

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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The Broken Body and Shed Blood

"My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." - John 6:55.

BY THE Lord's instructions many memorials were instituted by the Jews: the "manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant" kept in the ark; the "two stones upon the shoulder pieces of the ephod to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel"; fringes on the garments of the children of Israel that they might "remember all the commandments and do them"; the censers of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram "made beaten plates for a covering of the altar ... to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, to the end that no stranger, that is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to burn incense before Jehovah," etc., all of which interest us for their historical value and the spiritual lessons that may be drawn from them; but the one from which we have received our greatest inspiration, and the one that was used by our blessed Master himself as a basis for his parting message, is that of the Passover Supper. With the lamb of this celebration Jesus identifies himself. The cup which the Jews called the cup of blessing" he takes as a symbol of his shed blood, but for that purpose blessed anew; and the unleavened bread a symbol of his broken body.

Going back to the type we see the blood-sprinkled lintels and doorposts, for God had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." The night had come for Israel's departure from Egypt. The judgment of God was upon the land and was to be executed. The angel of death was to pass through and "smite all the first born; but provision had been made for the safety of God's chosen - "The blood shall be to you a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you." What cause for peace, consolation, assurance in these words! While they were spoken to the children of Israel still in Egypt, they come to the child of God still in the "land of the enemy with added force.

There are two aspects in which we may view the 'paschal lamb; first, as the ground of peace; and second, as the centre of unity. The blood on the lintels secured peace., Nothing more was required.

It was not a question of good works or of merit. It was a question of the Israelite having faith to believe what God had said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you," and to act upon that

faith. So with the believer today. It is not because of any inherent goodness or merit that he finds peace with God, but because of simple faith in the power of Jesus' blood to cleanse from sin, for "though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," when once the blood is applied.

The second aspect of the Passover, that of Christ as the centre of our unity, was pictured in the assembly of Israel gathered in peaceful and holy fellowship, partaking-of the lamb. Being saved by the blood was one thing, but being gathered round the lamb was quite another. The blood of the lamb however formed the foundation for both. Just so in Christian experience. Apart from the atonement of Christ there can be no peace with God and no fellowship either with God or with his people. It is to a living Christ in heaven that believers are gathered by the holy spirit,, to a Living Head; "He is our centre. Having found peace through his blood, we own him as our grand gathering point. The holy spirit is the only gatherer; Christ himself is the only object to which we are gathered. The holy spirit can gather only to Christ. It cannot gather to a system, a name, a doctrine, or set of doctrines. It gathers to a Person, and that Person is a glorified Christ in heaven."

It is our understanding that it was in the evening of the 14th of Nisan, that is, what we today call the evening of the previous day, that Jesus ate his last passover with his disciples, and following it instituted "the Lord's Supper," a memorial of his death,* and, as Paul adds, our communion, a partnership in his body and blood, saying: "Does not the consecrated cup which we bless mean that in drinking it we share in the blood of Christ? Does not the bread which we break mean that in eating it we share in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, many as we are, are one body, for we all share in one loaf." - *E. J. Goodspeed*.

* According to the Jewish reckoning, to be celebrated this year after sundown of Thursday, April 3.

As the literal lamb gave strength to the Jews, so we must feed on the mystical Lamb, by faith accept the merit of his sacrifice that we may be ready for our deliverance in the morning of the new dispensation. Our bread, the Apostle Paul calls "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." To eat that bread means much more than would appear to a careless examiner. Eating and drinking manifestly indicates our acceptance, not merely intellectually, but our acceptance, as a moral power for our transformation into his likeness, for the putting on of Christ, the mind of Christ, by the renewing of our minds. Drinking the cup signifies that we have accepted Jesus as our life-giver, and that our utter dependence is on him; also, that we have made a covenant to go into death with 'him. By the eating of the flesh we covenant to "suffer with him," and to conduct ourselves as become members in, sharers in, the "body of Christ."

