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Peace on Earth

"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." - Luke 2:15.

IT IS appropriate that the birth of our Lord should be celebrated by the giving of gifts even though most people have wandered far from the spirit of the occasion. It would be well to use this celebration for the reviving of not only the true spirit of giving, but the humble, grateful spirit of receiving; and above all the receiving of the meek and lowly Nazarene into a good and honest heart. He is ready to come in, however humble the abode.

While most Eastern villages had a kahn for the entertainment of visitors and the care of their animals, it is not unlikely, in view of the poverty of Bethlehem, that the tradition that Jesus' birth was in one of the numerous caves of the hillside is correct, as much comfort, and more privacy, would have been found there. Justin Martyn, the Apologist, who lived less than a century after the time of our Lord and who was quite familiar with Palestine, indicated that Jesus' nativity was in a cave. This is one of the few traditions to which attaches a reasonable probability. Scanty details are furnished us of the Holy Family that the shepherds found in this little recess. A few days previously we would have found them, doubtless a typical Israelitish household of the poorer class, in Nazareth, above the rich plain of Jezreel, the great battlefield of Israel. Between its enclosing mountain wilds had raged a large proportion of the fierce engagements that marked this nation's history. Fifteen hilltops surround the amphitheatre. On the lower slopes of the highest of these, a five hundred foot eminence, nestled a little terraced town of narrow streets.

The Galilee of Jesus' time was one of rich fertility, the fields between its many towns and villages being cultivated to the utmost. From the hilltop above Nazareth one of the most beautiful views of the whole land was to be had. Its miles of verdure pattern lay between snow-capped Mt. Hermon and this lesser eminence. Purple Carmel and the sail studded Sea were also visible from there. The Nazareth that lay below was one of the great centers of Jewish temple life, for it seems to have been a priest center at this time.

The village which for generations had been honored as the birthplace of King David and the home of other notables of the Israelitish nation, had brought to it one day the greater honor of a visit from the angel Gabriel himself; and his coming was to announce the still greater honor which was to be the portion of this humble village. To one of its lowliest families was to be born

He who should be not only King of Israel, to sit on David's throne, but King of kings and Lord of lords. The serene influence of the angel's salutation, "Peace to thee," and "The Lord is with thee," remained to comfort Mary, as she "pondered these things in her heart," during the many years of human misunderstanding that must inevitably have followed the birth of her child. In some little measure she had been prepared for the angel's visit, for, six months before this, her cousin Elisabeth had had a similar experience. But to Mary was the assurance of being the "highly favored," not in her own right, but in being the mother of Him of "whose Kingdom there should be no boundary," as an old Moravian Version has it. He must rule not only over David's realm, but be "Head over all things which are in heaven and which are in earth."

Evidently the foster-father of our Lord was as carefully chosen as His virgin mother. The gentle spirit that prompted his conduct toward his betrothed wife found with child, instead of having recourse to the harsh treatment the Jewish law justified, could not fail to have its influence during the years the mind of the tender child was being molded. One who by nature was so "just"* must surely have deeply influenced its development, as in- his sacred office of foster-father of the "Sent of God" he daily watched the unfolding of this delicate blossom.

* "Some have supposed that the term 'dikaios' should be translated merciful, and it certainly often has this signification, but here it is not necessary." - Adam Clarke.

The Silence of Centuries Broken

There must have been devout souls in Israel who were earnestly inquiring of the Lord as to the meaning of Daniel's prophecies, and who, on this account, lived in the hope of an early appearing of their Messiah. Then, too, the following suggestion, which, as also our other quotations, is from the Expositor's Bible, is worthy of consideration

"Israel's corporate life began with four centuries of silence and oppression, when Egypt gave them the doubled task, and Heaven grew strangely still, giving them neither voice nor vision. Is it but one . of the chance repetitions of history that Israel's national life should end, too, with four hundred years of silence? for such is the coincidence, if, indeed, we may not call it something more. It is, however, just such a coincidence as the Hebrew mind, quick to trace resemblances and to discern signs, would grasp firmly and eagerly. It would revive their long-deferred and dying hopes, overlaying the near future with its gold. Possibly it was this very coincidence that now transformed their hope into expectation, and set their hearts listening for the advent of the Messiah. Did not Moses come when the task was doubled? and was not the four hundred years' silence broken by the thunders of the Exodus, as the I AM, once again asserting Himself, 'sent redemption to His people'? And so, counting back their silent years since Heaven's last voice came to them through their Prophet Malachi, they caught in its very silences a sound of hope, the footfall of the forerunner, and the voice of the coming Lord. But where, and how, shall the long silence be broken? We must go for our answer-and here, again, we see a correspondence between the new Exodus and the old-to the tribe of Levi, and to the house of Amram and Jochebed.

"Residing in one of the priestly cities of the hill country of Judea . . . was 'a certain priest named Zacharias.' Himself a descendant of Aaron, his wife, too, was of the same lineage; and besides being 'of the daughters of Aaron,' she bore the name of their ancestral mother, 'Elisabeth.' . . . They were both 'righteous'-a word implying a Mosaic perfection-'walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.' . . . Rarely, if ever, do the Scriptures speak in such eulogistic terms; and that they should here be applied to Zacharias and Elisabeth shows that they were advanced in saintliness, as well as in years. Possibly St. Luke had another

object in view in giving us the portraits of these two pre-Advent saints, completing in the next chapter, the quaternion, by his mention of Simeon and Anna. It is somewhat strange, to say the least, that the Gentile Evangelist should be the one to give us this remarkable group-the four aged Templars, who, 'when' it was yet dark, rose to chant their matins and to anticipate the dawn."

Unto the Jew, childlessness was a sign of divine displeasure. "Unto you a son is born" was to them therefore a message of "good tidings" more welcome even than to Gentile ears. For Zacharias to be stricken dumb (apparently deaf also) for a period of nine months, and for Mary to have the finger of scorn unjustly pointed and the accusation of unfaithfulness fastened upon her, were not penalties too great to be borne with rejoicing if the longing was to be satisfied with children whom their God had chosen for special missions. The one was to be named "John," "the Lord is gracious," "he shall turn the hearts of fathers to their children"; and the other, "Jesus," "He shall save His people from their sins."

Four Gospel Singers

"And so the Old meets, and merges into the New, and at the marriage it is the speaking hands -of the mute priest that join together the two Dispensations, as each gives itself to the other, never more to be put asunder, but to be 'no longer twain, but one,' one Purpose, one Plan, one Divine Thought, one Divine Word. . . . On the one side are Zacharias and Simeon, the -one chanting his 'Benedictus,- and the other his 'Nunc Dimittis.' Facing them, as if in antiphon, are Elisabeth and Mary, the one singing her 'Beatitude,' and the other her 'Magnificat,' while overhead in the frescoed and star lighted sky, are vast multitudes of the heavenly host, enriching the Advent music with their 'Glorias.' .

