

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXVII    March, 1944    No. 3

## "Do This in Remembrance of Me"

*"I am the bread of life ... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."*

IT IS apparent from St. John's account of the discourse of Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum, from which the foregoing words are quoted, that His hearers were mystified if not horrified. "How can this man give us His flesh, to eat?" they asked one another. "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" And it is recorded that, as a consequence, "Many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." - Ver. 66.

The dogma of the Mass, to which we as Protestants believe Daniel and Jesus referred prophetically as "the abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan. 12:11: Matt. 24:18), is based on a literal interpretation and amplification of these words, which completely disregards Jesus' own explanation of His meaning. It was enunciated at the zenith of papal power and glory in A.D. 1215 by Pope Innocent III, who, according to Mosheim, invented the word "transubstantiation" in reference to this canon. It is thus defined by *Webster*: "Transubstantiation: The change by and at the consecration of the elements in the Eucharist, of the whole substance of the bread and the whole substance of the wine into the body and blood of Christ, only the appearance of the bread and wine remaining, a form of doctrine of the real presence, held by the Roman Catholic Church and, the Eastern Church."

This doctrine involves the belief that the officiating priest, because of his ordination, has the power to perform a miracle, by pronouncing certain Latin words which transform the bread and wine into the very flesh and blood of Christ.

It is difficult for most Protestant Christians to conceive that this monstrous superstition is actually believed by any one. But millions do believe and practise this error; and its effect is to divert their attention from the reality and efficacy of the one sacrifice consummated forever on Calvary, to a ritualistic observance that soothes without satisfying the conscience. In practice as in theory, the "sacrifice of the Mass" must be constantly renewed to maintain its efficacy toward God in theory, toward its communicant in practice. God must be continually propitiated for continued sin; the sinner periodically purged from the consciousness of guilt.

**WHAT JESUS MEANT**

Jesus Himself answered His questioners and explained the mystery. He said: "*The flesh profiteth nothing.*" (Ver. 63.) This is not a reference to the flesh in general. The only "flesh" spoken of by Jesus in this discussion was His own. "My [literal] flesh is of no benefit." What profit would it be for His hearers or for us to eat His body? "*It is the Spirit that giveth life.*" The Greek word *pneuma*, translated "spirit," primarily means the unseen currents of air, as explained by Jesus to Nicodemus. (John 3:8.) It has a very wide application in New Testament usage, both personal and impersonal. References to "the' spirit of adoption," of bondage, of slumber, of the law, of the mouth (words), of -fear, of glory, of the prophecy, etc., are examples of its impersonal use, signifying the *force or effect or power* of these things. Here Jesus speaks of the "spirit" -- the force or effect or power-of His flesh as He is using 'the term symbolically, to nourish and sustain life:' "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh [itself] profiteth nothing." And then He gave the definition of "the spirit" of His (symbolic) flesh, which is the "bread" of eternal life; a definition that leaves superstition and error no refuge or support: "*The words that I speak unto you are spirit and are life.*"

The antitypical and real, then, is not flesh or bread, but *words*. "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and Thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Jehovah, God of Hosts." (Jer. 15:16.) Jesus' words were the expression of Himself, His flesh; the best possible human representation of God, the Father, as He explained to Philip: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." This is the reason that the importance of the words of Jesus is so magnified, so exalted. He Himself said: "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." (John 14:10.) And the writer to the Hebrews declares: "God in these last days hath spoken unto us by His Son.." (Heb. 1:2.) They are the words of God, the Creator and Preserver of all life.

The importance of every word that Jesus uttered therefore cannot be over-estimated, for in them are set forth with final authority the terms upon which life may be attained by fallen man. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth-out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3.) This maxim was quoted by Jesus from the Mosaic Law; and Jesus Himself was the embodiment of the Logos, the Word of God.

Hence the force of the symbol of bread, which represents all the natural food of mankind. It must be continually eaten, digested, assimilated, to sustain our human life, even so the words of God through Jesus must be received, meditated upon and assimilated to our individual needs, or we will "have no life" in ourselves.

### **"EAT, AND BE SATISFIED"**

The words of Jesus are found exclusively in the four Gospels. This fact places these four short books in our estimation at the very summit of the world's literature; on -a higher plane even -than the remainder of the Bible. The Law and the Prophets foreshadowed, the Apostles were commissioned to interpret, but the words of Jesus in themselves are the supreme authority. We echo the answer of Simon Peter: "*Lord, to whom [else] shall we go? Thou hast words of eternal life.*" - Ver. 68, Literal.

Unquestionably these words of Jesus, recorded in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, are intended to explain the fundamental significance of the emblems used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper -- the Memorial -- the Remembrancer. After His "flesh," His human life and words for three and a half years, had supplied the "bread," Jesus sacrificed His life "once" on Calvary. Through that one all -- sufficient sacrifice He "obtained eternal redemption for us," for "without

the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." (Heb. 7:27; 9:26, 12, 22.) Figuratively we drink His blood when we by faith accept that sacrifice as for ourselves individually. The connection between the life, the blood, and the symbol of wine, is indicated in the two passages from the Law: "The life of the flesh is in the blood . . . the blood thereof is all one with the life thereof"; of the blood of the grape thou drinkest wine." -(Lev. 17:11, 14; Deut. 32:14, A.R.V.) But neither the flesh nor the blood are sufficient to give life apart from each: other; both must be received to be efficacious.

### **"REMEMBER"**

It is therefore not merely the fact of the Lord's life and death that the partaker of the Memorial is to remember; not alone His work for us, and our relationship to Him. His words are the extension of the life of Jesus, the Man; the paradox, the mystery of the spiritual continuance of His flesh. On them, if we would have life, we must continually feed. This, as well as other things, we symbolize in partaking of the emblems of the Memorial. So when He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me," He meant in remembrance of His words, His deeds, His personality, His character-likeness of the Father, as well as His sacrificial death. We are to mentally feed upon these, assimilate them, make them our own, until we become like Him; as it is written: "God . . . did predestinate [the called] to be conformed to the image of His Son." - Rom. 8:28, 29.

In consideration of the paramount-the *vital-importance* of the *words* of Jesus, should we not make ourselves very familiar with them? Should we not constantly feed upon them? We find time daily to eat the food necessary to maintain our failing bodies for a little while; should we not make time *daily* to read and meditate upon a portion of the words of Jesus, the food essential to eternal life? Three chapters from the Gospels daily would enable us to read over all His words once each month. Is that an unreasonable task, since our life depends on our familiarity with them? As a matter of fact, do we average reading them over once a year? Are we trying to exist on a starvation diet, when- we might "feast with Jesus' priests and kings"? How else can we become like Him? "*He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.*" -Ver. 67.

Let us think of these things as we partake of the annual Memorial Supper, of our Lord. The types of the Supper mean much more than this, of course. But the rest has no value to us if we fail to fulfill the type of assimilating His words, the bread of life; for "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

- H. E. Hollister.

## **"The Love of Christ Constraineth Us"**

"O Christ what burdens bowed Thy head,  
Our load was laid on Thee;  
Thou stoodest in the sinner's place --  
To bear all ill for me.  
A victim led, Thy blood was shed,  
Now there's no load for me.

"Death and the curse were in the cup,  
O Christ 'twas full for Thee  
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,  
'Tis empty now for me.  
That bitter cup love drank it up,  
Left but the love for me.

"The tempest's awful voice was heard,  
O Christ, it broke on Thee;  
Thy open bosom was my ward  
It bore the storm for me.  
Thy form was marred Thy visage scarred,  
Now cloudless peace for me.

