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Our Fellowship in Christ

"If there be therefore ... any fellowship of the Spirit, . . . fulfill ye my joy, that ye be ... of one accord, of one mind." - Phil. 2:1, 2

THE SCOTCH have a saying that some things are better felt than telt, and perhaps that is especially true of Christian fellowship. Difficult to describe, it is easy to enjoy. As we consider the subject afresh in this meditation, may the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be ours in rich measure.

For a text, we have selected the First Epistle of John, chapter one, verse three, which reads:

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

In this text the Apostle suggests a logical division of our subject into three parts, which we propose to consider in the following order:

1. Fellowship with the Father
2. Fellowship with the Son
3. Fellowship with the Brethren

Our fellowship with the Father is, in the first place, in the delight He takes in His Son. When we hear the Father speaking through the Prophet Isaiah (Isa. 42:1) , saying, "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold, Mine Elect, in whom My :soul delighteth," our hearts respond-we, too, delight ourselves in Him.

Again, we may have fellowship with the Father in His Plan. Just what is His Plan? We perhaps 'have been studying His Plan for years, and feel that we know a good deal about it by *flow*, but still, in another sense, we know not anything yet as we ought to know it. Notwithstanding all we have been taught concerning His Plan, the prayer of our heart continues to be: "Open Thou mine

eyes, that I may behold [still more] wondrous things out of Thy law." While daily His Plan becomes clearer and more distinct to faith's vision, yet when we shall know even as we are known, we will undoubtedly declare that, concerning His Plan as concerning Himself, "the half was never told."

HIS PLAN IN A NUTSHELL

If, however, we were to be asked by some one who had not as yet heard anything concerning His Plan, how would we, in a nutshell, describe it? Naturally we would use diverse expressions, but we would agree, would we, not, that His Plan in substance is this: "To fill this earth with (holy, happy, human beings, all doing right, not from compulsion, but from choice." As the Prophet says: He proposes to make the place of His feet (the earth is His footstool) glorious. (Isaiah 60:13; 66:1.) Of course, there are sidefeatures to His Plan, as we know. For one thing, this blessing is to be brought about through Christ and His Bride, the faithful Church of the Gospel Age, the spiritual seed of Abraham. We well remember the words of the Oath-bound Covenant to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 22:16-18.) The essential thought in this passage, however, is not that God's Plan would be accomplished through Abraham and his seed, although that is a very precious feature of God's Plan. The point of transcendent importance is that God had it in His heart to bless all the families of the earth (including those who were then dead and buried). If Abraham and his seed met the conditions, God's blessing would reach all the families of the earth through them. If Abraham and his seed did not meet the conditions, would God's Plan to bless all the families of the earth be frustrated? By no means. Or, again, if Abraham and his seed did not meet the conditions, would God, in order that His Plan be not frustrated, be compelled to bring the blessing to all the families of the earth through a disobedient Abraham and a disobedient seed of Abraham? The Jewish nation at the time of our Lord's days on earth, with few exceptions, thought so. Is it possible for spiritual Israel to make the same mistake? Clear and emphatic are the Baptist's words, and applicable are they equally to the presumption of both fleshly and spiritual Israel: "Think not to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham to our Father'; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up [fleshly or spiritual] seed unto Abraham." (Matt. 3:9.) The failure of Abraham and his seed to meet the conditions would mean merely that God would select some other agents to carry out His plan of blessing. Goodness and mercy and blessing are in His heart and must find their expression, though every honored agent fail Him.

Do we have fellowship with God in this, His Plan to bless, all the families of the earth? He finds no fellowship in His Plan amongst the people of the world, or with worldly-minded Christians. We, however, to some extent, at least, surely share His thoughts, and while we wonder at the wisdom, we worship the love displayed therein. But before the blessing can come, a great shaking will be necessary. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews reminds us of this: "But now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. (Heb. 12:26.) Sometimes people speak of this text as though it contained a dire threat instead of a promise. It is plain, though, that those who thus speak or think, have little or no fellowship with God in His Plan. Not that it would be any more pleasant for us in the shaking time than for others; for all we know to the contrary, our experiences might be even more severe than the general lot. But faith's vision sees beyond the "shaking" time and is at rest. No! God did not *threaten* to shake heaven and earth; He *promised* to, and it is our privilege to rejoice with Him, to have fellowship with Him, as we see ourselves approaching the time when His promise will be fulfilled, if indeed, we have not already entered that period.

Moreover, let us have fellowship with the Father, in His Plan, even though the vision seem to tarry, -and it seem delayed., It will not really tarry, but though it seem to do so, let us wait for it.

And let our waiting be not in fretfulness, or with impatience, nor yet even in an attitude of resignation. What has fretfulness, or impatience, or even resignation, to do with fellowship? Rather, let us remember with the poet, that

"God's plans, like lilies white, *unfold*.
We must not tear the close shut leaves apart;
Time will reveal the hidden heart of gold."

Let us remember, too, that the more we "touch lightly the things of this earth" and hold to those things only which cannot be shaken, the more fellowship with the Father we shall have in this feature of His Plan.

CO-LABORERS WITH GOD

Again, the Apostle tells us in 1 Cor. 3:9, that we may have fellowship with God, by laboring together with Him. "We are laborers together," says he, "with God. Here the reference was undoubtedly to the Apostle's own ministry of the Gospel, and to that of those associated with him in that ministry. Nor was it said boastfully. On the contrary, it was said to correct the mistake of some who were inclined to give him and the other leaders too, great honor. "We," he says, referring to himself, St. Peter, Apollos and others, "are merely laborers in God's vineyard. *He* it is, whose husbandry you are. True, I have planted, Apollos watered, but God giveth the increase."

Doubtless St. Paul's first labors were with himself. Before he could minister the Word to others effectively, it was necessary for his own mind to be illuminated by the Holy Spirit of truth, and for him to be divinely commissioned to the work.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that St. Paul spent the greater part of his life in preparing himself, and entered on his ministry only at its close. Still more mistaken would be the thought that he spent the *whole* of his life in self-preparation, and that *all* of his ministry was left to the next Age. No doubt he was-instructed of the Lord that not this Age but the Age to come is the one in which his labors in the ministry of the Gospel are to be productive of the largest results. No doubt also he understood the present Age was to be one in which the laborers themselves were to be selected and trained, and that, therefore, his most important labor was a work within, a work in himself, subduing, conquering, ruling self-a labor of cultivating the fruit and graces of the spirit in his own heart and life. But he well knew that the best way to promote his own, character development was to spend and be spent in the service of others. He was not content to read in the Book of Proverbs the statement that "He that watereth shall himself also be watered," and then sit back and wonder if it could by any chance be true; rather, he determined to verify that statement in his own experience by a life devoted, under Christ, to the ministry of others. Relying on the never-failing supply of God, he took what little water he had, and sprinkled others with it. Was he the loser? On the contrary was he not the gainer by This course? The very action of generosity reacted upon his own heart, making him still more generous. The great words of the 'Gospel had never meant so much to him as after he had expounded them to others. As he gradually poured out his life in the ministry, his own life became richer, his own character more developed. As he lavished himself upon others, his own liberal soul became fat, the graces of the Spirit became his in larger measure, the fruit of the Spirit sprang up more abundantly in his own heart and life. It is doubtless true that from the time he first met and was conquered by Christ, his life was one long laboring together with God in the work of preparing himself for the glorious ministries of the next Age. But it would be false and not true if this were stated as opposed to or independent of another aspect of truth, namely, that the work of thus preparing himself was so interwoven with the ministry of the Word to others, as to make either impossible without the other. In our discussion

of them we may, if we wish, distinguish the two ideas, just as a medical student may distinguish the arterial from the nervous system of our bodies. But we must never forget that in a living being not one or the other but both nervous and arterial systems are always present, and in a living Christian the principle which enables him to personally grow more and more like Christ is never found apart from that principle of life which causes him to lose himself in the ministry of others.