The eating of bitter herbs with the Pascal Lamb in symbolism speaks of cheerful endurance (translated "patience" in the New Testament) of those experiences that are necessary for the testing of every prospective sharer with him in the bounties of the Promised Land -- experiences that justly try us "in all points," that there may be assurance that throughout eternity there will be no unwillingness to fully and joyfully enter into every plan of the heavenly Father for us. From this proclamation of our desire to "suffer with him" in whatever way the loving Father shall permit, as pilgrims and strangers, far from the land of 'his promise and our choice, we go forth with staff in hand and girt for the journey, carrying our bread with us, and, too often, wandering long in the wilderness state before finally home is reached. In the typical wandering those who could not in faith accept joyfully, uncomplainingly, the trying experiences of the wilderness, found in it their burial place. The fact that only two of the adults who partook of the lamb and who left Egypt for the promised land reached it, causes us to pause and consider as to whether we

too might not "eat unworthily" of our Passover Lamb. It was not lack of knowledge, but an "evil heart of *unbelief*" that caused their bodies to fall in the wilderness. Let us "take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of us an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God; but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called Today; lest any of us be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: *for* we are become partakers of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence unto the end." (Heb. 3:12-14.) According to the next chapter, "The word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard." They and that faith, as it were, did not become so inseparably united as to become one. Their trial is past and "Failure" written in their record; but faith in the antitypical Lamb, which was prefigured in their yearly memorial that was instituted at their entrance into the wilderness, inspired the Apostle many generations later to write, "And so all Israel shall be saved." Out -of their ruin that One who will save will erect a memorial which for eternity will proclaim that the God of justice is also a God of love, wisdom, and power.

With the One who died as the sacrificial Lamb will be 144,000, who like Caleb and Joshua saw their enemies, giants in the land so great that the other spies said, "We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." Also like the two spies, this faithful company not only see the fruit of the land, but *have faith* in the One who promised.

As one of the innumerable things provided by our heavenly Guardian that the 144,000 might pass safely through their wilderness experiences was the Memorial Supper which our Savior instituted on the last night of his life, building on the foundation of the yearly Passover celebration and as a substitute for it. "Do this," he said, "in remembrance of me." "Take, eat; this is my body." It did appropriately represent him, for it was unleavened bread. "The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world." Therefore he could say, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." "If any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever." (John 6:33, 35, 51.) (The Revelator tells of a great company who did not have this satisfaction, but promises for them a future in which they "shall hunger and thirst *no more*.") The partaking of the unleavened bread at the Memorial Supper means to us primarily that we appropriate by faith the perfect human life which Jesus laid down, accept the restitution rights and privileges which Jesus' death made secure for Adam and all his race.

"IF WE BE DEAD WITH HIM"

Very clearly the Apostle Paul indicates that in the Memorial Supper we not only yearly commemorate the death of the Savior of the world, but also proclaim our privilege of being "dead with him": "I speak as to sensible men; judge for yourselves what I say, The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf. Matthew Henry comments on this passage:

"By partaking of one broken loaf, the emblem of our Savior's broken body.... we coalesce into one body, become members of him and one another.' Those who truly partake by faith, have this communion with Christ, and one another: and those who eat the outward elements, make profession of having, this communion of belonging to God, and the blessed fraternity of his people and worshipers," thus accepting all whom the Lord hath set "in the body as it hath pleased him."

"It will help us to see the connection of thought here to remember that the words translated 'communion' in this verse (1 Cor. 10:16), 'partakers,' (ver. 18), and 'fellowship' (ver. 20), are all

forms of the same Greek word. This word means communion, association, fellowship; and the genitive after it may denote either the persons or things with which one is associated, or that in which they are associated and have part together. Now if we examine the argument, we find that it is here the fellowship or association with the blood and body of Christ that is meant. In the second analogy used, the Israelites, by eating the sacrifices, are represented as partaking with thee altar-i.e., as consuming one part, while the altar consumes the other part of the sacrifices. And in the conclusion, those who eat the idol-sacrifices are represented in the same way, as in fellowship with demons. So that here, in the other analogy of the Lord's Supper, it must be fellowship with some thing or person that will keep up the correspondence between all the cases, that forms the basis of the argument. ' Some suppose that the fellowship is with believers and in the body of Christ. But this supposes that the point of the argument-viz., that with which we are associated in the Supper, is left out by Paul. Moreover, in the parallel cases, it is not the association with the worshipers, but with the object of worship, that is pointed out. The consistency of the several parts of the argument requires, therefore, that we understand here fellowship with the blood of Christ to be meant. But in what sense? It is evident from the passages (Matt. 26:26 seq., 1 Cor. 11:23 seq., John 6:51 seq.), which give the history and explanation of the Lord's Supper, that these -symbols represent the sacrificial death of Christ, and that, therefore, fellowship with the body and blood of Christ,, is fellowship with the Lord in his death. The partaking of these emblems brings us into this fellowship. But as the emblems are symbols, not the real body and blood of the Lord, so our eating and drinking are symbolic acts, representing the faith by which this fellowship is really accomplished. - Cf. John 6:51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, with ver. 35, 40, 47." - American Commentary.