"For me Lord Jesus hast Thou died, .  
And I have died in Thee.  
Thou art risen! my bands are all untied  
And now Thou livest in me.  
The Father's face of radiant grace  
Shines now in light on me."

## Our High Calling

HOW fitting is the term, "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," as pertains to the calling or special favor of this, present Age of Grace-the invitation to footstep followers of Christ to joint heirship with Him. Not to angels was such a call given, nor to holy men of old whose faithfulness was indeed highly meritorious did such great favor come a call to glory, honor, and immortality. How high a calling it is! Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be sharers with Him in all the Father had designed to give the Son of power, glory, majesty, and in the uplift of Adam and his race! Partakers with Him of the divine nature -- a favor higher than Which God could not give to any one! Who could aspire to such favor without the clearest assurance from God's Word that so high a calling was indeed placed within the reach of redeemed men and women now? Verily no man may take such honor to himself. Well may such favored ones say. "Thou hast called us to a station we could ne'er by merit win."

And who are they to whom this great favor is shown? Harken to the rating given them in the Word: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." - 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

Consider, then, the strata from which these called of God are taken, and the high standard set before them, requiring of them attainment of a high degree of sanctification, even cleansing "from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord calling them to a growth in love akin to the knowledge -- surpassing love of Christ. It is indeed a call of a very high character, to a very exalted dignity and station. Consistently, therefore, the transformation of character required must be very high. Nevertheless, a completed and glorified Church will yet be a witness to the practical possibility of every high ideal set before those who would win the prize of this high calling of God in Christ Jesus. How could we think otherwise of those requirements if God is to be recognized as consistent and practical? If He is able to work in us to will according to this, His good pleasure, and He does so work in receptive, minds, shall we not believe Him able to work in us to do that will, high though it be? If this be not so, how meaningless and impractical are the confident' statements of Paul in his prayer for the Ephesian brethren, assuring them that beyond all those large blessings asked for in that prayer, that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." - Eph. 3:20.

What is Paul showing in such great petitions as we find in this prayer, closing it with this final burst of largeness, if he is not showing that the highest of aims, of thinking, of hoped for attainments, should characterize every sincere heart among God's people:

Surely we should gather from this prayer an inspiration toward greater and greater things in Christian life, a drawing of our hearts upward and onward toward the ultimate goal, even that of being "filled with all the fulness of God." Can we say as in the presence of God, "I shall be satisfied with Thy likeness," unless so high an attainment has really gripped our spirit, and given an assured reality to our faith? Out of the heart are the issues of life, therefore if the Spirit of God has filled the heart with such desires as these, then that heart will assuredly be occupied with high principles, high aspirations, and- Christlike love. The thoughts will be centered in these things. Then as such an one thinketh in his heart, such he will become in character. Such will love

deeply, live in the heavenlies, be heaven-minded, find a special delight in- the great and rich spiritual verities of Christian life.

In that gem of literature, the thirteenth of First Corinthians, how fundamental and supremely important Paul makes the quality of love. Faith is -assuredly important, hope also, but of faith, hope, and love, he says, "the greatest of these is love." Is he not thinking in much the same trend when he writes, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8.) Well did the Apostle know, that the habit of thought determines the development of character, and that when the mind is exercised in the cultivation of such high, constructive thoughts, the mind of Christ soon becomes manifest.

### **HEART PURITY THE GREAT ESSENTIAL**

We must live in love if we would grow into the loveliness of Christ's character. No one can make any progress in real spiritual knowledge unless he lives in the love of Christ. The great verities of Christian life are never seen by those who miss this life of love; for there are great verities of divine revelation which no measure of mere intellectual knowledge can impart. It is not by mere mental acuteness that true spirituality is determined but by the manifest evidence of a *rich* possession of the Holy Spirit, which can be as remarkably manifest in the unlettered in earthly wisdom, as in the more able-minded students of the Word. Heart purity is the *best* evidence of being spiritually minded and spiritually developed, for it is written, "The pure in heart will *see* God." "The impure in heart," one has said, "see everything but God." Yes, heart-likeness to God and devotion to Him unquestionably determine the degree of spiritual understanding, for the reason that God has made it the imperative requirement antecedent to heart illumination. Our conduct, therefore, much more effectively than our preaching, will bear testimony to the degree of spiritual light and life possessed.

Let us note a few of the fundamental principles all must recognize and fervently desire to follow. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples because ye have love one for another." "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." These are unchanging principles of divine judgment. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," is also a principle of relationship to Christ as true in the case of the less alert intellectually as of those more analytically endowed; for: while various ramifications of Bible teaching may be but dimly comprehended by some, fundamentals may be grasped with clearness by the most illiterate of the truly spiritual children of God. These things being true, surely it is an outstanding evidence of the Lord's loving care over His Church through all the long centuries of this Gospel Age, that so universally, and through so many voices; the spirit of the truth, if not its perfect letter, has been placed highest among the things required of the Christian. What love is revealed in this, that the practical understanding and application of these are within the reach of the "not many wise" whom God in grace has called into this high fellowship with His Son; and how truly "His Plan His wisdom shows" in making love the principal thing, and the daily life the best evidence of the Holy Spirit's operations.

That there are dispensational unfoldings peculiar, to the progressive stages of Church history, who can doubt? The light that shines in the dark place until the Kingdom Day has fully dawned, is indeed a lamp in the pathway of the saints, and unto the sure word of prophecy we do well to take heed lest we live unaware of the special visitations of light and privilege that belong to our own day. But regardless of the particular day in which God's people have their tests of faith and character, love ever remains the principal thing, and associated with that love there are fixed and vital facts which are always "present truth." To be established in these facts of truth is therefore

the supreme objective before all who desire to attain the prize of our high, wonderful, calling in Christ Jesus. So important has this been in the view of the Lord and Head of the Church, that throughout the Age, while He has seen fit to allow many of His faithful servants to be measurably confused doctrinally, He has never left Himself without the witness of, His all inclusive redeeming love, nor permitted true brotherly love to depart from the Church which is His Body, and in which no schism can exist. How truly, then, has it been said in bygone days by one who knew God's love, though not all His Plan as it may be seen today: "The heart is the depository and source of all that affect; life. Here are the finest organs of spiritual vision. There are seals covering the deeper truths of God that no light or fire of intellectual genius can dissolve-hidden riches that no labor of learned research can find. But those seals melt like snow beneath the warm breathings of the heart; and the wine and honey of heaven drop into the bosom of the humble and contrite spirit."

### **A HOPE ANCHORED FAST TO ETERNAL VERITIES**

Recognizing, then, that it is only in a rich possession of Christ's love that divine favor can be continued to the individual, and that the life is conformed to the greatness of our high calling standards, this writer continues:

"We will need to widen the practical boundaries of our love till it touches the same expansive limits of God's love and purpose for all. He who mined the golden ore of His Father's love, and minted it into common coin and threw it in lavish handfuls among men, bids us perpetuate that beneficence in unstinted measure. He came to teach that God is near and tender, and that the things He loves to see in exercise are mercy and justice -- humility and love -- to have a heart that never hardens, a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts."

"Thou Son of God! fill up the blurred and blotted sketch which our clumsy hands have drawn of a divine life, with the fulness of Thy perfect picture. We feel the beauty which we have not realized; robe us in Thine own unutterable height of beauty."

Our high calling! Higher than the utmost reaches of earth's greatness: more stupendous than the limitless amazing splendor of a star-studded heaven-the uttermost bounds of God's willingness and power to bestow favor upon the subjects of His deepest affection! To this we are called of God, and to this He is abundantly able to bring us.