"Is Mary blessed among women? it is not because of any wealth of native grace, but because of the fruit of her womb. Does Elisabeth throw herself right back in the shade, asking almost abjectly, 'Whence is this to me?' it is because, like the centurion, she feels herself unworthy that even the unborn 'Lord' should come under her roof. And so, while this song is really an ode to the Virgin, it is virtually Elisabeth's salute of the Christ who is to be, a salute in which her own offspring takes part, for she speaks of his 'leaping' in her womb, as if he were a participant in her joy, interpreting its movements as a sort of 'Hail, Master!' The canticle thus becomes invested with a higher significance. Its words say much, but suggest more. It carries our thought out from the seen to the unseen, from the mother to the Holy Child, and Elisabeth's song thus becomes the earliest 'Hosannah to the Son of David,' the first prelude to the unceasing anthems that are to follow."

To Elisabeth Mary is "blessed" just as is the "fruit of her womb," for He is her "Lord." The song of Elisabeth is a mingling of honor to Mary and her Lord; but that of Mary begins and ends with the Giver of her blessings, blessings that are to be extended through her Son to faithless Israel, when faith has been restored to them. "Savior," "mercy," "strength" are precious words in her "Magnificat." The "loud cry" of Elisabeth's song having ceased, how soothingly Mary's hymn falls upon our spirits. Hers is poetry of a higher inspiration for she sings not of self or any human agent, but of the Eternal. Her song starts where Elisabeth's left off, and with it the doxologies of a new age are begun, but these were to be doxologies of overwhelming crescendos. No greater writer of hymns to His praise was to arise than the "sweet singer of Israel," but with the gift of His Son and the new enlightenment He brought, there was to begin the "magnifying" of the Lord in many a "soul" that before could have praised Him only with feeble lips. At last the Savior was to arrive, the need for whom, their personal and national struggles under the bondage of the law had tragically revealed.

Mary's song belongs, however, to the old dispensation, not to the new. There is not a word of praise for the Babe or the world-wide Savior He is to become. Her praise is all for the "Giver" of this greatest of all gifts. It is not yet revealed that in His Son, God is to be "manifest," nor that all doxologies sung to Him are hymns in praise of the Father's grace. And how meager is her understanding of that grace. She has learned of a Savior, but only for Israel, the believing nation, Abraham's posterity. There is no thought yet of the thousands of Gentiles that are to be adopted into that family, their eyes opened to see and reverence this crowning glory of God's grace, their hearts throwing wide their portals to enthrone Him as King.

Two Mothers in Israel

It was "in the sixth month [after he had appeared to Zacharias that] the angel Gabriel was sent" with his message to Mary. The explanation of the three months that she abode with Elisabeth would seem to be in part, at least, a natural desire to hold in her arms the forerunner of her Lord, and to be the first to "rejoice at his birth." Evidently she was present to hear Zacharias' hymn of praise to the "Horn of salvation," a place of refuge "from their enemies" to which all might flee. His Benedictus is a fitting postlude to her Magnificat; but his song, though with a wider outlook into God's purposes than Mary's, is still a magnifying of the "God of Israel" who has sent a "Horn of salvation **for us** in the house of His servant David." "The Dayspring from on high" is welcomed "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide **our** feet into the way of peace."

One of the words in that hymn that Mary probably "treasured in her heart" was the word "redeemed," a temple word meaning, "a price laid down." There were thirty-four years of preparation in it for her for that sad-glad day when salvation was at last secured for Israel and for all mankind. It was not of salvation from their political enemies that the Spirit spoke through Zacharias' lips, but redemption that would "save His people from their sins," "guiding our feet into the way of peace."

The first real echo of the angel message of "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people," came from the lips of the aged Simeon as, standing in the court of the Gentiles, with the infant Jesus in his arms, he prophesied of "the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." Israel is not forgotten, but now the salvation is a broader one. "Like the sentry who keeps watch through the night till the sunrise, Simeon has been watching and longing for the Dayspring from on high, reading from the stars of promise the wearing of the night, and with the music of fond hopes 'keeping his heart awake till dawn of **morn.**' **Now** at length the consummation, which is the consolation, comes. Simeon sees in the Child Jesus the world's hope and Light, a salvation 'prepared before the face of all people.' And seeing this, he sees all he desires. Earth can give no brighter vision, no deeper joy, and all his request is --

'Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Lord,
According to Thy word, in peace;
For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.'

"And so the four psalms of the Gospels form in reality but one song, the notes rising higher and still higher, until they reach the very pinnacle of the new temple-God's purpose and plan of redemption; that temple whose altar is a cross, and whose Victim is 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;' that temple where courts and dividing-lines all disappear; where the Holiest of all lies open to a redeemed humanity ["as many as the Lord our God shall call"-Acts 2:39], and Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, old and young, are alike 'kings and priests unto God.'

And so the Gospel psalms throw back, as it were, in a thousand echoes, the 'Glorias' of the Advent angels, as they sing --

'Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace.'

"And what is this but earth's prelude or rehearsal for the heavenly song, as all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, falling down before the Lamb in the midst of the throne, sing, 'Salvation unto our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb'?"

"Swell the notes of the Christmas Song!
Sound it forth through the earth abroad!
Glory to God!
Blessing and honor, thanks and laud!
Take the joy of the Christmas Song!
Are not the tidings good and true?
Peace to you,
And God's goodwill that is ever new!"

The Indwelling Christ

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." "That the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." - Eph. 3:17; 2 Cor. 4:11.

THE CHRIST who lived in Palestine upwards of eighteen hundred years ago lives in the world today. He has direct and constant access to the spirit of man, touching sin-stricken souls with His healing power; quickening dead souls by the inbreathing of His life-giving Spirit; "combating, defeating, expelling the slow death which has crept over the body of humanity." In all His activities within the soul His seeking and saving love is manifest. The eternal love outwardly expressed in the cross, is inwardly expressed in His tireless effort to make His great salvation an actuality in human experience. The four Evangelists have given the record of His outward life; those alone, who know Him, not after the flesh but after the spirit, can give the record of His never-ending activity within the inner sphere of the spiritual nature of man.

Of the two hemispheres of truth which constitute the whole Gospel -- the work of Christ for us, and the work of Christ in us, the latter often suffers a well-nigh total eclipse. Many think almost exclusively of what Christ has done for them, and overlook what He is doing **in** them; they look at redemption upon the divine side as a finished work, and fail to look at it upon the human side as a continuous work; they are so much taken up with the idea of Christ dying upon the cross for their offenses as almost to forget that He is living in their hearts to guide, to inspire, to bless, to save.