The above seems to us to corroborate what we find on page R5342 of the Reprints:

"There is a difference, we believe, maintained in the Scriptures between the bread, which symbolizes the Lord's flesh, and the wine, which symbolizes his blood. The Church, in order to be accepted of the Lord as members of his glorified body, must share in both of these by participation. The loaf, as the Apostle explains, not only represents to us our Lord, as the Bread of Life necessary for us, but it also represents us as his members to be broken as our Lord was broken; and the wine represents not only our Lord's blood, but also the blood of the Church that we are sharers with him in his sacrificial sufferings. - 1 Cor. 10:16,17.

"The privilege of sharing our Lord's cup is not for -the world. They will not share in the sufferings of Christ, because all opportunity to share in his sufferings and glory will have ended when the Church is glorified. The Lord said, 'Drink ye all of it'-drink it all. There will be none for the world to drink. And we who are of the Church class 'fill up that which is [left] behind of the afflictions of Christ.' - Col. 1:24."

Shortly before instituting the Memorial Supper the Master offered his intercessory prayer for all who should be of his body, "That they all may be one," "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." (John 17; 20,21.) This can have reference only to the oneness of spirit that Paul "begs" us to be "eager to maintain, the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," that we may "lead a life worthy of the calling to which we have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love." (Eph. 4:1-3.) If an honest desire for such a unity is not in the heart of one who partakes of the Lord's Supper, he at least has failed to note the way in which the Lord has associated-the two thoughts. "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body as well as the blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.' For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment upon himself." - 1 Cor. 11:27-29.

WHO MAY PARTAKE?

The answer of inspiration is that no one should partake unworthily. In this the Apostle was not forgetting that "there is none righteous, no not one"; but he is remembering that "we are acceptable in the Beloved," and only by faith can we be "accepted" "living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God." "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup." (1 Cor 11:29.) "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith," or apparently more exactly: Examinee yourselves, to 'see whether you are holding 'to your faith. "Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? -unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" (2 Cor. 13:5, R.S.V.) "If we say we have fellowship with him [in the bread, or in the cup, or in any way] while we walk in darkness, we lie and do' not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all ,sin." - 1 John 1:6,7, R.S.V.

It was immediately following the institution of the Memorial that Jesus warned Peter: "Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat," and added the consolation: "But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren." This was said to the weak, impetuous Peter, who thought he was able to follow the Lord into any experience. But instead Jesus told him: "The cock will not crow, till you have denied me thrice." Perhaps it was in part for us that Peter was permitted so drastic a demonstration of his weakness, and for us, as well as for him, that the very next words recorded are: "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God; believe also in .me" - the God whose "mercy endureth forever," and the Son, "who ever liveth to make intercession for us." - John 13:38; 14:1; Heb. 7:25.

In the words of another:

"Beloved brethren, let us 'meditate on these things.' We have tasted, through grace, the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Jesus; as such it is our privilege to feed upon his adorable Person and delight ourselves in his unsearchable riches'; to have fellowship in his sufferings and be made conformable to his death. Oh! let us, therefore, be seen with the unleavened bread and bitter herbs, the girded loins, the shoes, and staff. In a word, let us be marked as a holy people, a crucified people, a watchful and diligent people -a people manifestly 'on our way to God' -- on our way to glory -- 'bound for the Kingdom.' May God grant us to enter into the depth and power of all these things; so that they may not be mere theories, in our intellects -- mere principles of Scriptural knowledge and interpretation; but living, divine realities,. known by experience, and exhibited in the life, to the glory of God."

- *P E Thomson.*

The Shadow and the Substance

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is Christ's." "For the law having a shadow of the good ... to come, not the very image of the things [literally, practices] can never . . . make perfect them that draw nigh." - Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1.

THE SCHISMS that for nineteen hundred years have rent the Church of Jesus Christ into differing and often antagonistic factions have been almost invariably over opinions and interpretations of Holy Writ, not concerning its simple essentials: viz., the salvation which is in Christ Jesus; the High Calling; and holy living.

In the early Church, largely Jewish, the differences arose mainly from questions of Jewish law, tradition and procedure, as indicated by the verse from the Epistle to the Colossians, quoted above. In these last days of the Age, in a more sophisticated and abstractly thinking society, the "bones of contention" are principally of a philosophical character, and not of behavior or procedure. They chiefly concern what the believers *think*, not what they *do*.