Let us then, dear brethren, realize our privileges to the full. Let us be laborers together with God in that we endeavor to develop His character and spirit. And let us also, not as a separate matter, but as one vitally related thereto, be laborers together with God in ministering the everlasting Gospel to others; not, indeed, intruding even it upon the notice of others who give evidence that they do not desire it, but asking the wisdom which in ourselves we lack, and which, to all men, and therefore to us, He will give liberally, without chiding us for being so needy, and without impoverishing Himself one iota. And as we do thus labor, whether for ourselves or for others, may our labors both in word and deed, be characterized by that humility of the Apostle, who, though he did indeed labor more abundantly than they all, was prompt to confess, that after all, he was but a laborer, and that all his labors, whether in himself or on behalf of others, would be quite fruitless, apart from that Great One whose fellowship he was privileged to share.

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE SON

We pass now to the second part of our subject. As we were noting in our text, the Apostle John said that he not -only had fellowship with the Father, but also had fellowship with His Son. In what may we have fellowship with His Son? Surely we may have fellowship with Him in the delight He had in doing the Father's will. How He did indeed delight to do the Father's will! His very food, this was, as He told His disciples on one occasion (John 4:34) , God's law was written in His heart. (Psa. 40:7, 8.) Indeed He was so entirely devoted to His Father's will that the Prophet Isaiah in one place speaks of Him as being blind. In chapter 42, verse 19, speaking of Jesus, Jehovah asks the question: "Who is blind, as My Servant? or deaf, as My Messenger that I sent? Who is blind as He that is perfect and blind as the Lord's Servant?"

We know, of course, that our Lord was not physically blind, nor mentally, nor morally, nor spiritually. In what sense, then, could He be spoken of truly, as one who was blind? The next verse seems to supply the answer to our question. He was blind to everything that would detract or draw His attention away from the path, the narrow, difficult path, the Father had marked out for Him. As we, His followers, seek to walk in His footsteps, along the narrow way that leadeth unto life, we see on the right hand and on the left, many things that pull us, first in one direction and then in another, so that our endeavor to follow Him is very much of a zig-zag walk at best. But with Him, while He saw the same things we see, He did not allow them to have the same effect. His mind and heart were so firmly fixed on walking that narrow path of the Father's will for Him that it could be said of Him that He was blind to everything else. He saw the things that we see, but He did not see them too long. Where we let our eyes linger, He resolutely pulled His away. "Seeing many things," says the Prophet, "but Thou observest not." Oh! yes, He saw the many things we see, but His delight was in the Father's will. As the writer in the Book of Proverbs says: "A wise son maketh a glad Father" (Prov. 10:1), and the only thing for which this wise Son lived was to make the heart of His heavenly Father glad. Have we any fellowship with the Son in this? Can it really be that we -can make the heart of our heavenly Father glad? Certainly this was the case with Jesus, and the Apostle John says he had fellowship with Him.

Again, we may have fellowship with Jesus in the ministry of comfort. We spoke just now of Jesus being a wise Son. That Scripture brings to mind another, namely Isaiah 50:4, where the Prophet, placing words in the mouth of Jesus, has Him declare: "The Lord God 'bath given Me the tongue

of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." Perhaps one reading these words superficially, might be disposed to ask: "What is there, after all, in the ability to speak a word in season to him that is weary? Would that constitute one a wise son?-surely that would not denote very much learning, very much wisdom." But, brethren, we who are seeking to have fellowship with the Master in this matter of comforting others know differently, do we not? To speak words in season to those who are weary is a lesson which must be learned, and there is no school or college in the United States or elsewhere to which we can go for instruction. Even our Lord Jesus learned this lesson, for the thought of the text His better expressed: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of one that has learned."

And how did He learn this lesson? Did His Father take some special kind of clay and shape it into the formation of a tongue and place it between His lips so that He could speak a word in season to him that is weary? Ah! no. He learned this lesson in the same way we may learn it, if we will-He learned "how to sustain with words" (as the Revised Version puts it) by the things which He suffered.

Words can be and frequently are, such futile, empty things; but the words of -Jesus have proved to be wonderful words of life. Brethren, may it be ours to know more and more what it is to have fellowship with Jesus in speaking sustaining words to those who are weary. No doubt we all have our seasons of weariness-physical, mental, and even spiritual weariness. Let us prove also in the experiences of life that it is gloriously possible for us to have fellowship with the Son in the ministration of comfort His words of life afford. As the poet has said:

"Ask God to give thee skill
In comfort's art
That thou mayest consecrated be
And set apart
Unto a life of sympathy.

"For heavy is the weight of ill
In every heart
And comforters are needed much
Of Christlike touch."

There is another way in which we may have fellowship with Jesus-a way, indeed, in which *we must* have fellowship with Him, if we would have a share with Him in His throne. The Apostle tells us what this is in Phil. 3:8-10. He there tells us that he personally counted all things loss that he might know Christ and the power of His resurrection, *and the fellowship of His sufferings*. In this passage the Apostle, to our mind, makes a practical application of his understanding of the sin-offerings. But let us add a word of caution here. Sometimes it is possible for us to make the mistake of being too insistent upon what, perhaps, we may speak of as terminology. In an earthly court a fair-minded judge always tries to determine the issue of a case by the substance and not by the mere form of the matter which comes before him. So with our understanding of the various doctrinal matters that from time to time come up for consideration in these pages, and in our local ecclesia studies; as for example, the Sin-offering, the Covenants, the Second Presence of Christ, the interpretation of various portions of the Book of Revelation, Chronology, Tabernacle Shadows, justification, etc. There are many minds amongst us, each seeing things just a little differently, perhaps, from the way another views matters. Our heads vary in shape and size and what may seem very plain to one, may not be nearly so plain to another. Surely the substance in connection with our part in the Sin-offering is of more importance than the words in which some of us may express our understanding of the matter.