Christ the Inspiration of Every Thought

Before Christian experience can be rounded out to completeness, the Godward and manward sides of Christ's work must be embraced in a comprehensive faith; the work of Christ in its entirety must be brought within the inner sphere of personal consciousness; the outward Christ of history must become the Christ of inward experience; the dead Christ of Calvary must become

the living Christ of the present; the Christ embalmed in a book must dwell and reign within the heart. It is not [alone] Christ upon the cross, nor Christ within the Bible, nor Christ in heaven that saves; but Christ deeply hidden in the inmost spirit; Christ constantly present in the life; Christ the inspiration of every thought and word and deed. Christ in the soul and not Christ buried in a tomb, enshrined in a temple, or seated upon a throne is the life's true Life.

The doctrine of the indwelling of Christ in the heart is revolutionary. When accepted as an article of faith, and realized as a matter of experience, an uprising of the prostrate powers of the soul takes place; the outworks of the flesh surrender one by one to the thorn-crowned King, who holds in His hand the sceptre of omnipotent love; all insurrectionary forces are put down; the moral empire of God over man is fully and firmly established; and within all the borders of the goodly land which Christ has conquered there is order and peace.

More important than questions touching the right directing of religious activities is the question of the hold which Christ has upon the interior life. More important than questions of method is the question of spirit; more important than questions of form is the question of life. If Christ be supreme within, if He has His own way within the domain of the soul, all questions as to the particular shape that service ought to take are of secondary concern. To -one wholly given up to Him it is all the same whether service be active or passive, whether it consists in doing or in enduring the divine will; it is all the same whether the position assigned be to lie in the divine hand or to be led by the divine hand; to stand and wait or to run and work. One thing is sure, the life which Christ possesses and directs can not miss the mark.

The Secret Principle of Spiritual Life

Into the clear consciousness of the Indwelling Christ as the secret principle of spiritual life we all require to come to experience the reality and fullness of His saving power. No distant Christ can wipe away our tears, bear our heavy burdens, crush the heads of the serpent's brood that nestle in the breast, purify our hearts from sin, and impart unto us sufficiency of strength for daily toil and sacrifice. Until the personal presence of Christ becomes the profoundest fact of consciousness no real test has been made of His power to comfort, to quicken, and to save.

Only from a present Christ can present salvation come. To those in whom He consciously indwells the fulness of His redeeming energy is made immediately available. They do not need to go up to heaven to bring their Savior down, they do not need to go down to the abyss to bring Him up. Their redemption is wrought out from within; not superimposed from without. From within their spiritual stores are constantly replenished; from within the healing, cleansing fountain of divine life forever flows; from within a holy manhood is built up, as the flower is built up from the seed, . . . from within the glory of the heavenly life shines forth with ever-increasing brightness, struggling through the grossest coverings of the earthly life as the sun struggles through the dark *most clouds*. - *Selected*.

The Ministry of Sorrow

"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord!" "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" - Psalm 130:1; Job 34:29.

THE LIFE of every human being has its lights and shadows, its heights of joy and its depth of sorrow. These make up a large part of the warp and the woof of experience; and the web of character which flows from the active loom of life, will be fine and beautiful or coarse and homely, according to the skill and carefulness with which the individual weaves into it the threads of experience. In every life, in the present reign of sin and evil the somber shades predominate; and to such an extent is this true that the Word of God aptly describes the human family in their present condition as a groaning creation. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now," says the Apostle. The children of God are no exception to this universal rule; we also "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the deliverance of our Body" -- our company, the Body of Christ. - Rom. 8:22, 23.

But while we are waiting for our deliverance, the daily experiences of life have a most important mission to us, and the manner in which we receive them should be a matter of deepest concern; for according to the use we make of them, each day's prosperity or its adversity and trial bear to us a blessing or a curse. Those experiences which we are accustomed to regard as prosperous often have in them subtle dangers. If wealth increases or friends multiply or a large measure of earthly joy comes to us, how almost imperceptibly the heart finds its satisfaction in the things of earth! But when the keen edge of sorrow and disappointment is felt, when riches or health fail, when friends forsake, and enemies take up a reproach against us, the natural tendency is to despondency and despair.

Just here is a very important part of the great warfare of the Christian's life. He must fight the tendencies of his old nature and must confidently claim and expect the victory in the strength of the great Captain of his salvation. He must not yield to the alluring influences of favorable outward conditions, neither must he sink beneath the weight of trials and adversity. He must not permit any experience in life, however hard and painful, to sour and harden him or make him bitter, morose or unloving. Nor may he allow pride or love of show, or self-righteousness, to feed upon the temporal blessings which the Lord in His loving providence has given him to prove his faithfulness as a steward.

Depths of Sorrow Lead to Heights of Joy

Sorrow and griefs may, and perhaps often will, come in like a flood, but the Lord will be our Stay and Strength in every experience which He permits. The soul that has never known the discipline of sorrow and trouble has never yet learned the joy and preciousness of the Lord's love and helpfulness. It is in seasons of overwhelming sorrow and grief, when we draw near to the Lord, that He draws especially near to us. So the Psalmist found it, when in his deep affliction he cried to God, saying, "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice; let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!" (Ver. 12.) Feeling his own weaknesses and shortcomings, longing for full deliverance from every imperfection, and prophesying of the bountiful provisions of the Divine Plan of Salvation through Christ, he adds, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities [imputing them to us], O Lord who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared [reverenced]." - Ver. 3, 4.

How precious are such assurances when the soul is painfully conscious of its infirmities, of its utter inability to fully measure up to the perfect law of righteousness! How blessed it is to know that when our hearts are loyal and true, our God does not mark against us the unavoidable blemishes of our earthen vessel! If we come daily to Him for cleansing, through the merits of our Redeemer, our failures are not imputed to us, but freely forgiven and washed away. The perfect righteousness of our Savior is 'our glorious dress, arrayed in which we may come to God with humble boldness, courage-even into the presence of the great Jehovah, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

If thus God ignores the infirmities of our flesh, and fully receives us and communes with us as His dear children, we should so regard one another, considering not and charging not against one another the infirmities of the flesh, which each humbly confesses, and which they, like us, are earnestly endeavoring to overcome by the grace of God, to the best of their ability. To each one of the Lord's true children the words of the Apostle apply: "If God be for us, who can be against us? . . . Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's Elect? Shall that God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died?" (Rom. 8:31, 33, 34 - Diaglott.) The case is different, however, when the infirmities of the flesh are cultivated, indulged in without proper effort to correct them, and are justified, in order that the faults may be continued. Then, indeed, they are charged against us, and if we do not speedily "judge ourselves," and take decisive measures to correct them, the Lord will Himself judge and chasten us. -- 1 Cor. 11:31, 32.