But almost always the ones who are responsible for the quarrels and divisions are "the angels" (i.e., messengers, the leaders) whom the flock mistakenly 'worship' and follow in their divisive course, as the Apostle indicates in the verses following the above. (Col. 2:18-23.) The seriousness of the consequences of this mistaken attitude, to the Christian who is earnestly seeking to make his "calling and election sure," is plainly stated by the Apostle. "Let no man rob you of your prize." Such a disastrous *possibility* bids us pause and carefully consider our own position. "Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith: prove your own selves." (2 Cor. 13:5.) The Apostle is telling each of us: Do not be too sure you are right!

WHAT IS THE TRUE FAITH?

What is "the faith" of which the Apostle writes? Is it a code of doctrines, or *any* doctrine? Nowhere in the Scriptures is it so presented. "Faith" translates the Greek word *pistis*. No reliable dictionary of New Testament Greek defines this word as meaning a creed or belief; no lexicon of quotations from ancient Greek writers includes any such usage. The definition given by Professor James Strong is this: "*Pistis*, (from, *peitho*, to *convince*) *persuasion*, i.e. *credence*; morally, *conviction* (of *religious* truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially-*reliance upon* Christ for salvation; abstractly, *confidence* in such profession." Professor Strong adds: "By extension, the system of religious (Gospel) *truth* itself."

This definition, except the last sentence, agrees with the inspired definition of Hebrews 11:1: "Faith is the basis of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." Thus it is seen that faith is *wholly a mental attitude*. It is based on and involves belief, but is never the thing believed. Those cited in the 12th chapter of Hebrews as examples of outstanding heroes of faith certainly had no code -of doctrinal belief; but did have great confidence in and reliance on God.

Dr. Strong says *pistis*, faith, has been *extended* to mean "the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself. That is not what it means in New Testament Greek, however. Its "extension" to include the thing believed has been made by creed-makers and sectarians, to give Biblical authority to their own opinions and interpretations. To the Roman Catholic "the Faith" is the mass of Roman Catholic dogmas; to each Protestant sect it is its own particular creed. It behooves the earnest

truthseeker to gain a clear conception of the meaning of "the faith" of the New Testament, and to purge his mind of any trace of this sectarian "extension" of significance.

What then does Jude (verse 3) mean when he urges "them that are called . . . and kept for Jesus Christ", to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints"? To this the *Scriptural* answer can only be, to fight against the subversive tendencies of "the world, the flesh, and the devil," which would rob the saint of his basic "hope" and "confidence" in the Father,, the Lord Jesus Christ, and his own High Calling. A careful examination of every text in the New Testament in which "faith" appears as a translation- -of *pistis*, will accomplish the highly important result of enabling the student intelligently to "examine 'himself, whether lie be in *the faith*."

THE FUNDAMENTAL DEFINITIONS

It is passing strange that Christian teachers should have so long and so greatly complicated the subjects of the true faith and of "sound doctrine," when the Scriptures are so simple and so explicit in precisely defining their essentials. A few only of these Scriptural definitions -- a catechism of fundamental theology-leave the creedmaker, the sectarian, and the exclusivist no weakest leg to stand upon! -- For example:

(1) *What is the true faith?* Answer: "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." - Heb. 11:1.

(2) *What is true religion?* Answer: "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." - James 1:27.

(3) *What is the Kingdom of God?* Answer: "The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." - Rom. 14:17.

(4) *"What must we do that we may work the works of God?"* Answer: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." - John 6:28, 29.

(5) *What must be believed in order to come to God?* Answer: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." "This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ." "Jesus saith . I am the way, the truth and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." - Heb. 11:6; 1 John 3:23; John 14:6.

(6) *What is God's will for you?* Answer: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." - 1 Thess. 4:3.

(7) *What are God's requirements for entering his Kingdom?* Answer: "Adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue . . . knowledge . . . self-control . . . patience . . . godliness . . . brotherly-kindness love... . if ye do these things ye shall never stumble:

for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." - 2 Peter 1:1-11.

(8) *What will admit the believer to a share in Christ's throne?* Answer: "If we died with him; we shall also live - with him; if we endure [suffering] we shall reign with him." "Ye are they that

have continued with me in my temptations [trials]; and I appoint unto you a Kingdom . . . and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." "He that overcometh I will give to sit down with me in my throne." - 2 Tim. 2:11,12; Luke 22:28,29; Rev. 3:21.

