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## In the Upper Room with Jesus

*"And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us." - Mark 14:15.*

HOW BEAUTIFULLY the writers of the four Gospel accounts, each in his own way, contributes significant touches to the story they tell of the last Passover Jesus observed with His disciples. Matthew is brief, with no detail about the place selected. John makes no reference to the Supper other than to tell us that Jesus "riseth from Supper" and washed their feet. Luke gives much the same account as Mark, but adds these words of Jesus, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," or as the marginal reading: "I have heartily desired." Mark, besides mentioning the man with the pitcher of water, whom Luke also mentions, gives us another of those loving statements of our Lord we are so glad to have on record. The added touch is in the two last words of our text-"for us." The disciples had inquired: "Where wilt Thou that we go and prepare that **Thou mayest eat** the Passover?" In reply, Jesus, passing over the personal reference to Himself, said, "He will show you a **large upper room** furnished and prepared: there make ready **for us.**" This is in keeping with His remark, "I have heartily desired to eat this Passover **with you.**"

It is not difficult to understand this special desire of Jesus. Who more than He could rejoice in partaking of the last of all the typical passover feasts? What a joy it must have been to Him to know the old order ended and a new and more wonderful day of divine favor about to begin, through His own death. No doubt He rejoiced also in leaving behind a memorial in which His followers would always be closely identified with Him in grateful remembrance, "till **He come.**" As "the Church of the Firstborn" passed over from death into the life He came to give, how greatly He loved them, and henceforth He would have them, bound to Him as stated in His Word: "This is My body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me." - Luke 22:19.

### Closely Linked with His Own

We are reminded of another occasion when Jesus linked Himself personally with one of His disciples. Peter at this time was involved in a financial obligation, and Jesus immediately asso-

ciated Himself with Peter in his debt, telling him where to secure the required tax, saying, "That take, and give unto them for **Me and** thee." - Matt. 17:27.

But perhaps nowhere is there a more heart-moving illustration of this readiness of Jesus to be closely linked with His own, than in His marvelous prayer in John 17. In that prayer to God He says, "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them." "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory." (John 17:10, 24.) How intimately He here joins Himself to us and us to Him. Is He not saying to God in these words much the same that He had previously said to the two sent to prepare the upper room, Make ready for us, for Me and Mine? So true is this that as the prospective Bride portrayed in Canticles, we too can say of our espoused Bridegroom, "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me"; and with the Psalmist: "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O Lord! how great is the sum of them!" - Song of Solomon 7:10; Psa. 139:17.

Many are the lessons to be gathered in this upper room with Jesus. It is with us still if we will but turn our steps aside to be alone in His presence. Our blessed Lord has not changed, and as in days of old He found a place to be intimately near His own, so today He makes choice of times and places where we may come apart from distracting things and find both rest and enlightenment in some "secret place of the Most High." So He brings us to the upper room of our text to see new beauties in His words and way, that we may carry out into our field of influence and service something more of the fragrance of that sacred retreat.

### **"The Measureless Depths of His Love"**

Let us first ponder the words, "a large upper room furnished and prepared." In all there were only twelve besides the Master who would gather there for that evening hour. For so few a smaller room would seem sufficient. Why then the particular reference to its capacity? Just to recall that Jesus had Himself selected the place, and to remember that what was to take place in that appointed room on that memorable evening was to be of special interest to all His people throughout the Age, would answer the question. It leaves us humbled and blessed with a deep and grateful understanding. Amid the baneful things of the world, the ever-present downward tendencies of the flesh, and the ceaseless enticements of the Devil, the true disciple must learn that the narrowness of the heavenly way is real indeed, that "strait is the gate and **narrow** is the way, and few there be that find it." But not so the path of fellowship and blessing over which the good Shepherd will guide His faithful sheep. These "He feeds in pastures **large and** fair," leading them beside deep and wide streams of living water, so that they too may say, "He brought me forth also into a large **place**; He delivered me, because He delighted in me." (Psa. 18:19.) He still seeks large hearts for the fulness of His blessing.

What a depth of meaning, wideness of scope, largeness of love, was brought into view during that evening hour in that upper room in the memorial of His atoning death, and in His all embracing prayer with which, according to John, that evening hour of association closed. It would seem that even Judas was not excluded therefrom by any command of Jesus, traitor though he was. His feet were not passed by, but washed as were the feet of them all. Not until, of his own free will, he went out into the night, did he cease to share in the prepared feast or the ministrations of Him who there made Himself servant of all. What largeness this suggests! How it rebukes our narrowness! We are ashamed as we see the largeness of Jesus' patient dealings with the frailties of men so like ourselves. Can we not believe that the dimensions of that room grew larger and larger as the disciples witnessed the loving, tender service of Jesus there? If for the moment there was but a faintly comprehended sense of expanding vision, we know that in subsequent days the scene unfolded in ever-widening perspective. All their hearts, except the self

centered heart of Judas, grew broad in brotherly sympathy, and large in Christlike love. Has it been so with us? How sad if this is not true in our experience. Think of the "large room furnished and prepared" through the sacrifice of Jesus, into which divine love has led us, furnished, as Paul has said, "according to His riches in glory"; yes, prepared with a multitude of reminders of condescending grace beyond our deserving or comprehension. How the eyes of our understanding are opened here to see the inconsistency and unloveliness of narrowed conceptions of God, and the spirit quickened into the largeness of the love of God revealed through Christ. Here there can be no more making "the love of God too narrow by false limits of our own," for here of His fulness we receive, from grace to grace.

### **A Warning Shadow in the Upper Room**

Another important lesson of the upper room waiting for our attention is seen in the shadow found there on that Passover evening. Of a time long before, it was written, "the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." (Job 1:6.) This he has continued to do, even to our own day. Knowing this to be true, how great the need for watchfulness lest he insinuate himself into our fellowship where least expected, usually in garb angelic, often like Bunyan's "Mr. Valiant for Truth." If he dared enter that upper room long ago, which would seem, impossible even for him, because of the presence there of Jesus, then where, yes; where can saints be gathered that Satan will not intrude? If there be only one heart in which he may find a place, through that one he will come, even to the Lord's table. He came into the upper room in the heart and aims of Judas. A selfish heart it was, and selfishness is always a blinding thing. How much of heaven's riches has been bartered away for a mess of pottage of trifling worth! What an example Judas becomes of those who for some fancied worthwhile temporary gain lose sight of real spiritual riches. The spirit of betrayal grows rapidly in a selfish heart. It is never God and others first, but a wresting from both that which will please self.

It was in that solemn hour, a last momentous hour, that Jesus said, "One of you shall betray Me." A dark shadow it surely was in an hour otherwise so sublimely sweet. Is not our own time just such an hour? How sobering, therefore, the warning given us by our Lord, speaking of just "this time: "And then many will be ensnared, and will betray **their associates**, and abhor them." (Matt. 24:10, Diaglott.) "My soul be on thy guard!" How shocking the spirit that will cooperate in putting a child of God into the hands of an enemy, or assist in his beheading! It may mean spiritual suicide for those who do such things. O the possibility of losing heaven itself, or all opportunity for life, for a thing of as little value as "thirty pieces of silver"! Yet until we pass beyond the veil, temptations to selfishness, wrong ambitions, and covetousness will assail us. Let us "watch and pray" that we be not overcome of these, and thus fall a prey of the great Adversary, but ever follow the Master in the spirit of loyal devotion.