In the midst of the cares, perplexities and difficulties that come to the children of the Lord, we are to trust Him fully, and to possess our souls in peace and patience! We are to **wait** patiently for the Lord to outwork the issues of our experiences in His own good way. How **necessary** is the patient waiting on the Lord! The Psalmist says, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning." (Psa. 130:5, 6.) In every experience of sorrow and distress, and when the strain of the jarring discords and the stinging vexations, and wounds that make the heart bleed, threaten to overwhelm the spirit, let the child of God remember that "He **knows**, and **loves**, and **cares**," and that His ministering angel is ever near us, and that no trial will be permitted 'to be **too severe**. The dear Master is standing by the crucible, and the furnace heat will never be permitted to grow so intense 'that the precious gold of our characters shall be destroyed, or even injured. Ah, no! If by His grace the experiences may not work for our good, they will be turned aside. He loves us too well to permit any needless sorrow, any needless suffering.

The Reward of Patient Waiting

"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." (Psa. 37:5-7.) We must not be disappointed and allow our faith to falter when the test of patient endurance is applied, while the outward peace and quietness which we crave tarry long. Our Father has not forgotten us when the answer to our prayers seems to be delayed. Outward peace and calm are not always the conditions best suited to our needs as New Creatures; and we would not desire conditions in which the precious fruits of the Spirit would not grow and develop in us. Therefore, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice." (1 Pet. 4:12, 13.) He who numbers the very hairs of our heads is never indifferent to the sufferings and needs of His weakest and humblest child. Oh, how sweet is the realization of such loving, abiding care! "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"

The saints have indeed in every sorrow and grief a blessed consolation of which the world is wholly in ignorance. None but the true child 'of God can know it. What is this consolation? Oh, you who have never enlisted under the banner of the Cross, who have never put yourselves wholly into the hands of the Lord to be moulded and fashioned into His glorious likeness, who have never made an earnest effort to stem the tide of the tendencies of your own fallen nature, who have never contended earnestly for truth and righteousness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, what can you know of the sweets of this divine consolation? It is the precious balm of Gilead for wounded spirits on the battle-field of life, it is the stimulating, refreshing draught for fainting souls, hard pressed by the relentless foe. It is the soothing caress of a loving hand upon the fevered brow of the noble contender for truth and godliness. It is the gentle whisper of hope and love and courage when heart and flesh are almost failing. This is divine consolation, the only consolation that has in it any virtue of healing or refreshment. It is reserved alone for those noble souls who are faithfully bearing the burden and heat of the day in the service of the King of kings; while those who listlessly drift with the current of the world and the downward tendencies of the carnal nature can never have an intimation of its sweetness.

How loving and tender is our God, and how wise and strong! His promises have never failed those who have put their trust in Him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do good are very unproductive, that the opposition from without and within is very strong. But it is when we are weak, when we realize our own helplessness and incompetency, that we may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. It is then that we may realize that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of our God, while we are striving to do His will; for "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." Then let us more and more lay hold of this strength of the Lord, that we may courageously pursue our course in the narrow way of difficulty and trial. Precious indeed to the saint of God is the ministry of pain and sorrow!

"Ye Have Seen the Patience of Job"

The saints of every Age have learned the blessing of afflictions and sorrows. The Psalmist David says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes"; and again, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept Thy Word." (Psa. 119:67, 71.) God's faithful servant Job suffered almost overwhelming troubles, but the Lord brought him out into a large place when his testings had accomplished their designed effect. He was proven and strengthened by his sore experiences. Few if any of us could suffer more. He suffered the loss of all his property, then of all his children, whom he loved, then of the love and loyalty of his wife; and finally, he was smitten with sore disease-boils, from head to foot. To crown all, three of his friends came to see him on hearing of his great trials; and instead of being true comforters, they added to his sorrows by insisting that his own sins must have been the cause of all these disasters; that his experiences must surely be punishments from the Lord because of unfaithfulness on his part. Surely poor Job was afflicted!

But did he lose his faith in God? Hear him: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21.) "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." (Job 13:15.) Job was indeed much cast down, but he maintained his integrity -of character and his faith in the Lord through all. He did not charge God with injustice, and God did not desert His faithful servant. He reproved his accusers and required them to offer sacrifice, and instructed Job to pray for them, that their trespasses might be overlooked. In the end he was blessed more abundantly than ever before. God made him a great type of the human family, of the troubles of their fallen condition and of their final restoration to all that was lost in Adam, with the blessings of added

experiences to make them wise. How faithful is the Lord in all His dealings! Truly His children should never doubt His love; for

"Faith can firmly trust Him,
Come what may."

Preciousness of Intimate Fellowship with God

It is when continued trust in the Lord and His many responsive providences in our lives have ripened into precious personal acquaintance and intimacy that we learn to delight in Him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the divine love and care have been clearly seen in the guidance of our way, that we can recognize the abiding presence with us of the Father and the Son. Then, however dark may be our way, however severe may be the storm that rages about us, the thought of divine protection is ever with us, so that as the children of the Lord we are never in despair; though cast down, we are not destroyed; though persecuted, we are never forsaken. We know our Father's hand is ever at the helm, that His love and care are sure and unailing.

Those who have come into real heart sympathy with God have learned to see Him as the Fountain of all goodness and truth and blessing. To them He is the One altogether lovely. His Law is their delight. His friendship and love are their very life. When the hurt has become thus centered in God, it is the most natural impulse to commit its way unto Him. These can truly sing with the poet:

"So on I go, not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight."

Surely these have the desires of their heart, and no good thing shall be withheld from them. Their fervent prayers avail much, and in the Lord's good time their righteousness, however much it may now be misunderstood, misrepresented and evil-spoken of, shall be brought forth as the light-clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their course and of their hearts, shall be brought forth as the noonday. Even while we remain here as aliens and foreigners in the enemy's land, we shall be fed, nourished, temporally and spiritually, and shall rejoice and be glad in the "house of our pilgrimage. Precious indeed are the promises of God; and to the praise of His abounding grace, His saints of the past and of the present all bear ample testimony to their fulfillment.

"Who need faint while such a river
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?
Grace, which like the Lord, the ' Giver,
Never fails from Age to Age!"

- *W. T. Reprints, p. R5802, Nov. 15, 1915.*

Behold Your King

"This poem was especially written for, and dedicated to the Jewish-Christian Movement by Mrs. Herbert Poole of Powell River, British Columbia," author of "Ten Camels" and "The Son of the Highest."

Behold your King! Ye loyal sons of Judah.
Behold the Nazarene returned to reign.
No more as sacrificing priest to suffer,
He wears the crown that once He died to gain.
Behold Him, dressed in garments of His glory,
Come forth in power to heal and help and bless.
Oh rally round His standard, men of Judah,
He brings relief for all your sore distress.