*So* great a favor requires a high degree of faith, a strong gripping trust in the immutable promises of God, likewise a high-reaching hope, a blessed hope anchoring us fast to the eternal realities beyond the veil, and above all-love, a divine love received through saving faith, filling the life with untiring devotion to God, and shedding its beams of loving kindness where'er it touches other lives. And now abideth high persistent faith, a high and purifying hope; then best, and highest of all, the love by which is fulfilled the perfect standard and ideal of life: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with *all* thy strength, and . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." - Mark 12:30, 31.

- *J. J. Blackburn.*

## Three Ways of Disobedience.

*"Love not the-world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of the Father abideth for ever." - 1 John 2:15-17.*

MAN IS a moral being. This is it which distinguishes him, the crown of the terrestrial creation, from the lesser creatures about him. He alone possesses the marvelous God-given faculty of discerning between good and evil, right and wrong, holiness and sin. However of his own self man cannot set up a code of absolute ethics; therefore God has given to him the Bible, the divine standard of morality. The Bible gives us no metaphysical definition of sin, but describes it by its ruinous effects, by what it *does*. In simple definition, "sin is the transgression of God's law." (1 John 3:4.) Violation of this law immediately reveals sin. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3:20.) The Hebrew word for sin, *Chata*, is defined as "erring or going astray." The Greek word, *Hamartano*, similarly means "erring or missing the mark." Violation of God's law, or disobedience, is responsible for the present evil condition of the world. "By one man's disobedience," St. Paul says-a disobedience fathered and ever since fostered in all men by the "god of this world," the "spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." - Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2.

In this disobedience, the Apostle declares, Christians once shared and were by nature the children of wrath even as others. But the great mercy of God has reached out to us, and He has set our feet upon a Rock and given us a new song, even the loving praises of our God. From a condition of blindness and deadness wherein we fulfilled the desires of the flesh and of the mind, there has been an inward moral awakening to discern certain permissions and restrictions. The inward voice, illuminated by God's Word, says, "Thou mayest" and "Thou shalt not. Coupled with the "Thou mayest" there is life. Coupled with the "Thou shalt not" there is death. These are the most important facts and laws of the universe. They are what God holds to with more firmness than to anything else. From all His creation, animate and inanimate, He exacts *obedience*, absolute and unequivocal. The one exception and that for a comparative brief period only, is the permission of evil upon this earth; and this for the salutary purpose of revealing by actual experience, to men and angels, the "exceeding sinfulness of sin"; that is, disobedience to the divine law and its dreadful consequence. Every pain, every tear, every sorrow and woe can be traced back to its root of disobedience, and thus witnesses that "God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." - Gal. 6:7.

God's consecrated saints, who have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice to do not their own wills but His, are thereby pledged to full obedience. He who spared not His own Son, is testing our worthiness for joint-heirship with our Forerunner, who "though He were a Son, yet learned *obedience* by the things which He suffered." Ours is the task, by the grace of God, of "casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity, every thought to the *obedience* of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5.)

The real test upon the Christian, then, is the test of obedience to God's will. Let nothing obscure this foundation truth. For though knowledge and works and faith and zeal are meritorious and require evidences of faithfulness, yet all these, strange as it may seem, may exist even in a large measure without the real heart obedience required by the Lord. This is a hard saying, but it is nevertheless true that other motives rather than complete submission to God's will, can bring forth outward qualities which temporarily may mislead the individual and those about him as being

divine indications of approval. Not until the Refiner's fire reaches within to purge out all self-will, are the real motivating factors manifested.

Fruitage to ostensibly glorify God, apart from obedience, is unacceptable. This lesson was lost on Saul and it cost him the kingdom. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." (1 Sam. 15:22, 23.) Such also is the lesson of Matthew 7:21-23. Sometime, somewhere, lack of obedience to God's will manifests itself, and no citation of commendable works will then prove availing. Complete rejection results. Constant vigilance is necessary to recognize the subtle "sin which ever lieth at the door" and which would draw us from the prize.

### **"THE SIN WHICH DOTHSO EASILY BESET US"**

The life-work of a Christian consists in keeping his sacrifice on the altar; that is, keeping his own will constantly subordinated to God's will. This was the "cup" of Christ and this is the "cup" of His disciple. Faithfulness in "drinking this cup," submitting "under the mighty hand of 'God," will result in a transformation into Godlikeness and a consequent resurrection upon the divine plane of existence. To prevent the saint of God from attaining his goal, "ten thousand foes arise," and from the Scriptures we learn that these utilize three lines of approach, all of which, however, have the same objective, namely, to cause self-will again to assert itself, and thus disobedience to God's will results. These are brought to our attention by St. John in our heading text, where in words of remarkable comprehensiveness he has summed up the three ways by which sin (disobedience to God's will) seeks to penetrate the Christian's armor. These three means of entry are:

1. Lust of the flesh-gratification of the lower senses.
2. Lust of the eye-desire for the appealing things of sight.
3. Pride of life -- lust of the mind -- pride of knowledge -- exaltation of self.

These three means of sin, including their ramifications, express the motivating cause of all sin. On one or another of these points every intelligent being can be tested completely. They embrace all the possibilities of temptation, all the ways by which the creature can be separated from the Creator; for "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:14, 15.) The word "lust" is here used in the sense of strong desire or craving, and does not necessarily refer to desire for evil or immoral things. In fact it is well to note -at this point that the senses and the eye and the mind are all of God's creation and reside as -components of man's faculties by reason of God's willing it so. Of themselves they are good and to be used properly, but the Apostle John's words call attention to the fact that it is through these good things that evil does always approach, "and no marvel for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" and "we are not ignorant of his devices." (2 Cor. 11:14; 2:11.) Thus that which is good can become a source of evil to us, and it is the recognition of this truth that has caused men and women of limited religious persuasion to mortify themselves in all manner of ascetic pursuits, as regards clothing, diet, abstinence, etc., in their' endeavor to lead godly lives. This has led to undue emphasis on trivial things and has resulted in a "form of godliness," merely outward, dependent upon one's personal decision as to what is good and what is evil. In its extreme form this develops into Pharisaism, that self-styled righteousness so abominable to the Lord. The question is always not, what is good and what is evil, but, is it the Lord's will? We are not called to go through our Christian life constantly, classifying all things into these two categories, 'as this' were beyond our

wisdom; for "the heart is deceitful above all things" and "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death." Evil, of course, is to be instantly rejected, but evil, as such is not always recognizable. On the other hand, that which is good can also become a snare unto us. The ultimate touchstone to determine our proper choice is an affirmative answer to the question, Is it in obedience to God's will? The attitude 'of the Psalmist alone will guide us safely through: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: Yea, Thy law is within my heart." (Psa. 40:8.) Let us consider some Scriptural illustrations in conformity to the above thoughts.

## **THE ORIGINAL TEMPTATION**

The truth of the Apostle John's words is markedly verified in the account of the fall of man recorded in Genesis 3. Obedience to God was the condition under which Adam and Eve could continue in His favor and blessing. Abundant provision had been arranged for their welfare. No good thing was withheld to make their life replete with joy except one, and that for a time only. Access to the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" was denied them under penalty of death. In the words of, the sixth verse: "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be, desired to make one wise, she took of-,the; fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Here we recognize the triumvirate of evil;

1. Lust of the flesh -- "the tree was good, for food."
2. Lust of the eye -- "'the tree was pleasant to, the, eyes." 3. Lust of the mind-"a tree to be desired to make one wise."

Thus does that which is good in itself become a snare and the occasion for disobedience to God. How often since has man failed to recognize the Tempter and followed the appeal of his own heart into evil, for the approach is ever by one or the other of the three ways of disobedience.

