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In Retrospect

"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. - The night is far spent, the day is at hand" - Rom. 13:11, 12.

THE YEAR hastens to its close. There is a feeling of expectancy in the air, a sense of impending events fraught with significance for all the world. The long hoped-for dawn of peace has but found man faced with the stark realism that his very existence itself is now endangered by the power of atomic fission. The brave voices proclaiming the opening of an "Atomic Age" with second industrial revolution a thousand times more swift and far reaching than the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century cannot stifle the ominous undercurrent of warning in the expressions of others. It is clearly recognized that the moral progress of man has not kept pace with his scientific advances. He has become a menace to himself. The urgency of a moral regeneration is so apparent that a recent writer has said:

"We're not good enough for knowledge such as this. We've got to be better people now -- more generous, more fair, more, willing to cooperate with persons of whatever race color or creed, We must kill hatred, and foster love, and make this a better planet. And there is not a minute to lose."

Some are seriously urging a "moratorium" for science, an estoppage of research for a period to permit mankind to "catch up" as it were, but it is too late. Another has written:

"Scientists have put their feet upon the road and they must follow it. They believe there is no stopping, just *as* there is no turning back. *Make no mistake about it; they are desperately frightened.* They have loosed the genii from the bottle and they cannot put him back."

"The world appears
To toll the death bell of its own decease,
And by the voice of its own elements
To preach the general doom."

From this atmosphere surcharged with the apprehension long foretold in the Scriptures to obtain in the latter days, we turn to meditate upon the words of our text -- words of significance nineteen centuries ago, and how much more now. For we do indeed stand at the portals of a new day. Even the natural man has begun to apprehend this. What then of us who are in the very ante-chamber of the King's Banquet Hall.

Solemn thoughts move us. The Church's course is almost run. The great "Mystery [Secret] of God" is almost finished. But a short time is left for the remaining "Feet Members" to adjust one another's wedding robes, to add the finishing stitches to their wondrous embroidery, to be ready for presentation "faultless, before the presence of His glory with exceeding *joy*."

EARTH'S NIGHT OF WEeping

It has been a long night; long for the Church, but longer yet for the "groaning creation." Six thousand years of travail -- six thousand years of sin and death! Who shall measure the tears that have flowed, the anguish of human hearts as they stumbled down the "broad road" -- "having no hope and without God in the world." That first act of disobedience -- what a train of evil has followed in its wake! With man's alienation from his Creator, the light of God's favor was removed and a terrible, night, was ushered in wherein "darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people." The whole panorama of human experience in the light of God's Word can be likened to a mighty drama so tremendous in scope as to be a "spectacle to angels." What moving scenes and mighty characters are unfolded to our view as we look back over the pages of history! Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Elijah -- grand Old Testament characters -- pass before our view with precious lessons as we meditate on their relationships to the Creator. And then after 4000 years of "night," a "light" bursts forth upon this world which shall never be extinguished.

"This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord. For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven, did the Lord behold the earth; to hear, the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death; to declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord. - Psalm 102:18-22.

And the astonished shepherds hastened to Bethlehem to see Him who should fulfil the wondrous words of the angel still ringing in their ears and burning their hearts: "I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people. For unto *you* is born this day in the *city* of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Sweetest story ever told -- the story of Divine love! "The Life was the Light of men" and as He gathered about Him His "little flock" opening to them the Scriptures, the great Plan of God began to unfold with "wheels within wheels." During all the dark ages of the past, when God seemed to have almost forgotten His creatures, His Plan for their future blessing had been silently but grandly working out, though during all those ages the mysteries of His Plan had been wisely hidden from men. However, the buffetings and sufferings under the dominion of evil have given them an experience which will be greatly to their advantage when they are brought to judgment in the Millennial Day. The full meaning of that Sacrifice on Calvary remains "to be testified in due time" to the world at large. Only a favored few, to "as many as the Lord our God shall call," the consecrated saints of this Gospel Age has it been "given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Happy Zion! What a favored lot is thine!"

THE DARKNESS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

As we continue our retrospect, we pass on into the period when the "falling away" corrupted the Gospel Message and the light of Christ and the Apostles began to be obscured. Strange and terrible does it yet seem. The transformation of pure and primitive Christianity into medieval Popery, the metamorphose of that Kingdom of Heaven brought in by the Son of God into the Papal monarchy of Innocent III is indeed a terrible and woeful wonder. Yet amidst this signal corruption of divine truth and manifestation of human evil we may discern the restraining and chastising hand of God. Thomas Gill has well written:

"A journey through History is a walk with God -- a journey full of interest and wonder for every open-eyed traveler even if unaware over whose domain and in whose company he is walking; but how beset with wonder, how steeped in, solemn awe and solemn delight for each explorer cognizant of the divine region and conscious of the divine Companion! The charm of striking scenes, the awe of mighty events, is heightened and deepened by the conviction of their relation to the purposes of the All-wise Disposer, of their subserviency to the good pleasure of the Almighty and Benignant Ruler. The pain inspired by the evil and portentous personages of history is lessened by the contemplation of them as ministrants of God's wrath and executors of His judgments, as those whose hearts He hardens and whose wickedness, He overrules for the fulfilment of His purposes and the manifestation of His glory; while delight in valiant and godly souls, in true heroes and noble martyrs, rises into a loftier height when they are regarded as rejoicing fellow-workers with the Lord, as faithful servants of His will and gladsome ministers to His glory. The way is sometimes exceeding dark; the crimes and horrors of some periods in history oppress and overpower us; God seems to hide awhile His face from us. But the journey is pursued; we reach higher ground; we look back, we look around; our God shines upon us again; and we bow before the manifested might and majesty of the Moral Governor. Falsehood and Tyranny have won a crushing victory over Truth and Freedom; evil seems triumphant and supreme; the Good Old Cause, the very cause of God Himself, seems vanquished; when lo! a mighty man is raised up, a baleful power is stricken down; a terrible chastisement is inflicted; a great deliverance is wrought; we are uplifted into solemn sympathy with the Divine Avenger; we rejoice in a glorious manifestation of the Divine Deliverer; we are gladdened by a sweet visit of the Divine Consoler."

These words written in contemplation of the Apostasy and the Reformation are echoed by Milton:

"I do not know of anything more worthy to take up the whole passion of pity on the one side and joy on the other than first to consider the foul and sudden corruption, and then after many a tedious age, the long deferred but much more wonderful and happy reformation of the Church in these latter days."

So have holy souls rejoiced in the continued gleams of divine light even in the darkest of hours. God has never left Himself without witnesses who manfully and courageously showed forth the Gospel Truth, and the record of the Reformation struggle remains one of the brightest pages in history.