Behold your King! He waits your acclamation,
His hand alone can set the prisoner free,
Sound forth in fearless joy the proclamation
"Christ has returned. Our Lord and King is He!"
Upon you then, and on your oppressed brethren,
The Son of God will keep His word and pour
The power of His spirit. He will raise you,
Heal all your wounds and bless your race once more

Our blessed sons of Judah! You have suffered,
But soon your years of anguish will be o'er,
Forgotten in the glory He will give you,
"The tents of Judah first He will restore."
"Hosanna in the highest! Christ is risen!"
Sound forth to all the world that glad refrain,
For God, who led His chosen out of Egypt,
Will surely save His people once again.

Oh rally to His standard, men of Judah!
In David's star the cross of Christ is seen.
Lo, in the threatening clouds of Jacob's anguish,
The glowing rainbow of His promise gleams.
Proclaim your King, Jehovah's Son, in Zion,
Sound forth His praises, let the glad news ring
Till all the world shall hear the proclamation,
"Jesus of Nazareth is Judah's King."

Religious Intolerance

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. for he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds." - 2 John 10, 11.

IT WILL be seen at a glance that Truth and Love are keynotes of the Epistle, and that the conceptions which prevail throughout are those with which we have been made familiar by the previous Epistle. And yet one passage of the Epistle has again and again been belauded, and is again and again adduced as a stronghold of intolerance, an excuse for pitiless hostility against all who differ with ourselves. There is something distressing in the swift instinct with which an unchristian egotism has first assumed its own infallibility on subjects which are often no part of Christian faith, and then has sped as on vulture's wings to his passage as a consecration of the feelings with which the "odium theologicum" disgraces and ruins the divinest interests of the cause of Christ. It must be said-though I say it with the deepest sorrow-that the cold exclusiveness of the Pharisee, the bitter ignorance of the self-styled theologian, the usurped infallibility of the half-educated religionist, have ever been the curse of Christianity. They have imposed "the senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men on the general words of God," and have tried to enforce them on all men's consciences with all kinds of burnings and anathemas, under equal threats of death and damnation. And thus they have incurred the terrible responsibility of presenting religion to mankind in a false and repellant guise. Is theological hatred still to be a proverb for the world's just contempt? Is such hatred-hatred in its bitterest and most ruthless form-to be regarded as the legitimate and normal outcome of the religion of love? Is the spirit of peace never to be brought to bear on religious opinions? Are such questions always to excite the most intense animosities and the most terrible divisions? Is the Diotrephes of each little religious clique to be the ideal of a Christian character? Is it in religious discussions alone that impartiality is to be set down as weakness, and courtesy as treason? Is it among those only who pride themselves on being "orthodox" that there is to be the completest absence of humility and -of justice? Is the world to be forever confirmed in its opinion that theological partisans are less truthful, less candid, less high-minded, less honorable even than the partisans of political and social causes who make no profession as to the duty of love? Are the so-called "religious" champions to be for ever, as they now are, in many instances, the most unscrupulously bitter and the most conspicuously unfair? Alas! they might be so with far less danger to the cause of religion if they would forego the luxury of "quoting Scripture for their purpose." The harm which has thus been done is incredible:

"Crime was ne'er so black
As ghostly cheer and pious thanks to lack.
Satan is modest. At Heaven's door he lays
His evil offspring, and in Scriptural phrase
And saintly posture gives to God the praise
And honor of his monstrous progeny."

If this passage of St. John had indeed authorized such errors and excesses-if it had indeed been a proof, as has been said, of "the deplorable growth of dogmatic intolerance"-it would have been hard to separate it from the old spirit of rigorism and passion which led the Apostle, in his most undeveloped days, to incur his Lord's rebuke, by proclaiming his jealousy of those who worked on different lines from his own, and by wishing to call down fire to consume the rude villagers of Samaria. It would have required some ingenuity not to see in it the same sort of impatient and

unworthy intolerance which once marked his impetuous outbursts. . In that case also the spirit of his advice would have been widely different from the spirit which actuated the merciful tolerance of the Lord to Heathens, to Samaritans, to Sadducees, and even to Pharisees. It would have been in direct antagonism to our Lord's command to the Twelve to salute with their blessing every house to which they came, because if it were not worthy their peace would return to them again. It would have been alien from many of the noblest lessons of the New Testament. It would practically have excluded from the bosom of Christianity, and of Christianity alone, the highest workings of the universal law of love. It would have been in glaring disaccord with the gentleness and moderation which is now shown, even towards absolute unbelievers, by the wisest, gentlest, and most Christlike of God's saints. If it really bore the sense which has been assigned to it, it would be a grave reason for sharing the ancient doubts respecting the genuineness of the little letter in which it occurs, and for coming to the conclusion that, while its general sentiments were borrowed from the authentic works of St. John, they had only been thrown together for the purpose of introducing, under the sanction of his name, a precept of unchristian harshness and religious intolerance.

But there is too much reason to fear that to the end of time the conceit of orthodoxism will claim inspired authority for its own conclusions, even when they are most antichristian, and will build *up* systems of exclusive hatred out of inferences purely unwarrantable. It is certain, too, that each sect is always tempted to be proudest -of its most sectarian peculiarities; that each form of dissent, whether in or out of the body of the Established Churches, most idolizes its own dissidence. The aim of religious opinionativeness always has been, and always will be, to regard its narrowest conclusions as matters of faith, and to exclude or excommunicate all those who reject or modify them. The sort of syllogisms used by these enemies of the love of Christ are much as follows:

"My opinions are founded •on interpretations of Scripture. Scripture is infallible. My views of its meaning are infallible too. **Your** opinions and inferences differ with mine, therefore you must be in the wrong. All wrong opinions are capable of so many ramifications that any one who differs with me in minor points must be unsound in vital matters also. Therefore, all who differ with me and my clique are 'heretics.' All heresy is wicked. All heretics are necessarily wicked men. It is my religious duty to hate, calumniate, and abuse you."

Those who have gone thus far in elevating Hatred into a Christian virtue ought logically to go a little farther. They generally do so when they have the power. They do not -openly say, "Let us venerate the examples of Arnold of Citeaux, and of Torquemada. Let us glorify the Crusaders at Beziers. Let us revive the racks and thumbscrews of the Inquisition. Let us, with the Pope, strike medals in honor of the massacre of St. Batholomew. Let us re-establish the Star Chamber, and entrust those ecclesiastics who hold our opinions with powers of torture." But, since they are robbed of these means of securing unanimity-since they can no longer even imprison "dissenting tinkers" like Bunyan and "regicide Arians" like Milton-they are too apt to indulge in the party spirit which can employ slander though it is robbed of the thumbscrew, and revel in depreciation though it may no longer avail itself of the fagot and the rack.