Now, we all agree that the *substance of this matter is our personal possession of the Spirit of Christ which, led Him to be a willing sacrifice*, and the more of this spirit- of sacrifice we develop, the more will be our fellowship with Christ in the substance of the matter. Down through the Gospel Age there were many of the Lord's faithful ones who had a large experience of fellowship with Jesus in this sacrificial spirit-who laid down their lives in response to the leadings of that spirit, whose verbal explanations of the matter were far from exact. In all the various, church associations of Christendom today there are doubtless still some dear people whose hearts are very much in advance of their heads. After all, it is: "My Son, give me thine heart," not, "My, Son, give me thine head." Let us seek, then, not only to hold what seems to us to be the Scriptural presentation of the matter, but also to earnestly strive to have the substance, namely, the spirit of sacrifice, more fully developed in us. After all, facts, not theories, really matter, and our actions on this subject, as on any other, will speak louder than any words we, may utter. - Matt. 21:31.

Just one more thought on this phase of our subject: In our own experiences we share our joys with many, but our sorrows with only a few. If we have happy experiences we share them with almost any one. We are glad to let our gladness extend to all with whom we come in touch. But if we have sorrow, we are apt to be very reserved. Only a few close friends, only those who are very much *one with us*, are permitted to enter into our sorrows. We do not feel like sharing these with many. And so it is with our Lord. While He will in due time extend to the whole world the privilege of enjoying the blessings His death has secured for them, He does not invite them to share His sufferings. He does, however, invite His Bride to do so, and the Apostle, in the text we have noted, counted all else loss, that he might not miss the privilege.

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved? What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the Everlasting Arms! Dear friends, may it be ours to know more and more what such fellowship means.

- P. L. Read.

(To be continued)

Because He First Loved Us

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." - 1 John 4:10

THIS TEXT clearly reveals that all the love we experience toward God, originated, not within ourselves, but came into our hearts wholly from the heart of God. We can but give Him back the love we owe Him as the Source from which alone our power to love must come. Here, too, is it true -- "In the beginning, God." In the work of redemption, as in His mundane creation, all begins with God. When no eye pitied fallen man, His pity was already active. When there was no arm to reach out and save men from utter ruin, His Arm was revealed in One mighty to save. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. 5:6.) *We* love Him, therefore, "because He first loved us," and by the cords of that love drew us to Himself. By shedding His love abroad in our hearts through the revelation of His eternal love for us, we are empowered to give Him back the love we owe to Him, which in the ocean-flow of His love, may richer and fuller be.

What, then, is the measure of the love we should freely and unceasingly give back to God? His love for us is a perfect love, fully revealed in all phases of the salvation and relationships provided for us in Christ Jesus. The measure of our love should therefore be correspondingly full. This measure we have epitomized for us in that all comprehensive statement in which is gathered up the meaning of the whole law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." (Luke 10:27.) Such a degree of love on our part is the only consistent response we can make to God in view of all He is, and for all He has done for us. In this commandment our sense of gratitude is surely appealed to in a manner well calculated to bring our love into fervent operation. As Love, God speaks to us thus in order that we may see what our responsive love means to Him. As we examine this commandment with the affections of our heart quickened by the Spirit, there can be no failure to see the marvelous and beautiful way in which reciprocal love flows between God and ourselves. What a revelation of God this is! His love seeking our love and satisfied only by its full unhindered flow. To this end He has bestowed upon us the necessary faculties wherewith we may love Him with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. As He has given us eyes with which to see and enjoy the beauties of nature, and given us ears to hear sounds by which we are made glad, so has He given us the faculty to experience and react toward His love, that the Blesser and the blessed may rejoice together in a kinship of mutual love. "And we have come to understand and to trust the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love in God abideth, and God in him abideth. Herein hath love with us been made perfect." - 1 John 4:16, 17, Rotherham.

While encumbered as we are now with imperfect minds, and limited powers in many ways, we may never hope to know perfectly all that God is. In service, however devoted it be, we must lament its imperfections and confess ourselves unprofitable. But we *can love God* with all the powers of mind and heart with which He has endowed us. In this the inspired word of promise can apply, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:19.) It is as we see that we are capable of loving God in a manner acceptable to Him, that we may come and rest in the confidence that such reciprocal love binds us together. If we were told only of His holiness, of how righteous He is, we would seek to hide ourselves from His presence. If told only of His full knowledge of all we know ourselves to be, we might well despair. If told only of His almighty power, would we not say as did Israel of old, "Let not God speak to us lest we die." But when we are told that He is Love, and that He asks first of all for our love, then

we draw near to Him assured that such love means our greatest good. Coming into that love we learn that His holiness is an assurance of the purity of His love, therefore a pledge of His faithfulness. In that closer relationship to Him we learn that His power which we otherwise might fear, is now His everlasting arms underneath all our need and weakness. We see His' wisdom has been ever exercised in a tender care for our 'every want. So it is when properly. informed of His love for us that we come confessing, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (1 John 3:1.) Thus out of our devotion and reciprocal love we possess the heart-cheering evidence that because God *first loved* us, we have come into our unbounded love for Him-, and so we dwell together in love, we in God, and God in us.

GOD'S FORGIVING LOVE OUR COMFORT

The humbled heart is ever conscious of its inherent frailties, and ever ready to acknowledge with the Psalmist, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." (Psa. 130:3, 4.) Moffatt translates these verses thus, "If Thou didst keep strict tally of sins, O Lord, who could live on? But Thou hast pardon, that Thou mayest be worshiped." How much it means to all of us to know God as Nehemiah could testify of Him - "a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." (Neh. 9:17.) Ever ready to pardon! a reservoir of forgiveness waiting to flow out in a cleansing stream, and never denied where true repentance lifts its plea to God. But it is necessary to remember that though God stands ever ready to forgive, there can be none of the joy and comfort of forgiveness where there has been no genuine repentance. Here again Moffatt's translation expresses the thought in appropriate language: "Oh the bliss of him whom the Eternal has absolved, whose spirit has made full confession." (Psa. 32:1, 2.) This is in accord with the statement of the Apostle John, "If we confess our sins, [but not otherwise] God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9.) The same Apostle tells us, "Ye know that He was manifest to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." (1 John 3:5.) This manifestation -of Jesus that He might take away our sins, was of course, another of those initial acts of God in an anticipation of our need.' It is because of this previously provided basis for our forgiveness that we may have the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord no longer imputes iniquity. On this basis, however deep the stain of past sin may have been, we may now rejoice in the assurance that "the past is under the blood," and of a present state it can be said of us, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." - 1 Cor. 6:11.

The path to this blessedness is clearly outlined, yet it can be easily lost. We may turn to David for an illustration of this fact. As we read the story of his great sin, we find that it was not until Nathan came to him with his searching parable, that, repentance stung the soul of the sinner. For much of a year David seems to have been able to excuse his regrettable acts. Apparently he could go to the temple and mingle with the worshipers there, and feel no impulse leading to true repentance. Perhaps he uttered much of formal expression asking pardon for sins in general, as many have done in all ages. Yet we can be sure that underneath the cloak of 'his seeming piety he was painfully conscious of a guilty secret, and of a leanness of soul because of that sin. But when the Prophet revealed that David himself was the culpable offender, and shot those words into his inner conscience, . "Thou art the man!" there is no more pretense of being right with God. His awakening to the seriousness of his iniquity is then poured out in the Fifty-first Psalm, fittingly called "Tire Penitent's Psalm." Therein he confesses, "*I acknowledge* ,any transgressions: and *my sin is ever before me.*" Confession brought its blessedness, the proof in his own experience that, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." - Psa. 51:3, 17.

The Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 7:10, gives us a very significant phrase representing true repentance: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." The sorrow of true repentance is a heart sadness over sins committed, a broken and contrite spirit caused by having sinned. The sorrow of the world which worketh death may well be only a sorrow over having been caught in sin, with little or no sorrow for the sin itself. With the true child of God it often is the secret faults of which he is himself most painfully aware, in which the greatest sorrow is experienced. It is the tender conscience which is most sensitive to the realization of how completely we are known by the Lord. Such know 'it true, "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." - Psa. 90:8.

But we are thinking of how God's forgiving love becomes our comfort. Surely He has meant us to realize great comfort-from such assurance as He has given its through His Prophet: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that -inhabith eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." (Isa. 57:15.) What a picture of this great love we have in, the parable of the prodigal son. Here we are shown how pity and love *wait in readiness* to be manifested-seen afar off by the eyes of a father who no doubt had often looked down that same roadway; met with outstretched arms, and joyfully received back into the home from which wandering steps had carried him. Whom but His own Father, and ours, was Jesus picturing in this illustration of free and full forgiveness? This is the kind of love which in our own case has been "the goodness of God" leading to repentance. This is the lovingkindness by which our sense of gratitude is most effectively stirred. As we review the multiplied times in which this tender, mercy has been shown us through the years, is it not of God's forgiving love we are thinking most when we say, "He drew me with the cords of love, and thus He bound me to Him"?

In our quotation from Isaiah we are reminded that God specially delights to dwell with the humble and contrite spirit, and of such we want to be. By being thus minded we will never forget the defects in our character and conduct, so often manifested, and yet, thank God, so contrary to what we want to be. It is then that we find comfort in such things as our Lord's reference to the two debtors, one owing five hundred pence, the other fifty. Both were equally unable to pay the creditor, and both were freely forgiven. "Tell Me, therefore," said Jesus, "which of them will love him most." The answer given was, "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And Jesus said, Thou hast rightly judged." (Luke 7:40-43.)

This is not told to encourage us to become the greatest debtor possible, but it does afford us the opportunity to feel ourselves a chief of sinners, therefore one whose love should be of the supreme degree. Commenting on this personal sense of how greatly we are forgiven and loved, it has been said:

"I suppose that the life which says with deepest meaning, 'Thou knowest that I love Thee,' the life in which the love of Christ is, a sentiment so deep it cannot explain itself in words, but can only appeal to Christ's own knowledge of its sincerity, is the life that most fully realizes how it has tried the patience of Christ by the shortcomings of an undisciplined character; how it has disappointed the expectations of Christ by weakness when He wanted strength, by denial when He wanted brave and loving acknowledgment; and how over all the years of incompleteness Jesus has spread the covering of His forgiveness. Yes, through the mystery and the marvel of the forgiveness of our sins, through His patience as He turns and looks upon us when in the fever of temptation we are denying Him, Jesus knits us to Himself; till, though we are still failing, and

"still are faltering, we become conscious of a love for Him *answering His own*, and revealing itself as the deepest and truest thing in our nature."

So in the sweet comfort of this knowledge we have the joy of His forgiving love, and in the gratitude of our hearts we may say to Him, Thou knowest all things, but of all Thy boundless knowledge, the thing that alone can give me the courage to come to Thee just as I am, and to offer Thee all my faulty life, is that Thou dost know how truly I may say, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." In this we know it true again that His love quickened our love, and that herein is love's greatest manifestation to us-His waiting and understanding love, ever ready to meet our deepest need.

THE JOY OF COMMUNION AND CONFIDENT HOPE

Evident it is that as yet we can only know in part many things relating to our place in God's plan and affections. "Our fellowship," we are told, "is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3.) The desire for this fellowship, and the provision for it also, begins with God. With Him, our salvation was not merely a matter of a great, loving sympathy reaching down to save us from sin and its consequences. In creation, God intended man to be on terms- of the most intimate friendship with Himself. This of course means that His ultimate purpose as respects the race is the restoration of that sweet communion which we may assume prevailed in Eden when "the Voice of the Lord God" was heard by our first parents in the Garden before sin disrupted their communion. It is our faith that this purpose will not fail of fulfillment, that the earth will yet be filled with perfected beings, each loving God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength- the royal law of love embracing all of heaven and earth. Then shall Jesus, whose delights from of old have been with the sons of men, see of the results of His sacrifice, and be satisfied. - Prov. 8:31; Isa. 53:11.

That we who now believe in Christ and have been made members of His Body, the Church, were not chosen merely to fill a high position in God's purpose, is very evident. We cannot forget that what God said to His ancient people Israel, may also, and in a more wonderful degree, be said to us: "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any, people; for ye were the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen." (Deut. 7:6-8.) We are where we are and what we are because God first loved us and chose us to be the special objects of His greatest of favors. We remember also the word of Jesus in this same connection, how He would have us know, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." And, "Henceforth I call you not servants; . . . but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." (John 15:16, 15.) Truly we are chosen for a high and wonderfully intimate degree of communion with the Father and the Son! What an appeal this favor should make on our powers of reciprocal love, and how it should cause us to rejoice exceedingly in the fact that the circle of divine love was drawn large enough to take us in.

How exercised in heart we should be, therefore, to cultivate the spirit of communion with God, and with our beloved Lord, to whom we are espoused in the tender cords of Lover and loved. "It is not yours I want, but you," is the language of Christ's affections, and we can give Him back this degree of love, only as friendship with Him is made to mean more than service for Him. Not servants but friends!-friends, for a communion together in the things He receives from the Father, which He can share only with those who meet His friendship requirements.

If we are willing to take the Song of Solomon as setting forth the love of Christ for His Church (and of what purpose is this Book otherwise), we cannot miss the meaning of verses six and seven of chapter eight, in which the Bridegroom's voice is heard. It reads, according to Moffatt's translation, "Wear Me as a seal close to your heart, wear Me like a ring upon your hand; for love is strong as death itself, and passion masters like the grave, its flashes burn like flame, true lightning-flashes. No floods can ever quench this love, no rivers drown it." There are New Testament passages which in their intent convey this same picture of strong, warm, ardent love in our Lord's heart toward us, and this love yearning for our full reciprocation. We think of such texts as these: "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." "Christ also loved the Church -and gave Himself for it; ... That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." - John 13:1; Eph. 5:25, 27.