THE TIME OF THE END

A century ago saw the work of the various Bible Societies increase marvelously. The Bible became the possession of all who desired it and knowledge of things divine increased proportionately, culminating in the great Adventist movement of 1844. But it was not until 30 years later that the full measure of spiritual truth began to be seen in all its glory.

It has been suggested that as the High Priest in the ancient Tabernacle service every morning and evening trimmed and replenished the lights of 'the lampstand in the Holy, so in the beginning and ending of the Gospel Age a fuller and brighter illumination has been provided the saints in these two periods. In any event it is a matter of record that the wonderful outpouring of divine truth at our Master's First Advent has been repeated at His Second. For we do indeed live in the "days of the Son of Man"; the time of the setting up of the long awaited Kingdom of God. Seventy years ago it pleased God to raise up a mighty servant "set for the defense of the Gospel." As we look back upon that faithful life -- forty years of service for the King -- during which the Lord poured forth such a coordination of Truth as had not been since the days of the Apostles, we thank God for that ministry and for the vessel He used to glorify Himself. The memory of Charles T. Russell remains sweet and precious as we continue, to draw knowledge, comfort, and inspiration, from his abundant writings. Since his passing, almost coincident with the beginning of the dissolution of the framework of society, the grand Harvest message shines forth with undiminished lustre though with decreasing volume. This is to be expected, for the Truth is not in organizations but in individuals, and He must increase while we decrease. Of individual effort there can be no slackening, but as regards the Truth Movement we may expect it eventually to disappear. We may be reaching the final phase of earth's travail, and knowing the Church's glorification must precede the blessing of the world, we are above all interested in her change. Hear the thought provoking words of that wise servant in this connection:

"Though we may be sure that this 'change' of the last living members of the Body of Christ will not take place until the work committed to them in the flesh is accomplished, we are informed, . that ere long our work will be cut short -- gradually at first, and then, completely and finally, when 'the night cometh, when no man can work.' And the gloom of that 'night' will be dispelled only by the Millennial sunrise. When our work is done, and that night closes in around us, we may expect not only to see the storm-clouds grow, much darker, but also to hear and to feel the rising 'winds' which will culminate in a wild hurricane of human passion-a whirlwind of trouble. Then, having finished our appointed work, it will be our part to 'stand,' patiently, until our 'change' comes. - Eph. 6:13.

"How long the Lord may be pleased to let His saints stand in enforced idleness so far as His work is concerned, we do not know, but probably only long enough to let faith and patience have their perfect work. Here these virtues will be most fully developed, tested and manifested. This test of patience will be the final trial of the Church. Then 'God will help her, at the dawning of [her] morning' (Psa. 46:5, *Leeser's* translation) -- not the morning which is to dawn on the world at the brightness .f her rising with her Lord as the sun of righteousness, but at the dawning of *her* morning, in which she is to be changed to the nature and likeness of her Lord. *Her* orning is to precede the Millennial morning.

"That this dark night is already approaching we are made aware not only from the Scriptures but as well from the ominous signs of the times; and the fate of the Church then, so far as her human career is concerned, seems outlined in the closing pages of the lives of Elijah and John the Baptist. The beheading of the one, and the whirlwind and fiery chariot which bore away the other, probably indicate violence to the last members of the Body of Christ. Yet Zion need not fear; for God is in the midst of her, and will help her. Her consecration is un'o death, and her privilege is to prove her faithfulness: 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord.'"

THE DARKNESS IS PAST -- THE TRUE LIGHT NOW SHINETH

Our retrospect has brought us to these, our own momentous days. The period of Evil is almost ended, the Kingdom is at the door.

"The world is grown old, and her pleasures are past;
The world is grown old, and her form may not last;
The world is grown old, and trembles for fear --
For sorrows abound, and judgment is near!"

And we, the "living who remain,"
"We're now but in creation's vestibule,
And acting the mere prelude unto joy
Immortal, universal."

O weary and care-worn souls, look up and behold the glorious vision! It is no mere dream of delight to be presently swept away by the never-failing stream of we: nay, it is the joy that is set before us. And, if we but cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart, He, by His almighty power, will bring us safely to it, though, perhaps, through much tribulation. Does not the very thought of His promises lighten the burden of the cross? Sorrows, conflicts, and perplexities may be thickening around us: let them only cause us to cry with greater earnestness: "Thy Kingdom come!" In the sick chamber, or the place of heart-breaking toil; in the lonely garret, or the full house in which we must sojourn as strangers among ungenial spirits; by the newly opened grave, or in the forsaken home; wherever the load of human anguish presses most heavily, let us, even in sorrow, rejoice that the time of suffering will soon be over, and then God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there any more be mourning, nor crying, nor pain.

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand."

- *W. J. Siekman.*

Making a Foolish Choice

"If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever." - 1 Kings 12:1-7.

This was the wise advice given by the old men, but King Rehoboam did not heed it, but acted harshly according to the counsel of the young men. In forming an estimate of his conduct, however, we should remember that his mother was a heathen woman addicted to the worship of idols. King Solomon had been trying to please her and his many other wives by building various temples to false gods. So, then, it cannot be wondered at that with such a father and mother Rehoboam did not turn out very well, for great is the power of heredity. No doubt he thought that if he granted the requests presented to him at this time, he would have to keep on granting further requests *ad infinitum*. The best policy therefore seemed to be to be harsh with the people and intimidate them. So he said, "My father chastised you with whips, I will chastise *you* with scorpions."

This was a very unwise choice, for the elements of unrest and dissatisfaction were much in *evidence*. Had Rehoboam been wise, he would have discerned the condition that prevailed and would have used more tact and diplomacy in dealing with the situation. The fact is that a test had arisen, and the king failed to see that it was a test. Being proud and arrogant, he thought he could do whatever he pleased.

It is a great mistake for any one to take such a course. Today there is a testing going on among the Lord's people, as well as among the people of the world. Throughout the earth indeed the elements of discontent are manifest on every hand. If the world's rulers *were wise*, they would decrease the burdens on the people instead of increasing them. But these rulers act according to worldly, not divine, wisdom. Consequently a great disruption is now looming up. Then among the Truth people some are making demands on others that the Word of God does not make. They are setting up false tests. They have set a straight line, and claim that all those on one side of that line are in the Truth, and all those on the other side are out of it. Those who do not agree with them, they beat with scorpion tongues. This is very deplorable. It surely manifests a lack of the spirit of love, and without that spirit no person will ever win the Divine Kingdom.

Are we enabled by divine grace to discern the tests of the present time? Our faith and love will be tested to the full. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." And the will of God is that we continually manifest faith and confidence in Him and thus prove our love for Him; and that we love the brethren. "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

- *Walter Sargeant.*

God's Understanding Love

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love." - Jer. 31:3.

