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"Till He Come

*"For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come."
- 1 Cor. 11:26.*

WHEN WE reflect that this simple memorial of the Savior's sacrifice on our behalf is the *one request* He made of us, in so far as a ceremonial remembrance is concerned, its yearly observance assumes an importance even above and beyond its typical significance. The death of Jesus on the cross was the climax of an experience that had its beginning when He volunteered for the service which the heavenly Father at some time revealed to Him as being necessary for man's redemption.

We can well imagine the consternation and sorrow that assailed the heavenly hosts, as they witnessed the tragedy that was enacted in the Garden of Eden; for they beheld Lucifer, in violation of his trust, seduce this earthly pair created in God's image, and cause them to disobey the divine will, and through that disobedience, lose all hope for a continuation of the life and blessings that had been bestowed upon them. So wonderful was this earthly creation, that even God pronounced it "very good"; and in His talk with Job (Job 38:7), He indicates that the heavenly hosts were so delighted that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Could we for one moment think that they would then become indifferent to what they saw taking place on earth?

Perhaps, because of being perfect and accustomed to waiting upon the Lord, they would not discuss what they witnessed in the same manner that we discuss tragedies that distress us, but there would surely be sorrow in their hearts, as they beheld God's purpose apparently frustrated and seemingly nothing done about it, except to let mankind perish, and Lucifer, who was now called Satan, continue his operations of deceit and destruction.

Then too, our thoughts naturally go out to the Logos, He who was the Father's agent to accomplish the work of creation: what must He have felt as He saw Lucifer, this marvelous being who was of such great power and glory, yield to the covetous desire to have dominion like God, and in accomplishing this desire, bring rebellion, sin and death into God's perfect domain? His better acquaintance with the Father through having been His honored agent in the creative work, would no doubt give the Logos greater reason to trust in the Father's power and ability to solve

the problem in a manner acceptable to the divine attributes, than would be possible for those having a more limited acquaintance. But there is no reason to think that He knew of the coming fall of man or of the part that He would play in connection therewith:

The Scriptures give us no intimation that any of God's creatures were endowed with the ability to foresee coming events; the wisdom to know the end from the beginning inhered solely in the Creator. He foresaw the rebellion of Lucifer; the resultant fall of man; the six thousand years of the permission of evil; the redemption that would be accomplished

through His Son; and so His peace of mind could not be disturbed. But the angels were taken un-awares, and no doubt the Logos likewise knew nothing of what was to take place. Peace of mind, in so far as they were concerned, would therefore be in proportion to their trust in the Father's power and ability to work out His own will regardless of sin and rebellion.

Events that occurred subsequently indicate that the Father did not immediately enlighten the heavenly hosts as to the way man would be restored, for had He done so, the angels would not have made the attempt that turned out to be such a failure. They must have thought that, if given opportunity, they would be able to save mankind; and so God permitted them to exercise their wisdom and powers in this respect, at a time when men's bodies and minds were not so corrupt and weak as we see them today. Nevertheless, as God foreknew, their attempt was a failure which resulted in a condition of corruption that made it necessary to destroy all mankind but the family of Noah, and to confine in chains of darkness many of the angels who had in consequence become defiled. - 1 Pet. 3:19, 20; 2 Pet. 2:4, 5; Jude 6.

Following this, God gave a demonstration to both men and angels, that even a government carried on under His own laws and direction, wherein He was long-suffering with the nation that had promised to be obedient to His laws and will, would also be unsuccessful in bringing about a condition of righteousness and life. And when He removed divine super vision from Israel, He permitted Gentile nations to do what they could for the people of earth, and the results are everywhere apparent. Thus it has been fully demonstrated that neither men nor angels, even with the help of divine law and supervision, can do anything to restore mankind; and neither men nor angels will have anything to say about the government in the Age to come. - Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14; Heb. 2:5.

As already stated, we do not know when it was the Logos learned that the salvation of mankind was dependent upon His willingness to sacrifice; to leave the glory and riches of His heavenly abode and become a man in order that He might take man's place under the condemnation justice had required. It may have been when the inability of the angels to accomplish anything was demonstrated; in which case, the Logos did but wait some two thousand odd years for God's due time -- "In due time Christ died for the ungodly." Or it may have been just prior to the time He "left the glory He had with the Father." But in any case, the important thing was that He was both willing and obedient in the doing of the Father's will -- "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will O God." -- Heb. 10:5-7.

What a sacrifice that must have been; and how wonderfully it demonstrated His loyalty and obedience to the Father's will! But He does not appeal to His disciples on this score; nor does He reproach the Jews with the fact that in coming to earth to serve mankind, and Israel in particular, He had to sacrifice far more than mankind as a whole had ever known or possessed. We would

naturally think that He would desire some recognition of this, "so great a sacrifice" on their behalf, but He does not even mention it in His request for a memorial.

And then when He was born into this world, it was to a very lowly, humble position. To be sure, His birth was proclaimed by the heavenly hosts, but only a chosen few were aware of this. His birth was not such as to overawe or unduly influence the great ones of earth, or even of that nation, but was accomplished through a lowly maiden in humble circumstances; and He grew to manhood in a community of which it was said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Furthermore, He did not hesitate to associate with publicans and sinners, and He attracted followers only through preaching the truth and by doing good wherever He had opportunity. But does He desire for an acknowledgment of this enter into His request for a memorial? No, it is not considered; and even in His daily life, instead of calling attention to what He has endured for their sakes, He points them to God's goodness and mercy which had been exercised -on their behalf all through their national existence; He appeals to their sense of duty, their obligation in justice, their debt of love and gratitude for God's care over them; and He gives to God the credit and glory *for* His own sacrifice on their behalf: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

If only we too might be as humble and as self effacing in what we do as was Jesus! His attitude was that He did but carry out the Father's will in what He said and did: "If any man will do His [God's] will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." - John 7:17, 18.

When a certain one called Jesus "Good Master," Jesus said to him, "Why taltest thou Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God." (Matt. 19:16, 17.) The glory which this man would have ascribed to Jesus, Jesus was quick to show did not originate with Himself, but was God's goodness manifested in and through Him.

It has often been remarked that when some distinguished one of earth leaves a memorial to himself, he usually designs it to call remembrance to some self-glorifying achievement: something that has exalted him in the eyes of his fellow-man, for it is selfglory that he seeks. But Jesus had no such thought, He knew that He was near to the hour of His greatest suffering and shame, the hour when His life as a human being would be ignominiously sacrificed: not for any wrong that He had done, as His enemies falsely accused, but that He, might do the Father's will in providing a ransom: "The just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Pet. 3:18.) It was this act of total self-abnegation that Jesus asked us to remember-this act in which He assumed the penalty that was ours, that thereby it might be possible for God to be just and at the same 'time justify those who would believe in Jesus. - Rom. 3:26.