The tender mercies of contending religionists are exceptionally cruel. The men who, in the Corinthian party-sense, boast "I am of Christ," do not often, in these days, formulate the defense of their lack of charity so clearly as this. But they continually act and write in this spirit. Long experience has made mankind familiar with the base ingenuity which frames charges of constructive heresy out of the most innocent opinions; which insinuates that variations from the vulgar exegesis furnish a sufficient excuse for banding anathemas, under the plea that they are an implicit denial of Christ! Had there been in Scripture any sanction for this execrable spirit of

heresy-hunting Pharisaism, Christian theology would only become another name for the collisions of wrangling sects, all cordially hating each other, and only kept together by common repulsion against external enmity. But, to me at least, it seems that the world has never developed a more unchristian and antichristian phenomenon than the conduct of those who encourage the bitterest excesses of hatred under the profession of Christian love. (1 John 3:10, 11.) I know nothing so profoundly irreligious as the narrow intolerance of an ignorant dogmatism. Had there been anything in this passage which sanctioned so odious a spirit, I could not have believed that it emanated from St. John. A good tree does not bring forth corrupt fruit. The sweet fountain of Christianity cannot send forth the salt and bitter water of fierceness and hate. The Apostle of love would have belied all that is best in his own teaching if he had consciously given an absolution, nay, an incentive, to furious intolerance. The last words of Christian revelation could never have meant what these words have been interpreted to mean-namely, "Hate, exclude, anathematize, persecute, treat as enemies and opponents to be crushed and insulted, those who differ with you in religious opinions." Those who have pretended a Scriptural sanction for such Cainlike religionism have generally put their theories into practice against men who have been infinitely more in the right, and transcendently nearer God, than those who, in killing or injuring them, ignorantly thought that they were doing God service.

Meanwhile this incidental expression of St. John's brief letter will not lend itself to these gross perversions. What St. John really **says** and **really** means, is something wholly different. False teachers were rife, who, professing to be Christians, robbed the nature of Christ of all which gave its efficacy to the Atonement. . . . These teachers, like other Christian missionaries, traveled from city to city, and, in the absence of public inns, were received into the houses of Christian converts. The Christian lady to whom St. John writes is warned that, if she offers her hospitality to these dangerous emissaries who were subverting the central truth of Christianity, she is expressing a public sanction of them; and, by doing this and offering them her best wishes, she is taking a direct share in the harm they do. This is common sense; nor is there anything uncharitable in it. No one is bound to help forward the dissemination of teaching what he regards as erroneous respecting the most essential doctrines of his own faith. Still less would it have been right to do this in the days when Christian communities were so small and weak. But to interpret this as it has in all ages been practically interpreted-to pervert it into a sort of command to, exaggerate the minor variations between religious opinions, and to persecute those whose views differ with our own-to make our own opinion the exclusive test of heresy, and to say, with Cornelius a Lapide, that this verse reprobates "all conversation, all intercourse, all dealings with heretics"-is to interpret Scripture by the glare of partisanship and spiritual self-satisfaction, not to read it under the light of holy love.

Alas! churchmen and theologians have found it a far more easy and agreeable matter to obey their distortion of this supposed command, and even to push its stringency to the very farthest limits, than to obey the command that we should love one another! From the Tree of delusive knowledge they pluck the poisonous and inflating fruits of pride and hatred, while they suffer the fruits of love and meekness to fall neglected from the Tree of Life. The popularity which these verses still enjoy, and the exaggerated misinterpretation still attached to them, are due to the fact that they are so acceptable to the arrogance and selfishness, the dishonesty and tyranny, the sloth and obstinacy, of that bitter spirit of religious discord which has been the disgrace of the Church and the scandal of the world. - *Early days of Christianity-F. W. Farrar.*

Submitted by W. J. S.

Free Yet Bound

(A Paradox)

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." - John 8:36.

"Free from what, dear Lord?" I ask.
"Free from the bigot's blinding mask:
Free to make the truth your choice,"
Quickly came His loving voice.

"Free all error to detect,
Free that error to reject;
Free the error to point out
To other blinded souls in doubt.

"Free all God's message to believe,
And from any source receive;
Free to serve another's need,
Free Christ's 'Little Flock' to feed.

"Free to serve the Lord your God;
Free to bear His chastening rod;
Free to go where He directs,
Free from fear while He protects.

"Free from sinful, haughty pride,
Free beneath His wings to hide;
Free from slavery's galling yoke;
Free His blessing to invoke.

"Free from superstition's veil;
Free from slander's withering gale;
Free from fear of death's grim hour,
Free from Satan's awful power.

"Free from grinding poverty,
For His riches now you see;
Free from sin -- your glorious dress
Christ's unfailing righteousness.

"Free from greed and worldly gains,
Free from Babylon's shackling chains;
Free upon God's Word to feed, Free!
You are forever freed!"

Exod. 21:5, 6.

But while I'm free I still am bound;
And while I journey on toward home,

His joyous service, I have found,
Is sweeter than the honeycomb.

His golden, silken cords of love
Hold me to Him in bondage strong;
No power in earth or heaven above
Shall part us through the ages long;

For to the doorpost I've been led,
And through my ear the awl's been thrust.
To all the world I'm reckoned dead;
My Lord alone I'll serve and trust.
In Christ I'm free-in bondage never;
And yet, I am His slave forever. - *Hilia Lorena Wallace.*

"God Is Love"

Notes from talk given by Brother Walter Sargeant shortly before his passing.

1 John 4

"GOD IS love." I consider that the most wonderful text inside or outside the Bible. Love is an element which can never under any circumstance, be coerced or forced into activity. The thunderstorm cannot say when the lightning is striking all around in its fury, "You must love me or I'll strike you." Oh, no; that would never compel you to love the thunderstorm. You might fear it, but never love it. The North wind blowing at a velocity of ninety miles an hour could never compel your love. Oh, nor; the greatest dictator the earth has ever known, under pain of incarceration or death cannot compel your love. You might hate him, or fear him, but you would never love him; he cannot make you do that.

But when the beautiful, warm days of springtime return with the multiplicity of color, benefactions in great variety, and everything is calculated to induce us to revel in the mere sensation of its beauty and balminess-no one needs to tell us we must love the springtime. When the lily raises her beautiful head to the sun and the rose diffuses its fragrance throughout the summer garden and the butterflies hover over the honey-laden, perfumed flowers; or when a little child smiles up into your face from its crib-does anyone have to, compel us to love these things? No, indeed. Love springs spontaneously from the heart to meet these; we cannot keep from loving them.

Some people tell us we are making too much of love. I do not think we are making half enough of it. The more we make of love, the more it will make of us, and the more godlike we will become.