### **"Lord, Is It I?"**

There are times when the Word speaks very directly to our hearts; times when through it we seem brought face to face with glaring defects in our own lives; times when we remember that even a loving John could desert his Master in fear, a Peter deny Him with vehemence because too sure of his ability to stand loyal; and we may well fear for ourselves lest some permitted circumstance need only to come and reveal our weaknesses just as clearly. This lesson is to be learned in the upper room in the immediate presence of Jesus. He makes us there to remember that though His warnings are spoken in general terms, our own fall may be involved. As every such warning is heard by us, well it is that we think not so much of what others may or may not do, but say with our brethren of long ago, "Lord, is it I?" Who among us has not needed to remember this? In some moment of self laudation has the Lord not heard us affirming our loyalty, declaring, or perhaps, only thinking, that while others have fallen

or may yet fall, we can be depended on to remain steadfast and true? How often He has found us comparing ourselves among ourselves and others with ourselves, and too often to self-praise. How glad we should be that He loves us too much to let us go on in this way without rebuke and correction. Sometime, somehow, He will surely make us conscious of His searching gaze, while He asks, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" Our feelings cannot be different then from the feeling of Peter when he was reminded of his weakness and disloyalty by that heart-searching question. No hint now that he thought himself a better disciple than the others-too humbled now to flatter himself by contrast with his brethren -- he could only say, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Painful such humbling may be to us when it comes into our experience, but thanks be to God for all that destroys the spiritual pride of self righteousness.

Let the largeness of the upper room be remembered then! As we hear the Lord's words revealing that some of those very close to Him will fall, let us remember how we have thought of ourselves superior to saints of former days who did not see some things we are now privileged to know; or for what minor differences we disparage and even put the cap of disloyalty on a brother walking beside us under the efficacious blood of Christ, while we assume the halo of faithfulness for our own head. If we are honest when we find ourselves guilty of this, we will not be asking the question, "Lord, is it I?" It will be the confession, "It is I. I have not done better than Peter or others." Humility and unspeakable joy will go hand in hand when we learn this lesson of the upper room. No sweeter witness can come into the heart bearing witness to relationship with Jesus, than this very lesson permanently learned. Then, and not till then, have we entered into the blessed spirit of oneness with Jesus in the love wherewith He loves all His Church.

### **"I Have Called You Friends"**

Passing by other precious lessons, many of them particularly important today, we come now to a consideration of the great truths contained in the sermon so closely associated with the upper room. It is significant that it is-from "the disciple whom Jesus loved" that we get this priceless sermon. John leaned on Jesus' breast, and thus brings us near His heart. What a loss it would be had we not this prayer and these last words of Jesus to His disciples as given in chapters 14 to 17 of John's Gospel story.

And what is the character of this last sermon of Jesus? It opens with a most comforting word to His immediate disciples and to all such followers throughout the Age, and closes with a plea to God on their behalf, and ours, by which we ought to be transported into the highest sense of blessedness. To His disciples He says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." To the Father He prays, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am . . . . And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (John 14:1-3; 17:26.) Between these opening and closing statements the great desire in the heart of Jesus was for our intimate relationship with God and Himself, and for the interrelationship of the whole family of God. The chief points are, first, the sending of the Comforter, which, as Jesus pointed out, would mean more than if He could remain with them as a man; this would mean, second, their identification with Him as branches in Himself the Vine, all bearing much fruit to the glory of the Father; third, the rich blessings possible through prayer; and at last, fourth, the joy of being with Him in the Home prepared above.

"Ye are My friends"! What a privilege this represents! Yes, but more than a privilege, a requirement. Jesus lifts our relationship up above the level of servants; therefore it is friendship

He desires. Failing to reach this plane, we fail to belong to that inner circle peculiarly and particularly defined in this whole last-hour sermon. To Jesus, it is a matter of our abiding in Him and He in us, a relationship in which there will be a sharing in mutual interest and joy of all things revealed to the Son by the Father. Can there be any clearer proof found anywhere in the entire Bible that the ultimate end of whatever privileges of knowledge, service, or fellowship we may have, is that, like Paul, we will recognize that having Christ formed in us is the goal of all Christian experience. When Paul turned from everything else to Christ, it was that he might eventually "be found in Him." So it must be with us. The great ideals Jesus sets before us in this sublime farewell discourse are the only ideals consistent with our high calling -- "called to be saints." They are not impractical or impossible, but intended to inspire every disciple with the same glorious hope given to Paul -- the hope of attaining all there was in Christ for him. Any who stop short of this aim are stopping far short of God's will for them.

This is the closing word of Jesus in the upper room, in which He lifts our thoughts out of the ordinary into the sublime. He portrays the Christian life, not as a hard and burdensome experience, but as a life similar to His own, one in which His joy, His peace, His fruitful prayers, His love, could be known in experience and reflected in the life. In his Ephesian epistle Paul has given us the sum of these lessons of the upper room. In chapter 2, verses 1 to 7 (Eph. 2:1-7), how much we are shown of our place in the will of God. We are raised with Christ and seated in heavenly places **in Him**. As in the gracious words of Jesus: "There prepare for us," is revealed a breadth of love, so in the words of Paul: "He hath raised us up together, and together made us sit in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus," is revealed the same rich breadth of love. The conception of our union with Christ is wholly wrong unless it embraces all saints as sharers together with us. Can we be attentive listeners in the upper room and miss this important lesson? We sit not alone, nor with a select few chosen by ourselves, but with all who love our Lord in sincerity. This is the fulness of life, the completion of the testimony that we have passed from death unto life. Here, love to Christ will fill the heart, give strength to hake off hindering prejudices, adjust all our intellectual difficulties, and broaden our love and sympathies until we can survey the whole field of Christian brotherhood and, thinking of the Home above, theirs and ours, say with the Savior of us all, There prepare a room a place for us. - *Contributed*.

## **Sheltered Under His Wings**

*"See! a King shall rule justly, and princes do right, and a Man be a shelter from wind, and a refuge from storm, like pools in a dry, like a shadowing rock in a wearisome land." - Isa., 32:1, Fenton's Translation. .*

THE STRIKING language of the Prophet in this text contains a wealth of meaning to all who are weary of the dark night of sin and sorrow, and who cling with undiminished faith to the promise of a joyful morning without clouds, when sighing and crying shall flee away forever. Indeed the prophecy is so striking that we may well inquire, Of whom does the Prophet speak when he tells of one who shall be so complete a hiding place? If we are to understand him to refer to one among the sons of men, where can such an one be found? For six thousand years mankind has sought in vain for such a deliverer, only to discover that no arm of flesh has been competent toward off the succeeding waves of storm and tempest. The pages of history carry the records of man's shattered hopes, as through the ages he has repeatedly chosen some trusted leader to guide him into a happier state, only to find that it is not in the power of any human agency to break the fetters under which the whole creation groans and travails. Surely the experience of threescore

centuries has demonstrated the verity of the inspired declaration, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." (Psa. 146:3, 4.) Who then is the man foreseen by the Prophet Isaiah?