From the divine standpoint, and therefore, eventually from the standpoint of all who will gain eternal life, *this experience* in which our Lord suffered the penalty that man had brought upon himself, is regarded as the crowning glory of His worthiness to occupy the exalted position in which God has placed Him. This is called to our attention in Revelation, chapter five, where John is given to see a Lamb that has prevailed to take the sealed book from out the right hand of God. And when He had taken the book, the heavenly creatures all about the throne sing a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." "And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud *voice, worthy is the Lamb* that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing."

And so, whereas from man's viewpoint, Jesus chose an experience that plumbed the depth of suffering and shame as the event in His life that He wished commemorated, yet from God's viewpoint, and therefore from His own and from ours, He chose that which constitutes the supreme evidence of His love for us, and His loyalty and obedience to the will of His heavenly Father. "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." - 1 Cor. 5:7, 8.

AS OFT AS YE EAT THIS BREAD

While it is manifest that the memorial aspect of this yearly observance constitutes the primary and vital significance in the emblems of bread and wine, still there is an additional aspect of the matter that has a solemn significance for all who have entered into a covenant of sacrifice to suffer and be dead with Christ. As the Apostle points *out* in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter eleven, in partaking of the bread and wine, we also symbolize a participation in the sacrifice. Not that we can or do add anything to the merit of Jesus, which alone constitutes the ransom for all mankind, but that God has been pleased to require, in His selection of a Bride for His Son, that they must participate in His sufferings if they would be counted worthy to share in His glory.

All the Atonement Day pictures show that God cannot accept, an imperfect sacrifice. And so, in order that these who partake of Adam's imperfection and condemnation by inheritance, may be able to offer an acceptable sacrifice, God has decreed that faith and obedience, manifested in consecration to the doing of His will, shall be sufficient ground for declaring them righteous. And since it is God that justifies (Rom. 8:33), and no one would dare call Him in question in the matter, such not only have peace with God (Rom. 5:1), but are free from the condemnation. (Rom. 8:1.) Therefore in Romans 12:1, Paul points out that their bodies, because of the merit of Christ's sacrifice applied for them (Heb. 9:24) now constitute a sacrifice that is no longer dead in trespasses and sin, but is living, holy and acceptable to God. So in partaking of the memorial that commemorates our Lord's death, let us also keep in mind our own consecration to be dead with Him.

Our text says, "For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's, death till He come."

This text has often suffered at the hands of its friends-true saints who have desired to faithfully proclaim His death, and in whose hearts there was the longing expectancy of His coming. -Some have interpreted the "as oft" to indicate any time, or any recurring period of time that they might choose Others, combining the "as oft" with the statemen found in Acts, chapter 20, verse 7, think that the memorial should be kept every first day of the week But we have taken our cue from the rule of observances established by God in the Passover, Atonemen Day and other types, and so observe the memorial yearly as near to the time indicated at its institution as we are able to determine.

TILL HE COME

But what *is* meant by "Till He come"? These words undoubtedly refer to the time of our Lord', second advent. Most Bible Students, enlightened through the commentaries of Pastor Russell, continue to observe the memorial of His death, although they are convinced that He has been present for about seventy years. The answer to this question could involve quite a discussion. From the pen of Howard H. Bickersteth we have the following lines:

"Till He come"; O let the words
Linger on the trembling chords;
Let the little while between,
In their golden light be seen;
Let us think how heaven and home
Lie beyond that "Till He come."

See the feast of love is spread,
Drink the wine and eat the bread;
Sweet memorials, till the Lord
Call us round His heavenly board;
Some from earth, from glory some,
Severed only -- "Till He come."

The latter verse shows a misconception of the state of those who have died during the Age, but the author evidently had in mind the Apostle's words recorded in First Thessalonians, chapter four, verses sixteen and seventeen-the time when the last members of the Body will be caught up to meet the Lord and the resurrected saints in the air. We would agree with the thought that as long as any of the saints remain this side the veil, it will be proper to observe the memorial of His death.

The "till He come" would therefore seem to include the thought of the complete gathering unto the Lord of those who are alive and remain, the last members of the Body who are still undergoing the ripening process before being gathered into the heavenly garner. This would agree with Jesus' own statement at the time He instituted the memorial: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until the day *when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom.*" - Matt. 26:29.

This event, we believe, occurs some years following the first sign of His presence as set forth in Luke 12:37 and Revelation 3:20, for both of these Scriptures indicate a period of time in which our Lord will personally supervise the faithful, watching saints in their feasting upon the Word of Truth in the end of this Age. It is evident that the ones He serves will be given a depth of understanding that has been lacking since the Apostle's days. Would any one of us deny that the Church has experienced such an out-pouring in the past seventy years? To Israel of old God promised an early and a latter rain that would insure abundant crops if they would faithfully serve Him (Deut. 11:13, 14); and James employs the same figure of speech with regard to the harvesting of saints into the heavenly garner: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." - Jas. 5:7.

All through the Gospel Age until the harvest time, saints, when they died, were laid away in a condition of unconsciousness called "sleep." Their experience was much the same as those who died prior to the Gospel Age. Speaking of the "sons of God," the saints of this Age, God through the Prophet says, "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High. *But ye shall die like men*, and fall like one of the princes." (Psa. 82:6,7.) Prince Adam died for his own sin; but Prince Jesus died as a sacrifice for the sins of others. Those saints that having once been cleansed, return to "wallowing in the mire," will die like Prince Adam-for their own sins; but those who remain faithful to their consecration vows, will die like Prince Jesus: not for their own sins, but as a sacrifice.

We are given to understand that there comes a time at the end of the Age, when death will not bring a period of sleep as in the past, for those who die will be changed instantly. Paul says (1 Cor. 15:51-53), "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The order in the resurrection of the saints will be, first, those that sleep, and then, "We who are alive and remain." - 1 Thess. 4:14-18.

"What a wonderful change when our Lord shall appear, Oh, how precious the thought that the time is so near; When the saints shall awake in His likeness sublime, And the living be changed in a moment of time."

Who can fathom the glory of that awakening, that "till He come"? The Scriptures link it up, not with the secret and generally unknown phase of His presence, but with the appearing phase. Peter says (1 Pet. 5:4), "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." And Paul says (Col. 3:4), "When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." And John in the same strain says (1 John 3:2), "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

This phase of the coming of Christ, viewed in the light of these Scriptures, will constitute the most momentous event in all the experiences of the members of the Church. What it will signify to those of us who suddenly find ourselves in the glorified presence of the Lord, and in possession of immortal life, is a change far too great for us to imagine. How can we even begin to picture the joy and wonder of that experience? We would never dare think of such heights of glory, honor, and excellence, were not the hope of attaining them so fully and unequivocally set before us as the reward of faithfulness in overcoming.

The preparation for this event that is everywhere stressed in the Word, is not the knowing of the exact date, but of being prepared in heart and life to the extent of the grace of God working through our consecrated ability. As John says, "Every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." And so may the thought of participation, in this memorial "till He come" cause us to be watchful and diligent in giving heed to the things that pertain to our transformation into the image of our Lord.

