousness which is laid up 'for *all* who love the appearing of our Lord, our Head, our High Priest.

The act of consecration marked our passing from the court into the holy, from a humanly minded condition to that of spirit begetting, as Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promises, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. And only by keeping our minds stayed on these promises can we be kept in perfect peace. "Eternal vigilance is the price of our liberty" in Christ Jesus. It is needful if we become not castaways to give, to the end of our days, earnest heed to the things which we have heard.

It was to Christians who had shown great zeal in the cause of Christ, who had suffered persecution for His sake, of whom the writer asks the question, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Earnest heed is needful that one may be more and more filled with the mind of God, the Holy Spirit of God, that it may inspire every thought, word, and action, and lead thus to the development of its fruits. Cease to believe and we again become condemned. Cease to abide in Him and we are cast forth as a branch. No matter how great our early devotion and our patience, *no* matter how we labored and worked and how much *we* may have borne for His name's sake, "neither did we faint," still it is needful that we give earnest heed to the things we have heard, for how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

## **Inspirations from the Cross**

There are several reasons given in the text why we should give more earnest heed. First, the source of this great salvation given was our Savior Himself. For God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." At sundry times and in divers manners He had in times past spoken unto the fathers by the Prophets. These were but the servants of God; and likewise the angels, for "of them He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire. He speaks now by the One whom the angels were commanded to worship, who is the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, who created all things and upholds them still by the word of His power; who having purged our sins, is made heir of all things and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High. It is He who sacrificed His life, agonized in Gethsemane, died on the cross, and descended into the lowest depths of degradation and misery that every human soul might come, if he will, into harmony with God. It is He, the Redeemer of all the world, who spoke to them, warned them of their danger, and reproved them of their sins.

So He speaks today to us *who* profess to believe the living Christ -- He who passed not only through Gethsemane and the judgment hall to death, but by the resurrection into the Holy of Holies, crowned with glory and honor, through whom we are sanctified and for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren, for He says, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto Thee." To quote from another: "And it is the living Christ that speaks to us. I cannot but feel that the religious life of Christendom *has* suffered, grievous harm from the constant representation of the Lord Jesus . . . in the weakness and humiliation of His death on the cross. . Men look upon Him in those dreadful hours when He was crowned only with thorns, when *His* sceptre was a reed, when an imperial robe was thrown upon Him in mockery, when He stood as a criminal before an earthly ruler, when the cruel instruments of ecclesiastical tyranny were permitted to heap upon Him insult and scorn, when the rabble of a degraded nation triumphed over His apparent discomfiture, when He was deserted by His friends, when even the divine glory was unable to penetrate the dense clouds of suffering and disaster into which He entered for the salvation of mankind: We hear Him asking for vinegar to relieve His burning thirst, crying out in the bitterness of His soul, because the light of God's countenance; is hidden from Him. God forbid that we should ever cease to speak of having redemption in His blood. We are not ashamed of the *cross*. To us it is the symbol of triumph and the memorial of salvation. But it is not fitting that we should forget the glory which. preceded or the *glory* which was to follow. He is, no longer in Gethsemane, no longer on the cross, no longer in Joseph's sepulcher.

"We are adoring, not a living being, but a creation of our fancy, when we pray to a Christ crowned with thorns. He has assumed [that which is far beyond] His former glory. He reigns at the right hand of God. He wears the signs of the most awful and august authority."

## **If We Hold the Beginning of Our Confidence**

Could we have a better reason for giving more earnest heed to the things which we have heard? How can we escape if we let them slip? Another reason for our earnest heed is the Church's participation in the glory of its Head-the glory of Zion, of which the Psalmist sings (Psa. 87)-translated by another singer of later times thus

"Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
Zion, city of our God.  
He whose word cannot be broken



Formed thee for His own abode.  
On the Rock of Ages founded,  
Naught can shake thy sure repose;  
With Salvation's wall surrounded,  
Thou shalt triumph o'er thy foes.

"Then the streams of living waters,  
Springing from eternal love,  
Will supply thy sons and daughters,  
And all fear of want remove.  
Who can faint when such a river  
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?  
Grace, which, like the Lord, the Giver,  
Never fails from age to age."