Even if it be admitted that in some manner such a prophecy might be a forecast of a man's future glory and service to his fellows, yet it seems that the only possible application which would give full weight to the prophecy of so great a wealth of blessing, would be that it refers to the "Man" whom God has appointed to abolish sin and death, and to fill the earth with perpetual rest and peace. "The Man Christ Jesus" is the only One who can be the deliverer and the refuge from all the adverse conditions of wind and storm, and bring forth streams in the desert, or be the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land. In Him alone may the Church now and a sin-sick world by and by find the fruition of all true desire for emancipation and peace, for only in and through Him is it possible to find a complete satisfaction of the unutterable longings of the heart for perfect harmony with infinite love.

### **A Thousand Years Earth's Coming Glory**

Taken as a prophecy of earth's future glory under the reign of its rightful King in association with His Bride, the Church, our text leaves nothing more to be desired. Ever since man was driven out from the happy home provided for him, "eastward in Eden," where he had enjoyed intimate communion with God, and then because of disobedience sent out into the earth, cursed for his sake, to dwell where "the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness," and toil with sweat of brow against the thorns and thistles, the disappointments, suffering, and exposure to the unrelenting malice of a malignant Adversary, O how greatly he has needed a hiding place. Surely unnumbered souls have felt as Job must have done when he prayed in the midst of his affliction, "O that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that Thou wouldest keep me secret, until Thy wrath be past, that Thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!" (Job 14:13.) "Many indeed have similarly longed to escape the afflictions traceable to the entrance of sin into the world, and to go "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." How blessed then to know that for a thousand wonderful years mankind will be in the hands of Christ and His Church, and through the Kingdom protections and advantages be hidden from the demands of a perfect law, until qualified to fall into the hands of the living God without fear. In that glad day they shall find the promise fulfilled, far beyond all the dreams which have kept hope springing eternal in the human breast.

Truly, it is not in the power of human tongue or pen to portray the glorious perfection of the coming earthly Paradise condition when mankind have found shelter in the Rock of Ages and complete deliverance from sin and death through Emmanuel's reign. It is beyond our present powers of imagination to visualize the happiness of man's estate, when the great work of reconciliation between God and man is complete, and "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev. 21:3.) But this we know that in that glad day every God implanted longing of which a perfect heart is capable, will find its full realization and expression. Man will be at rest in God, world without end.

### **Every Man shall Love His Fellow**

Harmony with God will mean perfect harmony with each brother man in that eternal Kingdom of joy and peace; for then no more will "man's inhumanity to man make countless thousands mourn," but instead, earth's society will be fashioned after the order of that which fills the courts

of heaven itself. O what a wealth of possibilities divine love has planted within the mind of man! Created in the image and likeness of God, there are springs of infinite and eternal possibilities hidden in that image and likeness far beyond our present ability to even catch a dim outline. Man, as God intends he shall yet be, is a noble, lovable, marvelous creation. When we read, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," we must not confine the meaning of this love of God for man to the limits of a great sympathy for him in his fallen condition. The love of God for man is centered in His eternal purpose, when in the exercise of His creative love and power He added a perfect human being to "the whole family of God."

Is there not more of heaven-born love, rather than mere human reaction, when a new-born babe adds to the number of the family circle. The two or three children who have preceded it are not loved less, but the new arrival becomes the center of every one's affection, and all combine to welcome the added treasure given them to love and cherish. So it must have been among the heavenly host when man appeared among the children of God. Are we not told that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" over the works of creation? And who but the First-born of all creation is represented in these illuminating words, "The Lord [Jehovah] possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I 'brought forth. Then was I by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, **and My delights were with the sons of men.**" (Job 38:7; Prov. 8:22, 25, 30, 31.) Do these Scriptures not tell us something of the thrills of joy experienced by all former members of "the family of God" when roan, "crowned with glory and honor" came from the hand of Him whose name means Love?

And it was this noble creature that "God so loved." It was this marvelous being that Jesus gave His life to reclaim, and it is this conception of man as God beholds him by and by, that fills our own hearts with that unexplainable present love for mankind, even though for the present moment he is so marred and defiled by sin. Underneath the marred and sadly disfigured image borne by the mean as we see him today, we realize there are those latent qualities which six thousand years of the exceeding sinfulness of sin has not entirely eradicated. And so with "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts," and faith in His power to reclaim and perfect even to the uttermost all who come unto Him, do we not find a sheltering love creeping into our own souls and feel the surging floods of living water welling up in our hearts for every struggling human being, filling us with, a longing to refresh them with its thirst-quenching sweetness? Surely, to have had contact with the "Man," that "shadowing Rock in a wearisome land," has filled our lives with love for the world, for whom He gave His life to reclaim from sin, that He might again crown them with the glory and honor of perfect manhood.

If these be the reactions we experience today as we come under the benevolent influences of the redemptive love of God, shall it not be so with the world of mankind when Jesus reigns from "the river unto the ends of the earth"? In that day "every man" shall indeed "love his fellow, justice give to each and all, dwell in love, and dwell in Jesus, who redeemed them from the fall. Living, as each one will be, under the sheltering wings of Christ's Kingdom reign, and receiving through its beneficent provisions; all needed sympathy and encouragement, "the brotherhood of man" will then become a beautiful reality. Living in constant contact with Christ and His Bride will bring them into an understanding touch with everything in human life. They shall learn to look for the man God intends, and forget the warped and twisted characters undergoing the regenerative operations of that glorious restitution day. The love of Christ will constrain them, to practise a sympathy with "all sorts and conditions of men" in all sorts of deformity, and thus together they shall attain the goal of perfect Godlikeness-perfect life, perfect love, perfect rest, completeness.

Verily the prophetic picture given in our text is no overdrawn forecast of earth's coming glory, or of the completeness of the deliverance man shall enjoy from wind and storm, arid conditions, or from the inhumanity of man to man.



## **Great Need of Compassion for the Groaning Creation**

Such a picture as we have before us of God's present sympathy for mankind in his fallen condition, and of His ultimate purpose in his full recovery, cannot but fill our hearts with comfort and joy. No one who has himself really experienced the love of God in pardoning grace can be a stranger to the impulses that love creates. True, there will be those who, like the man in our Lord's pointed illustration, though forgiven an enormous debt themselves, will, nevertheless, keep a strangle hold on a debtor owing but a few pence. Such, however, have not really experienced the thrill of conscious forgiveness, for none are forgiven beyond their own willingness and delight in forgiving.