- *John T. Read.*

Comfort for the Bereaved

It is not the Lord's purpose to let us know during our period of service here, how much has been accomplished by our efforts, but in the work of comfort to the relatives of deceased soldiers there has been enough response to assure us the work had His blessing. Those who have served discovered a blessing for themselves in the enlarging of their sympathy for the poor groaning creation. The ending of the war does not need to bring an end to this form of service. Every issue of a newspaper in the larger cities and most of them even in the smaller communities, tells of hearts saddened by the loss of loved

ones. A letter of sympathy and a tract or two enclosed may prepare a heart for the message of a tearless eternity, and demonstrate to the Lord our eagerness to be used in His work of blessing all the families of the earth.

The tracts, "Why God Permits Calamities" and "When the Morning Cometh," have been used effectively in this work. Should you wish to engage in this service, send your order for tracts to The Service Committee, P. O. Box :3473, Mdse. Mart 'Station, Chicago 54, Ill., and please make your order for a definite number as we have no way of knowing your opportunities and the time you can devote to the work.

"In Like Manner"

"... *The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*" - James 1:17.

THE STUDENT of the Divine Word, who today seeks to arrive at its deepest meaning through study of the English translations, is faced with many difficulties. Not the least of these are the peculiarities of Greek and English idioms.

Idiomatic language uses words with a meaning other than the ordinary dictionary definition. Idiom is defined as: "An expression . . . the meaning of which as a whole cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements; thus, 'Monday week' is an idiom signifying 'the Monday a week after next Monday'; 'How are you?' is equivalent to 'What is the state of your health or feelings?'"

The New Testament was written in the Greek language of nineteen hundred years ago, and contains many idiomatic expressions peculiar to that language and period. The common English translation is in idiomatic English of three hundred and fifty years past-which is ample time for great changes in the common speech -- the vernacular. Furthermore, the Holy Scriptures are written in a metaphorical language of their own -- "the tongue of men and of angels" -- which is the *lingua franca* of communication between the worlds of the flesh and the Spirit; and it employs many idiomatic expressions of its own.

Bible students who are familiar with the Plan of the Ages have a tremendous advantage in understanding the meaning of Scriptural metaphor -- of type and prophecy, of similitude and parable. Most commentators on the Bible-even the most learned in Hebrew and Greek-do not have this advantage, but wear the colored spectacles of creed and tradition, which hinder instead of aid their vision.

The best -- in fact the only -- way to learn the meaning of an idiomatic expression in a foreign language, is to become familiar with as many instances of its use as possible. Thus, if a student of English came upon the expression, "Monday week," he might be unable to learn its meaning from the dictionary; but sooner or later, in perusing English literature, he would find an instance in which the period meant would be defined in some way; perhaps by a mention of the number of days intervening, which would give him the needed clue. Accordingly, an Exhaustive Concordance, which enables the student to locate all the different passages in the Bible in which any given Greek or Hebrew word occurs, is of the greatest assistance in determining from the contexts in which it is used, the idiomatic meaning of the word.

Perhaps one of the most important subjects in the Bible concerning which the teaching has been obscured by unfamiliar idioms and creedal spectacles, is that of our Lord's return -- His Second Advent. It is said in various Scriptures that He will come "in the clouds" and "upon a cloud;" that He will "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God;" that He will "come as a thief in the night," and yet "every eye shall see Him;" and that He "shall so come in like manner" as His disciples saw Him going.

Every student of the Word will agree that the reconciliation of these various statements is a problem.

So great a problem is it, that there have been violent differences of opinion on the subject, among Christians of undoubted sincerity and ability, for nineteen hundred years; and expositors are no nearer agreement today than at the beginning.

The *key* to the understanding and reconciliation of these seemingly conflicting statements is the Divine Plan of the Ages-"the eternal purpose [age-plan] which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:11.) If the student is familiar with the various details and ramifications of this fundamental "Plan" of God's dealings with men, he is able to distinguish in the Divine Word the literal from the figurative, to translate the symbolic into plain statements, and to reconcile all the apparently conflicting statements regarding the Second Advent into a harmonious sequence of events.

Perhaps the most simple, literal, and authoritative statement in the Scriptures concerning our Lord's return, is that of the angels to the group of wondering disciples, standing awe-struck, gazing into heaven, where they had just seen their risen Lord disappear. The angels said: "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." - Acts 1:11.

Even in the case of this simple statement, much misunderstanding has arisen, owing to the readers' colored spectacles and their failure to give due consideration to idiomatic usage. The crucial point is, of course, the "manner" defined by the angels' words. At least three different views of its meaning are held by various expositors.

The first is that Christ's return "in like manner" means that when He comes He will drop quietly and visibly from the sky, seen of those who happen to be at the spot upon which He descends -- presumably the Mount of Olives outside Jerusalem (Zech. 14:4) hence the colonies of Christians at present awaiting the great event in Jerusalem. However, this view would appear to be contradictory to the Apostle's declaration that He would "descend from heaven with a shout," etc., since He did not shout and there was no sound of a trumpet when He ascended. It is also contrary to the Lord's own statement that He would come in the clouds, and that every eye should see Him. It would seem that this view is untenable, if we believe that the Scriptures are inspired, and harmonious.

The second view of the meaning of the angels' message is that His coming will be "in like manner" in that it will be known only to a comparatively few of earth's inhabitants -- to the believers who are looking for Him and that His coming will be without splendor, demonstration, or noise. This view limits the angels' comparison between His departure and His return to a narrow scope-to the opening features of His return-His *parousia*, or presence, prior to the *apokalupsis*, or unveiling; and to a mental or spiritual perception of His presence, which in reality is quite different from the physical *appearance* of His Ascension, vouchsafed to the pre-pentecostal disciples. On the contrary, the angels' message was unlimited in scope: "This same Jesus shall so *come in like manner* as ye have seen Him go." In the particular "manner" signified by the angels, the "coming" was to be entirely the same as the "taking." As will be seen, this view does not conform to the idiomatic meaning of the Greek word *tropos*, here translated "manner."

The Greek-English dictionary defines *tropos* as "a turn, that is, a revolution." This does not help much; the substitution of this definition for the translation in the text, making it read "shall so come in like turn," does not make sense, and indicates that the word must have an idiomatic meaning quite different from its literal or root definition.

Consulting the Concordance, we find that besides being translated "manner," *tropos* is also rendered "as," "conversation," "means," and "way." Only when we look up and analyze the several contexts in which the word appears, does a pattern of its idiomatic meaning gradually emerge.

In Matthew 23:37 the Lord uses *tropos*, translated "as," in His lament over Jerusalem: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, *as* a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Does the Lord here compare His desire to comfort the children of Jerusalem, to the *place* of gathering of the chickens, or to the wings and feathers of the hen? No; the comparison is to the maternal, protective instinct of the hen; to the comfort and protection afforded the little chicks by her wings and feathers. It has reference to the *disposition* and *habitual behavior* of the hen, not to the details and circumstances of her actions. It is a comparison of internals, not of externals.