"The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." (Psa. 87:1.) This being true, how can we neglect so great salvation? And finally how shall we escape if we do neglect? This is the great salvation; there is no other for Christ's Church. We are not by the grace of God going to let these things slip. We are not, by the power of the Holy Spirit, going to neglect this great salvation.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if [because] we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." And we know "it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

"For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, . . . For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward His name."

"Christ, the Wisdom and the Power! From our labor's fleeting hour  
To that timeless age of bliss  
Which shall crown the toil of this. Grant that all our life may be  
Hidden and revealed in Thee.

"That our work may be divine, Seek we not our own but Thine;  
Lost to self and found in Thee,  
Find we sweet humility, Zeal by warmest love refined,  
True devotion's single mind.

"So in Thee we shall be strong, Seem the labor light or long;

And though clouds of self and sin Darken round us and within,  
So not dimly shall we see Light to  
lighten all, in Thee."

- *Contributed.*

## **"Praise Waiteth for Thee in Zion"**

As the hymn, "Praise Him! Praise Him!" ascended from the little Convention Hall in Atlantic City, we believe it was as "sweet incense" before the Lord, coming as it did from hearts realizing something of the benefits of that "Love unbounded, wonderful, deep and strong," and also that "Power and glory unto the Lord belong." It was a season of sweet fellowship. The expression on the faces of all gave evidence of a joy within, and as the opening remarks reminded us we were to have the privilege of fellowship with brethren who had not only been acquainted with the Lord, but been long in His fellowship, we had reason to expect much in the few hours we were to spend there together with the Lord around His Word-"seated together in heavenly places"-as members of one family, members of the same Body, called with the same calling, even to joint-heirship with our one Lord. Surely we could unite in praising Him, "ever in joyful song."

Friends had gathered, well filling the hall for the first sessions on the afternoon of Saturday. The first theme discussed was the "Hidden Treasure." (Matt. 13:44-52.) Earthly treasures with their illusions, their fleeting, momentary joys, and their disappointments-treasures that must be guarded against thieves, rust, and moth, were contrasted with the heavenly-the gold tried with fire, and the white raiment which we must "buy" (Rev. 3:18) -- buy as did the man seeking goodly pearls with "all that he had." There was no holding back of *anything*. Giving our hearts, our wills, we give our all. If the heart is fully dedicated to the Lord, the giving of time, talent, money, influence-all, will naturally follow. And we will be on the alert for every opportunity of service, every opportunity to do "good unto all"-every opportunity to witness by word or by example to the mighty love of God. In these various ways we are "laying up treasure in heaven"-treasure that does not need to be guarded lest it corrupt or be stolen from us, but is safe there in the "treasury of heaven." Oh, that we all may have a large account there to our credit, as a result of a life of sacrifice and devotion prompted by an overflowing heart of thankful praise to God.

### **"God is Love"**

We were reminded again of that which grows sweeter to us with the years-the love of God. "God is Love." (1 John 4:7.) And why should it not grow more precious to us as we more deeply realize our need, not only of His almighty power and infinite wisdom on our behalf, but especially of His love-that love that has pity, compassion, long-suffering, mercy love that never changes-Everlasting Love. God's love has in it all that properly belongs to God. One quality of God's love is constancy. It is changeless, from everlasting to everlasting. Jesus reflected this love. . Having loved His own He loved them to the end. Another quality of this love is gentleness. There is plenty to teach the gentleness of love. The greatest forces of nature are the most quiet, the most gentle. How gentle the sunbeams, yet how powerful. How quiet and gentle are the dew drops. The mighty works of God are done without a sound. They are the gentle forces. Jesus was gentle.

He blessed the little children. He allowed Judas to kiss Him. Do we show the gentleness, the kindness, the mercy of Jesus?