Note the method of the Adversary. It is always- the same. There is first a questioning of God's love; the subtle suggestion that the commandment was arbitrarily imposed: "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat?" Surely He cannot love you if He denies you this fruit. No mention is made of all God's many gifts and proofs of love. These are carefully kept out of sight. The thing denied is alone fixed upon and made the occasion for questioning God's love. This is the fundamental lie; the indirect suggestion that the Creator's command is due to His limitation in love toward His creature-God is not love. Every other lie is possible after this. With what subtleness is the temptation opened-by a simple question as to God! Yet doubt arises and how awful are the results. Another has well said: "*If* we question what God does, we judge God; we get out of our place, and put Him out of His. A really humble soul never judges God. It may not have peace or joy, but at least it will not judge God; submitting, rather, to His sovereign will; tempted to question, yet not questioning. Such a soul has broken through the snare. It is safe, for it will not entertain questions as to God's ways."

God's way being questioned, His love doubted, the next. step is the denial of God's truth. "Ye shall not surely die. Truth is rejected; God is made out a liar; His place; in man's trust is assailed and what follows is inevitable. For God's love and truth being denied, the next step is to take God's place openly. "Ye shall be as *gods*." How subtly has the poison of the first suggestion spread! God has lost His character in the heart of men. Self may now therefore seek to be "as God"; so entirely is spiritual perception gone when we begin to doubt Him. Disobedience follows

as a matter of course. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the **living God.**" - Heb. 3:12.

### **CHRIST'S TEMPTATIONS**

Let us now consider- the temptations of our Master as recorded in Matt. 4:1-11, remembering that He was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15.) Again does the Tempter seek access through the evil trio:

1. Lust of the flesh -- Command these stones be made bread (cater to thy necessities).
2. Lust of the eye -- Cast thyself from the temple pinnacle (an ostentatious display will accomplish your purpose speedily).
3. Lust of the mind -- World kingdom shall be your, (exaltation of self).

Manifestly the objective in all three temptations was one and the same, namely, to bring about Christ's violation of His covenant by sacrifice with God at Jordan, "Not My will but Thine, O God, be done" in one word, disobedience. Satan's appeal is not through the grosser forms of evil, for such would have proved unavailing, but is clothed in a subtler form. There is the suggestion to use divine power for 'the necessities of the flesh, a seemingly justifiable course in view of our Master's forty day fast. Then the suggestion to utilize a spectacular method of calling attention to Himself and so to His message, with even a Scripture wrested in seeming confirmation. Thirdly, the appeal to *the* mind through-the gift of world dominion with its immediate possibility of a reign of good on behalf of all mankind. These were indeed powerful suggestions with a direct appeal to the perfect flesh and eye and mind of the Master; but here was One who unlike Adam, could see beyond the creature (the visible form of temptation) and discern the Tempter.

Note how in our Master's case, the Adversary reversed his procedure in Eden. There he questioned God's love; next, His truth; and finally exalted man to equality with God. Now he says in substance: "God's love for you is unquestionable; therefore it is appropriate that you exercise the power given you for your obvious necessity." Again, "It is proper for you to utilize this spectacular method to call attention to your mission, for does not the unassailable Word declare: "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall "bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Again, "I am willing to submit to the divine purpose of setting up a world kingdom under your jurisdiction; and to expedite matters am willing to turn over all the kingdoms to you now, with one qualification -- you must recognize me as your superior."

With what firmness did our' Lord reject all these overtures, discerning instantly that His obedience to God's will was on trial. "Hallelujah! what a Savior!" But the record of history reveals how these same temptations proved efficacious in bringing about the great Apostasy; and even in smaller spheres have the Adversary's delusions been successful. Under the guise of seeming righteous methods, all for the furtherance of God's Kingdom, men have succumbed to their own wills, and sad is the record of disobedience.

### **CAIN-BALAAM-KORAH**

As further illustrative of the Apostle John's words we consider next Jude 11: "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying . of Core."

Here in reference to a class in his day, Jude cites the record of several Old Testament characters whose evil course can be similarly placed in juxtaposition with the words of our article text:

1. Lust of the eye - the "way of Cain" (Jealousy - envy).
2. Lust of the flesh - "Error of Balaam for reward."
3. Lust of the mind - Rebellion of Korah (exaltation of self).

Their evil course is thus witnessed to us as Scriptural examples of forms of disobedience which can be a snare to others, including ourselves also.

The record of Cain, found in Genesis 4, reveals an attitude which bears out St. John's words: "His works were evil and his brother's righteous." (1 John 3:12.) The sight of his eyes did but enrage him; he craved the position of acceptance which was Abel's, and instead of determining the reasons for Abel's favor and conforming himself thereto, he opposed his own will to the will of God and thus despised His dominion. This was the first step in his downward "way." Soon, abandoning all self control, he gave free reign to his evil passions until they led him, under the guidance of "the wicked one," to imbrue his hands with his brother's blood. Afterwards he boldly set at naught the authority of his Maker, and called in question His right to sit in judgment, upon his conduct. Such is the *way of Cain*; a brother-murderer.

The record of Balaam is found in the Book of Numbers, Chapters 22, 23, 24, and 31. The story is familiar to all and reveals that attitude of mind which for purposes of gain will endeavor to circumvent the divine will. The Prophet Balaam showed a certain outward and official respect for the commands of God, while in his heart he utterly rejected His dominion. In obedience to the positive divine command, he at first refused to go with the messengers of -Balak. Afterwards tempted by the promise of more glittering rewards, he sought to change the divine purpose, notwithstanding the clearest manifestation of the divine displeasure. To cure the "madness of the Prophet" the dumb ass spake (2 Pet. 2:15, 16), but, to no avail, for we read the astonishing answer to the angel: "If it *displease thee*, I will get me back again:" (Num. 22:34.) For the second time he is permitted to go on, and ultimately meets his end by the sword. This is the "error of Balaam," and teaches us that once having been instructed in the Lord's will, we must implicitly remain obedient thereto. If for purposes of gain we should in any way seek permission to do our own wills, we shall but emulate the "madness" of Balaam; for while God will not change His will, neither will He circumvent ours, and we shall find the circumstances to permit us to go our own way, the way of self-delusion; but "the end thereof is the way of death." - Prov. 14:12.

Something of this lesson of strict submission to God's will is discernible also in Moses' unfortunate experience in the second smiting of the rock for water. The account is found in Numbers 20:143, and Moses' mistake is generally explained as being the seeming self-exaltation implied in his words in the 10th verse: "Must *we* fetch you water out of this rock." It is possible that a greater sin was here committed, in that since the Lord had abundantly demonstrated His ability to provide for the necessities of Israel by the first supply of miraculous water, this lack of faith on the people's part should have been withstood most positively by Moses and Aaron, and under no circumstances should they have approached the Lord at the behest of the people, even though it may have meant their stoning. For while God gave them the authority to bring forth the water (just as He permitted Balaam to follow a course- opposed to God's will), yet, is went ill with them both. We would emphasize in this particular for deep contemplation, the words of the Lord in verse 12 to Moses and Aaron: "*because ye believed Me not.*" (See also Deut. 1:37 and

Psa. 106:32, 33.) Just as the people should have submitted in faith to the experiences divine providence permitted, so also should have these two servants of God, instead of hastening to alter these experiences by the expression of their own or the people's" will. The deeper lesson for us is that neither the Elders nor the Ecclesia -should attempt to alter God's will to suit their own ideas, especially, when past experience has shown His ability to provide for all the necessities of His Own. But alas, how often, like Moses and Aaron and the people, has this same mistake been made during the Gospel Age wherein discontent and lack of faith have resulted in the exercise of self-will, when men have "after their own lusts heaped to themselves teachers, having itching ears," and resulted in the rising of the old proverb "like people, like priest." No self-arranged religious pretensions are acceptable with the Lord, for "to obey, is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