FAITH ALONE can interpret life's complex experiences. Only a heart rich in faith can find an answer to the enigma of pain and suffering. But bearing with patience the trials which for the present are not joyous, but oftentimes grievous, such faith sees that in a willing submission to all of God's will there is a likeness to Jesus in the acceptance of bitter experiences as a cup poured by the Father's hand. If the cup be a painful trial, submissive faith, looking far beyond the brief, moments of affliction, can visualize eternal ages of glory to follow -- "after we have suffered a while." When trials are viewed thus, the unseen realities beyond the veil are made so real to the mind that "faith becomes an affirmation that sees eternal truth as present fact."

This full assurance of faith comprehends much! To really know the One whom we have believed is to have a full measure of confidence in Him at all times, and under all circumstances. Such abiding faith we need, in times of trial when the pressure is particularly great, even though we know that these frequently represent His chastening love; and we need this faith also when meditating on the gracious provision God has made for us in our inability to reach up to the perfect ideals He has given us to cherish as life's true objectives. We know that to those who love Him aright, the promise is that if they will hold fast in faith, pray on in hope and love, and day by day follow on to know the Lord and the power of His resurrection, God will hold the heavenly inheritance secure for them. He is able to keep all they have committed to Him. He knows all the roughness of the toilsome way over which each one is led by His hand, and because of this, His judgment will be according to the trials endured, the weaknesses faithfully striven against, and according to the unquenchable yearning of the heart for His perfections.

God understands! He knows how we long to give ourselves wholly over to His molding hand to be fashioned in harmony with His will for us. He knows how thoughts will wander away from the heavenlies, and the mind drift along the easy trend of mundane things. But He also knows our desire to have every thought and act brought into subjection to His perfect mind. This, then, is our joy, our rest and peace. Since God understands us altogether, it is ours to believe He accepts us in the Beloved One as we are, and loves us with a constant, and everlasting love. On the strength of His promise we are to believe He holds us in His own right hand, and from that hand none may pluck us, neither will He let us go. It follows then, that the larger our vision of His grace becomes, the wider reaches to which our faith extends, the greater the measure of our love, and the deeper our gratitude of heart, the more blessed will be our comfort and joy in God's understanding love. Every lesson learned through the obedience of faith will be an added preparation for the happy hour of heaven's unfolding illuminations by which all life's mysterious ways will be made plain, and all complexities disappear. Faith will be lost in sight and prayer give place to praise.

Though the eternal realities are only seen as yet by the eye of faith, yet how full of heartening power our partial vision can become! Visions of glory to follow are given us in various ways, and these become to us as beckoning hands enabling us to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. They come to us like the voice of Jesus, saying amid the winds and waves, "It is I, be not afraid." Only let us believe that these assurances are for our appropriation and we will find it becoming more and more true as our loving Savior said, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Ere long it will be no more an occasional fleeting glimpse through breaks in overhanging clouds, but the fulness of vision amid heaven's cloudless, sightless glories. If we will go on letting patience have her perfect work in us, watching for the tokens of God's overruling in all our way, the hope will grow even more glorious, the cloudy intervals between the sunshine will become less frequent as faith grows stronger, and the days of heaven on earth be a greater foretaste of that which is yet to be ours when the end of the way is reached. On our Father's face there is an unfading smile of love which our hearts can know and feel, and in that smile we have the assurance that in all the way we take while delighting in His will, He knows, and loves, and cares. He always understands.

"He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase:
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.
When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end off our hoarded resources,
Our Father's full giving is only begun.
His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth and giveth and giveth again."

"How high is His love?" His high as the heavens;
As high as the throne of His glory must be;
And yet from that height He hath stooped to redeem us --
He so loved the world and He so loved me."

- J. J. Blackburn.

The Magnificat

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: amid the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end." - Luke 1:30-33.

FOR OUR Christmas meditation we have selected the words recorded in Luke 1:46-55. These, the exalted utterance of a humble Jewish maiden, were invoked by the inspired greeting of her kinswoman. For, "it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she spoke out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? And, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." - Luke 1:41-45.

Moved by the deepest emotion, Mary breaks out in an ecstatic song, to which we owe the earliest and grandest of our hymns, the Magnificat. Like Miriam, Deborah, Hannah; or Judith, she utters a song of joy. In the words of Geikie: "The whole hymn is a mosaic of Old Testament imagery and language and sows a mind so colored by the sacred writings of her people that her whole utterance becomes, spontaneously, as by a second nature, an echo of that of prophets and saints. It is such as we might have expected from the lips of some ideal Puritan maiden in those days in our own history, when men were so deeply read in the oracles of God that their ordinary conversation fell into Scriptural phrases and allusions, and their whole life was colored by the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Mary, like them, must have, lived in a constant realization of the presence and special providence of One with whose gracious communications to her people she had thus filled her whole thoughts. A Jewish puritanism, of the loftiest and most spiritual type, must have been the very atmosphere in which she moved, and in which her child was hereafter to be trained.

With the extremism which has developed into Mariolatry, we of course, have no sympathy. But we can and do honor one whom God has thus honored and to whom the angel could say: "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And while not countenancing the generally accepted doctrine of "the Immaculate Conception" of Mary,* which attempts to establish faith in our Lord's mother as immaculate, spotless, perfect; and admitting only that she was a member of Adam's race in the same sense as all other members of it -- that her life was derived from the Adamic stock with inherited human weaknesses and blemishes and was unavoidably, like all others, under the sentence of death -- our esteem for this gentle maiden of marvelous faith, submission, and obedience remains undiminished. Truly, "henceforth all generations shall call her blessed." However, it is not the Virgin mother's person but rather the spiritual emotion and eloquence of her Magnificat that is our immediate concern and to which we now turn for detailed consideration. Each exulting strain of that song which anticipated the first Christmas will refresh our spirits as we recall our own cause for joy and gratitude to, "the Giver of every good and perfect gift."

* For a full treatment of this subject see Scripture Studies; Volume V Chapter 4.

"SING FORTH THE HONOR OF HIS NAME"

"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior."
- Luke 1:46, 47.

How natural for her mind, imbued with its religious heritage, to raise itself in adoration of her God. The intimation made to her was one which she could hardly grasp in its full significance. Her Son was to sit upon the throne of His father David, and reign over the house of Jacob, founding a kingdom which should endure for ever. The gratitude within, welled forth in notes of heartfelt praise. And to us who know the full significance of that wonderful event, Mary seems to speak in the Psalmist's words: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." Our echoing words of praise have already been written for us: "Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in, the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all.. Both riches and honor come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in Thine hand is power and might and in Thine hand- it is to make,, great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name." We may all say: "My soul shall be joyful in the, Lord: it shall rejoice in His salvation." - Psa. 34:3; 1 Chron. 29:10-13; Psa. 35:9.