Since, then, it is from the lips of Jesus we hear the words, "Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile," let us see in this invitation not only His desire for our refreshment, but a desire on His part for our closer communion with Him. This communion is essential to the full measure of joy and confident hope the Lord desires us to have now. Do we not need it in times like these? We do need to pray for a closer walk with God, a more intimate fellowship of our spirit with His Spirit. We need to be more in meditation on His wonderful love, more sensitive to the leadings of His love through daily experiences, and more established in that humble yet confident spirit which can affirm, "I am His and He is mine, forever and forever." Having loved us first, and ere we knew Him, He continues to love us unchangingly. Of this love we sing, "O love that will not let me go!" And such it is. Then let our love respond in the full possible measure of heart, soul, mind and strength, until in heaven we find the completion of our happiness in a perfect ability to give Him back the love we owe. Then, when we walk with Him in white, we shall know as we cannot know now that, herein was love's greatest manifestation, "not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

- J. J. Blackburn

The Father of the Faithful

"But now they desire a better country, that is, an-heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city." - Heb. 11:16.

AS WE continue our lesson on Mount Moriah, we hear the angel of the Lord again addressing Abraham, calling to him "out of heaven" and saying, "By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord." He had often promised, but now for the first time he swore, and because He could swear by no greater, He swear by Himself, and said, "By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." (Gen. 22:16, 17.) This promise is so far-reaching, so "exceeding abundantly above all" that Abraham could have "asked or thought" that we may be inclined to think of it as a solitary experience; but it is not. It is an example of God's dealings with those who are prepared to serve Him at any cost. "After thou hast patiently endured thou shalt receive the promise." "The moment of supreme sacrifice shall be the moment of supreme and rapturous blessing." It is then, when we bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that God opens the windows of heaven and 'pours out a blessing such as we are not able to contain.

Though the faithful of this Gospel dispensation are separated from Abraham by the lapse of centuries, they are inheritors of this promise. We are inheritors of the blessings that he won. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise"-that seed that shall bless all 'the families of the earth. Truly Abraham looked across the vale of centuries and saw the "Day of Christ." He saw it and "was glad." (John 8:56.) Doubtless the halo of this vision lit up the common walk of his life, as it should do for us.

ABRAHAM MOURNS FOR SARAH

But at last a new experience came to Abraham. He and Sarah had journeyed long together, and God had greatly blessed them. They had shared the joys and sorrows of life, and now in the evening of life they realized more than ever their need of each other. But the time for Sarah's departure had come, when that long and sweet companionship must be broken. It is a generally accepted fact that Abraham was away from home when Sarah died. We presume this is inferred from verse 2, that "Sarah died in Kirjath arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham *came* to mourn for Sarah." This is the first time we read of Abraham weeping. We do not read of any particular manifestation of sorrow when he left his childhood home and crossed the Euphrates, "going he knew not whither"; nor even is there mention of special grief on Mt. Moriah, though we know of course that his heart was deeply touched. But when his beloved companion is stricken in death, we read that he came to "mourn for Sarah and to weep for her." Perhaps one reason for this difference can be explained in the difference between "doing God's will and suffering it." So long as we must be active in the doing of His will we bear up with fortitude. Our attention is somewhat turned from our grief by the multiplicity of our engagements. But when all is over, as in the case of Sarah's death; when our loved one requires nothing more at our hand, and we have performed the last service and are left alone with our beloved dead, then it is we give way to our grief.

But we believe there is another, a deeper reason for his special grief at this time for her who had been the partner of his life for seventy or eighty years -- connected with every thought and every

experience. Abraham's weeping is not to be wondered at. Sarah was the only one who could enter into all that was precious to Abraham. Few lives have been so bound as those of Abraham and Sarah, or have so manifestly been united by God. They had grown up together in the same family, and been together separated from their kindred, and together passed through difficult experiences. They were knit together not only by natural congeniality, but by reason of being chosen of God as the instrument of his work in the fulfillment of His promise for the salvation of mankind. So that when Sarah was taken, Abraham doubtless felt that his work was all but done.

But we read that "Abraham stood up from before his dead." As the Father of the faithful he not only "died in faith," but lived in faith. His hope was in God. He saw the promises "afar off and was persuaded of them and *embraced* them. "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He had once had the faith to "go out, not knowing whither he went," and he now had the faith to continue his life pilgrimage alone. He had walked with God, for these many years, and had learned to accept from His hand the bitter and sweet with acquiescence and thankfulness. He recognized God in everything. The measure of one's strength will be found in the measure of his faith.

FAITH CHOOSES A BURYING-GROUND

Abraham must next seek a burying-ground for his beloved dead. He had recently heard from his kindred-in Mesopotamia (22:20-24) -and it might naturally have occurred to him to take Sarah's body there for burial beside their ancestors. But while he recognized himself as a stranger and sojourner in the land of Palestine, he remembered God's promise that he would "give unto him and his seed after him the land wherein he was a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession." In the exercise of this faith in God and His promise it was fitting that he should choose this land for their burying-place, though as yet he had "none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set his foot on," and must needs purchase a field for burial.

It is interesting as well as edifying to note Abraham's conduct toward the sons of Heth and especially toward Ephron from whom he purchased the Cave of Machpelah for a burying place. Evidently the narrative of this purchase of the Cave and the burial of Sarah is preserved for us on account of its manifest significance in connection with Abraham's faith and integrity. His life had, evidently been an exemplary one, for the Canaanites recognized him as "a mighty prince" among them, and they wished to give him his choice of their sepulchres to bury his dead. While faith makes man independent of the men of the world, it is none the less true that faith teaches him to walk uprightly before them. We are told to "walk honestly toward them that are without," to "provide things honest in the sight of all," to "owe no man anything." (1 Thess. 4:12; 2 Cor. 8:21; Rom. 13:8.) These are precepts never to be neglected by the children of the Lord. Abraham's conduct is worthy of note in this matter. While the land was all his by the gift of -God, yet he refused to accept it as a gift from Ephron, but insisted on paying the full price, "as much money as it is worth." Abraham preferred to be debtor to no man. He wished his title clear to his burying-ground, and the "field and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of Machpelah. And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham, for a possession of a burying-place, by the sons of Heth." (17-19.) There Sarah was buried, and there Abraham was buried; and Isaac, and Rebekah, and Jacob.

"During the lapse of ages, all around this spot has been changed again and again; but at some remote period, possibly as early as the time of David, the reverence of the Jews built these tombs round with masonry so substantial that it still endures. Within the space thus enclosed there stood

for long a Christian church, but since the Mohammedan domination was established, a mosque has covered the spot. This mosque has been guarded against Christian intrusion."

"These all died in faith not, having received the promises but having seen them afar off and were persuaded, of them and embraced them and professed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." These worthy men of old not merely lived by faith, but when they came to the close of life, they gave evidence that the promises of God were real to them. This purchase of a burying ground in the land of promise was an exhibition of the power of faith, not only to live, but to die. Why was Abraham so anxious to make sure his title to this Cave of Machpelah? Why so careful to weigh out the full price "current with the merchant"? He did it all by faith. He knew that in prospect the land was his, that his seed should possess it, but until then, he would not be debtor to those who were to be dispossessed.