(9) *What are the things which will debar inheritance of the Kingdom?* Answer: "The works of the flesh . . . fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like . . . they who practise such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." -Gal. 5:19-21.

(10) *How may we know that we are of the Truth?* Answer: "Little Children, let us love not in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and in truth. Hereby shall we know we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before him." - 1 John 3:18, 19.

The Scriptures quoted in this (entirely unofficial) Catechism are not the only ones answering these fundamental, comprehensive, and supremely important questions. But no one can deny that they contain a statement of all the essentials of salvation and the divine preferment promised the successful Christian race-runner, as well as a plain warning of the consequences of non-conformity thereto. They are binding provisions of a solemn covenant of marriage, extended by the Father to the prospective members of his Son's Bride. Acceptance and compliance on the part of the candidate for membership- in that exalted Body is *all* that is required by the Father and the Son. Dare any who claim to recognize the Bible as their only creed add any other requirement to these fundamentals as the basis of fellowship and joint service with other Christians? The Apostle substantially answers this question in Galatians 3:15: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void or addeth thereto."

"IF BY ANY MEANS . . ."

But some one may logically ask: "If these fundamentals include all that is necessary to salvation, why did the Lord set forth so much more in the Scriptures? What relationship have all the types, shadows, prophecies, promises, and exhortations therein, to the essential doctrine of Christ? These things seem not to simplify but to amplify and complicate the plan of salvation. How should we appraise them, if not as *essentials*?"

The Scriptures themselves answer these questions, either specifically or by implication. The non-essential teaching (doctrine) of Scripture is designed to accomplish at least four purposes, Viz.:

(1) To explain and adorn in various ways the essentials of God's Plan, so as to make it more attractive to and assimilable by the various temperaments and mentalities ("tribes") of men.

This is just as it is in the physical world. An abundant variety of foods are supplied, to satisfy every healthy appetite and need. No man requires nor can eat even a portion of everything in the world that is good- for food, though some foolish men are said to have tried it. No student of the Scriptures can comprehend, nor needs to assimilate, every teaching of the Bible; it is impossible in one short lifetime.

The Father "openeth his hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing." The Son, as the Father's plenipotentiary to mankind, proved his right to primacy by becoming "the servant of all." The Apostle Paul writes of his own ministry: "To the Jew I became as a Jew . . . to them that are under the law as under the law . . . to them that are without law, as without law. . . . To the weak I became as weak: I became all things to all men that I *may by all means* save some." "Some

indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will.. .. What then? only that *in every way*, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." - Psalm 145:16; Mark 10:42-45; 1 Cor. 9:20-22; Phil. 1:15-18.

None other can be, as was the Lord, "the servant *of all*"; few can hope to emulate the Great Apostle in serving the brethren by becoming "all things to all men"; accordingly it must be recognized that in the Church, as St. Paul explains: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal." This exhortation of the Apostle might be paraphrased:

"The same Spirit gives
Different gifts,
For different services,
For different works of God,
But EACH ONE is to profit ALL the brethren." - 1 Cor. 12:4-7.

How free from partizan narrowness or exclusivism are these words of the Apostle; as were Jesus' instructions to his disciples: "John said . . . Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. But Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against you is for you." (Luke 9:49, 50.) How hard it is for us all to see that if others are preaching the "sound doctrine of God and the Lord Jesus Christ;" though they are not "following with us" they are "for us" - "on our side" - and that regarding all such we should heed the Apostle's earnest words, emphasizing the "any": "If therefore there is *any* exhortation in Christ, if *any* persuasion of love, if *any* fellowship of the Spirit, if *any* tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; ... in lowliness of mind each accounting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building." - Phil. 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 3:8, 9.

(2) Specifically, the variety of Scriptural teaching is designed to exercise the disciple in *discrimination*, so that he may differentiate the essential from the non-essential in their application to his own needs, and to his fellowship with the brethren, and so perfect a mature character qualification.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man," writes King Solomon the Wise, "But the end thereof are the ways of death." The disciple who fails to discriminate between essentials and non-essentials and confuses the two, is in great danger of finding himself in such case as the Wise Man describes. "Solid food is for full-grown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." The difference has been hard for many Christians to discern. "Even Satan fashioneth himself into -an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness." "By their *fruits* ye shall know them." - Prov. 14:12; Heb. 5:14; 2 Cor. 11:14, 15; Matt. 7:15, 16.