Hebrews 13:5 illustrates not only the idiomatic Greek usage of this word, but also the changing meaning of the English words as at the time of the translation of the Authorized Version, and today. One of the meanings of "conversation" is given by Webster as: "Manner of living; conduct; behavior" but this definition is marked "*Archaic.*" "Let your conversation be without covetousness," in the time of King James I of England, when the Authorized Version was translated, meant: "Let your *manner of living*-your habitual behavior-be without covetousness." In the American Revised Version, 1881, this verse reads: "Be ye free from the love of money" -- a very free and condensed rendering; but this Version gives a marginal reading which is nearly literal Greek, and at the same time modern idiomatic English: "Let your turn [of mind] be free from the love of money." If one's "turn" or bent is in a particular direction, his habitual behavior is quite likely to conform to this disposition.

In Acts 13:18 this word (*tropos*) is combined with another Greek word meaning endured. It reads: "And about the time of forty years *suffered* he their manners in the wilderness." This rendering also exhibits the English idiom of three hundred years ago. "Suffer" then meant to permit, to allow; and of the eight different meanings of "manners" listed in Webster's Dictionary, the one that fits is: "A characteristic or customary way of acting natural or normal behavior; habit, usage, custom." This is an excellent definition of the idiomatic Greek *tropos*; and in this passage the Apostle is saying that God permitted for forty years the habitual (mis-) behavior of Israel in their wilderness journey to Canaan, (thus showing His great patience and forbearance toward them.

One more illustration of the idiomatic meaning of this Greek word: *trope* is from the same root as *tropos*, of practically the same meaning, that is, a turning. In James 1:17 the believer is assured of the eternal consistency and faithfulness of God: "Every good and perfect gift . . . cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of *turning.*" The American Revised Version renders the last phrase: "Neither shadow that is cast by turning" -- both thus adhering to the literal meaning of the word. The word here translated "shadow" is a combined word, its meaning accurately represented by the American Revised Version rendering, "shadow cast." This is not a wholly satisfactory translation, because it does not follow the New Testament Greek idiomatic usage. Literally speaking, *a turning in* itself does not cast a shadow. And what light exterior to God could shine upon Him and cause Him to cast a shadow, since He is "the Father [origin] of lights"? It is apparent that both the turning and the shadow are figurative.

"Shadow" is used in Greek much as in English, to represent gloom, or the danger or fear -of death, or the death state. The conception envisaged by the Apostle is of the Almighty turning away from His attributes of Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Power. What a shadow would be cast over the whole universe if its Creator were ever seen to turn or vary in the slightest degree from

His course characterized by these principles! What consternation would ensue were the Father of lights to exhibit any indications of folly, injustice, hatefulness, or weakness! It would mean that He had abandoned His great Plan of the Ages, and His intention to restore all the willing and obedient of the race to life and happiness. The shadow of Death would fall on all His thinking creation.

But this, thank God, is unthinkable. The Apostle rightly says: In Him *"there can be no variation; neither shadow that is cast by turning."* He Himself declares: "I, Jehovah, change not; *therefore ye; O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.*" - Malachi 3:6, A.R.V.

This is substantially the comforting assurance given the anxious disciples by the angels at the Ascension of Jesus Christ. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner." The word "manner cannot mean the outward appearance or circumstances of His return; *as we have seen, tropos*, the word translated "manner," always refers to internals, never to externals. Externally there will be a vast difference between the lowly Nazarene, Jesus, and the One who is "coming in His glory, with all His holy angels," to be "seated upon the throne of His glory." But the angels' message deals not with differences, but with the "sameness." The risen Christ had used every means to convince the disciples that, despite His change of nature, He was the same kind Master and friend and benefactor whom they had known and loved *so well*. Now they-and we-are assured that in every way the coming One will be "this same Jesus." In every way His "manners" -- His disposition -- will be the same. He will come to "bless and not curse;" as manifested in His departure in the act of blessing (Luke 24:50, 51); He will have the same habits of "going about doing good"; the same mission of bestowing "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." He will indeed return *"in power and great glory,"* as He said, but with the same character. of kindness and helpfulness that, you, disciples, have known and loved in Him as a man. The announcement of His Second Advent will be as truly "glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people," as it was at His first Advent as the Babe of Bethlehem. *"This same Jesus will come with like turn of mind as ye have seen Him go."* For He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever."

AVATAR

We cannot doubt that He will come
For whom the Ages have made room.
We may not gaze upon the sky
And fear or question or deny.

And though we've watched through many years
A flood of human blood and tears;
And though ten thousand hopes shall die,
And songs be hushed, and long fears lie
Darkly upon the desperate Earth;
At long last *He* shall have re-birth.

We who have seen the sons of men
Rise up and drain the cup again --
We do not doubt, 'spite sight and sense,
The surety of His imminence! - *Anon.*

- *H. E. Hollister.*

The Law of Attraction

"With lovingkindness have I drawn thee." - Jer. 31:3.

THE LAW of attraction is a universal law in all God's wide domain. The planets are all subject to it, and swing in their orbits in response thereto. The sun and moon affect our earth through the operation of this law, and ocean tides speak of its force and marvels. The far-off ocean calls to the rivulets away in distant hills, and in answer to that call the lesser streams are attracted to the greater ocean-bound rivers, and all flow onward until the mighty streams come to rest in the depths by which they were so effectively drawn. But the circle of attraction continues on and on, The rays of the sun sweep over the wide expanse of the ocean depths lifting its waters to the clouds again. The forest-covered hills and mountains, the fields of waving grain and meadow, attract it back to earth in dewdrop and rain. Thus the land is refreshed to supply the needs of man, and the streams are kept flowing for the thirsty hart, and for cattle on a thousand hills.

In all this we may see illustrated a law of attraction by which our spiritual life is nurtured and developed. Our love for God, we are told, is the response to His love for us. "We love God, *because* He first loved us." It is of this attractive influence we sing, "He drew me with the cords of love, and thus He bound me to Him. He has made us so that our only complete satisfaction *is* found in drinking deeply from the fountain of His grace. His Word teaches us this lesson, and in the world about us there are many illustrations of its application. As the ocean draws the many scattered streams from the distant hills onward to itself, so does the wideness of God's love and mercy draw us to Himself, the embodiment of all love-excelling. As the hart pants for the waters of the cooling stream, and in seeking it follows a law inherent in its nature, so our soul's seeking after God is the perfect conformity of our spirit answering to the drawings of His Spirit. The vine which may begin its life in the dark recesses of a pit will never cease to struggle toward the sunlight, nor rest content until it is waving in the light toward which an unseen power was drawing it. It could not remain unaffected *by* the pull of the light for which it had its inherent affinity. So we too are drawn by a law of spiritual attraction toward an environment which God has made our true realm of life in fulness. He works by this law leading us to will and to do His good pleasure. In its workings this law drawing us Godward grows stronger as our spiritual life progresses toward its intended goal. The prayer for a closer walk with God becomes ever more fervent as the heart response to His love expands. The true testimony of His power working effectively in our hearts is therefore found in this never ending longing for the fullest comprehension of His grace. What a happy experience it is to know that there is a law working in us and for us whereby we become conscious of being led from grace to grace, from one degree of spiritual understanding to another yet greater vision of God's complete will. What is this but confessing that "the half has never yet been told"? Is it not giving reality to our oft-repeated words, "Heaven is nearer and Christ is dearer, than yesterday to me"? Only as this law of attraction and answering-response prevails in our lives will we ever reach the possible attainments represented in God's loving will for us. He is ever calling us toward greater things, and so our language should always be, "Where He leads me I will follow, I'll go with Him all the way."