LESSONS OF IMPORTANCE

Thus we have two lessons: one setting forth the principle of honesty and uprightness in all our dealings toward the world; and the other presenting- the faith that should ever animate all our actions. The hope set before us is that of sharing with Christ in the First Resurrection, glory and honor and immortality, the crown of life; and while this lifts the heart above the world and every fleshly and earthly influence, it furnishes a high and holy principle that should govern all our course in life. "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Kim as He is." This is our hope. And what is the effect of this on our lives? "Every man that bath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (1 John 3:2, 3.) If we are to be like Christ over there, we must be as much like Him here as we can be. Hence the followers of Christ should ever seek to walk in purity, integrity, and uprightness in the view of all around.

Thus it was with Abraham in reference to the sons of Heth. His whole deportment and conduct was marked with unselfishness and with noble and lofty purposes, so that he was recognized as a "mighty prince" among them. And they would fain have done him a favor, but Abraham as thee man of faith had learned to take his favors from God. While he would pay them for Machpelah he would look to God for Canaan. It was not pride or any feeling of that sort that kept Abraham from accepting the gift, but that what God had promised as a gift must not seem to be given by men. The sons of Heth knew the value of "current money with the merchant" and Abraham knew the value of the Cave of Machpelah. It was worth much more to him than to them. To them it was worth "four hundred shekels of silver," but to Abraham it was priceless, as the "earnest" of an everlasting inheritance, which could be possessed only in the resurrection. Faith looks at things as God looks at them, and estimates them according to heavenly values.

Though Abraham dwelt in tents, moving about from place to place, just as he had done from the first year he entered into the land, and had no permanent dwelling place, yet he died fully persuaded that the land was, his and that one day it would be possessed by his descendants. His faith was triumphant in God's promise. But we believe that he valued God's friendship more than anything He had promised. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 11:14-16) points out that in Abraham's profession that he was a "pilgrim and stranger" he "declared plainly" that he "sought a country," that he "desired a better country." If he had desired to return to the country from which he came, he might have had the opportunity to return, but because he "desired a better country," God was not ashamed to be called his God, and He bath prepared for him and for all similarly faithful, "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

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- Contributed

The Way of Obedience

Matt. 14:22-33

The Master knew that the storm would break,
When He sent the Twelve away
Across "to the other side" of the Lake
While He stayed in the Mount to pray.
It seemed to them like a day so fair
As they pushed the boat from shore;
No hint of storm from the sea nor air,
No strain on the sail nor oar.

But "even was come"; and the ship was lost
In the midst of troubled seas;
Hard-driven and rent by the winds, and tossed
Away from the sheltering lees.
But straight against wind and storm they toiled --
Those fishermen true and brave
Though tempest and fears around them coiled,
And death lurked deep in the wave;

For the Twelve had learned as they'd walked with Him,
Through the day and darkest night,
That the way of obedience, though sometimes dim,
Was the way toward safety and light.
The Master had said, "To the other side";
Should chosen ones doubt or quail?
Why should they *think* that ill could betide,
Or turn and ride with the gale?

Severe was the test that tried and spent
The toiling Twelve on the deep,
For how could they know the Lord's intent
Or faith in His vigil keep?
They did not know how He knelt to pray --
That their cries of distress He heard;
But somehow they knew their safety lay
In obeying His every word.

Alone the Master stood on the land
And held the demons at bay;
On the lashing tempest He laid His hand
As it swept on its trackless way.
He knew the weight of the pounding deep
And measured the strength of the blast;
And He watched His own and longed to keep
Their faith in His word steadfast.

He prayed that night for the loyal Twelve:
That obedience and love fail not --
That deep in the Father's Plan they delve,
And their garments be kept from spot.
While fishing for men in life's great sea,
With "contrary" wind and tide,
Would they "toil all night" obediently,
Forgetting all else beside?

But He saw them true to His last command,
For they neither faltered nor turned;
And over the waves He stretched His hand,
And His great Eyes looked and yearned,
Then straightway He stepped on the sea and walked
To those men who toiled with a will;
And soon by the boat He came and talked;
"O peace, ye seas! Be still!"

And the sea laid down in its bed, to sleep,
At the words so infinitely calm.
"O be not afraid!" rippled over the deep
Like the hush of an evening psalm.
And the lesson of faith was learned once more
As they left the boat and the waves,
For they knew as they touched the other shore
The way of obedience saves.

- *Nellie Florence Jolly.*

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The Letter to the Colossians

"Wives submit" - "Husbands love" - "Children obey" - "Fathers provoke not." - Col. 3:18-21.

THE INFLUENCE of the Bible has thoroughly reached every portion of the world known by most of us, and what it has accomplished in the transforming of the home is accepted as a thing to be expected. The instructions regarding the proper conduct of a Christian home, as given by the Apostle in the verses under consideration, and their context, and in 1 Cor. 7:10; 1 Tim. 3:11; Titus 2:4, 5; 1 Pet. 3:1-7, and more extensively in Paul's letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:22; 6:9), had nothing however of the familiar sound to the heathen of the first century. They were being introduced to what was in practically every particular a newness of life. As familiar as most of the principles laid down are to us, there are in them subtle suggestions that are apt to be overlooked largely because we do feel so familiar with Christian principles. The precepts are extremely simple and their necessity in the main quite obvious. The servant, the child, and the wife are instructed to obey, the husband to love, the father to show gentle consideration, and the master to show impartiality and justice.

These are not however merely rules of conduct the Apostle is giving, but methods by which our Heavenly Father may be glorified. Incidentally, the individual heeding the injunctions is himself richly blessed, and is constituted a greater means of blessing to those with whom circumstances daily give him contact.

Unfortunately, in our century there is a tendency to consider the word submission "old fashioned." Anything viewed as a means of giving honor to the name of our Heavenly Father will never become "old fashioned" with those who truly reverence Him, and the more difficult the circumstances, the more gladly will they render that homage. While submission is the keynote of the wife's relation to her husband, it is, however, submission only "as [Greek: because, or in the degree] it is fitting in the Lord." In the letter to the Ephesians the wifely relation is placed on the very 'highest of planes. It is there considered as a type of the relation of Christ and the Church. The duality, therefore, and the source of the wife's subjection to her husband, will be the same as the quality and the source of the new creature's subjection to Christ. In other words, love will be the animating principle.

In a proper marriage, the believing wife gives loving obedience, not because she has found a master, but because her heart has found a place of rest. But faith, raising her submission to a still higher plane, enables her to render joyful obedience even where the unworthiness of the head of the household is apparent, for she recognizes that the opportunity of honoring her heavenly Head is only the greater because of the difficulties the human relationship presents. She, too, must accept the privilege of obedience to an earthly husband as a means of proving her devotion to her heavenly Lord and an opportunity of practicing the complete submission that will be for eternity the glory of every member of the Bride Class.

Undoubtedly the process is made much easier, if not more beneficial, where there is reason for love and reverence, for the heart that loves cannot do otherwise than seek and rejoice in opportunities of serving. The nobler, the purer, the more unselfish the heart, the nobler, purer, and more unselfish will that service be.