But we are thinking now of those who really know by experience that mysterious inflow of sympathetic love which must have filled the heart of Stephen, when with glory-lightened countenance he entreated that his murderers be not charged with their crime. May it not be that the answer to that prayer is a matter over which we need not dispute. Who knows but that it was that forgiving love radiating from his angel-like face that burned so deeply into the innermost soul of Saul, and prepared his troubled heart for the voice of Jesus on the Damascus road. Sweeter to the heart of the noble Stephen than vindictive retribution could ever be, would be the adding of a character like Paul to the number of the elect of God. And what would it have meant to us if his murderers had been served with the punishment their crime deserved? Would we have ever known Saul as anything but a heartless zealot, blind to every human claim of love and pity? Surely we would never have felt the power that every true Christian has realized as flowing through this "chosen vessel," had God not certainly answered Stephen's prayer. But let it be remembered, Stephen could not have foreseen the immediate results of his forgiving spirit. He did not pray thus because he knew that ere long Paul would shake the Jewish world with his championship of the cause of Christ. No, he prayed thus solely because he had caught the spirit of his Master, who came not to destroy men's lives but to save them. And in all this we may find a lesson never more needed than at the present time.

## **Strong to Bear Injustice**

Manifestly many of the saints today are being placed in circumstances where there is plenty of opportunity to allow bitterness against others to gain no little possession of the mind. The world is full of injustice. In so many ways every man's hand seems to be against his neighbor, and the survival of the individual seems more and more to depend on a willingness to use any method to attain a reasonable share of life's necessities. In the midst of such conditions it is easy enough to develop a vindictive attitude, to be unmindful of the example of Jesus, who opened not His mouth in complaint against His murderers, and to forget the spectacle of angelic rapture never to be forgotten by Saul of Tarsus. When it comes to the matter of our daily life with its round of "all things working together for good," how little we can really know of the meaning of a thousand and one things that come and go from day to day. Could we always realize the possibilities hidden in our contacts with all sorts and conditions of men, is it not safe to say that many times our reactions toward their selfish ways and their unjust methods, would be different from what it often is. May there not be times when, if we have developed the spirit of Stephen, and are ready to really believe that "they know not what they do," we will find it so much easier to curb any bitterness that might be creeping in. Surely, if keeping company with the Son of Man cannot make one strong to bear injustice, and fortify one against the toil and pain of daily contact with any circumstance divine love sees best for us, then how can Jesus say to us, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? - Matt. 11:28.

Only let us remember that it was after He had suffered all the terrible agonies of Gethsemane that He said to His disciples, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken! **Ought not Christ to have suffered these things**, and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:25, 26.) The whole tenor of Scripture teaching from first to last shows that the Christ must be first a suffering Christ before the right to reign can be enjoyed. How we need to constantly remind ourselves of our need of sharing the experiences of our Lord and Head if we would be qualified to reign with Him by and by. Did He not learn obedience by the things which He suffered, and at the same time was He not being made a merciful High Priest through being touched with a feeling of our infirmities? He gained thereby a greater sympathy with tried and sin-wounded men, and became thus a Savior more perfectly equipped for His saving work. And thus it is that chastening becomes so vital a part of the peculiar heritage of the sons and daughters of God. The great Husbandman does not prune wild brambles growing outside of His garden wall, but every branch within the wall that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more and more fruit. Then better far to be His wounded tree, bleeding from prunings perhaps, but from which richer fruit will yet appear.

Let us keep God's vision of perfect man consistently before our mind, not the warped and deformed creature who now afflicts us because sin has made him so. Let us visualize the everlasting benefits yet to come to men through the permission of evil, and train our vision on that ever brightening horizon where the prophetic beams of light are already promising the speedy coming of "the times of restitution of all things, spoken by the mouth of God's holy prophets since the world began." Thus, even now, we shall find ourselves enjoying more and more of the spirit of Stephen, and thereby become sympathetic intercessors for those who, because blinded by the god of this world, cause us suffering and disappointment.

Taking this view of present experiences, and learning to interpret all of our trials in the light of preparatory lessons in patience and love, qualifying us for our future work in the Kingdom, shall we not even now, because of our abiding faith in God, by our manifest peace and joy though troubled on every side, and by our freedom from any taint of vindictiveness, be to weary, chafing hearts all about us, a guide to "a shadowing Rock in a wearisome land." How better can we honor our God and reveal the quietness of spirit a knowledge of the truth can bring, than by our daily testimony witnessing to the fact that we have found the Man Christ Jesus a blessed shelter from the biting winds and stormy blast, a sheltering Rock under whose shadow there is peace, perfect peace. O what if we do sow in tears for a little while? What if we do find the struggle at times seemingly more than we can bear? The promise is sure, "We shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing our sheaves with us." When at last the long hoped for Kingdom reign does come, and the work of lifting mankind out of sin and death is our Age-long blessed occupation, shall we not then rejoice that we have had so much opportunity in the school of Christ to learn how to exercise the love of Christ for sinful man?

"Then cometh the end." And what an end! As the result of the work of Christ and His Church, the earth will be filled with a happy human family all in perfect harmony with their Creator. There will be no more one absent "prodigal son" among the children of God, but the "whole family of God in heaven and earth" one in eternal unity, eternal peace, and in a never-ending enjoyment together of the ceaseless unfoldings of the love and power and goodness of our gracious God. Surely God's "elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Then dear tried and warfare encompassed saints, "let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing" for so great an undertaking as shall be given to us, when in a little while it shall be our privilege to lead the race back over the long way, until it rests again in the Paradise of God.

## "Wave and Tide"

"On the far reef, the breakers  
Recoil in shattered foam.  
Yet still the sea behind them  
Urges its forces home;  
Its chant of triumph surges  
Through all the thunderous din  
The wave may break in failure,  
But the tide is sure to win.

"The reef is strong and cruel;  
Upon its jagged wall  
One wave -- a score -- a hundred.  
Broken and beaten fall;  
Yet in defeat they conquer,  
The sea comes flooding in  
Wave upon wave is routed,  
But the tide is sure to win.

"Oh, mighty sea! Thy message  
In changing spray is cast;  
Within God's plan of progress,  
It matters not at last  
How wide the shores of evil  
How strong the reefs of sin  
The wave may be defeated,  
But the tide is sure to win."

## The Law of Sacrifice

*"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." - John 12:24*

IN THE preceding verse Jesus said, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified." And in the verse following our text we read: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." It would seem that Jesus was here enunciating the great law of sacrifice, or, in other words, the law of love expressed in sacrifice. And why do we say, "love expressed in sacrifice"? Because we do not know of any better way to give expression to love. The fact is manifestly true that if we love people, we are willing to make sacrifices for them, and do so even joyfully; and if we are not willing to sacrifice for them, - it is proof positive that we do not love them.

Evidently sacrifice is a universal principle. It is well illustrated in nature. Behold an apple orchard. How beautiful it is when the trees are all in flower. Then after a few days, we pass by and find the ground all covered with petals. If the tree could talk we might say to it, "O apple tree, you are losing all your beauty. The ground is snowy white." And the tree might reply, "If I did not give up my beauty, you would not have any apples in your cellar next winter. In this respect I am under the law of sacrifice. I shed the flower in order to produce the fruit, and do this for the benefit of others."