The gainsaying or rebellion of Korah does likewise have its lessons for us. The account is found in Numbers 16 and reveals the consequence of exaltation of self, namely, destruction. Korah and his followers were truly princes in Israel, and God acknowledged the holiness of their offerings (verse 38); nevertheless, disobedience to the divine arrangement crept in through the "lust of the mind or self-exaltation. It is possibly this same type of delusion which will ensnare the disobedient at the close of the Millennial reign, for we read in Revelation 20:9 that this class compassed the camp of the saints (the Ancient Worthies -- then Princes in the earth) about, as if in rebellion against their long jurisdiction. It is quite possible that the Adversary, then loosed for a season, will deceive this class by intimating that they are quite capable of continuing on their own without the further necessity of submission to these Judges of the earth. But like Korah and his company, these shall also meet divine judgment, and again the penalty for self-exaltation will be death. For "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

### **"MY SOUL, BE ON THY GUARD"**

With these examples before us and many others which could be cited, how doth it behoove us to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." (Rom. 13:14.) To withstand the darts of the Adversary will require all the fortitude and faith we possess. Seeking to bring about disobedience to God's will through these three lines of approach are the Christian's three great enemies: the world, the Adversary, and the flesh. To offset the world and its love we have God and His love. To offset the Adversary, the "liar from the beginning," "who abode not in the truth," we have the Son, God's Truth, who was manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil. To offset the flesh or self-will, that greatest of enemies, the one within the fortress, we have the Holy Spirit; and if we "walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16.) Brethren, let us take heed to our ways, for "the heart is deceitful above all things" and the way to self-will is easy to enter upon. An intellectual grasp of religious truth is no bar to the exaltation of self, but alas, can sometimes actually stimulate self-glorification. This may not be obvious to us, but will be quite discernible to those about us. For it is true that self can reveal itself in our works, in our service, in our choice of hymns, in our conduct in study meetings, in our testimonies, in our discourses, in our articles, yea, even in our prayers! What a subtle Adversary is this, for while "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord," self-will, which begets disobedience, may conquer when all else fails. Let us diligently examine ourselves, prove ourselves, whether our every course of action is motivated by full obedience to His will; that none of self has crept in any where to mar our fellowship with Him, but that in all things we emulate the blessed example of our Master, who delighted in the Father's will and was obedient in all things, even unto the death of the cross. "For the world passeth away,

and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of the Father abideth forever." Therefore, dearly beloved, "keep yourselves in the love of God" by faithful obedience even unto death.

"Oh, what a struggle wakes within,  
When in the spirit's solitude,  
The tempting, treacherous thoughts of sin,  
In all their luring smiles intrude!

"'Tis then, my Father! then I feel  
My nature's weakness, and, oppressed,  
Like a poor trembling child I steal  
To Thee, for safety and for rest.

"Beneath Thy Shadow let me live!  
Be Thou my Friend -- my Father be!  
I bend in dust -- I pray, forgive  
The erring child that flies to Thee!"

## The Letter to the Colossians

*"Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman but Christ is all, and in all." - Col. 3:9-11- Amps R. V*

THE TRANSLATORS are generally agreed that the first phrase of our quotation is used by the Apostle as a reason for the "putting off," of "anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking," "lying," previously mentioned. At first it may appear illogical to put off these vices because we have put off the old nature with its vices. All students of the Word, however, have learned too well the Apostle's carefulness of reasoning to suppose there is not very accurate thinking, back of this recommendation. On examination of the passage we find that it looks not only backward to the "stripping off" of the eighth verse but forward to the "putting on" of the twelfth. The logician's "therefore" joins the two thoughts.

The first thing of note in the passage is that the Apostle takes for granted that the Christian, has stripped off "the old man *with his doings.*" There is no place in the Apostle's scheme of Christian living for a mere pretense of consecration. Christianity is an intensely practical thing that entirely revolutionizes the life. No more is anything done because of submission to habits formed in youth. Those are "his doings," and must be "stripped off" ruthlessly" that our application of this new figure may conform with the figure previously used, of death and burial. (Col. 2:12, 13.) In considering dress as a symbol of character, it is interesting to note that in our language the word "habit" does duty for both costume and custom.

Change of clothing as a figure of a change of condition is frequently used in the Scriptures: "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness." Jehovah is represented as saying regarding Joshua the high priest: "Take the filthy garments from off him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich *apparel.*" Jesus also used this figure in His parable of the man without the wedding garment, also in that of the prodigal son. (Psalm 132:9, 16; Job 29:14; Isa. 52:1; 61:10; Zech. 3:3-5; Luke 15:22.) But in the passage being considered, the use Paul makes of the figure is a strange paradox: a man who has put off an old man, and is now putting on the new man. *Paul* thus makes it very clear that there is a personality, an identity that is never lost in this changing about. Though death has taken the old man, the same individual, though now a new creature, is the one resurrected to walk in newness of life with Christ. The old man is of Adamic stock, and the new a regeneration through the Word.

For such Christians as these to whom the Apostle is writing the visible outward change is greater than for those who live in communities where all are more or less affected by the refining influence of Christianity. The lives of even those who reject Christianity are usually to some degree influenced by the power' of the cross. Indeed many true saints can point to, no sudden and meteoric rise to holiness, because of having from infancy been under the influence of Christian associates.

### **"BEGOTTEN UNTO NEWNESS OF LIFE"**

True religion is a personal matter, not something to be inherited from our parents, but a personal gift from our Heavenly Father. However noble the life before the moment in which that gift was received, it was a life of selfishness, lived for one's self and his loved ones. The newness of the

new creature is in that it is not of this world but of heavenly origin, "begotten again," "begotten of the Spirit," "in Christ Jesus." Therefore, however exemplary the life may have been before, however unnoticed the change in the eyes of his companions, there is a complete inward transfer of allegiance clearly distinguishable by the individual if he has placed his all in the hands of the Savior. For one thing, he will, perhaps *for* the first time, discover how deeply entrenched is selfishness in his being; though up to that time he may have thought he was living only for others. Here begins the struggle that he must have the courage and endurance to continue until the old creature's "house" that he must of necessity use in lieu of a body, has been laid aside that he may be finally "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." (2 Cor. 5:2.) He may suffer many humiliating revealings of the habits of the old creature that cause him to do the things that he hates, but there should never be a moment of relaxing the new creature's opposition to the ways of the old, never a moment when his will is not for righteousness, and so supremely so that even the thought of *evil* will find no welcome in his mind. - Rom. 7:15; Psa. 101:3; 119:104, 113; Prov. 8:13.

Since his begetting was through the Word, then to that Word, and to that Word and its Giver only, he must *look* for a continuation of life.. (Matt. 4:4; James 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:23; John 6:63; Phil. 2:16.) He has been "begotten to a hope of life" (1. Pet. 1:3, literal - Diaglott), and if life is to be perfected in him, it can be only through the words of life, 'the living, the life-giving Word of God. (Acts 5:20; Phil. 2:16.) So powerful is the influence of this begetting that "whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not," the sin that others would charge against him being not the work of the, new will but of the flesh. (1 John 5:18; James 4:7; 1 Pet, 5:8, 9; Luke 4:8; Rom. 6:13; Eph. 6:13; 2 Pet. 3:17.) Daily the keeping. power of the Word will be safeguarding his life, a shield and a buckler, his defense even against the wiles of the Arch-enemy of his being "Thou wilt keep him *in* perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength"; margin, "the rock of ages." (Isa. 26:3, 4.) With our feet established on that Rock, God's strength gives a true manifestation -of itself in our weakness. - 2 Cor. 12:9, 10; 13:4; Heb. 11:34; 1 Cor. 1:27; Psa. 8:2.