"WHO REMEMBERETH US IN OUR LOW ESTATE"

"For He hath regarded the low estate] of His handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call-me blessed." -- Ver. 48.

For centuries had the pious women of Israel each cherished the hope that of her might be born the long promised Deliverer. And now this incomparable honor, worthy of the greatest Queen, had become the lot of this humble maid. Well might she rejoice at the goodness of God. And is it not so with us? What shall we say as we consider our own even greater portion? Hath not the Lord considered our "low estate"? "For 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 weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, bath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that, no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and deliverance: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor. 1:26-31.) As of our glorious Forerunner it is written (Psa. 72:17), "All nations shall call Him blessed," so of those "born in Zion" we read: "Blessed and holy is he that bath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." - Rev. 20:6.

"THE LOVING KINDNESS OF GOD"

"For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name. And His mercy is on them that fear Him, from generation to generation." - Ver. 49, 50.

God had thus favored Mary because she feared (reverenced) Him, for His mercy is on such, from generation to generation. We marvel at her calmness and poise at the strange announcement of the angel. Her answer is the ideal of dignified humility, and meek and reverend innocence: --

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." We echo Elisabeth's words: "Blessed is she that believed."

As we turn to consider our own portion in the Lord's inheritance it is with the joyful testimony: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." For have we not prayed to Him-"Show me Thy Ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to Thy mercy remember Thou me, for Thy goodness sake, O Lord." - Psa. 25:4-7.

And did He not hearken to us? "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." (Psa. 34:6.) "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." - Psa. 40:1-5:

"THE LORD'S ARM EXALTED"

"He hath showed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the , imagination of their hearts." - Ver. 51.

What a depth of wisdom lies hidden in these words, far beyond their primary significance to the humble soul that uttered them. She had indeed been told that her child, from its birth, should be called the Son of the Highest, and 'the Son of God. But the human mind is slow to grasp great truths, and needs to grow into a comprehension of their meaning: it cannot receive them in their fulness till it has been educated, step by step, to understand them. Long years after this she only partially realized the import of such words. In her Son's youth she was perplexed to know what was meant by His answer (Luke 2:50), when He stayed behind in the Temple; and years after that she failed, once again, to realize her true relations to Him. (John 2:4.) Nor does she seem to have risen to the full sublimity of her position, and of His, while He lived, though the deathless love of a mother for her child brought her to the foot of the Cross. - John 19:25.

Not so with us, however, to whom the "Arm of the Lord" has been revealed. We have grasped the full import of that birth in Bethlehem and recognize in Him "the Dayspring from on high that hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:78, 79.) "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory." (Psa. 98:1.) "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." - Psa. 118:15, 16.

MESSIAH OF NATHAN'S LINE

"He bath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He bath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He bath sent empty away." - Ver. 52, 53.

Through His Prophet Jeremiah God had said: "Behold the day is coming, that I will raise unto David a Righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper. In His days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name that Jehovah proclaimeth Him, Our Righteousness." - Jer. 23:6, Young's translation.

This Branch had been expected to be a lineal descendant of David through the royal line of Solomon, but a comparison of various Scriptures proves this not to have been the Lord's will, inasmuch as Solomon is shown to have subsequently lost God's favor. (See Psa. 132:11; 1 Chron. 28:5-9; 1 Kings 2:4; 1 Kings 11:9-13.) Consequently we find that our Lord's descent from David is through the humbler line of Nathan as traced by Luke (3:31) who styles Joseph "the son of Heli," that is, the son-in-law of Eli. By birth, Joseph was the son of Jacob, as stated in Matthew 1:16. By inspiration Mary expresses this truth in her song of thanksgiving: "He hath *put down the mighty* from their seats, and exalted them of *low degree*." The diadem and crown were removed from Zedekiah, the last king of the line of Solomon, to be given, to him of the line of Nathan whose right it is -- the Son of David who also is his Lord.

We also, dear brethren, have been the recipients of grace because of the rejection of those whose primary portion it was. For it is written: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity: but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." (Rom. 11:7, 22.), "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:11-13.) "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high; who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people." - Psa. 113:5-8.

"GOD'S PROMISES SURE"

"He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever." - Ver. 54, 55.

Two thousand years.. had elapsed since God's great promise to Abraham, that in his seed all the nations would be blessed. With prophetic insight Mary recognizes a decisive step in the fulfilment of God's unchanging purpose, and closes her song on this note of joy. Later, when her babe was born, the aged Simeon who had also waited for the "Consolation of Israel," took Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,, according to Thy word:, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; alight to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." - Luke 2:29-32.

Today we have reached a crucial period in the history of the world. The lofty spiritual sentiments of the Magnificat find little real response in the weary hearts of men. In this day of crass

materialism, faith in God is well-nigh extinct. Men do not look to Him for help in their present world-wide distress. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. 3:13.) In the not far distant future there is to be a stupendous change in this earth's affairs and the astonished masses of mankind will be hold the full realization of the glorious hope breathed forth in the song of the humble maid of Nazareth -- "Great joy which shall be unto all people." Again shall be heard those words of the heavenly host, now to be echoed by all humanity:

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST,
ON EARTH, PEACE, GOOD WILL TO MEN."

- *W. J. Siekman.*

I Shall Be Satisfied

"Not here! not here! not where the sparkling waters
Fade into mocking sands as we draw near;
Where in the wilderness each footstep falters,
'I shall be satisfied,' -- but oh! not here!

"Not here, where all the dreams of bliss deceive us,
Where the worn spirit never gains its goal;
Where, haunted ever by the thoughts that grieve us,
Across the floods of bitter memory roll.

"Satisfied! satisfied! the spirits yearning
For sweet companionship with kindred minds --
The silent love 'that here meets no returning --
Inspiration which no language finds.

"Shall they be satisfied? the soul's vague longing --
The aching, void which nothing earthy fills?
Oh! what desires upon my soul are thronging
As I look upward to the, heavenly hills!

"Thither my weak and weary steps are trending.
Savior and Lord! with Thy frail child abide!
Guide me toward Home where, all my wandering ending,
I shall see Thee, and 'shall be satisfied.'"

Christians Chastened and Scourged

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth evens son whom He receiveth." - Heb. 12:6.