So Jesus was talking about sacrifice and love, and death and life. He was referring to Himself and to the members of His Body, the Church. We say this advisedly, believing it to be indicated by the context. For if there is one thing clearly set forth in the New Testament teachings, it is the fact that, "If we suffer [with Christ], we shall reign with Him; if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him." Of course this does not mean that we have any part in His ransom sacrifice. That sacrifice stands alone, supreme, having propitiatory value attaching to nothing else. Our own voluntary sufferings for the Master have a reflex action upon our own characters, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, in our flesh, for His Body's sake, which is the Church.

So the Master used the illustration of the corn of wheat. We believe that He Himself was the first corn of wheat to thus be cast into the soil to die. Did He bring forth much fruit? During the Gospel Age He brings forth 144,000 grains, and that would seem to be a very large yield from one grain. Also this is a very superior quality of wheat. But in the Millennial Age He will bring forth a much larger number, and in this service He will be assisted by the Church.

### Two Kinds of Death

When a seed is cast into the ground, it is sown unto life and unto death, but the production of life is the purpose of the sowing. However, the farmer knows that there will also be death. But what kind of death? There are two kinds of death mentioned in the Bible, namely, the death that Adam died, and that the human race dies; and the death that Jesus died. These are quite different, the one from the other. The kind of death that Adam died was a penalized death, a slow process of disintegration. His vitality was gradually depleted. He wasted away, and finally went into the grave. That was the punishment for sin. But Jesus did not die that kind of death. His death was a voluntary one. He said, "No man taketh My life from Me. I have power to lay it down, and I have

power to take it up again." If we lay a thing down, any one may pick it up; but if we do not lay it down, it is a different matter. So, after Jesus laid His life down, any one could take it.

Now then, the seed in the ground has to die either like Adam or like Jesus. If it dies like Adam, it just wastes away, or rots away in the ground, and in that case nothing whatever comes out of it. We have known seeds to rot away in this manner, and that was the complete end of them. So our seed has to die like Jesus-a sacrificial death. And that is exactly what takes place.

### **Germination of Natural Seed**

When the seed is cast into the ground, the thing that occurs is called germination. That is the beginning of the development of a new plant in the seed. This at first is a tiny, feeble baby plant. It struggles into life, and like all babies, it needs food. This food it obtains from its mother. The old mother seed. has, stored up in it, nutritive element in the form of starch. But this starch has to be changed into sugar before the baby plant can consume it. And this process is soon effected by nature itself. Now the little baby plant can have all the food it needs. But what is it doing? Literally it is eating up its mother. The mother is giving of her substance to supply the son's requirements, but she herself is dying a sacrificial death. She is not rotting away in the ground, but is being **used up** in the interests of another, and the final result is that much fruit is produced.

The seed, we believe, was Jesus in the first instance, and the members of His Body, the Church, in the second. In each case the seed is sown at the time of consecration. That is when each one takes the seed (himself), and in the act of consecration casts it into the soil. The soil is the divine will. That is the only kind of soil that will make the seed grow. We do not consecrate unto the divine nature. We do not even consecrate unto a place in the Church. We consecrate to do the divine will. What use God will make of our sacrifice, we leave entirely in His hands.

### **Germination in Spiritual Seed**

The thing that then occurs is the begetting of the Holy Spirit. That is the beginning of the development of the new mind. At first this is a very small and feeble mind. It needs to grow, and in order to do this it must have food. This food is in the Word of God. According to the analogy of the seed, that must be stored in the old body as starch. "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart." The various capacities-his eyes, his ears, his tongue, hands, feet, brain-all his powers must be converted into servants of the new creature, as for instance, the old mind must be renewed and its thoughts instead of feeding the old creature must be such as "mortify," deaden, the earthly members, and transform the character. Thus the new creature is being developed, quickened, and this process is continued until the time of birth on the spirit plane. All this is at the sacrifice of the old body.

### **The Joy and Sweetness of Sonship**

We positively must have the "joy of the Lord" in order to grow. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." "Rejoice, and again I say, Rejoice." In other words it is everything to us to realize that we belong to God, that "All things work together for good to them that love God." When we lie down at night under a pall of darkness, we know that we are safe, because that guardian angel of ours is looking after us to shield us against the powers that lurk in the darkness. When we go out in the morning to the duties of the day, to meet the various trials that shall come along, that guardian angel goes with us. We cannot see him, but he is there.

## **Growth of the New Mind**

The new mind is growing now. It is becoming stronger in the elements of Christ. It is drawing on the vital powers of the old body, and using up the bodily capacities in service. Thus the old body is dying, but is doing so sacrificially. It is not wasting away, but is being used up in the service of the new mind. The new mind is in control, and the old body is the servant. Thus in Romans 6:11-13 we read "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

The Word of God corresponds also to the sunshine outside, that warms the earth and causes germination in the seed. "Of His own will begat He us through the Word of truth-that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. "Sanctify them through Thy truth. Thy Word is truth." In the final analysis, therefore, the growing power comes from God, through His Word.

It is interesting to watch the growth of anything. Only those things grow that have life. A seed looks very insignificant, but it contains the life principle, and that means great fields of golden grain for the farmer and barrels of flour for the consumer. In the springtime we behold everything waking up from its winter sleep, and all around us are the manifestations of life. And we like to watch things day by day as they grow.

## **Fruitage unto Life**

We love to behold evidences of growth in the Christian. There is no kind of growth so beautiful as this. Here is one who was mercenary, sordid, selfish, living for the things of the world, having no consideration for any one but himself. Now his mind is caught up by a bright vision of God's great purpose. He sees that no man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth to himself. He realizes the great privilege of being a co-worker with God, and he steps over the line to be on God's side. Or, to carry out the picture of our parable, he casts the seed into the soil of the divine will. He just buries himself in that great will. And now he becomes a new creature. He is living for righteousness and truth. "Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."

He begins to grow. According to a mark, pattern, or standard, which is the perfect pattern set by Christ Jesus, he makes progress day by day. He is becoming kinder, stronger in faith, more hospitable, more considerate of others, more patient, braver to face life's daily battle. He is realizing in himself what the poet meant when he said,

"Be a little kinder  
Than the day before,  
Pray a little oftener,  
Hope a little more.  
Cling a little closer  
To the Father's love.  
Life below shall liker grow  
To the life above."

Ah yes, soon we will be seeing an abundance of fruit. For the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, patience, faith, meekness, self control. This fruit is indeed worthwhile, for it is qualifying its possessor for a higher service beyond the *veil*. - *Contributed*.

## The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 1:24-27

*"I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake." - Col. 1:24, R. V.*

THE NATURE and the scarcity of Paul's references to himself and to the brethren there, have led many to infer that he had never visited Colosse. Even the passage now to be considered may be viewed more as an allusion to his office than to himself. The mention of his apostolic sufferings is forced from him not by a desire for recognition, but by a consuming desire that the brethren of this little Class may continue faithful to the Gospel which they have heard. Neither his greater sufferings nor his higher office are alluded to by Paul as an evidence of superiority. But having been introduced as an incentive to greater faithfulness on the part of the Colossians, they inflame the Apostle's mind with the usual rapturous enthusiasm regarding the precious message entrusted to him. Suffering suggests service, and the thought of his divine commission to serve leads his mind to the "mystery" for which he is suffering in order that he might serve those who have part in it.