All that we ever imagined of goodness, righteousness, justice, exists in God in its highest state of quintessence. When the panting hart drinks at the water-brook, -he exemplifies the emotions of every Christian who pants after God-for **God is Love**. We come to that great Fountain-head of Love. We drink and drink and drink, but we never get filled, our capacity is limited; but God's capacity is unlimited. He is the Fountain of Love.

God's Love is constant. It is from everlasting to everlasting. He is changeless-not a friend today and an enemy tomorrow. His love for us is like that of a mother for her child. A mother is one you can count on; that is, most mothers are like that. She is one who can be counted on in every exigency of life. So is God-in the dark days as well as in the bright.

I am reminded of the story of the soldier who went to war, leaving his sweetheart behind. He was reported killed in action. Years later when he returned to his home town he was told that his sweetheart had moved away. Finally, after *years of* searching, he found her ill in a hospital where she had gone to nurse. He never forgot his plighted troth. That soldier had the element of constancy, dependability. Jesus never deflected from His purpose; He was constant. We are living in a time when constancy is almost unheard of. How many have the determination, the desire, the constancy to live up to the covenant they made with God? Where are all the brethren who once walked with us? God is constant! God has the constancy of love.

God's Mighty Works Produced by Gentle Forces

God has the gentleness of love. Every golden sunbeam has that: every drop of dew has that. The greatest forces in the world are the gentle forces. The great Spirit of divine truth operates gently, without a sound, in the heart of the "Christian, and enables him to bear testimony to the Lord. We see the mighty forces working in the orchard to produce the princely fruitage of the apple, the pear, the peach, or the plum? Do, you hear anything? Not a sound. No matter how closely you listen you cannot hear the sap rising in the tree trunk, nor can you hear the bursting of the fruit buds, nor the putting forth of the foliage on the tree. Not a sound can you hear as the petals of the violet unfold; nor those of the daisy, nor the grass springing up under your feet; no, nor any of the growing things which God has made to beautify this earth. There is no sound as the mighty sun pushes its shining orb above the eastern horizon in the morning, nor when it sinks in the western sky at the close of the day. Such mighty works of God are done without a sound. These are mighty, but gentle forces.

Jesus was gentle -- the grandest gentleman who ever trod this earth. What an example of gentleness He manifested when taking a little child on His knee, He blessed him, teaching an impatient group of disciples the great lesson of gentle humility. He allowed Judas to kiss Him. What a gentlemanly act that was! I am sure I never would or could have stood for such a thing. No one in all the world ever could have done such a thing. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter; He opened not His mouth. He was a gentleman. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath God removed our transgressions from us." Such gentleness! Do we show such loving gentleness to others? God is going to overcome the selfishness of this world with a 'superabundance of good -- of love.

God is bountiful. Oh the bountifulness, the munificence, the generosity of God! He might have made only one flower, but He made over one hundred thousand flowers, bountiful with colors. Suppose God had made everything in this world of one color; red, for instance, or green, pink, or yellow.

What an awful place it would be to live in! Why, we would be sick of looking at green-all green; green people, grass, trees, flowers, houses-everything green. God made all the beautiful colors for our enjoyment and pleasure. I am told that there are sixteen fundamental colors and hundreds of shades. God is bountiful; that is a constituent of His love. Jesus, too, like His Father, is bountiful. Look at the things He did when He was here on the earth. He went about healing the sick, feeding the multitudes, healing the leprous, opening the blind eyes, raising the dead-rendering service to all. It is a wonderful thing to be affluent-like the sun. There are very few people that have money,

but sometimes it is the person that does not know where the next meal is coming from that gives us the greatest understanding of love, and we go away from that home with a stimulus, feeling that life was never so worth living.

Where honesty and sincerity are lacking, there is no inspiration. If we could only go through this world making people feel that life is good, is beautiful, making their lives worthwhile, what a wealth of character we would possess. Love can lift one out of despondency. God's love is so much broader than the measure of our minds that we cannot begin to conceive of how abundant it is. All the truth we have reflects only a small portion of the love of God. We make God's love too narrow by a measure of our own-

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

Simple Goodness

The world is reading our lives and it reads no other Bible and we must make sure that our daily actions spell out a true Gospel, so that no one who sees us may ever get a wrong thought of Christ or a wrong sense of His religion from us. None of us understand one-half the good there is in simply being good. There is no other such power for real usefulness and helpfulness, no other such glory for God as in simple goodness. Holy life itself is highest service. Heart culture requires the utmost diligence.

One part of consecration is embracing every opportunity of doing good to others. There are those about us who find life -hard. They need sympathy and help. We have our model in Christ who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." We need not wait for great opportunities: these come but rarely; the common days are full of opportunities for little kindnesses and thoughtfulnesses and unselfishnesses and we must seize these-doing the thing that Christ would do if He were just in our place. "He was touched with a feeling of our infirmities." He was touched with compassion as He saw the suffering of those about Him. He gave them real and true sympathy. Nor did He stop with tender emotion and kindly words. He put forth His powers and helped the suffering.

We do not know half the sorrow that those whom we meet every day are enduring. We cannot do much, but we may have a heart of love and sympathy which will manifest itself in a spirit of patient gentleness and kindly thoughtfulness. It does a great deal of good just really to care for people, to be truly interested in them. Sincere sympathy is oftentimes better than money. We need only to have in us the true spirit of Christ-of unselfish love, and then the blessing will flow from our lives with out effort or purpose. It is the little things that we can do that in the end leave the largest aggregate. Words of kindness, thoughtful acts, cheering looks. The way to grow rich in treasures of kindness and affection is to show kindness and affection to all who need. That day is lost in which we do nothing to bless some other life in the name of *Christ*. - *Selected*.

"Fight the Good Fight of Faith"

I came and saw, and hoped to conquer,
As the great Roman once had done;
His was the one hour's torrent shock of battle;
My field was harder to be won.

I came and saw, but did not conquer;
The foes were fierce, their weapons strong.
I came and saw, but yet I did not conquer;
For me the fight was sore and long.

They said the war was brief and easy,
A word, a look, would crush the throng;
To some it may have been a moment's conflict,
To me it has been sore and long.

They said the threats were coward bluster,
To brave men they could work no wrong;
So some may boast of swift and easy battle;
To me it has been sore and long.

And yet I know that I shall conquer,
Though sore and hard the fight may be;
I know, I know I shall be more than victor
Through Him who won the fight for me.

I fight, not fearful of the issue,
My victory is sure and near;
Yet not the less with hand and eye all watchful,
Grasp I my buckler and my spear.

For I must fight, if I would conquer,
'Tis not by flight that fields are won;
And I must conquer, if I would inherit
The victor's joy and crown and throne.