CARELESS WRITERS may pile up words without any addition to the thought; but those who wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit were not so wasteful.. (Prov. 18:9.) There are, however, in the Scriptures many passages which upon a surface examination might lead us to suppose the writers had thus erred. The text under consideration is one of this kind. Many, interpreting it, make no difference between the two clauses, which teach two distinct and important truths. This difference is indicated both in the words "chasten" and "scourge," and in the words "loveth" and "receiveth." Chastening and scourging do *feel* much alike, but, according to the Greek words as well as the English, the cause and intent are quite different. Scourging indicates wrong-doing for which punishment is being meted out; chastening is educational, and implies need, not necessarily wrong-doing. The synonyms of the Standard College Dictionary make this distinction regarding the English. Having defined "scourge" as "to punish," it continues: "*Punish* is distinctly retributive in sense; *chasten*, wholly corrective and merciful in intent and result." "Chasten" is defined as "1. To discipline by pain or trial. 2. To moderate; soften. 3. To refine, purify. 4. (archaic) To chastise." "Discipline" is defined: "1. To train to obedience or subjection. 2. To drill, educate. 3. To punish or chastise." It is understood that words are used in their first meaning by discerning writers unless they place something in the context to indicate otherwise. On examination of the Greek words we find the definitions given above are good translations of the original.

George Ricker Berry defines (1) *paideuo* (translated in the King James Version, chasten) "To train a child; hence, (1) to instruct, (2) to correct, to chasten." Strong's definition is: "To train up a child, i.e., educate, or (by implication) discipline (by punishment)." Thayer gives the following: "(1) As in classic Greek properly to train children. Passive, to be instructed or taught, to learn: followed by an infinitive; to cause one to learn. (2) To chastise or castigate with words, to correct. To chastise with blows, to"scourge." As an illustration excusing this last definition, "to scourge," which would fit no where else in the New: Testament nor in Classic literature, Thayer cites the passage which we are considering and Luke 23:16, 22, where Pilate said, "I will therefore chastise Him, and release Him, and again, "I have found no cause of death in Him: I will therefore chastise Him, and let Him go." In these verses Thayer evidently overlooked the fact that Pilate has just said, "I have found no fault in this man." The reason for Pilate's choosing the mild word which has no thought of punishment in it in classic Greek -- and in the New Testament so far as we have been able to discover -- is manifest. The classic definition as given by Liddell and Scott, is:

(1) To bring up, rear a child; (2) to train and teach, educate . . . (3) To chasten, discipline. **In** this entire passage (Heb. 12:5-7) Young in his "Concise Critical Comments on the Bible" uses the word "instruct" and its derivatives instead of "chastise," etc.

For the other word, *mastigoo*, we find the following definitions: Berry: "To scourge." Strong: "To flog." Thayer: "To scourge. Metaphorically, of God as a father chastising and training men as children by afflictions." Liddell and Scott: "To whip, to flog."

The difference in the intent of the rest of the two clauses in which we find these words, chasten and scourge, is just as apparent. "Whom the Lord loveth He rears as children," includes all His creatures from the Logos down through the ranks of the angelic host and the lowliest of the human family; but the other clause, "and scourgeth every son *whom He receiveth*," has one very important omission. The Logos was His only begotten Son, therefore not "received" as were we of a later begetting, selected for that purpose from an alien family. Nor did He ever deserve any scourging. When Jesus came to John the Baptist to receive immersion at his hands, His cousin, not knowing of any baptism other than for the remission of sins, and knowing that Jesus was righteous, would have turned Him away had not

Jesus insisted. (Matt. 3:13-15.) His insistence was not because He had any sins of which to repent, but because He did always those things that pleased the Father (John 8:29); His meat, was to do the will of Him that sent Him. - John 4:34.

As to the other word, *paideuo*, though He had far less to-learn than we, yet, strange as it sounds to us, *Jesus "learned obedience [Thayer gives as the "proper and primary significance listening"] by the things which He suffered.*" (Heb. 5:8.) Under the difficult conditions of this earthly existence, He learned to listen for the heavenly Father's voice when every circumstance was contrary to all the conditions of the many millenniums of His previous existence, and as He never could have learned in the sacred courts of heaven. When He was thus "completed" (literal Greek, ver. 9), "He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Through our frequent waywardness we learn what it is to have earthly clouds come between us and the Father's face. He who knew no sin, obedient unto death, even the death of the lowest of sinners, through the fulfilment of Psalm 22:1, completed His lessons in "attentive hearkening" (Strong's). (Phil. 2:8.) The sad story of one man's disobedience by which we were all made sinners, is at last" on the cross counterbalanced by the complete obedience of One through whom the many shall be constituted righteous. - Rom. 5:19, Diaglott.

Jesus came down from heaven, "not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him" into conditions under which He could be tested (and trained) in all points. (John 6:38; 5:30.) In the verses following this statement is recorded His assurance that it is the Father's will that of all which He had given Him He should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. Evidently they, too, must have a faith that will manifest itself in obedience (verse 40): "For this is My Father's will, that every one who *fixes his gaze* on the Son of God and believes in Him (literal: into Him) shall have the life of the Ages, and I will raise him to life on the last day." (Weymouth.) Thus the requirement for the Church is the same as for her Lord -- they, too, must learn attentive hearkening by the things which they suffer; they must be "strangers and pilgrims," must conduct themselves honestly, honorably, as true citizens of the heavenly Kingdom, though their walk is among heathen (1 Pet. 2:12) whose heathenish schemes and practices are a continual test of their faithfulness to the laws of the heavenly government. Here criticizing, judging, hating, jealousies, backbitings, slander, and all the rest of the evil progeny of Satan are made easy, and only in the power of His might can their onslaughts be defeated, and devoted to the purpose for which our all wise Instructor has permitted them -- for our training, the chastisement of Hebrews 12:6. The resultant character will', be chaste and beautiful, not because of the size or quality of the individual's brain; but because of the skill of our Teacher, and of our having faithfully kept ourselves in submission to His instructions, gratefully accepting His corrections.

If one of us, admiring a painting in some art institute and desiring to have a copy in our own home, should carry our paints and brushes to the institute and make a copy, what we would have to hang on our walls would be only a feeble imitation. If, however, while we were at work, the artist who produced the original should ask permission to take the brush, there, would be no hesitation about giving way to him. Should we do this and should there be no suggestions or, restrictions on our part, the result would be not a copy, but another masterpiece, the "very image" of the original. Why should any one hesitate to give way to the great Creator? Fruit-bearing is the easy, the natural result, of abiding in the Vine.

Failure to bear in mind that "every son whom He receiveth" must have not only scourgings, but, as one "whom the Lord loveth" will also have trying experiences, is often a cause of needless discouragement "Our heavenly Father designs that various kinds of trouble shall come upon us, that these may develop and prove our characters. It is a part of the divine plan to permit us to have experiences of affliction. (Psalm 119:67, 71, 75; 34:19, 20.) . . . We are each to demonstrate our willingness to suffer according to His will, and often to suffer unjustly. Our Lord set us an example of cheerful, patient submission to God's will. We are to walk in His footsteps. And we have the example

of the Apostles, when trials and difficulties and persecutions came up on them; and the example of other saints all down the Age.