### "Suffering for His Body's Sake"

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is "the Church." (Col. 1:24, R.V.) The critical versions, faithfully following the Greek text, omit the "who" found in the King James Version, thus beginning the new sentence and thought with the important word, "now." It is an Apostle in chains that uses it, not to complain, but to assure them that the bird in the darkened cage **can** sing as cheerfully as the one in his native bower. The iron on his wrist, the iron entering his soul, could not lessen the ardor of one who had learned "both how to be abased and how to abound." (Phil. 4:12.) It is for their sake, because of his faithfulness to his commission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, that he is in prison; and he rejoices in this privilege of bearing affliction that they may be enlightened.

"It is to constitute an important part of the New Creatures' testing that as respects earthly things (hey . . . must suffer persecution, must practise self-denial, must be as deceivers, and yet true; as having nothing, though really (by faith) possessing all things; as unwise, though really wise toward God. So much so that the prophetic description of the Master must be in large measure applicable to all who follow closely in His steps, viz., 'We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.' The Prophet declares, 'The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we [as sinners] were healed.' Let us not forget that our healing, or justification, preceded our acceptance as members of the Body of Christ -members of the New Creation; and that our acceptance to this higher plane of sonship and joint heirship was upon the special condition that **'we suffer with Him.'**" - "Studies in the Scriptures," Vol. VI. pp. F531, F632.

### "That Which is Lacking"

"I fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ." (R.V.) These are startling words. "It is not surprising that many explanations of these words have tried to soften down their boldness; as, for instance, 'afflictions borne for Christ,' or 'imposed by Him,' or 'like His.' But it seems very clear that the startling meaning is the plain meaning, and that 'the sufferings of Christ' here, as everywhere else, are 'the sufferings borne by Christ.' " -- "Expositor's Bible."

But what sufferings "borne by -Christ" are lacking, incomplete? "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we **are** healed. . . . And the Lord hath laid on Him **the iniquity of us all.**" The ransom is here described as complete. Manifestly, therefore, the Church must look elsewhere for their privilege of filling up "that which is lacking of the afflictions" "borne by Christ."

So far as the Greek indicates "the Christ" may be considered equally well to mean either our Lord or the anointed company that is His Body. Whichever interpretation is accepted, the same conclusion is reached. The sufferings of Paul and all members of that Body are necessary that each may be fully qualified for his place. Through much tribulation each must enter into the Kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22; 1 Pet. 5:10; James 5:10.) These tribulations must be brought upon us because of faithfulness or through sharing with those who are similarly faithful. (1 Pet. 2:20; 3:14; 4:12-16; Matt. 5:11; 10:22, 39; Luke 6:22; 2 Cor. 4:11; Heb. 13:13; 10:32-34.) "In so far as ye are taking fellowship in the Christ's sufferings rejoice!" (1 Pet. 4:13, Rotherham.) The Church suffers as He suffered, but only in part for the same reason' as He suffered. He alone died to expiate the penalty that was on the race because of Father Adam's sin. We do "'stiffer with Him that we may reign with Him"; and that we, as He, may "learn obedience." (Heb. 5:8.) The Church, now that she is His, has no sufferings peculiarly her own. Jesus suffered when the reproaches of them that reproached Jehovah fell on Him. (Psa. 69:9.) She suffers as He suffered-for faithfulness to her Father and her Lord; and therefore for faithfulness to the Word of God. In all that she suffers, her Head participates as the head of a natural body suffers, however remote the member may be that is afflicted. "In all our afflictions, He is afflicted." (Isa. 63:9.) He inspired the statement: "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye." Doubtless as Paul writes there rings in his ears the voice that hailed him on the Damascus road: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" The principle, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Matt. 25:40), does not await the end of the Millennium to become operative. While spared having gone to the lengths to which Saul's zeal drove him, can there be less of true contrition than his on the part of any one who becomes aware that the same Voice still warns that every trifling injury or injustice done to any member of His Body through envy, hatred, or even carelessness, is done to Him. Contrition must fill the heart of each one who hears that Voice.

Paul in the prison cell has forgotten neither the voice of reproof nor the commission given Ananias, sent to minister to him: "I will show him how great things he must suffer **for** My name's sake." (Acts 9:16.) For the last member of the Body, whatever his sufferings, this will still be his consolation-that his filling up that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ is "for His sake," though it is the result of activity that is in large measure, if not almost altogether, service toward our brethren, our lips and our hands thus "giving thanks to His name."

As compared with the sacrifices of "bulls and goats," these are "better sacrifices," faithfully performed with one principal motive-the desire that the "heavenly things" may be "purified." (Heb. 9:23.) So insignificant a thing as "a cup of cold water" is transmuted into a "better -sacrifice" if given to "one of the least of these" "in the name of a disciple." - Matt. 10:42; 1 Cor. 16:15, 16; Matt. 21:28; Mark 13:34; 2 Tim. 4:5; Matt. 25:22, 23; Mark 14:8; Luke 12:48; 1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Cor. 3:9 2 Cor. 8:2, 3; Mark 10:43, 44; John 13:14.

But we must not pass by the expression, "Fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ," without a careful examination of the original. Perhaps this is merely a mistranslation. Having considered all the versions at hand and finding them giving the same



thought, we turn to the Greek text to learn whether or not the definition of some one or more words might not permit the choice of a less startling rendering.

The phrase, "I fill up," represents a verb composed of two Greek words, the first of which "refers to what lacked as yet" (Darby); and the second, "to fill to the brim." (Thayer) (Matt. 13:48, Phil. 4:18 "full"; Phil. 4:19 "supply"; Phil 1:11, Eph. 5:18 "filled"; Phil. 1:9 "abound.") This last mentioned authority gives as the definition of the complete word thus formed: "to fill up in turn." Regarding the whole verse he comments:

"The meaning is, 'what is wanting [lacking] of the afflictions of Christ to be borne by me, that I supply in order to repay the benefits which Christ conferred on me by filling up the measure of the afflictions laid upon Him.'"

Clearly, the sufferings which the Apostle bore in his fleshly body were for the sake of Jesus' spiritual Body of many members, which Body is "the Christ" of Galatians 3:16, 29.

But we have not yet considered all the Greek that bears on this point. There is another word in this text which means, "lacking, yet," though that thought is included in the Greek word just considered. Paul makes doubly sure by this repetition that this thought is not missed. Manifestly, it is a very important one. Christ had "suffered, the just for the unjust"; but we must "suffer with Him" if we would reign with Him. Until the last member has "through much tribulation" been made ready to "enter into the Kingdom," some of the "sufferings of Christ" will be "lacking yet."