Love also has the quality of bountifulness, munificence, generosity. Everything in nature speaks of this the flowers with their multitudinous variety and color, the grass, the trees, the birds-everything. Jesus manifested this munificence. He was always giving out, always blessing-virtue went out of Him and healed the multitude. None came into His presence without receiving a blessing. If we could go through life making other people happier, better, more worthwhile because they had come in contact with us, what a wealth of character we would possess. It is the life that is filled with love that will do this. How sweet, how glorious it would be if we could live



such a life-always giving off what the other person needs, thus passing on the benefit of our contact and fellowship with Christ being merely a channel through which His blessing flows. It means close contact, close communion with the great Source of love, and a continual "beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord," in order to be ourselves changed and reflect that "glory," that love. We cannot make too much of love. The more we make of love, the more it will make of us.

"The love of God is broader  
Than the measure of man's mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind."

Another subject discussed was the Process of Sanctification, in which it was shown from the Scriptures that sanctification is not instantaneous, but is a gradual work, continuing throughout life, that this "setting apart for a sacred purpose," is to prepare us to be "kings" and "priests" and requires not only time, but effort-not only the initial part of coming and presenting ourselves, but the keeping of that consecration alive. God must ever be first.

### **Present and Future Values**

Doubtless many of us felt gently reproved as we listened to the discussion of the Christian's Present and Future Values, and realized how often we weigh the trifling and transient things of earth against the great and eternal things in the heavens. The "deceitful desires" of the flesh sometimes lure one into believing certain earthly possessions are necessary, when, viewed in the light of the "new creature," they are but hindrances --that which will take time and attention from the higher and better things. (Gal. 6:14, 15; 1 Pet. 4:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:17.) Those who "glory in the cross" fill their minds with heavenly treasure and not with baubles for the gratifying of the flesh-deceitful desires. Jesus loved the world, but He had no desire for worldly possessions or worldly fellowships. Instead of allowing our minds to be filled with earthly treasures, we must **see** to it that "this treasure," the new mind, is in control of our earthen vessel. (2 Cor. 4:7.) Like the vessels of Cana of Galilee, we must be emptied-emptied of self-that He may fill us "to the brim." The Prince of the Power of the air will see that we are filled to the brim if the water of God's filling does not crowd out the last trace of his spirit. This means eternal vigilance, circumspection, and seeking ever the will and the glory of God. It is the Scriptures and not fanaticism that urges, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or *whatsoever* ye do, do *all* to the glory of God. Nothing is too small to be in that list. The "hundred and forty-four thousand" rejoice in the privilege of being that particular, for His sake. This is real "service." (Rom. 12:1.) In our desire to serve we may give out many tracts and books that are never read, but there is one epistle that is read, and that by all with whom we come in contact-the "living epistle, read and known of *all* men." (2 Cor. 3:2; 4:10; Col. 1:26.) While the giving of tracts is commendable, the work of writing this "living epistle" must have the first place in our lives. And after we have "done all," our best, we will find that we "offend in many things" (James 3:2) and are but "unprofitable servants" to a perfect God. The "excellency of the power" will surely be of God and recognized as such, when, the death of the flesh complete, we see "the glorious riches of His inheritance in the saints." (Eph. 1:16-18; 2:9, 10; 2 Cor. 4:16, 17; John 15:8; Mal. 3:17; Isa. 62:3.) And through the ages to come, the Father will "show the exceeding riches of His grace [an abundance beyond description or comprehension] in His kindness toward us." (Eph. 2:3-7.) Would we wish to, can we afford to, do less than do "Whatsoever we do, to the glory of a God" so generous? "O! to be nothing"; only an empty vessel that He might fill me.

The subject of Patient Endurance is always timely, for we "have need of patience," not only that which passes for patience in the world-courtesy in outward manner even when there is much all

around to disturb, but we who are to "endure unto the end" and to "inherit the promise," must have the courtesy that comes from within, and that cheerful, patient endurance under continued trial and thus "bring forth fruit with patience." The Apostle exhorts that "ye have need of patience that *after* ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." We see that it is not merely to do the will of God, but after having reached that point, we should by patient endurance establish God's righteous will as the law of our hearts and the rule of life under all circumstances, whatever of trial we may be called to pass through.