Changes somewhat comparable to the transformation in one who comes from self to Christ are often noted in people of the world, and these changes, too, are usually the result of some thought having newly laid hold upon the life. Why then should it seem impossible or even strange that a flash of Spirit given truth revealing the love of Christ should open blinded eyes to see a transfiguring vision of the altogether lovely One?

Believing truths merely with the head does not make one a Christian: "With -the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (Rom. 10:10; Matt. 6:21; Prov. 23:7; 4:23.) This heart belief cannot mean less than a complete revolution of the entire being. All such old things as the new creature cannot use to advantage will have passed away; but "*all* things will have become new-even the old things that the new creature has" found it advisable to retain will have been renewed in such an actual way that he can truly say, "Behold *all* things have become new." He now does only those things that are in harmony with his understanding of the will of God; but even such common and human things as eating and drinking, he does "to the glory of God," or he is not a new creature according to the Apostle's definition of one. (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Cor. 10:31; Matt. 5:16; John 15:8; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 6:20.) "If there has been any reality in' the act by which we have laid hold of Christ as our Savior, our whole being will be revolutionized; old things will have passed away-tastes, desires, ways of looking at the world, memories, habits [standards, pricks of conscience, and all cords that bound us to our God -- forgetting past and all things -- will have become new, because we ourselves move in the midst of the old things as new creatures with new love burning in our hearts and new motives changing all our lives," a new goal shining before us,

a new hope illuminating the blackness of past days and the dingy ness of the path ahead, a new song on our lips, a new power in our hands, a new Friend by our sides.

To attempt reforming an individual into the likeness of Christ before the revolt against the rule of the flesh, the world, and the Adversary, and before the acceptance of our new Ruler have taken place, is like attempting to build the second story of a house before the first. The failure can be no less complete. Only first-hand faith is a foundation solid enough so that on it may be reared the glorious structure of "gold, silver, and precious stones" which the Lord has planned for each of His children of this Age.

### **PUTTING OFF, A DAILY PROCESS**

As already noted in the Revised Versions the passage under consideration is introduced by "Seeing that." Though this reading is disputed by some, we have retained it since it is a logical connection with the preceding and a natural translation of Paul's words. And in it there is a reason for the preceding exhortation to "Put off all these," and also for the following, "Put on therefore" the beautiful garb of love and compassion.

When a heart is given to the Lord, the work of putting off and putting on, in a sense, takes place at once, but time must be allowed for this change to be wrought into the character, and for it to consistently show in the conduct. There are daily manifestations of at least traces of the old life, and there must be a daily putting on of the new. It is not illogical, then, to put off what we have put off *in our consecration contract*; nor to put on actually what we have *by faith* put on. This merely means, live consistently in accord with your expressed resolve; carry out item by item what in that one moment you agreed upon as a whole; the enemy has been cast out of the central citadel, but keep up the fight until he has been driven beyond the utmost bounds of your realm. To stop short of that is to demonstrate that our avowed hatred of his rule is mere sham. *To be* content to have any shreds of the old filthy garment clinging to us -is to deny our love of purity.

### **THE NEW GROWTH, AIM, AND PATTERN OF THE NEW MAN**

For a moment the figure of the garment passes from the mind of the Apostle and he gives us a passing glimpse of the glory of the new creature, his spirit kindling to new fervor at the thought of the transformation under way for the "up-newing" of Jew and Gentile.

As the rendering of the Revised Versions indicates by the phrase "*being* renewed," the transformation is not the work of a moment, but continuous. How very slow or difficult it may be, it must be persisted in until perfection is reached, or the "old man" will "*wax* corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." (Eph. 4:22 See A. R. V.; Rom. 6:6; 1 Pet. 4:3, 4.) The result will be, "according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20); persistently downward if the will of the old is allowed sway, but upward into the very presence of Jehovah Himself if our all is surrendered to His will. If one would attain to -that, let him "put on the new man, which after God (Greek: in accord with God) is created (Greek: made habitable, completely changed) in righteousness and true holiness." Young has it: "in righteousness and kindness of the truth." (Eph. 4:24.) "The New Testament in Basic English" gives this interesting rendering: "Put. on the new man, to which God has given life, in righteousness and a true and holy way of living." The parallel passages of Colossians and Ephesians link the thought of truth with the new creature. The Diaglott literal rendering of the phrase in Colossians makes the parallelism more complete. It reads: "*by* exact knowledge." Light was the first thing in the old creation, it is the first thing in the new. And it must to the end "shine in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of

God," if the up-newing is to attain to "the perfect will of God, His likeness. - 2 Cor. 4:6; Rom. 12:2.

One wonders at times as he reads various translations of a passage, each stressing precious truths, if it may not be that this is one of the means by which the Holy Spirit guides into all truth, having chosen (or shall we say, having prepared) a language capable of conveying such a wealth of thought that no one word or phrase of other languages can convey it all. The Revised Versions' rendering of the phrase we are considering: "that is being renewed *unto* knowledge," like the Diaglott rendering, expresses a vital truth, for we can never safely forget that we "know nothing yet, as we ought." (1 Cor. 8:2.) While knowledge is a means by which the likeness of God is worked out in us, yet in order that exact knowledge may be attained, it is also necessary to have the image completed. As we grow in knowledge we grow in resemblance; as we grow in resemblance we grow in knowledge. When the full radiance of His glory shines undimmed in our face, we shall "awake in His likeness" to "*know* even as we are known." (Psa. 17:15; 1 Cor. 13:12.) We must be like Him in nature to see Him as He is; but if we are ever -to be like Him in nature, we must be made like Him in character by seeing Him with the eye of faith, not as imaginations would paint Him or creeds misrepresent Him, but, under the guidance of His Word and Spirit, know Him "as He is." (1 John 3:2.) "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" now and for eternity. - Matt. 5:8; Isa. 33:17; John 17:24.

Because the image of God in us for the present is rudimentary, we are exhorted to be "imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love as He hath loved us," yea, even to "walk in the light as [in the same manner as] He is in the light." (1 John 1:7; 2:6; Rom. 6:4; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:2.) But the goal always before the consecrated is: "As [accordingly as] He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all your conduct." (1 Pet. 1:15, see Diaglott.) This is the purpose of all our putting off the old and putting on the new. To this end Christ died. Thus the blackest limp, dug from the deepest mine, can be changed by His alchemy into the brightest of jewels to shine eternally in His diadem.

### **UNITY IN THE NEW CREATION**

All artificial methods of attaining unity have always and must always fail. There is one that succeeds: looking beyond national, social, creedal, and educational boundaries to Him who is our all, and in all. All who are in Christ and in whom Christ dwells are one in Christ Jesus, brethren to be loved and fellowshipped. If any be Christ's, then are they, regardless of race or creed, Abraham's seed and heirs with Christ. (Gal. 3:29.) The false teachers of Colosse did not have the breadth of vision to grasp this fact, but were teaching that there was a privileged class in the Church, favored above others because they had been born Jews or had received higher education. At the foot of the cross there is no time nor thought for the distinctions the flesh would make and selfishly cling to in rebellion against the Apostolic injunction.