### **"No Man Liveth to Himself"**

Paul suffered not merely for the sake of those members of the Christ Body that lived in his day. He was ministering to the Age in more ways than one, not the least of which was the writing of the "prison epistles" in which every Christian has shared to some extent. No one is a lone beneficiary of his own sorrow. Prison cells can never keep within their confines the "song of Moses and the Lamb." How much we owe to the dismal cells from whose darkness have risen hymns of light and inspiration in which the saints of generations to come have united their voices -- the prison epistles of Paul, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," the hymns of Madame Guyon we love to sing ("Hymns of Dawn," 180) -- and how joyfully we each would do our little part in filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ if we could always realize that, though as unknown to us as to our beloved Paul and these others, our sufferings "for Christ's sake," too, are in some mysterious way ministering blessing to other members of His Body. If we realize that Christ is with us in every experience, and that every trial is borne that His Body may be complete, we cannot fail to "in **everything** give thanks."

"Be our trials great or small, be they minute and every-day-like gnats that hum about us in clouds, and may be swept away by the hand, and irritate rather than hurt where they sting -- or be they huge and formidable, like the viper that clings to the wrist and poisons the life blood, they are meant to give us good gifts, which we may transmit to the narrow circle of our homes, and in ever widening rings of influence to all around us. Have we never known a household, where some chronic invalid, lying helpless perhaps on a sofa, was a source of the highest blessing and the center of holy influence, that made every member of the family gentler, more self-denying and loving? We shall never understand our sorrows, unless we try to answer the question, What good to others is meant to come through me by this? Alas, that grief should so often be self-absorbed, even more than joy is! The heart sometimes opens to unselfish sharing of its gladness with others; but it too often shuts tight over its sorrow, and seeks solitary indulgence in the luxury of woe. Let us learn that our brethren claim benefit from our trials, as well as from our good things, and seek to ennoble our griefs by bearing them for 'His Body's sake, which is the Church.'

## **"He Trod the Wine-press Alone"**

"Christ's sufferings on His cross are the satisfaction for a world's sins, and in that view can have no supplement, and stand alone in kind. But His 'afflictions'-a word which would not naturally be applied to His death-do operate also to set the pattern of holy endurance, and to teach many a lesson; and in that view every suffering borne for Him and with Him may be regarded as associated with His, and helping to bless the Church and the world. God makes the rough iron of our natures into shining, flexible, sharp steel, by heavy hammers and hot furnaces, that He may shape us as His instruments to help and heal." - "Expositor's Bible."

Let us learn from Paul's example of rejoicing in affliction. It was in, not after, his prison experience that he wrote, "I now rejoice." It is easy to look back and see how afflictions, now "light" because of the influence of time, did work out for us a little of that character-likeness to Him necessary to our sharing in the "eternal weight of glory"; but how much more effectively they might have "worked" if we had then accepted them as "light afflictions," faith transmuting them into blessings for ourselves, our brethren, and all about us-yes, even for the world in the next Age, who are to profit by the tenderness, the patience, the longsuffering, the charity, wrought out in us by these divinely permitted privileges of "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ."

"Whereof I am made a minister ["servant" Diaglott] ["one who executes the commands of another"] according to the stewardship [margin] [the office of chief servant for the managing of a household or state] which is given to me for you to fulfill the word of God." (Col. 1:25.) He who, according to the statement he makes in Col. 1:23, is a servant of the Gospel, here proclaims himself a servant of the entire Church, but here again the thought is especially that he has a particular mission "to you" Gentiles, who, that the Word of God may be fulfilled, must have the Gospel preached to them "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the same Body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel." (Eph. 3:6, R.V.) For Paul, or any other servant, to use less than all his powers in his Master's service, would be to waste his Master's goods. This does not mean the ceasing of physical employments, but that, by His grace, we may, "whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God." The greater the possessions of the householder, the greater the responsibility of the servant. Since "all things" are His, we, His servants, are responsible to Him for all things, even the eeriest trifle. And this is of course too particular a life for any except those who can truthfully say, "How love I Thy law; it is my meditation all the day." It is one thing to meditate on His Word that we may prove we are right in our doctrinal position, and another to meditate on it to discover wherein we might be wrong; one thing to search for evidence against our brethren, and another humbly to seek guidance for our own lives; one thing to seek merely that we may know certain facts, and another to search that we may know God.

The responsibility of one who is of this Church of which Paul proclaimed himself a "servant," like the Apostle's, does not end with his personal Christian life. Like all physical symbols of spiritual realities, the one of the Householder fails to cover all details. The servants in this "house" (Heb. 3:2), who are also sons of the Master of the house, are therefore brethren, and so closely interwoven are their lives and interests that every servant serves every other servant on every contact. Having accepted from the Master the commission of servant, that individual is from henceforth serving. There is no leave of absence. All are under command to "forsake not the assembling of themselves together," whether they occupy the chair at the front or the back of the room, whether the Master's will for them is to add much or little to the meeting. The command for all is, "Be thou faithful in that which is least." They have a duty to their Master and to every

fellow-servant in this wonderful household, said "to all men as they have opportunity." The possessions, tangible and intangible, are the householder's, not theirs. They must be ever alert to know His will regarding their use. Under His guidance one will be delivered from the folly of "Eyes high -- tongues false and hands shedding innocent blood -- a heart devising thoughts of vanity-feet hasting to run to evil -- a false witness who doth breathe out lies-and one sending forth contentions between brethren," for "These six hath Jehovah hated, yea, seven are abominations to His soul." (Prov. 6:17-19, 16, Young's Literal Translation.) To learn those things, one must take service under another master. The rule in this household is, "Love one another as I have loved you"-I who served even to the ignominy of hanging on the cross for you.

We are not, however, the servants of all in the sense that we are to take instructions from all. "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." (Matt. 23:8.) It is the Master that tells us what to do with our five barley loaves and two small fishes. It is always, simply, "Give." And the one who had the loaves and fishes, wondering, sat down with the five thousand and was fed.

But in the passage we are considering, Paul is speaking of a particular feature of his stewardship, "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations; but now is made manifest to His saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Ver. 26, 27.) A second allusion to this mystery (4:3) similarly links it with the Gentiles, for it was not for preaching the Gospel to Jews but to Gentiles that he was imprisoned. Note also Romans 16:25: "Now to Him that is of power to establish you [Gentiles] according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began [therefore not the Gospel to the Jews], but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations [most frequently translated "Gentiles"]."

A "mystery" in New Testament usage is not an incomprehensible thing, but one that up to a certain time was not comprehended but is now understood. Paul was made a steward of this mystery to "make it known to all nations. (Rom. 16:26.) Now that the due time had come, it was to be proclaimed from the housetops. This, figuratively, is the Master's method of instruction. Not many Jews were found who could be given that commission. The "middle wall of partition" [Centenary translates: "party wall of partition"; Weymouth: "hostile dividing wall"] was more precious to them than the people on the other side the wall. Jesus is the end of that spirit of division only "to every one that believeth." It is love burning in the Apostle's heart that inflames his speech at the mere thought of the commission given him to do this great work of uniting all in one Body; and love that warns against divisions and those "that cause divisions." "Avoid them."