Submission on the part of any one is limited by the restriction, "We must obey God rather than man." (Acts 5:29.) The wife might by human reasoning, make an additional exception where her

judgment is of a superior quality. Popular opinion, however, confesses that the Scriptural standard is the one unconsciously accepted by mankind. Higher education has made submission of the wife more difficult in our day, but it is the more meritorious. It is the tendency for human logic to accept this as an excuse for insubordination, but the admonition still stands, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, *as it is fit in the Lord.*" They, like their Head, are learning submission by the things which they suffer. How convenient if a large portion of that suffering is in their home, and how joyfully they can accept it if they recognize its purpose and advantage. Whatever our heavenly Father's final verdict on one who, does not, as an honor to His name, gratefully profit by the privilege of submission, even the most difficult, we must remember we are not the judges. We can pity her for her lack of perception in failing to see the greatness of her privilege of by this means glorifying Him. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." - Eph. 5:22, 20.

THE HUSBAND'S DUTY

It is in connection with the Apostle's discussion in Ephesians of the husband's duty to his wife that he introduces the teaching that their relation corresponds to that of Christ and the Church. It is Christ's love, however, and not the love of the Church, that is taken as the example of perfection. The Lord's love for the Church is generous, calm, patient, self-sacrificing, truly self-forgetting, asking nothing but love, giving all, shrinking from no suffering, not even death itself. Christ loved the Church not because of her loveliness, for He "gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." - Eph. 5:26-28.

Much that the world calls love is selfishness. The couple married "in the Lord," may require years to attain the self less love Paul exhorts them to emulate. Because the husband loves, he will not be harsh or bitter-"cross or surly" is the "Centenary Translation of the New Testament" rendering. The Diaglott uses the word "harsh." If any husband finds his wife lacking in submission, he would do well to consider whether a kindlier, more Christlike disposition on his part, might not inspire submission. She may give the intermittent submission of fear to a gloomy, ill-natured, or surly husband. Christlikeness should evoke joyful, unbroken submission. She should rejoice to honor one with such a character, as her head and 'king-she as a queen freely doing the will of her honored and revered head. On the part of neither will there be a morbid fear of rights infringed, of independence lost, or regret for whims ungratified. Quarrels will give way to loving confidences. There is a practical lesson in Romans 12:1 for every husband and parent, for there is a winning power in "tender compassions." - Diaglott.

No human being, however close the relationship, can come between husband and wife without interfering with the Lord's plan for them. But the Lord can and must come between them, a third party uniting the two, to make them one "in the Lord." If that fact could always be kept in mind, the ideal marriage relationship would result; Each member of this partnership can do much to make it easier for the other to be conscious at all times of the Lord's presence as a bond of union.

THE DUTIES OF CHILD AND PARENT

The instruction to both parents and children [Mosaic Law: those who are not of age] is also brief but clear-gentle consideration, prompt obedience in all things, and with one necessary and proper exception: the command must be in harmony with the Lord's will.

Obedience has not reached absolute completeness unless it is prompt obedience. This only is the kind "well *pleasing* in the Lord." It is also to human eyes a gratifying spectacle, and much is added to the joy of later years for the one who can look back upon a childhood in which this was the habit. The story is recalled of Dr. Johnson, grown to manhood, standing bareheaded in the market place at Lichfield, with the rain pouring on him, in remorseful remembrance of boyish disobedience to his then deceased father. No tears are more bitter than those shed for wrongs done to one who is gone beyond the reach of our penitence.

Obedience to be fully pleasing to the Lord must be not only prompt but the response of love-not obedience that is rendered through fear. The Christian parent can make it much easier for the child to render this, type of obedience when his commands have been changed to love-inspired requests. Love will invariably endeavor to make commands less and less required and to eventually arrive at the condition where requests will be all that is necessary. This sometimes means many years of - training for both child and parent, and perhaps that is one reason' for the Lord's arrangement by which the child was left to the training of its parent until he was thirty years of age. Conditions in the world today might be very different if that divine provision had not been set aside. - Exod. 20:12; Lev. 19:3, 32; Deut. 4:9; 6:7; 11:18, 19; 27:16; 31:13; Psa. 34:11; Prov. 1:8; 6:20; 10:1; 13:24; 19:18; 20:11; 22:6, 15; 23:13, 14, 22; 26:3; 29:15; 30:17; Eccl. 12:1; Matt. 15:4; 1 Tim. 5:4.

There is no substitute for love in winning the confidence of the child. (Prov. 10:12.) His keen perception is quick to discover its lack, and however rigid the self-control of the parent, there are bound to be revealing moments of lovelessness moments when some tone or look betrays the selfishness that caused the parental outburst. The difficulty is practically the same if the parent does have love for the child but greater love for self.

Probably the greatest hindrance placed in the way of children's obedience in our day is the lack of respect parents show toward each other in the presence of the children. No Christian parent has the right to expect the child to be obedient to the one for whom he or she is showing no respect. The child must himself first be taught respect for both parents, since in no other attitude can he render obedience "well pleasing in the Lord." The Lord has well covered every phase of child discipline in this phrase, but for details, other Scriptures should be consulted. We recommend the rereading of Chapter XIII, Vol. VI, of "*Studies in the Scriptures.*" What is most needed is to surround our children with a 'thoroughly Christian atmosphere, from their earliest moments; to let them see in their parents the genuine fruits of spiritual life -- love, peace, purity, tenderness, kindness, unselfishness, loving thoughtfulness of others -- a holy life.

How do parents provoke their -children? Perhaps most often by unreasonable commands, unnecessary and capricious restrictions, alternating with' listless laying aside of all restraints, by failing to first learn self-control themselves and to manifest it in tone and manner; and also by being prompt to see and speak of faults rather than of those things that are worthy of praise. Such failures on the part -of the parent are almost certain to be followed by bursts of temper on the child's part, as the parallel' Ephesians passage points out, for which the child will be punished, whereas the real guilt is the parent's. The result is often listlessness, less desire to give obedience, and a certainty that it will be the fear-inspired kind instead of the love-inspired response that is pleasing to the Lord.

The child's sense of justice though, like his parents', tinged with selfishness, has not yet been depraved through his contacts with the world, and is apt to severely condemn all unthinking parental selfishness. Parental love can effectively train this sense of justice in almost every

instance, into the better, the proper channel of devotion and joyful obedience to the self effacing parent. In other words, usually the thing necessary when listlessness and apathy is noted on the part of the child is not more scoldings from the parent but more self-examination on his part. A good teacher or parent, when a child is unresponsive, will first examine into his own faithfulness, and very honestly and minutely, before there is any criticism of the child. When a child's attitude says, "It is useless to try any more," or "What is the use of trying to please him?", the teacher or the parent may be almost certain the standard has not been set too high, but the reward too low. The rewards that the largest of incomes can provide are too low for the heart that is craving love.