Let the river in its course toward the ocean teach us the beauty of this which is God's way. The river flows continually toward the ocean, its-appointed rest. In its flow it grows wider and deeper because it receives from all contributing streams along its way. Each little stream adds a quota to its depth and strength. It begins in the far away hills, a tiny stream. As it flows onward gathering volume as it progresses, there will be many winding curves, many noisy rapids, and some projecting rocks around which it will swirl in foaming haste and roar. But as the stream nears the

ocean, its flow will gradually become a more quiet and even progress. The turbulent haste is gone and the undercurrents are stronger. At last it reaches the inflowing tides and merges imperceptibly and without commotion into the congenial environment of the larger waters which all along its way had been mysteriously affecting it.

Applying the illustration to our spiritual life, how is it with us now, as the numerous signs of the times, and as well the facts of age tell us that life's course will soon be completed? Surely the law of spiritual affinities has been drawing us onward through the years in ways that have left the marks of progress. By that law maturity in spiritual vision should have come, giving evidence that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him the deeper facts of eternal life. The powerful attraction of eternal realities must have grown increasingly evident in an abundance of the heart of which the mouth habitually speaks. We will have learned the necessity of letting all contributing streams of spiritual knowledge add to the volume of our understanding of the whole will of God. Comprehending with all saints thus, will have widened the horizon of all truth, and deepened the currents of Christ's intended fellowship among His people in a true unity of the Spirit. It is now a far call for most of us since the day we took our first steps in the narrow way; the years have come and gone, filled with opportunities to grow in grace and knowledge. The great ocean of eternity is now just a little further on. In what measure have we attained the stability of character and quietness of spirit indicating readiness for a merging of the present life into the greater life soon to be given to those made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light?

Life's sun is sinking westward now, and as it nears the point of its setting beyond the horizon, what will it bring of glory into these closing years? We should want it to be like one of those glorious sunsets when another law of God paints the western sky in a glory no human artist can reproduce. What beauty tints the lingering clouds, spreading a richness of splendor over the sphere where earth and heaven seem to blend in a glory that excelleth. We behold it all, and say, how beautiful is the ending of a perfect day! The heat of the day is over, and the winds have gone to rest. Day is slipping quietly out through the portals of the western sky, and the night of sleep comes to give rest to the weary toilers. How gracious all God's arrangements are! "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." - Psalm 19:2.

So should it be with us as our course is nearing its great consummation hour. There should be a quieting and a deepening of our experience as we draw near "the shining shore" before us. There is our Home, and an entering into a completion and perfection for which we have yearned. There is our rest, where no more painful limitations of mind or body will leave us seeking on and on for something instinctively recognized as yet unattained. There hearts which have longed to see the face of God, and the face of Him whose image we are to bear, will never need to ask again, "Face to face, what shall it be?" Then the stream of life over which the love of God drew us, will have merged into the life that shall endless be, a life full of all that an unfettered immortal life can mean. In numberless ways we have had verifications of our Lord's good word of promise, as He has said to us, as to others, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." We praise Him for those cords of love which naught of evil forces, or of our own failures, has severed. In love He redeemed us and drew us to Himself, and that love attracts us still as nothing else can do.

- J. J. Blackburn.

A Question in Reference to the High Calling

Question:

Did the door of opportunity to be, of the 144,000 close in 1914; if not, has it closed since that date, or is it still open?

Answer:

It is our conviction that the door in question is still open and that it will not close until the last member has passed beyond the veil. Just when that date will be we do not know.

If the door closed in 1914 or at any other time in the past, one of two other things must also be true, namely:

1. At the time the door closed, the last member had successfully completed his earthly career and gone beyond the veil, or
2. A certain number, still in the flesh and having yet to complete their earthly trial, had nevertheless developed such maturity of Christian character that failure under any further testing would, for them, be impossible.

Let us consider, very briefly, these two implications. In the first place, the proposition that we have the means for determining the date for the glorification of the Church, was set forth by Brother Russell in *Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. II*, pages B76, B77. We quote:

"In this chapter we present the Bible evidence proving that the full end of the Times of the Gentiles, i.e., the full end of their lease of dominion, will be reached in A. D. 1914. . . . And be it observed, that if this is shown to be a fact firmly established by the Scriptures, it will prove: . . . that some time before the end of A. D. 1914 the last member of the divinely recognized Church of Christ, the 'royal priesthood,' the 'body of Christ,' will be glorified with the Head."

In considering this proposition it is of the highest importance that we sharply distinguish two propositions which have been very close together in our past thinking, but which, in our opinion, should be considered separately. We refer to:

1. Signs of the Master's presence and of the consummation of the Age.
2. Determination of the date of the glorification of the Church.

In expressing our opinion that these two propositions should be considered separately, let us not be misunderstood. It is not our thought that they are entirely unrelated to each other. On the contrary, we realize that the glorification of the Church could not take place without the return of the Master and the end of the Age. But the point we wish to make is that our inability to determine the date for the glorification of the Church does not necessarily prevent us from recognizing the Signs of the Master's presence, nor does it prove that there are no signs awaiting our recognition. Whether or not there are such signs is another matter. But if it be conceded that our Lord is now a spirit-being, and therefore able to be invisibly present, should He so desire facts which we believe all our readers are satisfied are well established by the Scriptures, then it follows that the Master *might* be present, the end of the Age *might* have been reached, and these facts *might* be satisfactorily evidenced to us, even though the date for the glorification of the Church still remained among the "secret things" belonging unto the Lord. (Deut. 29:29.) To

appreciate this point we have but to remember that the conviction that the Lord is present and that the consummation of the Age has been reached, rests upon several different, independent "signs," whereas the inference that 1914 would see the glorification of the Church was deduced solely from the parallels drawn between the Jewish and Gospel Ages. That these two ages *do* correspond in many respects there can be no question; but that the parallels drawn between them, especially their time features, were strained and forced, seems equally clear, and in respect to 'their harvests, as may be seen by reference to Reprints Vol. 7, page R5950, before he left us Brother Russell recognized this mistake. Under the caption "Our mistake respecting the harvest" he wrote: "Our thought was purely an inference, and now [Sept. 1916] we see that it was an unjustified one."