Paul was writing to people in a world where class distinctions cut deeper clefts in their social geography than our modern imaginations can fathom. Deeper and wider than any other, was the Jewish concept of the rift between circumcision and uncircumcision. Nevertheless in Christ Jesus, even for a Jew, that distinction was obliterated. And for the cultured Greek, even the Scythians, the lowest of the barbarians, had become their brethren in full fellowship.

The arrogance born of education, while probably the most virulent of prides, found a close counterpart in the superiority of master over slave. The untold miseries caused by slavery in that far-off era can be but dimly known. It is estimated that its horrors crushed all the joy out of the lives of more than half the world. In the lovely letter of Paul to Philemon, apparently delivered at

the same time with this letter, there is given a little hint of the new joy of those "bondmen and freemen" made "free with -the liberty wherewith Christ makes free." There can be no freedom for the bondman, in the ancient or the modern types of bondage, until he has learned that the so called freeman is in as much need of being made free as he himself-that every member of Adam's race until Christ has made him free, in his bondage to sin, bound in chains more binding, more galling, more vile by far than those worn by the most pitiable of galley slaves.

Christianity entered upon no campaign of social reform, no direct war against the evils of slavery; but instead of merely touching the surface, as reform movements do, it reached the heart of the matter to "make free indeed." It sowed new seed in the weed-infested ground and thoroughly choked out the obnoxious growths in the ground thus sown. But the work is not complete, for only a heart here and there has been blessed with this liberty. Only when that great tidal wave of the "knowledge of God" has overflowed all the earth, will the last ridge disappear that now separates it into the many little miasma-infested pools that spread misery and destruction throughout the land.

The life-time galley slaves of Satan, who have faithfully kept stroke for him, will every one have deliverance provided. (Eph. 2:2; John 8:44; 1 John 3:10.) Only by drawing their first breath of freedom in that Kingdom of righteousness and peace which Jesus even now is preparing to establish, will -they learn the real horrors of slavery and the joys of freedom. Then, finally, will all bondage end, except -that of love and faith; but, praise God, "of His Kingdom and peace there shall be no end." - Rom. 14:17; Isa. 9:7; Dan 7:14; Luke 1:33; 2 Pet. 1:11; Rev. 11:15.

- P. E. Thomson.

## **The Father of the Faithful.**

*Genesis 20, 21.*

*"Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." - Gal. 4:30.*

AS WE come again to review some of the incidents in the life of Abraham, we find him "journeying toward the south country," and sojourning in Gerar, "the capital of a race of men who had dispossessed the original inhabitants of the land, and were gradually passing from the condition of wandering shepherd life into that of a settled and warlike nation; afterwards to be known by the Hebrews by the dreaded name, Philistines: a title which, in fact, gave to the whole land its name of Palestine. Their chieftain bore the official title of Abimelech, 'My Father the King.'" There are two distinct points worthy of note in connection with Abraham's experiences in this place. First, the moral degradation to which he subjected himself in the eyes of the world; and secondly, the moral dignity which belonged to him in the sight of God. Abraham feared the men of Gerar. He judged that the fear of God was not in that place, and knowing that Sarah was a beautiful woman, he feared they would kill him (verse 11), seemingly forgetting that God was always with *hint*. He was evidently more occupied with the men of Gerar than with the One who was the great God over all. Forgetting God's power to protect him, he resorted to the same stratagem which he adopted years before in Egypt. By taking his eyes off God he lost his center in Him for the time being, and gave way to worldly methods.

The record tells us that "Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister." In the experiences of God's faithful prophets of old there is a lesson we may well ponder with respect to their strength of character, their uprightness, their moral integrity under certain tests, and their utter weakness and failure under others. Abraham had given evidence of living on a very elevated plane in his experiences with Lot; but now "in his contact with people on the outside, the "sin of unbelief" crept in, and he stooped to the practice of deception. While it is true that Sarah was his sister in a certain sense-she was the daughter of his father, but not of his mother-yet Abraham said this to convey a false impression. Sarah was much more his wife than his sister. He had made a secret agreement with Sarah in their early years that at every place whither they came, she would say, He is my brother. This evidenced a lack of faith which should have been overcome during the years of their witnessing the hand of God in their experiences. We are strong only as we cling to God. So long as Abraham was in the path of God's appointment nothing could harm him. If he had simply trusted God, the men of Gerar would not have interfered. Who can harm those who are the subjects of His "unslumbering guardianship"? Abraham would then have reaped the rewards of faith, and also maintained his own dignity as a man of faith. God graciously passes over our lack of faith in our early days, when faith is yet a germ; but it is unbecoming in maturer years, and especially in the one who was to be the "father of the faithful."

### **DISHONORING GOD BY OUR CONDUCT**

The experience that came to Abraham and Sarah as a result of this deception must have been most distressing to both of them, and a lesson to them as well, for the king sent and took Sarah. Abimelech commends himself to us as a man of noble character. Having been warned of God in a dream, he "rose early in the morning," desiring to undo any wrong and to restore Sarah to her husband. Note also how gentle his "reproof" to Sarah. (Verse 16.) Doubtless among those tribes Abraham was known as a servant of Jehovah, and they would judge the character, of God, whom

they could not see, by the ways and conduct of His servant. Alas that Abimelech was able to rebuke him: "What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done."

How often do the children of God thus dishonor Him by lack of faith, unbelief, and as a consequence lower themselves in the eyes of the world, failing to manifest that living faith that elevates one above the world and above their thoughts! We find Abraham here exposing himself to the rebuke and reproach of the men of the world because of what he had done under the power of unbelief. The king of Gerar knew Abraham had done wrong and reproved him for it. While Abraham was an upright and honorable man by nature, yet nature's uprightness and honor cannot be trusted; they are liable to give at any moment. "It is faith only which can impart a truly elevated moral tone, because it connects the soul in living power with God, the only source of true morality."

But there is another point of much interest and value to us. Abraham stood condemned before the men of the world, but how did he appear before God? Let us note the amazing difference: God appears to Abimelech and tells him that Abraham is a prophet, that He had protected Sarah, and that Abraham would pray for him, and as a result of his prayers. Abimelech would be spared. Surely there is a touching lesson here for us in our weakness. God sees His people only in *Christ*; hence they are "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." The world sees not the "robe of righteousness," but God sees nought else. When Balak sought to curse the seed of Abraham, God said, "I have not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither have I seen perverseness in Israel." Thus in Abraham's case -- he lowered himself in the eyes of Abimelech, who rebuked him, but when God dealt with the matter He said to Abimelech, "Behold thou art but a dead man"; but of Abraham He said, "He is t prophet and he shall pray for thee." Yes, with all "the integrity of his heart and the innocency of his hands," Abimelech was but a dead man; and more than that, he was a debtor to the prayers of the erring and inconsistent child of God for the restoration of the health of his household. God may often discipline and chastise His child, but when the enemy brings suit against him, God pleads his cause: "Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm." "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of Mine eye." "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." He hides His children in His pavilion, protects and shields them; and in His patience and forgiveness, and in His love, as consuming fire, He cleanses t hem of concealed and hidden sin.

### **THE PROMISE FULFILLED**

Doubtless the Lord was preparing Abraham and Sarah for the blessing He was about to bring to them in the birth of Isaac. "The Lord visited Sarah as lie had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken." (22:1.) It is impossible to trust God too implicitly. Not one word of His promises fail. "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever; the thoughts of His heart to all generations." (Psa. 33:11.) But we must be prepared to wait God's time. "At the set time" Isaac was born. Thirty years before, God had promised Abraham a seed-that He would "make of him a great nation." Had Abraham known then that he was to wait thirty years, his heart would have failed. God in His gracious love did not make known to him the time until -those years were nearly spent. "And Sarah bare Abraham a son in his old age." Sarah's laughter of incredulity at the first intimation that she was to have a child, was now exchanged for the laughter of fulfilled hope.