- *Horatius Bonar.*

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren:

Your letter of the 27th received, and before I again neglect to do so I will write and renew the subscription to the "Herald" that has expired for which you will find cash enclosed. . . . I do have many causes for thanksgiving for the help in the narrow way that many of your articles have brought.

I believe I am more critical now than ever in my life, but my criticism is turned inward rather than outward, for the trend of many of late years has seemed to be toward judgment of others; and I was not without this fault, but I am trying to search my own heart more closely and let the mantle -of charity cover the seeming faults of others. So long as we can see the fundamentals eye to eye, I believe that most of -our differences are in terms rather than in fact, and I am very thankful that our Father will not judge me so much by my head as by the condition of my heart.

I want the pure truth on all the Scriptures in so far as it is possible, yet I want most of all to be able to sincerely love my brethren even when we may not see alike. Daily, therefore, do we ask for guidance in all things for ourselves and also for all our brethren, especially for those who like yourselves are seeking to give out the rich blessing of God's Word. May the spirit of Christ at all times be our guide, may nothing of self or for the glory of ourselves ever enter into our service for the brethren. God bless and keep you always in a humble, meek, yet courageous state. Love to all the fellow workers... .

By His grace your brethren,
Brother and Sister C. A. K. -- Pa.

Dear Brethren:

Your good letter of October 14th was much appreciated. I felt a little more relaxed after receiving it and could read the second volume of "Revelation" a little more comfortably. However, I did finish it within thirty days -- a little short of it, "but knowing I was granted plenty of time, I didn't get nervous over it. I just finished it this afternoon.

I want you to know I appreciate the privilege of reading it; and even though I will not retain in my memory a whole lot of it, it has given me a splendid foundation in the understanding of the Revelation symbols, etc. A number of things have been cleared up to me and will be a help in further study of God's Word. I am going to read "Daniel" now.

We have about all -of Brother Russell's writings. In the Lord's providence we were presented with a set of the Reprints a few months ago. We are delighted to have such a "treasure-chest." I "love" the admonitional articles. We note that many such appear in the "Herald."

We appreciate your words of encouragement, and it is our earnest desire to keep in close range of the Good Shepherd's voice. We pray for all who are engaged in the ministry.

Again thanking you, and with Christian love from all in our household, I am,
Yours by His favor,
A. B. S. -- Maine.

Dear Sirs:

A boyhood friend of mine in the State of Maine sent me one of your leaflets: "Immortality and the Resurrection of the Dead," and I found it very interesting, and wish to see other leaflets from your press.

I am not and never have been a member of any church or denomination regarded as religious, for the reason I have never read, nor heard a creed expounded, to which I could subscribe to every declaration in it, though naturally religious from boyhood. To my mind no man has seemed more contemptible than a hypocrite, and for me to subscribe to a creed to which I made a mental reservation would place me in their class.

Yours truly,
G. D. M. -- Minn.

Dear Brethren:

We have had so many blessings and privileges of late; it seems our Lord has been giving us more and more evidence of His leading along the way. We had the privilege of attending the Chicago Convention taking with us our son and his wife and our daughter living near us. Among other rich blessings of the Convention there is -one outstanding to us which we must tell you about. A short discourse -on baptism was given which was right to the point. When the invitation was extended for those who wanted to be immersed to come forward, our three children walked up. Oh, the joy that was ours at that time just cannot be expressed! We knew they had made a consecration as they had given evidence, and yet we felt it was an individual matter, and have never urged the subject. We thank the Lord and rejoice in this evidence of His love and answers to our prayers... .

When we came home we wrote to our other daughter who had not been able to attend the Convention with us, and she replied that she was deeply touched, and sorry that she could not have been there also. So when we went to the Convention at St. Louis which followed shortly after, we drove to this daughter's home and took her with us. . . . On Sunday morning we met at a small Christian Church where five were immersed, our daughter being one of them. We feel that our labors have not been in vain, and we know the Lord has been leading and guiding us these many years. What shall we render unto Him for all His benefits? We have had so many blessings and we pray He will keep us all faithful in these strenuous times.

We continue to have blessed meetings in our home. There were seventeen of us yesterday.* What *a joy* to our hearts as we see the dear ones *grow* in grace and knowledge -of our Lord and Savior! Please remember us in prayer. May we all be found faithful and hear the "Well done." Psalm 68:19; Rom. 15:13.

In the bonds of Christian love,
Brother and Sister A. J. N. -- Ill

* These dear friends, wishing to witness to their neighbors, began meetings about ten years ago in their little country schoolhouse at the time of a Pilgrim visit. These meetings have continued through the years, and the above gives evidence of the Lord's blessing upon their efforts. - Ed. Com.

The Old and the New

Dear Father, as the old year dies,
My heart ascends in prayer to Thee;
In loving gratitude and praise,
For all Thy goodness unto me.
I thank Thee, that Thy precious Truth
Grows ever sweeter day by day,
As with increasing joy, I walk
Along the blessed, narrow way.

I thank Thee for the trials sore,
Which wrought in me faith's rich increase
I thank Thee for the storms and then,
For afterwards of sweetest peace.
I thank Thee for the love of saints,
Their fellowship, their sympathy,
For knowing, that from every land
Their daily prayers ascend for me.

I thank Thee for the quiet days,
For persecutions, which afford
A chance to prove love's very depth,
And share the sufferings of my Lord.
Dear Lord, Thy mercies have been great,
I cannot name, or number all;
And should the coming days be dark,
Thy loving kindness I'll recall.

Oh, I confess, I've been remiss,
I have come short; Lord, pardon me!
As this another New Year dawns,
With heart sincere I promise Thee
To spread Thy Truth with greater zeal,
In loving search for grains of wheat.
To suffer slander, scorn, and hate,
And let the bitter make me sweet.

I want a large increase of love,
A kinder manner, softer tones;
I want by loving acts to show
I sympathize with others' groans;
To all their imperfections blind
But quick to see and serve their need.
An utter sacrifice of self;
I crave it Lord, I do indeed.

Tho' rising winds may fiercer blow,
And dark'ning clouds around me lower,
By faith's strong hand I'll cling to Thee,
And trust in Thine Almighty power.
I would be faithful unto death,
If on my head the storm should break;
This, and much more, I want to do,
So help me, Lord, for Jesus' sake.

- *Rebecca Fair Doney.*

Recently Deceased

Mr. David L. Conklin, Hamilton, Ill. - (August).

Mr. Conrad Binkele, Los Angeles, Cal. - (October).

Mr. Carl Bogdon, Cleveland, Ohio - (October).

Mr. August F. Brooks, Long Beach, Cal. - (October).

Mrs. Margaret Johnson, Youngstown, Ohio - (October).

Mr. T. E. Barker, Boston, Mass. - (November).