It is our thought that had our dear, Pastor continued with us, he would have given the subject the thorough re-examination it deserves, and that, in the light of the events which have since transpired, his keen spiritual mind would have seen the necessity of discarding still more of the "parallels" than those features to which, in the article cited, he referred. However, his brief remarks are quite sufficient for our purpose. They not only admit mistake, but what is of still greater value, they explain the nature of the mistake. It was not merely that we had been mistaken in the year in which the Church was to be glorified. Had *that* been the extent of our mistake, he would, presumably, have been able, by a more accurate calculation, to tell us how many years we were in error, and just what the correct date would be. No! our mistake was of a different character than merely an error in arithmetic. It lay in supposing that the date of the Church's glorification could be ascertained at all, by the "parallels" method. His actual words are: "We should not have looked for parallelisms between the starting of the Gospel Church and its experiences, and the starting, in this harvest time, of the heavenly Church and its experiences. These are no part to the parallel."

Again, he said: "We imagined that the harvest work of gathering the Church would be accomplished before the end of the Gentile Times; but nothing in the Bible so said. Our thought was purely an inference, and now we see that it was an unjustified one."

Yet again, he wrote: "The harvesting of the Jewish Age, gathering 'Israelites indeed' into the Gospel Church, did not close with A. D. 70, but progressed in various parts of the world thereafter. Quite a good many Jews, doubtless, profiting by their terrible experience, were all the better prepared to be gathered into the Gospel garner after the destruction of their national polity. Similarly, we may expect that quite a good many [Christians] will yet be gathered to the heavenly garner, and we know of no time limit here."

We know of no time limit here, either. With Brother Russell we are quite satisfied that it was a mistake to try to arrive at such a "time limit" from the parallels, and no other method has occurred to us, or been brought to our attention. That the day will one day arrive when the last member of the Church will have been faithful *unto death* we are, of course, assured. And we have confidence, too, in His promise, that to those who are thus faithful, He will give a crown of life. In this confidence, and in the assurance that He is making all things work together for good to us who love Him, and that He will under no circumstances permit us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, we rest. - Rev. 2:10; Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 10:13.

Foregoing we have endeavored to show:

1. That insofar as the glorification of the Church is concerned, not only is the date, 1914, erroneous, but that the true date is not to be ascertained from the "parallels" of the Jewish and Gospel Ages.

2. That up to the present time no other method of determining the date of this event has occurred to us, or to any Christians of our acquaintance.

3. That the absence of a revelation on this matter does not give us any occasion for unrest, but leaves us content, rejoicing in the continued privilege of ministering the glorious Gospel (a message angels fain would sing) to all who have ears to hear, and, while seeking to assist others, to endeavor, by His grace, to make our own calling and election sure.

4. That while the "glorification of the Church" is closely associated with the "second presence of the Lord" the determination of the date when such glorification is to take place is quite another matter and

5. That this was a fact clearly seen and stated by Brother Russell prior to his departure.

One further word in closing this discussion: What of the second implication, namely, that the door of opportunity could have closed before the last member of the Church had completed his trial, on the supposition that some had developed such maturity of Christian character that, after a certain date, failure under any further testing, would, for them, be impossible.

To this we reply: We do not deny that, in His inscrutable wisdom, the Almighty may be able, years before the end of the race-course is reached, to foresee the final outcome in the case of one or other of the prospective members of the Church. We do not know that He can (We speak as men-Rom. 3:5), nor, in speaking of One who calleth things which be not as though they were, would we be so foolish as to say that He cannot. With God all things are possible (save the denial of Himself and His attributes) . However, nowhere in the Scriptures, so far as we can 'recall, is the thought advanced that any, in this life, would attain a state in which failure would thereafter be impossible. On the contrary they are most explicit in their warnings. "Be thou faithful unto death," is the Master's exhortation, "and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.) Hold that fast which thou bast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 3:11.) The implication is clear that if we do not hold fast, another will take our crown. If we are faithful for the greater part of the journey, and then become unfaithful, a crown of life will not be given us. But if the crown now held in reservation for us is not to become ours because of unfaithfulness, it must be awarded to another. But before such other could receive it, he, in turn, must be faithful-unto death. In order to thus be proven, he must enter the door of opportunity to run for the great prize. Therefore that door must be ajar. Thus must it remain, so long as a single member remains in the flesh.

When at last the door is shut, a company- who, we have reason to believe, correspond to the "foolish virgins" of our Lord's parable (Matt. 25:1, 2), will be fully informed on the subject. They will announce the fact to all who then have ears to hear: "Let us give glory unto Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."- Rev. 19:7.

"We see the marriage splendor,
Within the open door;
We know that those who enter
Are blest for evermore;
We see our King, more lovely
Than all the sons of men;
We haste because that door, once shut,
Will never ope again."

- P. L. Read.

Obedience Better Than Sacrifice

THE SCRIPTURES clearly indicate a great trial and testing for the Church in the next few years. It will determine with *very* many what Saul's testing determined for him, whether or not God's favor will continue, with its Kingdom privileges and opportunities. To the faithful the Lord says, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." The others will be answered as was Saul, "Obedience is better than sacrifice;" thou art rejected. Through the Revelator the Lord tells us how the Philadelphian stage of the Church would be saved from the great "hour of trial that is come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Rev. 3:10.) There are trials coming upon the Laodicean Church, living at the time of the presence of the Son of Man, when He stands at the door and knocks. (Rev. 3:20.) In that trial, we are told, that a thousand shall fall at the side and ten thousand at the right hand of the one Body, the true Church, of which Jesus is the Head. The Apostle Peter, in figurative language, describes the heavens as being on fire (2 Pet. 3:12), symbolically picturing the ecclesiastical influence of our day; and St. Paul tells of the "fire that shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (1 Cor. 3:13.) We are assured that only the gold, silver and precious stones of the divine character and doctrine will abide the fiery ordeal. Surely none of the Lord's people can afford to ignore such testings as these; particularly none of those who with us believe that we are now in that trial period; and that the next seven years will be pre-eminently a testing time.

THE TEST OF PERFECT LOVE

If the test of character approved of God, is loveperfect love for God, for the brethren, yea, also for our enemies -- then let that thought be continually before all of our minds to the intent that we be not overtaken, that we be not deceived by the great Adversary, who still would fain put darkness for light and light for darkness, on this as upon every other subject. Our anticipation is that the great conflict which will ultimately reach the world, and eventuate in the anarchy which will overthrow all law and order, will begin with the Church; begin with the consecrated, the sanctified, the enlightened. Does not the Lord forewarn us, that in all things judgment must begin at the house of God. (1 Pet. 4:17.) Necessarily it must begin with those who are highest up in that house as respects light, knowledge and privileges.