The peace of Abraham's home was for a time apparently unbroken; but the dislike which Sarah had manifested for Hagar some years before had never been wholly extinguished. Nor was it possible for Hagar to forget the hard treatment she had received from Sarah that had driven her forth to fare as best she might in the desert.

We are told that "The child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the day that Isaac was weaned." But amid all the joy of that happy occasion one shadow fell over the scene, for "Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking." Then Sarah's slumbering jealousy was awakened. Ishmael was fourteen years old at the time of Isaac's birth, and it is hardly to be wondered at that he should be severely disappointed that, whereas he had been the undisputed heir, he was now being superseded by this child. And so he "mocked" him, or as stated by the Apostle (Gal. 4:29) he "persecuted" him. Perhaps this was not the first time Sarah had seen this disposition of Ishmael toward her son, and she saw no reason for standing it longer. She said to Abraham, "Cast out the bond woman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."

We recall St. Paul's explanation of this matter, wherein he says: "Which things are, an allegory: for these are two covenants." (Gal. 4:22-31.) The Jews in the Apostle's day prided themselves on being the descendants of Abraham and considered it impossible that any but themselves could be children of God and heirs of the promise. And when large numbers of the Gentiles accepted Christ under the early preaching of the Gospel, the Jews who like Ishmael were born after the flesh, persecuted those who, like Isaac, were children of the promise, of the spirit. Hagar, the slave, was a fit one to represent the spirit of legalism and bondage -- a seeking to obtain life by the observance of the Law. Hagar, as the Apostle explains, "is Mount Sinai," or the Law Covenant, "which gendereth to bondage," while Sarah, the free woman, represents the Covenant of Grace. Her children are the children of faith, the children of the promise, and are free. There was not room in Abraham's tent for the two women and their children; so legalism, which insists on the performance of the outward rite of circumcision, etc., cannot exist with faith, which accepts the finished work of Christ. The Apostle exhorts the Galatian brethren, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." \*

---

\* For a more complete explanation of the Apostle's words here regarding the two covenants, etc., we refer the reader to "Studies in the Scriptures," Vol. VI, Chapter VII, "The Law of the New Creation."

Ishmael was of no use whatever, so far as God's promise was concerned. He did afford something for nature's affections to twine around, thus making a more difficult task for Abraham to perform afterwards. Nature can never do anything for God. "The Lord must 'visit,' and the Lord must 'do,' and faith must wait, and nature must be still-yea must be entirely set aside as a dead, worthless thing; and then the divine glory can shine out, and faith find in that outshining all its rich and sweet reward. This wondrous faith! It brings into our present all the power of God's future, and feeds upon God's promise as a present reality. By its power, the soul is kept banging upon God when every outward thing seems to be against it."

## **REGENERATION, THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW NATURE**

Isaac proved to be in the household of Abraham what the begetting of the spirit is in the believer. It was not *Ishmael changed*, but it was a new child. The son of the bondwoman could never be anything else but that. On the contrary, Isaac's position and character, his standing and prospects, were all from the Lord. Regeneration is not a change of the old nature, but the introduction of a new. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." It is the beginning of a new creature by the operation of the Holy Spirit, founded upon the accomplished redemption of Christ.

Nor does the introduction of this new nature alter the true, *essential character* of the old. There is the full display of its evil character in opposition to- the new element. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other. There they are in all their distinctness, and the one is only thrown into relief by' the other. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The Apostle goes on to say, "It is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be.*" Again, "Ye have put off the old man." He does not say ye have improved or are seeking to improve the old man, but ye have put it off. There is a very. great difference between seeking to mend an old garment, and casting it aside altogether and putting on a new one.

Passages might easily be multiplied to prove the un soundness of the theory that the new nature is merely a gradual improvement of the old; and to prove that the new life, which we have in union with our risen Lord, can be attained only if the old is kept under our feet in the power of that new life. The birth of Isaac did not improve -Ishmael, but only brought out his real opposition to the child of promise. He might have gone on very quietly and orderly till Isaac made his appearance; but then he showed what he was, by persecuting and mocking at the child of resurrection. What then was the remedy? To make Ishmael better? By no means; but to "Cast out the bondwoman and her son." Here was the only remedy.

"Now the error into which the Galatian churches fell, was the introduction of that which addressed itself to nature. 'Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.' Here salvation was made to depend upon something that man could be, or man could do, or man could keep. This was upsetting the whole glorious fabric of redemption, which, as the believer knows, rests exclusively upon what Christ is, and what He has done. To make salvation dependent, in the most remote manner, upon anything in, or done by, man, is to set it entirely aside. In other words, Ishmael must be entirely cast out, and all Abraham's hopes be made to depend upon what God had done and given in the person of Isaac. This, it is needless to say, leaves man nothing to glory in. If present or future blessedness were made to depend upon even a divine' change wrought in nature, flesh might glory. Though my nature were improved, it would be something of *one*, and thus God would not have all the glory. But when I am introduced into a new creation, I find it is all of God designed, matured, developed by Himself alone. God is the actor, and I am a worshiper; He is the blesser, and I am the blessed; He is 'the better,' and I am 'the less' (Heb. 7:7); He is the giver, and I am the receiver."

### **SUFFERING-THE PRICE OF SUPREME FAITH**

Abraham had many tests during his life. He was first called to leave his own country and kindred, and his father's house. Later his father was taken from him.. His experiences with his nephew, Lot, were most grievous. And now he is called to give up his son, whom he loved, for we read that when Sarah asked him to cast out the bondwoman and her son that "the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his son." The discipline through which the Patriarch was called to pass was but the trial of faith. Faith is the expression of our inner life; and it cannot be exercised in its highest form so long as there is any hidden sin or iniquity,, no matter how small, in our heart. We must be rid of every clinging inconsistency, for it is this that paralyzes the action: of faith. It is impossible to exercise faith except as our heart is pure, and our walk one of holiness before God.

Many have longed for a faith like that which Abraham had-a faith that staggered 'not through unbelief; a faith to which God could not give a denial; a faith that could open and shut heaven, and to which all things are possible. But there is a price to be paid for such faith. Are we willing to pay the price-the price of suffering? -- the cost of rending from our hearts all that would hinder

the operation of this faith; "the cost of seeing one cherished idol after another cast out; the cost of being stripped even to nakedness of all the dear delights in which the flesh may have found pleasure." We hardly realize all that this means, but it is revealed step by step -- measured out according to our strength by Him who knows our frame and remembers that we are dust. We need not dread the pruning-knife, for it is in the hand of One who loves us infinitely, and who is seeking results that will fill our hearts with gratitude and praise.

The final separation from Abraham of all that would hinder from the exercise of a supreme faith was brought about by the birth of the long-promised seed, and led up to the crisis with which we are now dealing. "The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight." But the Lord said unto Abraham, "Let it not be grievous in thy sight, because of the lad, and because of the bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said. unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called." In obedience to the Lord's command, "Abraham rose early in the morning," and sent Hagar and her child from his home, bidding them a last farewell. He must have suffered keenly in this experience, but one more weight was laid aside, and one more step taken in his preparation for the supreme victory of his faith, which was to follow, for which his entire life had been a preparation.

"Hast thou not seen, in retrospective life,  
That will of God which caused thee bitterest strife  
Hath turned to sweetness-while the thing He gave  
To suit **thy** will grew darker than the grave?"

"There's rest supreme for souls that choose His will;  
A blest security from every ill.  
The things God chooses for us never fail!  
They have their anchorage within the veil."

- *Contributed.*