The Testimony meeting was a real inspiration. The earnest faces and ready responses as the opportunity came for testifying showed the work of grace in the heart. One dear brother who had been with us on some previous occasions, but had just recently been taken to camp, sent his testimony in the words of Hymn 174, "My Faith Looks up to Thee," in which all joined, remembering the brother and others who had been called from their homes in similar service, in prayer.

How appropriate that our sweet season of fellowship should close with a little heart-to-heart talk from our dear elder Brother Friese on "Our Father," when we were exhorted to "Bless the Lord at all times," that "Praise should continually be in our mouth." Surely our dear brother's long years of acquaintance with His Father, and our Father, the closeness of relationship, of union and communion, shone out in his loving words and admonitions and was a most fitting benediction.

After a vote of thanks to the dear friends of Atlantic City for the privilege of fellowship with them there, our convention was brought to a close by a hymn of Praise and a prayer of thanksgiving to Him from whom all blessings flow.

## **"Come Now, Let Us Reason Together"**

My Dear Brethren:-After reading the September issue of the "Herald," especially the first article, I felt I wanted to write you, but have not gotten to it until now, when I have just finished reading the October number, and find it to be of the same high order as the September issue. . . . The articles are splendid and like manna to those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness-not written merely from a store of knowledge, but from an experience of the operation of the Spirit of God. . . .

The article in the October "Herald" on "The Perfecting of the Saints" is very good. It contains some good food; but I think the writer made a very unfortunate start, and *made a serious mistake* in applying Romans 7:24, 25 to Paul *as a Christian, or to any other Christian*. Even Brother Russell, and all good writers whom I have read, applies that Scripture to those under law *who had not come into Christ* and found the deliverance that is in Him. . . . The Scripture in Romans 7 was never written to describe Christian experience, and to make it so teach is to make Paul contradict himself.

In the third paragraph of the article in question we have a picture of a man, a Christian, and Paul, *living a double life*: with the flesh living in and serving sin, a slave to sin that is within; but with the mind or as a New Creature serving and pleasing God. If this is true, what better are we than those under law? Why all we read in the New Testament about overcoming, and

why all the promises to the overcomer if *in reality there is no overcoming*, and if the man under grace is the same slave of the flesh and its lusts as the man under law? And let me ask the writer of the article, Can he harmonize his teaching in the third paragraph of his article with the beautiful teaching near the end, page 156, col. 2, par. 1? And let me ask him: If doing what the man in Romans 7 does, *lets the flesh have its way*, does that not mar the image that is growing in our heart and mind? Do we not all know from sad experience that even a short season of fleshly activity sets us back spiritually and mars the image fair? . . . If we claim to have heart likeness to Christ and do not have life likeness, we are only fooling ourselves. . . . - W. M. B. C., Can. [The emphasis placed on words is ours.]

### **Our Reply**

Dear Brother:--It will not be possible at this time to answer all the points of the above in detail but we hope that the following argument may help to do away with some misconceptions. The Word of God is inspired, but our conclusions are not inspired and must stand or fall in proportion as they measure up to the Word.

The paragraph in question, it is true, does present the thought that Romans 7:24, 25 applies to all Christians whether Jew or Gentile; but such an application does not warrant the conclusion suggested in the above criticism, namely, *"a double life."* If these verses can be construed *to* signify "a double life" when applied to Christians, they would *just as surely* signify the same if applied to Jews under the law. But we may be sure that Paul is not saying that sincere Jews, such as was he himself, had been living "a double life"; for *no* one who at heart loves righteousness and sincerely endeavors to do God's will, can be said to be living "a double life." To live such a life would mean to be hypocritical, as were the Scribes and Pharisees, whereas Israelites "indeed," such *as* were the Apostles and disciples, were not hypocrites.

What then are we to understand from Paul's argument? The Church at Rome, to whom he was writing, was made up of both Jews and Gentiles, and in common with the Church in other *cities*, was troubled and confused by the teachings of certain Jews who were more or less successful in persuading Gentile converts to conform to requirements of the *law*. Paul in several of his epistles combats these errors.