Are we prepared for these tests, of which we read that they would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect? We still believe that these tests will be along the lines of perfect love. Love and selfishness are the two great powers that are moving the world and each individual therein. We have already seen that the selfishness, which will overwhelm the world shortly, will mean lovelessness to the extent that the Scriptures declare, "Every man's hand shall be against his neighbor, and no peace to him that goeth out nor to him that cometh in." (Zech. 8:10; 11:6.) Is that same condition of things to be expected in the Church every man's hand against his neighbor, the tongue of every brother against every other brother in the Lord? Are anger, malice, hatred, envy and strife to be permitted to overwhelm the Church of Christ? Could such things have any place or power of influence against those who have knowledge of the truth? We are of the opinion that this is just what we are to expect.

We are in the habit of supposing that our Lord's words, "Brother shall deliver up brother to death," applied merely to our Lord's time and during the dark ages. Do we forget that similar conditions may be expected in the end of this Age? The delivering up may not be physical, however; the crucifying, the scourging and the roasting may not be literal; but we believe that very much the same things may be expected within such limits as our civilization will compel.

Apparently it is not enough of a test to us to be "hated of all men for My name's sake." We must be tested by the hatred, the malice, the evil speaking and evil surmising of those who dipped with us in the dish, of those who partook with us of the present things of divine bounty at the table of the Lord, the spiritual food. Ah! if this be so then we may indeed expect for the closing days of the Church, the Body of Christ, experiences not dissimilar to those which came to the Master in Gethsemane, one of the most trying of which must have been the Judas kiss.

BRETHREN, WHAT SHALL WE DO?

When some of those who heard the Apostles on Pentecost day came to an understanding of what was the real situation of affairs, and that they and their rulers had crucified the Prince of Life—some of them actually and some of them by failing to protest—those who were right-minded were cut to the heart and cried out, "What must we do?" The Apostle assured them of forgiveness because they, did it ignorantly. And so with us. If any of us find that under any snare, or delusion of the Adversary, we have been entrapped into wrong-doing toward a brother, we should immediately feel cut to the heart, and should go to the Lord for divine forgiveness and to those whom we have wronged, for their part of it, that thus we might turn defeat in the hands of the Adversary to victory.

Undoubtedly just such a storm is coming; and as the Prophet expresses it, the question is not, Who shall fall, but "Who shall be able to stand?" (Mal. 3:2.) A thousand shall fall to one who will stand. The very Elect will not be deceived, but the question is, Are we of the very Elect? and our answer must be that the Lord will decide this matter according to the manner in which we decide when under the test. It is impossible for us to surmise what may be the various apparent grounds for unbrotherliness, for the loss of a brother's love. If we give heed to the Adversary, he will make us think it proper to break away from the regular rule of procedure, and, if we are willing, make us to feel that we are fully justified in violating all the various directions which the Lord our God has given us. It will require of all of us loving faithfulness to the Lord and to the brethren to enable us 'to withstand the trials of this day; and we cannot at this point refrain from reminding the dear followers of the Lord afresh of what we have already amplified in DAWN-STUDIES, Vol. VI, Chap 9, the course which the new creature should take in every matter in which he feels that a brother has offended him, outlined by our Lord in Matt. 18:15-17.

Let us be sure that the Adversary will use every means to turn us aside from this plainly stated rule of love; that he will endeavor to make us think that it cannot be applicable to the difficulty which troubles us. Let our answer to all such suggestions of Satan be "Get thee behind me." We write thus pointedly, because in various parts we have intimations from the brethren of misunderstandings and in some instances the manifestation of a loveless spirit, a hypercritical spirit, an unbrotherly spirit, a spirit in direct opposition to the Golden Rule and to the Lord's instructions, instructions, to go to him alone, to seek to win thy brother, and not to cast him off nor excommunicate him. On the contrary, be ready to die for him. "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren." - 1 John 3:16.

Let us remember, also, that this loveless condition of the heart, this hypercritical spirit, does not come in suddenly; it develops gradually. Hence every day each of the Lord's people should have a searching of his heart to see whether or not he can find there toward anybody, saint or sinner, any of the spirit of malice which the Lord figuratively represented as leaven, contaminating in its influence. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (1 Cor. 5:6.) A little envy, a little malice, a little anger, a little hatred, and a little strife, may leaven our hearts completely, and in a comparatively short time turn the sweets of our new nature, the spirit of love, into acid bitterness.

Moreover, the leaven is not likely to be confined to one, but spreads to others; and thus many may be defiled. The poet has said:

"We are not worst at once; The course of evil begins so slowly, and from such slight sources,

An infant's hand might stem its breach with clay; But let the stream get deeper, and philosophy,
Ah! and religion, too, shall strive in vain To turn the headlong current."

- R4208, *July* 15, 1908.

A Much Loved Brother Passes to His Reward

(Brother A. I. Ritchie, beloved of the brethren over many years, was called to his reward on January 19, ending many years of faithful service in the Master's vineyard. He was well known among the friends because of years of public service, first as a field-man in the newspaper work with Brother Russell, and later as a pilgrim brother. While in the Brooklyn office he was vice president of the Society, and handled Brother Russell's mail and was thus in constant touch with many of the brethren. From one who in recent years beheld his life of full devotion to the Lord a letter has been received in which she says: "Brother Ritchie did much good in visiting the sick and isolated. He had real love for the brethren-not for just those who saw eye to eye with him on all doctrinal points of Scripture." "This is the test by which our Lord said we were to know His disciples: "If ye have love one for another."

While Brother Ritchie will be greatly missed, especially by the friends with whom he was closely associated, yet we rejoice on his behalf, for "Blessed are, the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." We sorrow not for our Brother, but our hearts go out on behalf of his beloved and faithful companion for whom we pray the comforting and sustaining grace of the Lord. As one by one the number beyond the veil increases and the members this side correspondingly decrease, we are more deeply impressed with the great privilege of being faithful to that calling -- faithful in dying with Him to all that is human, and faithful in living with Him "in newness of life," being "conformed to His death" and "knowing the power of His resurrection." We know not who will next be called to enter into the joys of our Lord, but we trust that all the Lord's consecrated children are in the waiting attitude, longing for that glorious change.

"A little while;" now He has come;
The hour draws on apace --
The blessed hour, the glorious morn,
When we shall see His face.
How light our trials then will seem!
How short our pilgrim way!
The life of earth a fitful dream,
Dispelled by dawning day!

"Then, O Lord Jesus, quickly show
Thy glory and Thy fight,
And take God's longing children Home,
And end earth's weary night."

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brother Thomson:

Greetings in our dear Master's name to you and all the brethren with you. I have long wanted to write to thank you for so kindly sending me the "Herald" free ever since my husband passed away, which is nearly twenty years ago. I feel *very* indebted to you. You will, I hope, be repaid when I tell you that many of the articles have been a help and comfort and encouragement in my lonely travel in the narrow way. I come so short in that character-likeness which my Father is looking for; but I know He will be my guide, and give me grace to trust Him. The article in the July issue, "Sheltered in the Love of Christ," also the one in August, "Debtors to His Marvelous Grace," I was much blessed and encouraged by.