"Trouble is not necessarily a sign of the disfavor of God. On the contrary, we know that many are the afflictions of the righteous and that '*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*' The truth will cost them something. *Faithfulness to the Lord* will cost them much. As the Apostle says, 'If ye be without chastisement [discipline, training], then are ye bastards and not sons.' (Heb.. 12:8.) If God gives peace of heart, who can upset the one who is thus in harmony with God, in whom this peace of heart is ruling? This, then, is the greatest blessing of all. And He grants this peace to those who are faithfully striving to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We have a Refuge which none but His only can know. No harm can reach us within this shelter; no storm can shake us from our moorings, for we are securely anchored to the Rock of Ages. 'And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to the called according to His purpose.' (Rom. 8:28.) And as Job's after blessings far outweighed his brief trials, so it will be with the Lord's saints today."

"Did our Lord have any fears? Yes, . . . 'He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared.' ... Though His words were few because no words could express the emotions of His soul, His chastened spirit was all the while making intercession for, Him with groanings that could not be uttered. (Rom. 8:26.) Yes, 'He was heard in that He feared,' the fear was all taken away, and, strong in the strength which God supplied, He felt that He was able to offer the acceptable, sacrifice, to meet every jot and tittle of the requirement of the law in doing it, and hence that His salvation *out of* death, His resurrection, was sure.

"Though He was a recognized Son, and hence perfect, without sin,, the Apostle speaks of Him as being *made perfect* -- *as* being perfected in *some sense* through a process of experience -- of experience of humiliation and suffering. In what sense, then, we inquire, was He perfected? The answer is implied in the words -- 'Yet learned He *obedience* by the things which He suffered; and, being made perfect [in this lesson], He became,' etc. Although He was a recognized Son of God in whom the Father was always well pleased, and one who had never disappointed in the slightest degree the fondest hopes of that righteous Father; although He had always recognized the Father as the source of His being, and the fountain of all wisdom, goodness, and grace, and as that superior Being to whom He owed the deepest gratitude for life and all its manifold blessings, in whom also dwelt all wisdom and honor and glory and power, and whose perfect will was therefore the supreme law, the expression. of the most perfect righteousness and truth; the profoundest wisdom and the deepest love and grace; to whom therefore, was due the most loyal and loving obedience at all times and under all circumstances; and although He was a Son who had always recognized and delighted to do the Father's will; yet He was not counted perfect in the sense of that established and demonstrated character which was the necessary requirement for the priestly office to which He was called. For this office He must be proved beyond all peradventure by the severest tests, and that before many witnesses, in order that all might know the strong foundation upon which they could build their hopes. It was for this purpose that His sense of loyalty was put to the severe test which it met in Gethsemane. Possibly even our Lord Himself did not realize the strength of His righteous character until brought face to face with this, last trial. There He. was tried and proved to the uttermost, and under the fiery ordeal His character, always perfect to the full measure of its testing, gained by divine grace its glorious perfection of completeness. [Is it surprising that we who are so far from perfection should also need to be "tested in all points"?)]

"Thus, through suffering, He learned obedience to the perfect will of God down to the lowest depths of self-abnegation; and God permitted it so to be, because such proving was necessary, both for the development and manifestation of that perfection of character which would be worthy of the high exaltation to which He was called.

"It should ever be borne in mind that perfection of being and perfection of character are two different things. Perfection of being is the work of God, while perfection of character is the work of the intelligent creature, wrought out in obedience to divine law and under the divine direction and supervision. Adam was a perfect being, innocent, free and glorious in his pristine beauty; but in the work of character building he soon failed, and hence lost his perfection. Character cannot be developed wholly without trial. It is like a plant: at first it is very tender; it needs an abundance of the sunshine of God's love; frequent watering with the showers of His grace; much cultivating through the applied, knowledge of His character as a good foundation for faith and inspiration to obedience; and then, when thus developed under these favorable conditions, it is ready for the pruning hand of discipline, and is also able to endure some hardness. And, little by little, as strength of character is developed, the tests applied to it serve only to develop more strength, beauty and grace until it is finally fixed, developed, established, perfected -- through suffering.

"In the case of our Lord, this valuable plant of character, perfect in its infancy, maintained its perfection through all the tests applied to it, until it was finally made perfect in completeness, being established, strengthened, settled.... 'And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.'" - R5879, R1806, R1807; April 1, 1916; May 1, 1895.

Inspired by the faithfulness of the Ancient Worthies listed in the eleventh chapter of this Epistle, "We must put away our own grossness, as athletes rid themselves by severe training of all superfluous flesh. Then we must also put away from us the sin that surrounds us, that quite besets us, on all sides, whether in the world or in the Church, as runners must have the course cleared and the crowd of onlookers that press around removed far enough to give them the sense of breathing freely and running unimpeded in a large space." (Expositor's Bible.) Faith alone will deliver us from the overwhelming pressure of the world's sin. Ours is a "furlong race," with the Judge in sight at the end of the course. On Him the contestant must fix his gaze that his course may be a straight one, for He is our goal. We must not only win to gain the crown, but must be worthy to wear it. when He bestows it. There can be no winning if the race is run uncertainly (1 Cor. 9:26); no worthiness if anything less than His. perfection is our goal. "Wherefore lift up your listless hands, strengthen your feeble knees; make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather healed." - Heb. 12:13, Centenary Translation.

"O blows that smite, O wounds that pierce
This shrinking heart of mine!
What are ye but the Master's tools,
Performing work Divine!
How blest that all these seeming ills
That draw my heart to Thee
Are each a proof that Thou hast set
Thy seal of love on me!"

- P. E. Thomson.

A Blessed Season of Fellowship

How rich in joy and blessedness is the fellowship of those who know the salvation that is in Christ Jesus! Truly, it is like the "precious ointment upon the head" and "as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion!": for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." When the meaning of Malachi 3:16, 17 can be associated in the memory concerning a gathering of brethren, in which the presence of the Lord was assuredly experienced, those thus privileged to gather in His name, under the influence of His Word and Spirit, have special reason for believing themselves "kept by the power of God unto salvation," and being made ready for a final gathering, into His immediate presence. By such experience they may know that they have entered into the true unity of the Spirit, the oneness for which Jesus prayed on behalf of His people.