In the chapters leading up to the Scripture in question, Paul shows that the endeavors of righteously inclined Jews to keep the law did not benefit them in so far as the obtaining of salvation was concerned; for the law promised life only to those *who* could keep it in every "jot and tittle," and this was impossible for sin-defiled humanity. Having shown that all Gentiles had violated the law of God sensed by conscience (Rom. 2:14, 15), he asks: "When then? Are we better [off] than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge of *both Jews and Greeks*, that they are *all* under sin" - Rom. 3:9.

To transgress God's law in *a single point* constitutes offense against the whole law (James 2:10), and would as certainly bring death as if one had broken every commandment therein. (Rom. 2:12.) No matter then how sincerely either Jew or Gentile might try, neither could escape condemnation; and so Paul asks the question (Rom. 7:24) "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" The answer he gives sums up in a single sentence all his previous argument which, in brief, showed that since the sins of mankind had now been punished in Christ Jesus, God could be just and yet justify sinners apart from works. (Rom. 3:24-28; 5:10, 18, 19.) And so he gives the answer to his own question and says I thank God (for deliverance) through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We submit then that *no one but a Christian* would or could make this statement, and so cannot agree that the verse should be applied only to "*those under law who had not come into Christ.*" This Epistle, when written, was not divided into chapter and verse as we find it in our Bibles today, and so we also submit that the next verse is further proof of the point just made: for the first three words of chapter 8, verse 1, definitely connect this verse *up* as a conclusion of what has just been said - "There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them *which are in Christ Jesus.*"

It is true that Brother Russell did apply Romans 7 up to and including verse 24, to Jews still under the *law*, but the following quotation shows that he considered verse 25 as applicable to Christians, and that the great difference between sincere Jews under the law and sincere Christians was the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Reprints, page 3436, col. 1, par. 2, lines 12-26, reads:

"The Apostle represents not only *himself but all sincere Israelites*, groaning under the law, when he cried out, 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this dead body?' (Rom. 7:24.) **He was mourning**, and the Lord pointed that all the mourners in Zion should be comforted-comforted with the assurance that, while they were sinners and imperfect and could never justify themselves before God under the *law*, nevertheless, God Himself had found a ransom, had redeemed His people. It is in view of this comforting assurance of the Gospel that the Apostle, after representing himself as the Jew, under the law, groaning, and travailing, and crying for deliverance, in the next breath *represents himself as the Christian who has found the deliverance*, and exclaims, 'Than s be unto God, who giveth *us* the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!'"

Again his meaning is clearly set forth in a long article written to explain these two verses in Nov., 1, 1900 Watch Tower (R2719-R2722). And although he changed his view as respects the New Covenant as being-the means of grace wherein, we, stand, yet we are unable to find any place

where he changed his opinion as to the significance of the verses in question. Page 2721, paragraphs 3 to 6 read:

"The advantage of this new position in Christ [verse 25] over the old position in Moses is that God now accepts *my* new mind, my heart desires, accompanied by my best endeavors; and under this New Covenant, through the merit of the ransom, **He** justly ignores and hides from His sight the imperfections of the flesh, which are contrary to y *wish*, and against which I am striving. It may be aid of me, then, *and of all such*, that it is with our mind with our hearts, 'that we are serving God-even if, to some extent, contrary to our wish and endeavor, our flesh should, either through weakness or ignorance, serve he law of sin at times. - Rom. 7.

### **The New Creature Alive, the Old Dead - Rom. 8:1-11**

"Under the covenant through which we are united to Christ, our mortal bodies are reckoned as dead, as sacrificed, as no longer us, and our minds are reckoned as the new creature adopted into the family of God, and seeking to serve God and His dear Son. It is therefore according to the standpoint from which we view the matter that we could say of these new creatures that they are holy, and that the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in them, and that the Wicked One toucheth them not. - 1 John 5:18.

"In such expressions *we* are referring exclusively to the reckoned '*new*' creatures, and are ignoring entirely, as dead, their mortal bodies. But if we should speak from another standpoint, and attempt to 'say that we are actually perfect in the flash, it would be untrue, and not only so but would be an ignoring of the merit of Christ's sacrifice, and our *continued need* (while in the fallen flesh) of a- share in the justification which it provides. Those who would thus speak of their flesh as perfect, should hear the Apostle speaking to the reverse, saying, 'In my flesh dwelleth no good thing,'-no perfection; *aria* all. imperfection *is* unright, and all unrighteousness is sin. Hence, says the Apostle John, 'If we say [speaking of our flesh, and ignoring the justification provided in Christ to cover its. blemishes] that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' - 1 John 1:8.