In this day we find Satan very busy with so many various thoughts amongst the brethren who once believed as Brother Russell taught. Surely he was used of God to bring the message due, but now many think otherwise. For myself, I can truly say, I understand my Bible better since I read the volumes that Brother Russell wrote. One question I would like to ask: Is the Lord present? or is His coming still future?

I would like to testify in my eight-one years today that I find my Father's grace and strength all-sufficient daily. Though I have fightings within and without, He knows and cares. May the dear Lord's blessing be with you all. With much Christian love in which the brethren here join,

Your sister by His grace, C. H. - Eng.

Reply

Dear Sister:

As you hoped, we are indeed well repaid by the report of the blessings you have received through the "Herald," and appreciate your making mention of articles that have been especially helpful to you. That of course assists us in knowing what will be best to supply in the future, and also in knowing the things on which our heavenly Father is placing His special blessing.

The question you raise about the "Presence" is one on which there is a great variety of opinion; and one, since it is a matter of interpretation, on which we can have only opinions, even though the signs are so clear to some of us that it seems almost as if we were walking by sight today.

You are of course familiar with Brother Russell's reasoning on the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and of how the times in which we are living seem to be a clear fulfilment of the Lord's assurance that one of the major signs of His parousia would be a "time of trouble such as *never was* since there was a nation." Even people of the world are ready to confess that this is the exact condition on the earth today. We can, therefore, think of no answer to your question except that the Lord is present. But to the mind of the writer there is another evidence just as convincing: The Lord said that when He came He would tell us to sit down at His table and He would serve us. We have had that feast, and it has been such a wonderful one that it is unthinkable that it was the result of the superiority of one man *to so tremendous an extent* over every other Bible student of the entire Age. I can only think of that feast as having come from the hand of the Lord, with Brother Russell used as the chief servant at the table. Brother Russell felt, too, that that was the way he was used. I recall his telling me that he could never think of the "*Scripture Studies*" as his writing -- evidently it had been apparent to him that he could not have discovered all the truths in

those volumes himself, and he could think of them only as from the Lord -- and of course *He* is the source of all truth.

Rejoicing with you in your strength, physical and spiritual, and praying His all-sufficient grace to be with you to the end, I remain

Your brother in the bonds we all love to wear,
P. E. Thomson.

Dear Brother Blackburn:

I would like to assure you that the reason for delay in replying to yours of September 11th, is not that I am, or have been unmindful of this service on your behalf: and I can say truly that if I were to follow only the dictates of my heart, this letter would be much longer than it will be, for I have no greater joy than speeding the message of Love and of Hope, especially to those of a kindred mind.

But the condition of my hands forbids writing except to a very limited extent. And just noww they are "pretty bad." Yet I would like to say just a little about that which you and I prize as the most precious possession that a merciful and loving Father has so graciously given to us-"peace and hope through Christ, our Lord and Savior." And, dear brother, I have learned through experiences that while "peace" does not necessarily imply a mind that is free from sorrows, troubles, or perplexities (2 Cor. 4:8-10), there is a strength given according to the need, and thereby one may find that, as Paul says, "My God shall supply all your needs." In this too we learn that the dear Lord's words to Paul are equally effective toward us, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." So these words of the Master are ever potent.

Oh! that we could and would take Him at His word, and find that there truly remaineth a Rest for the people of God; a Rest that brings with it a fulness of joy and peace such as may be ours, not only when the way is clear, but also when the soul is passing through its blackest night! If only we could and would have the words of John, chapters 13 to 17 embossed upon our minds and accept them as they were spoken! "My peace give I unto you." What a peace this is! A peace that surely must enable one to face every trial -- every perplexity -- every fear or doubt, with a serenity and composure that reveals in the one who possesses it, that which Paul must have felt when he said, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." . . .

And what shall I say of our Hope? Nothing new, I suppose. But David's words come to mind, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope." I recall a little verse which seems to fit in nicely here,

"Be strong to hope, O heart,
Though day is bright;
The stars can only shine,
In the dark night.
Be strong, O heart of mine;
And look towards the Light."

So "it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Our hope, yours and mine, is not, and should not be, a hope that is strong when all is well, and weak when the hard testings come. No, thank God, our hope is "sure and steadfast," an "anchor of the soul, which entereth into that within the veil." As the writer of Hebrews says, in this, "We have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." And what a hope! The Apostle says that "We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." Just as truly he has said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men, most miserable."

Therefore, dear Brother Blackburn, I am happy to affirm that today, nearing the bend in the road, I feel that through the very things which, on some, have a very negative effect, my heart and mind are more concerned re that on which my hopes are fixed. I know I have my moments of anxiety, of grief, of uncertainty as to the right step: but, through it all, an ever merciful and loving Father cheers me, and comforts me, leads me, and I know that all is well. I can sing the words of the old hymn

"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from Home,
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see
The distant scene -- One step enough for me."

Another year will soon be here; and it is good to know that as we leave a year behind, Christ goes forward with us into the New Year. We neednot fear, therefore, to go forward, if we go with Him. He will guide us, and all will be well if we put our hand in His.

And now, thank you, dear one, for your kindly letters, with their evidences of love and desire -- truly a cup of cold water in a barren land. I would like to go on and on, but my fingers say "No" and so I must close. . . Kindly give my love to the brethren at headquarters, and to all interested in the Kingdom, and accept the same for yourself and your dear wife. I hope that your health is more satisfactory, and that you are not over-doing. I commend you, and yours, and the dear brethren who have so faithfully served its, and are still doing so, "to Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God, our Savior 'be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever."

With prayers and kindly thoughts on behalf of you all, I am, by God's grace and infinite love,

Your brother in the Lord,
W. W. -- B. C.

Dear Brethren:

Loving Christian greetings. I am writing again to say how much we appreciate the "Herald," which you have sent to us free for so long; and if you are able to continue we shall be so grateful, as we look forward to its coming. It is our only means of meeting with the brethren, and the fellowship we enjoy as we read it together is very sweet.

I think I told you when I wrote last year that my dear husband was suffering with lung trouble. Now I am glad to tell you that he has been spared to me so far, and how I thank my heavenly Father! Although he is almost a chronic invalid and has to keep his bed, yet he is always rejoicing in spirit and is always so cheerful and contented. He has been away in a sanitorium for three months, and now he is so glad to be at home again, and I am thankful for the strength which is given me day by day to care for him. We are able to talk over the precious truths and the sweet memories of past years, when we met together with those of like precious faith. Also we are able to pray for you all and your labors of love in the Master's service. We ask your prayers too, that we may let our light shine even now and be faithful to the end.

With our united love in the Lord,
Yours by His grace,
D. and J. B. -- Eng.