All of this may be much in the minds of those who gathered in Atlantic City over the weekend of October 6 and 7. From first to last it was an occasion of spiritual refreshment. It was the largest gathering we have had in Atlantic City-the little hall being well filled at the first session. In discourse, in praise and testimony, and in the intervals of fellowship between the several sessions, the spirit was that of a oneness of interest in the great privileges of Christian life. So much so was this, true that it can be believed that in the "book of remembrance written before the Lord for them that feared Him and that thought upon His name," a record has been made of this very helpful and blessed season of spiritual association. The subjects discussed by the several speakers were of a character consistent with the solemn possibilities of these very important times; and *such* words in season, how good they are!

The first speaker taking for his theme "God's protection," drew some very helpful lessons from Psalms 122 and 34. We were reminded of the wonderful and powerful agencies appointed by God for our protection. "The anger of the Lord encampeth round about those that fear Him." One such angel accomplished the destruction of Sennacherib's army of 185,000 in a single night. Why, therefore, need we fear since these same powers are provided for our protection and deliverance. Because of the completeness of our protection through past years, and the safe-keeping which is still our favored lot, the language of our hearts should be that of Psalm 34:1: "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

The next theme presented was of similar strain, being, "Who shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (1 Pet. 3:13.) If we are followers of that which is good, we need have no fear what evil men may say or do concerning us. But the emphasis is on our being followers of that which is good in God's sight. Attention was drawn to a yet more helpful reading of other manuscripts: "Who is he that will harm you if ye be imitators of the good One?" This means that our lives, much more than, our preaching, enter into the matter of being kept under the shadowings of God's care. And what joy can be ours in knowing that eventually these who may have spoken against us as evil doers will yet glorify God on our behalf. Some day God will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noonday.

The next theme was framed in the words, "Our Expanding Vision." Once again we had occasion to realize how greatly we have been favored in being enlightened by the Word and Spirit of God. To us has been given a revelation of the wonderfulness of God's character as revealed in His Word, and in all creation. The boundless universe in which we find ourselves calls forth our adoration and praise. Then as we review the magnificent and unfailing purposes of God, contrasted with the puny and ineffectual schemes of men, what gratitude should be ours for the light so graciously given to us. To meditate on God's great expansive purposes is to say in

heartfelt confidence, "Who shall not reverence Thee, O Lord, when all Thy righteous acts are made manifest."

Following these themes discussed on our first day together, the second day of feasting began with a very encouraging and thought-provoking discourse on the subject, "Left over to the coming of the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:15.) It would seem that all present must have felt a fresh impulse to lift up their heads rejoicingly in the conviction that deliverance for the Church is near. It was truly a word in season, well calculated to keep us "looking for that blessed hope," with confidence, and with increased desire.

Then came a helpful presentation of the ever needed doctrine, "The ministry and power of the spirit." The Holy Spirit must never be denied its place in our lives if we are to reach attainments necessary to divine approval. The depth of spiritual life therefore depends upon the degree of our consecration to Gods will. Each one must be "filled with the Spirit." Capacities may differ, but all must have the Spirit to the full measure of individual capacity. A good illustration was used to make this point helpful: Clear water can be poured into many vessels, some very beautifully designed, some common and without special beauty, some large, some quite small, but each can contain a full measure of the same pure water. Likewise is the filling of the Spirit possible to every one called of the Lord into present privileges.

The program concluded with remarks based on Matthew 25:10: "And they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut." Reference was made to what had been said by a previous speaker concerning prophetic fulfilments taking place in these present days; and this being manifest to all of us, what importance is associated with each day of our lives. The things by which readiness for an abundant entrance is assured are things of the heart. It was pointed out that the lamps of the foolish virgins were evidently as 'well trimmed as those of the wise, but a well-trimmed lamp meant nothing without the vessel filled with oil. Likewise a well marked and understood Bible without a rich possession of the Holy Spirit means nothing but disappointment. The life of Christ as He lived it among men must be carefully studied, and His example faithfully followed. The power of His resurrection must be known in daily experience if we are to be found on the inside of that door, which once closed. will never open again. This means living *very* close to the Lord, for "The light, the oil, the robes we wear, are all from Him alone."

-- *Contributed.*

On Holy Ground

In giving a report of the convention held in Hallowell, Maine, October 27 and 28, it seems well to begin with the date of the arrival of Brother John T. Read on the 24th. At Belgrade that evening he gave a most helpful and impressive talk on the 32nd Psalm, and also sang for us. On Thursday evening there was a meeting in Augusta, when Brother Read's subject was the 51st chapter of Isaiah.

The convention opened Saturday afternoon at two o'clock. Eleven of the Boston friends arrived in two cars, and four from New York in one car in time for the opening service, which cheered our hearts. Brother J. H. Sonntag of Dorchester, Mass., who had been invited to serve at the convention, arrived by train, also in time for the opening meeting. Brother Gilbert E. Kemp, of Boston, acted efficiently as Chairman.

Brother Read delivered the first discourse which was very admonitional, followed by Brother John E. Dawson who spoke on the end of the Gentile Times. After the evening meal, the friends had an opportunity in a testimony meeting to express their gratitude to the Lord for their privileges and to voice their feelings for each other in their mutual endeavors. Their faces shone with the joy they felt in their hearts.

After the testimony meeting Brother DeGroot gave a talk in which he stressed the holiness of our Christian walk, even the hall in which we met was "holy ground," he said, because the Lord and His people were there, even though that same hall would be used for other purposes later. The closing service of the evening was in the nature of a symposium. Brother Webster, of Medford, Mass., spoke on Faith, Brother Bridges, on Hope and Brother Smith, on Love, each for fifteen minutes, to the edification of all.

Sunday the morning devotion began at 9:45, followed by a talk by Brother DeGroot. His subject was, "God All in All," bringing us to that fitting climax of 1 Corinthians 15:28: "Then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." Brother Dawson followed, and our hearts responded to his emphasis of love of the brethren.

In the afternoon Brother Sonntag gave a discourse on "The Potter and the Clay," which was much appreciated. His illustrations impressed the lesson on, our minds.

The public discourse, delivered by Brother Read on the subject, "The Desire of All Nations at Hand," was refreshing to us who know the "Old, Old Story" as well as to a few strangers who gave close attention to the discourse.

Brother Read's ministry of song during the convention, added much to the pleasure and profit of all. In closing we want to mention his service at Pittsfield, Monday afternoon following the convention. The two sisters there and ourselves were stirred to greater faithfulness and were much encouraged by his talk on "God First."

Thus closed a very sweet season of fellowship and we' are thankful to God for the spirit of oneness that prevailed and the blessings He poured on us all. "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."

- *Contributed.*

Feasting Upon the Manna

The Gary, Indiana convention held on September 15 and 16, proved to be a very enjoyable and blessed season of fellowship and feasting upon the manna from heaven as it was set forth by the various speakers.