"St. Paul proceeds to clearly mark the distinction between the *new* mind, which consecrated in Christ is accepted as the 'new creature,' holy and acceptable to God, and our mortal bodies, which he calls 'this dead body' -originally dead, under divine sentence, because. of sin, but redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and justified, and then included in our sacrifice, when *we* gave our little all in consecration to the Lord, *as* living sacrifices-to be dead with Christ, to suffer with Him even unto death. He declares- that it *is*, *to* those who are walking *after* the spirit, seeking to **serve** the Lord in spirit and in truth, from the heart, that are freed from the condemnation; and that this includes the thought that they do not now walk *after* the flesh, desiring *to* fulfill its desires. And here *we* are to closely distinguish between the walking *up to* the spirit, and walking *after* the spirit. We should *of* course follow as closely to the *spirit* of truth and righteousness' *as* possible, and yet *we cannot hope*, *so long as* we are in the imperfect flesh, that we could ever walk *up to* the spirit' *of* the divine requirements, though we are to strive .in this direction continually. One thing is positive, *However* we must not walk *after* the flesh. To do so would imply that we had lost the new mind, the new disposition, the new will that we had become dead to those hopes and covenants which had led to our consecration."

The paragraph of our article in question was not intended to convey the thought that "in reality there is no overcoming"; we agree fully that only overcomers can hope to meet the Lord's approval and hear His welcome plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant." To "let the flesh

have its way" would surely mar (in the sense of hinder) the "image that is growing in our heart and mind," but let us make sure that we understand what is meant by overcoming.

The child of God who has hopes of becoming transformed into the image of his Master, and who has the divine perfection held *up* before him as the goal to strive toward, would surely lose this blessed relationship if he were indifferent to the sinful tendencies of his earthly tabernacle, for this would show that he did not love God. If it were possible for us to live lives *wholly free from sin and imperfection*, this, it is true, would be overcoming sin, but it would not be overcoming from the standpoint in which our Lord overcame: nor would we be following in His steps by so doing. Jesus had *no* sins to overcome; but was "holy; harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." What He overcame, then, was the pressure brought to bear upon Him (through the world, the flesh, and the Adversary) to make Him draw back from His covenant of sacrifice.

Jesus, as a man, had kept the law perfectly, and was entitled to life and all the earthly blessings that originally had belonged to Adam; sin was abhorrent to Him, and being perfect, it was but natural for Him to live a sinless life in spite of **His** surroundings. But in entering into a covenant of sacrifice unto death, He rode roughshod over every instinct of His perfect humanity; it was not natural for Him to sacrifice the flesh, and He would have violated no law of justice had He refused; but for the joy that was set before Him and **His** delight to do the Father's will, He entered into an agreement to sacrifice Himself, and He faithfully carried out that agreement to the end.

We must overcome from the 'same standpoint. We have entered into a covenant to forego all earthly hopes, a covenant to be dead with our Lord, and to be overcomers. We must faithfully perform that contract unto the end. To live after the flesh would mean to return to earthly hopes, desires, and aspirations, and would abrogate our covenant. May God help us to keep these old bodies under the domination of the will of God, which we have taken for our wills, and be faithful to our covenant until death.

## The Praise Belongs to Him

I know if I am chosen to joint-heirship with my Lord,  
To reign with Him in glory, to receive that great reward;  
If after all my weaknesses a crown for me He'll claim,  
I know that choice will surely bring great glory to God's name.

If, I had been more worthy, and my stumblings had been few,  
When men gave *God* the glory, they'd have praised *my virtue*, too;  
If I'd ne'er lost a battle; or had never missed the mark,  
As they talked about *His* goodness, *mine, also*, they'd remark.

But my being *so* deficient, in thought and word and deed,  
Means *He'll* get *all* the glory - He deserves it all, indeed.  
When they see this weak mortal raised to such immortal heights,  
What praise, will rise to Him who in such nothingness delights!