We may best know what would be well-pleasing to the Lord by considering His treatment of the human family, rebellious and estranged from Him. (Psa. 89:30-33; Lam. 3:1.) His love withholds neither punishments nor blessings. But in making this comparison it must not be forgotten that the definite indication is that God's present procedure is best only for the present, and therefore to be superseded by a new arrangement in due time. At that time it is clear, love will not delay but hasten the hand of justice. Now "sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily" (Eccl. 8:11); but then every evil will have not only a speedy, but just, recompense. There is however an excuse for any parent reasonably delaying justice, for he must recognize the danger of injustice, or even unrighteous anger, in hasty judgment on his part. The parent who fails to guard against these things may some day learn that because of his fault there have been talents buried in a napkin. (1 Sam. 3:13; 2 Sam. 18:33.) It is sunshine that ripens fruit, and frost that scatters the blossoms. Bear in mind, too, that the power of Jesus in our lives is not because of austere commands, but because of His drawing near to every one of us to be a brother to us, one that "sticketh closer than a [natural] brother." The principle of the power of love to gain obedience is well illustrated by the experience of a sister who as principal of a graded school established so great a reputation for the school that yearly a great university sent a delegation to examine into her method. It is not probable that many of the members of these committees ever comprehended her -explanation that the beautiful development of the children of that school was' the result of teaching them to do everything from the motive of love. The difficulty was not to teach the pupils that supreme lesson, but to find teachers who would cooperate.

There is a beautiful suggestion for parents also in the texts in Revelation that tell of Jesus' reign being a shepherding, though with a rod of iron. That will be a period of supreme rewards, attended however with retributive justice promptly administered. (Rev. 2:27; Psa. 2:8, 9, Rotherham.) The child is fortunate whose parents use the *spirit of that Age* in his rearing. That will be ' an application of the addition the parallel Ephesians passage makes: "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This, however, can lead to consecration unto death in this life only for those who are now called of the heavenly Father, for we have Jesus' plain statement on that (John 6:44); but the parent will have done his duty, and the fruitage in the next Age may be to the glory of God. Perhaps Dr. Maclaren's statement of the case in commenting on this text is too often true:

"I fear that [bringing children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord] is a duty fallen woefully into disuse in many Christian households. Many parents think it wise to send their children away from home for their education, and so hand over their moral and religious training to teachers. That 'may be right, but it makes the fulfillment of this precept all but impossible. Others, who have their children beside them, are too busy all the week, and too fond of 'rest' on Sunday. Many send their children to Sunday School chiefly that they themselves may have a quiet house and a sound sleep in the afternoon."

The admonition to the children of Israel is just as applicable today to spiritual Israel: "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them

diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of, thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." - Deut. 6:6, 7; 4:9; 11:18, 19; Psa. 78:5-8, Col. 3:16.

- P. E. Thomson.

SURRENDER

"He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." - Matt. 10:39.

I lay it down, the life Thou gavest me,
This life called "mine," but henceforth **Thine** to be;
I lay it, blessed Master, at Thy feet,
Apart from Thee so weak and incomplete,
Yet dear to Thee, else I dare never bring
So poor an offering to Thy feet, my King:
This heart of mine, with all its living powers
To live, to will, to be, through Life's swift hours,
With all its faults, its tendency to sin,
Just as it is, to Thy dear love I bring,
Take Thou control, and 'neath Thy Spirit's sway,
Cleanse and renew, use for Thyself today.
I lay it down, all that I have to give,
Marred and imperfect, yet for Thee I'd live
Still nearer to Thine Own great loving heart,
Have in Thy life a deeper, Closer part:
With deeper faith, devotion, me inspire,
Be Thou, O God, my strength, my joy, my Life's desire.

- Ethel Bentall.

"Ready to do whatsoever the Lord my King shall appoint." - 2 Sam. 15:15.

Fellowship in Detroit

The sweet fragrance of the Detroit Convention will linger many days with those privileged to attend, for the Lord generously spread before us a feast from His storehouse. It was truly a "sitting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

The first speaker, Brother Blackburn, used as his subject, "God's Guidance Hitherto and Henceforth" (1 Sam. 7:12), bringing from Israel's history many beautiful illustrations of the Lord's Providence over His chosen people, and showing how He led them forth by the right way to the Promised Land, all of which was typical of His faithfulness to His chosen people of today. Brother Siekman spoke next on the recent prophecy of Mr. Churchill, regarding the times and seasons in which we now live and his idea of the new order soon to be inaugurated—"the desire of all nations." Brother Thomson followed with an excellent talk, using Job 23:10: "But He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me, I shall -come forth as gold." Many lessons were drawn from the refining of gold. Though water often has its work in the separation of gold, yet it needs the fire to burn away the dross, leaving only the precious metal. We, as Christians, are washed by the water of the Word, and must pass through the fire, 'at the hands of the great Refiner. Thus only shall we come forth as gold.

Brother Jordan directed our minds to thoughts on "The Father," using John 14, wherein there is much of assurance and comfort. Brother Blackburn again spoke, using Heb. 12:2, "Let Us Consider Him." We were reminded that if we would be followers of Christ we must "walk even as He walked," animated by the same spirit and disposition. Would we be found in the home of the publican, and with the woman at the well? Then we must have His spirit of compassion. We cannot "consider Him," and at the same time be unmoved by the sufferings that surround 'us. And this compassion is not limited to the world, but should begin--with our brethren whom we are to seek to "provoke unto love and to good works." Joseph, who was a type of our Lord, said to his brethren, "Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you." (Gen. 43:3.) In like manner, we too, must, at least in prayer, bring our brother with us if we would see our Lord's face. This beautiful thought impressed upon our minds the oneness that exists between the members of the family of God.

We listened with interest to Brother B. F. Hollister who spoke from the prophecy of Habakkuk on the plans and purposes of God; and also as he conducted the immersion service which was deeply impressive. This beautiful symbol of going into death and being raised again to walk in newness of life never loses its significance and depth of meaning, but rather with the years grows more solemnly significant and precious.

The beautiful thoughts presented, by Brother J. T. Read on the subject "Taught of God" reminded us that we: must be free from self to grow in His love. The "Way of Faith, Obedience, and Separation" (Matt. 7:14), as illustrated by Brother Siekman in the valuable lessons of Abraham's experiences, was an inspiration to all and encouraged us to give further study to the life of the one so honored as to be called the "Father of the faithful." The importance of keeping our consecration vow faithfully was emphasized by Brother Thomson as he explained from Judges 16:6, that Samson's downfall came not because of his shorn locks but because of his broken vow.

The closing talk by Brother Dawson was a fitting climax to the three glorious days. God's standard of perfection as given in Matthew 5:48 provided much food for thought -- a standard which can be reached only in His strength. 1 Cor. 13:3-8 was mentioned, a favorite passage of our

dear Brother Walter Sargeant, who inscribed it on a card that he kept within view for many years, so that he should never forget the pattern of Christian love.

The public talk, "A Thousand Years of Peace," brought joy to our hearts as we listened again to the "Old, Old Story," ever new. Though the number of visitors was small, the majority asked for literature.

Each day during this blessed season of fellowship many inspiring testimonies were given, witnessing to faith in the living God who hath delivered, who doth deliver, and who will yet deliver us. We thank the Lord that He has given us "pastors and teachers," and that He gives us the privilege of these seasons of happy fellowship in the days of our pilgrimage.

- From Notes supplied by Brother Malcolm Hogg.