Just one thing the Apostle alludes to here as their present share in the hoped-for blessings "which shall be unto all people"; "Christ in you [Gentiles], the hope of glory." Nothing short of the sacrificial love of Calvary can have brought that Jewish heart to the point of exulting in the privilege of sharing that supreme favor with the despised- heathen. For the heart in which Christ dwells, hope always grows broader and more beautiful-broad enough to include all His creatures, and beautiful enough to enrich eternity. What missionary zeal should fire our hearts, too, at the thought that we might in one little lifetime instill this blessed hope in one whom God has called out from this great mass of mankind "without God and without hope in the world." But first, if one would be used of God, there must be a rich indwelling of the spirit of Christ "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

- P. E. Thomson

## **War Attitude for Christians Outlined by Church Council**

Under the caption of "A message to our Fellow Christians" the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America recently outlined a thirteen-point platform of attitudes and responsibilities of Christians in the light of the existing war, in a pastoral letter which, we are informed, was sent to 150,000 member churches throughout the nation.

### **We Have Sinned**

Commencing with the ' assertion that "the calculated treachery of recent aggressions has evoked instant condemnation," and that the war which oppresses our world today "is a manifestation of a great flood of evil that has overwhelmed nation after nation, destroying human rights and leaving men the victims of irresponsible force," the letter hastens to add that "we do not disclaim our own share in the events, economic, political, and moral, which made it possible for these evil forces to be released. . . . The laws of God have not been honored. Now the awful consequences are laid bare. Conscious of our participation in the world's sin, we would be humble and penitent before God."

### **Our Three-fold Responsibility**

Our responsibility, after turning "from proud and frantic worldliness to God" is shown by the letter to be three-fold: "As citizens of a nation which, under God, is dedicated to human freedom; as members of the Church in America, which is called to minister to people under heavy strain; and as members of the world-wide Church, which unites in a common fellowship men of every race and nation who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior."

The letter does not undertake to settle the question which has long perplexed earnest Christians as to what the will of God is for them, when their own country becomes involved in war. Recognizing that divergent views are sincerely and conscientiously held by Christians it wisely concludes to honor "the sincere conscience of every man," and "encompasses with gratitude and prayer all now summoned to render sacrificial service, whether in the armed forces or in other work of national importance."

What are our responsibilities as members of the Church in America? These, the letter points out, are responsibilities "which only the Church can discharge. It must ceaselessly bring to judgment those individual and social sins . . . which are the cause of our disaster. The Church must minister in every Christ like way to men in the midst of war. More than ever, in such an hour, people need its ministry. They cannot withstand the tensions of wartime without moral and spiritual resource. The Church must inspire men, in the armed forces and at home, with faith and hope and courage."

"As members of the world-wide Church, which transcends all differences of race and nation, we have obligations which reach beyond our own country. We must preserve at all costs the world-wide Christian fellowship, without which no free world order of justice and peace can be achieved. In times of war Christians in different nations are still members of the one Body of Christ. We must pray, not merely for our own national interest, but that God's will may be done in and through all nations. We must remember that in every warring nation there are men and women who, in spite of different political allegiances, are one with us in the ecumenical Church, and who also pray for its fuller realization and the coming of God's Kingdom in the world."

Concluding, the pastoral letter called upon Fellow Christians to:

"Bow in penitence before the judgments of God, who is the Ruler of nations and the Father of mankind;

"Devote themselves to preserving and strengthening the ideals of freedom and democracy;

"Withstand any propaganda of hatred or revenge and to refuse it the sanction of religion;

"Manifest Christian goodwill toward those among us whose origin was in nations with which our country is now at war;

"Succor with generosity all who suffer from the ravages of war;

"Minister to the deeper needs of men in the nation's service;

"Pray constantly that our national leaders may be guided and strengthened by the Spirit of God, and that after this tragic conflict there shall come a new world of righteousness, justice, and peace for all nations;

"Strive for national policies in conformity with the will of God, rather than to seek the divine sanction for a human purpose;

"Work actively and persistently for justice and good will among all racial groups both in our own country and throughout the world;

"Maintain unbroken the fellowship of prayer with Christians everywhere;

"Be steadfastly loyal to the holy Catholic Church; holy -sanctified to the redemptive purpose of God; catholic -of all believers and in all ages;

"Pray without ceasing that God's name may be hallowed and His will be done in earth as it is in heaven;

"Maintain confident faith in God as the refuge and strength of His people even in the darkest night, and to trust in the triumph of His will."

## Encouraging Messages

Dear Ones in the Lord:

I am enclosing one dollar and would like you to send the "Herald" to my sister for a year. Would like you to start with the January issue, but wonder if you could send her the one for this month too, and very soon, for I think it is truly wonderful. So many things are about what we talk over whenever I see her. I have given her my copies when I get through with them, but I really like to go over them from time to time. She lost her only daughter just a year ago and is still just so heartbroken, and the truth is the one great comfort. I know that she will enjoy each "Herald" as it comes to her.

It is so wonderful that almost every "Herald" has an article that helps so much, on the very things I pray our Heavenly Father to send me. I have prayed so longingly and earnestly to be able to absorb more of His love so that I can be more loving and tender with those around me, and that first article "Gifts from on High" is just what I needed.

I am praying continually for all our beloved ones here and across the water too. Thank God for prayer! I have found that the prayers offered for me have helped in such a large degree; and what a comfort it is for us to bring the beloved brethren before our Heavenly Father's Throne of Grace and to know our beloved Lord its there beside Him as our faithful High Priest. Surely we can rejoice and again rejoice in such great love.

God bless you more and more as the old year ends and another begins, and may the Kingdom blessings come very soon.

Your sister in Him, L. R. B. -- Pa.

Dear Brethren:

Sister F-- and I consider it a privilege to be able to enclose a check of \$ .... as our small contribution to the excellent work of the "Pastoral Bible Institute." You are authorized to **use** this remittance in the best interests of the Lord's ministry.

We further would like to express our sincere appreciation for the many kind and helpful talks delivered by your traveling brethren who have been a genuine help to us personally and to our little Class collectively. We are particularly in harmony with the spirit of tolerance manifested by members of your group and we know that any little part which the Lord grants us in furthering your work will result in genuine good to those who love the Lord.

By the way, we are wondering whether there would be any of your traveling speakers near Milwaukee or vicinity on December 31st or January 1st. We plan to have a watch-night service at our home and if it could be arranged that one of your regular traveling speakers could serve, I know our little Class would sincerely appreciate it. But if that is not possible, due to a previously arranged schedule, we shall have to make our own arrangements as best we can. . . .

Sister F joins me in wishing you and all those whom we have learned to know and love, our most sincere and best wishes for a Merry Christmas as well as a, spiritually peaceful and Happy New Year.

Yours in His service, H. H. F. -- Wis.

## **Recently Deceased**

Mrs. E. A. Merrill, Yukon, Okla. - (October).

Mr. Edward O. Larson, Beloit, Wis. - (December).

Mr. August Blom, Tacoma, Wash. - (January).