The Gary Class, consisting mostly of young Polish brethren, had secured a very excellent hall, equipped with a loud-speaker system that made it possible for all present to distinctly hear all the speakers. Everything had been well arranged. Considerable effort was put forth to take care of the comfort of the friends, and the local brethren must have felt well rewarded in the splendid attendance at all the sessions, fully 200 or more being present on Sunday.

The speakers, Brothers Obenland, Read, Jarmola, Poskonka, Miskovitz, Moyle; DeGroot, Morehouse and Siekman, had chosen subjects that were edifying and instructive, and their ministry was much appreciated by those present. Besides the discourses there was a Bethel service on Sunday to start the day, and a testimony meeting led by Brother Stromberg at the beginning of the afternoon session. The public meeting attracted about 20 visitors, and in all, 18 requests for reading matter were received.

The final service of the convention was a love feast, which seemed to add a finishing touch and benediction to what all felt was an inspiring and blessed season.

-- Contributed.

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren:

Greetings in the Master's name. We wish to share our joy with you by letting you know what a blessing the convention,, has been to us all. Yes, it is more than words can express. We have been feasting on the messages that were given by the dear brethren from God's Holy Word, and our hearts are encouraged to press on come what may. As the morning lesson points out *how* God cares for the small things, such as the lilies, it makes us know He cares for such small ones as we.. We here cannot tell the Lord how much we thank Him for the gatherin I together of His people with our little Class here in Atlantic City, to refresh our hearts, and we pray His rich blessing may attend yourr efforts in His service unto the end of life's journey.

With much Christian love,
Brother and Sister S. C. -- N. J.

Dear Brethren:

Greetings to all the Lord's people at the Institute.... Enclosed you will find One Dollar to renew my subscription to the "Herald" for another year. I am more than glad to let you know that I have found the "Herald" just as interesting, informative, doctrinally sound, and faithful to the *only* creed that we as Bible students have -- the Bible.... I like the scholarly, yet understandable style in which the "Herald" articles are written. As to holding to the teachings of the Present Truth, I believe that ,the "Herald" stays as close to the teachings of our Pastor, as he would have, had he lived into these days. Neither have I found the "Herald" guilty of building "new fences" within the Lord's sheep fold, and thus causing divisions amongst the Lord's sheep.

In closing I pray that the Lord may continue to use you in the blessing of the household of faith in the days to come.

Your brother in Christ, C. A. L. -- Ill.

My dear Brethren:

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say Rejoice. I wish you to know that one day I found four pages of a magazine, "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom," which I read and saw many good things in it -- truths which the Lord gave us in these last days by His faithful servant. Especially I was glad to see on the second page, in harmony with Brother Russell's will, five brothers as Editors -- three to read and approve each article. Also I was glad to notice that you have meetings in various cities.

I wish to have some copies of the First Volume in Brief, also of the "Herald." I shall be glad to hear from you and of the work you are doing, and to cooperate in any way you may suggest. I was at one time in the United States and received the truth there in 1916. I have followed the Truth throughout the years, walking in the narrow way, in which I trust to prove faithful unto death and be found worthy of a share in bringing blessings to all mankind Since 1935 I have been in Athens. I am a watchmaker, but to me the one thing above all others is the preaching of Christ's Kingdom which is at hand. I send my regards and love in the Lord to you all. The Lord be with you.

Your brother in Him,
D. C. -- Athens, Greece.

Dear Brethren:

I must thank you for your kind letter of April 5th, which reached me on the 2nd instant only.

My family and I always look for the "Herald," and you may be assured that it is always most welcome and much appreciated. Yes, we certainly wish to be continued on your mailing list. Very recently one of my daughters, aged twelve, remarked that she finds the articles in the "Herald" very clearly expressed and, that it is not confusing, as some others. So you will see that the "Herald" is giving us, young and old, wholesome and sustaining food. May God bless and make it the mean of still greater blessings

I keep a keen watch on our small Class, especially our Indian brethren, and I very sincerely pray that God will not permit Satan to disturb our present harmony. Would it be possible for you to send me an extra copy, of the "Herald" each issue for the use of the Class, as my copy often comes back to me in an unfit state for filing, after passing through so many hands. Our small Class is steadily increasing and we have had the pleasure of adding four new members to our number, two of whom were Roman Catholics. Praise God for His great mercy in thus blessing the work here, and we one and all solicit your prayers on our behalf. Two of our Indian brothers have gone out on a tour, and so far as we learn God is blessing their labors.

All our Indian brethren, my family and I, unite in sending you all our warm Christian love, and we shall always be glad and encouraged to hear from you as often as convenient.

Your brother and servant in our glorious King's service,
J. B. R. -- Bangalore, S. India.

Dear Brethren:

Your latest shipment of some 1,000 tracts, "When the . Morning Cometh," is at hand and at this writing is already distributed. The tract was received with unanimous delight by the young people. They like the subject matter and say it is just right for distribution. Altogether they have put out some 7,000 tracts. The stock here in our Book Room, every one's private supply, and all of those which you sent us are out-and they are begging for more.

I do not know whether you are at the present time in position to supply their eager demand to continue this service. What with scarcity of help and printed stock it may be impossible for you to send us more tracts. They are being carefully and prayerfully placed, each district covered being made the subject of special prayer for the Lord's guidance before it is entered. The work has brought some results, not great, but encouraging. If you cannot send us more, we will understand the situation and hope the time may soon come when conditions will make it possible to continue, if this be the Lord's will.

Thanking you very sincerely for your cooperation, I am Yours very truly,
T. B. -- Wis.

Forgotten Workers

"Help those women which labored with me, whose names are in the book of life." -- Phil. 4:3.

"They lived, and were useful; this we know,
And naught beside;
No record of their names is left, to show
How soon they died.
They did their work and then they passed away,
An unknown band;
But they shall live in endless day, in the
Fair, shining land.

"And were they young, or were they growing old,
Or ill, or well,
Or lived in poverty, or had they wealth of gold
No one can tell.
Only one thing is known of them-they faithful
Were and true
Disciples of the Lord, and strong, through prayer
To save and do.

"But what avails the gift of empty fame?
They lived to God;
They loved the sweetness of another Name,
And gladly trod
The rugged ways of earth that they might be
Helper or friend,
And in the joy of their ministry
Be spent and spend.

"No glory clusters round their name on earth;
But in God's heaven
Is kept a book of names of greatest worth,
And there is given
A place to all who did the Master please,
Though here unknown.
And there lost names shine forth in brightest rays,
Before the throne.

"O take who will the boon of fading fame,
But give to me
A place among the workers, though my name
Forgotten be;
And as within the Book of Life is found
My lowly place,
Honor and glory unto God resound
For all His grace."