I know that when my Savior did return *to* heaven above,  
And was crowned with wondrous glory, it did prove His Father's love;  
But thinking *of Christ's* merit, and His sinless life of grace,  
'Twas no wonder that Jehovah chose *Him*, for such a place.

With *me* it is so different; I have not and thing to plead,  
That I should be more honored than another bruised reed;  
And truly there's no reason to give *me* a mite of praise;  
To Him belongs all glory for the joys which crown my days.

If you knew all my failings, and my blemishes so vile,  
And saw the loving patience my Father shows the while,  
'Twould amaze you beyond measure to think He *could* or *would*  
Make me an able servant who should do His people good.

But if to Him such praise is due because of what I *am*  
Because, of such a weakling He has made a stronger man,  
Then what will be His glory when He's raised me higher still,  
And crowned me with His choicest on the top of Zion's Hill?

That all these years of striving find me so imperfect still,  
Does not speak much to my credit nor give a happy thrill;  
Where I *appear* as *worthy* 'tis because *His grace* is there,  
And in the praise and *glory* I deserve no part, no share.

I hate my faults and failings, and I fight them day by day,  
But from self with all its' weaknesses I cannot get away;  
Despite this fact, *He uses me-beyond is still more grace*  
And hosts will tell His glory-His who found poor me a place.

- Benjamin H. Barton.

## Messages of Encouragement

Dear Brethren:

It was indeed a great surprise, and the cause of very joyful sentiments to receive your kind letter here today, expressing brotherly interest in my welfare after these many days. I am thankful to say that I myself, and the friends I have the privilege to serve, are faring very well, considering the time of unrest prevailing all over the world. We have freedom to gather round the Bible and even to meet at little Sunday conventions. We rejoice in our great God, His Christ, and the wonderful message the Bible contains. If you have any reason to believe that your magazine will reach me, I should indeed be glad to receive it, or at least some copies of it, though I may not be able to send the subscription price.

We have full freedom to send out our little paper in this country. At Christmas time I had the privilege of visiting friends in Stockholm, Sweden, and we had little gatherings, considering the Scriptures almost every day.

I am now very near seventy years old, and I am feeling it just a little bit, but yet able to travel round the country and meet with little groups.

You must convey greetings of warm Christian love to the friends who are so kindly inquiring about me, and I ask you to be assured that I have greatly appreciated your brotherly kindness in writing' me.

With warm Christian love,  
Yours in our dear Lord and Master,  
Carl Luttichau-Denmark.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Loving greetings. I wish once again to thank you for so kindly sending me the "Herald" free. I should miss them very much. Yet- the. time seems near when we shall not be able to, get them. I have found the articles both comforting, uplifting, and searching. I expect you are wondering if we are receiving them. We have up to recently, though often delayed.

We all need your prayers. A lot of damage has been done, but up to the present none of the brethren in this district have lost their home. We are still able to meet for study on Sunday. We give thanks to our heavenly Father daily for all His care and keeping. We, do indeed long for His kingdom to come. We think often of you all and thank God for the loving lessons we get through your ministry. May His rich blessing ever be with you all.

It rejoices our hearts to read the letters of our dear brethren in Poland and Germany. We pray every night that the dear Lord. will comfort and strengthen them. (Deut. 31:6.) This message is sent to them with our Christian love, if you are able to write to them. - Psalm 46; Num. 6:24-26.

With Christian greetings, I remain,  
Your sister in hope, C. H Eng.



Dear Sirs:

Your interesting leaflet entitled "Why Does God Permit Evil?" came into my hands just yesterday. It has a real message for such a day as this.

Your generous offer on the back page also interested me. I am therefore enclosing thirty cents for a copy of "The Divine Plan of the, Ages." Since the above mentioned leaflet has a real message, I believe the others listed will have also. If I am not asking too much, please send me the one on Bible prophecies, Christ's Second Coming, and the Present World Distress.

I thank you for your kindness. May the Lord richly bless you in His work.

Sincerely yours in Him, D. M. - Pa.