(3) A variety of instruction is given in Holy Writ to prepare each successful candidate for the High Calling, for his particular work as a member of the Body in the future Kingdom: All disciples do not need all Scriptures equally, for their special development.

St. Paul tells us that "one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." Jesus explained to the dotting mother who petitioned for her two sons the two chief places in the Kingdom next to him, that these honors were not for him to bestow. He said: "To sit on my right hand and on my left . . . is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father." "In a great house," St. Paul writes Timothy, "there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some unto honor, and some unto dishonor [or, less honor]." The Revelator prophesies of some who "die in the Lord" that they "may rest from their labors ... their works follow with them." (1 Cor. 15:41; Matt. 20:20-25; 2 Tim. 2:20; Rev. 14:13.) All these indicate opportunities of service directly under the eye of God himself; education for special assignments under an infinitely more liberal and comprehensive G. I. (God Issued) "Bill of Rights"; and possibilities of preferment and promotion in *the* service of the King of kings that, rightly evaluated, fire the imagination and challenge the aspirations of the most ambitious and high-minded of men. The emoluments- and rewards of earth do not compare for a moment with those offered in the divine service. "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." - 2 Cor. 4:17.

(4) The non-essential portions of Scriptural teaching are intended to serve as excuses for divisions. The attitude of the individual Christian in the presence of such divisions manifests the righteousness of the Lord's judgment as to the candidate's fitness for membership in his mystic Body for "many are called but few chosen." -- Jesus: Matthew 22:14.

St. Paul states the necessity and reason for divisions-in the Church, in so many words: "I hear that divisions exist among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. 11:18, 19.) It would not seem just .on the part of the Divinity, in issuing a general invitation to believers to strive for participation in the heavenly Kingdom, to state any of the essential stipulations or qualifications in language that could be misunderstood. Hence, as we have seen, there is no possibility of misunderstanding the indispensable requirements and qualifications for membership. But the great volume of supplemental and contributory teaching of the Scriptures affords ample opportunity for differences of opinion, "parties, divisions, factions," which often 'have been fanned into "wraths, jealousies, strife, enmities, sometimes culminating in persecutions, murders, heretic-burning, and bitter wars. Certainly none of these can be "practiced" (the word in Galatians 5:21 means "performed repeatedly or habitually") by those who would be members of the Body of Jesus Christ; and, as we might expect, the Apostle solemnly warns that such "cannot inherit the Kingdom of God."

The indispensable graces of unity and tolerance can be acquired only in association with those with whom we do not fully agree. They must be practiced in spite of differences of, opinion which will inevitably arise. They are the ripe fruit of love, while divisions and exclusivism are always evidence of lack of brotherly love, whatever doctrinal excuse be made. There is no difficulty or test in maintaining unity with those who agree with us: there is no opportunity here for developing tolerance. The fellowship of congenial brethren is naturally valuable to us; they are "honorable" and "strong" in our estimation. But again the understanding, Great Apostle 'admonishes us: "Nay, much rather those members of the Body which seem to be more feeble are necessary [to the proper development of the others]; and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable [valuable] upon these [if we heed the Apostle] we bestow more abundant honor: and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; whereas our comely parts have no need: but God tempered the Body together, giving more abundant honor [value] to that part which lacked [comeliness]; that there should be no schism in the Body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." - 1 Cor. 12:22-25.

So we see that Christian unity is always perfected on the basis of the essentials of doctrine and character-development, in adherence to the Seven Unities of Ephesians 4:3. The non-essentials which have been the ostensible reasons for divisions among the consecrated brethren of the present Harvest time are, as always, convictions that are very precious and important to those who have participated in the controversies and separations. To hold as secondary these personal convictions in order to maintain unity on the essentials as urged in the Scriptures, is indeed a searching test of Christian character.

THE HARVEST TEST -- SHADOW OR SUBSTANCE

These controversial convictions involve the shadows, not the substance, of Scriptural teaching. The *substance* of the "doctrine of Christ" is contained in the New Testament; the *shadows* of "the good things to come" are represented in the types, symbols, and similitudes of the Old Testament. Only the substance, or reality, the Writer to the Hebrews declares, can "make perfect them that draw nigh." The reason is that the shadow is never "the very image" of the reality. Yet Christian teachers still insist on a dogmatic acceptance of the faint "shadow" as a basis for full recognition of fellow Christians, even though the substance of the New Testament reality is accepted and acted upon by the brethren who are excluded.

For example, all Bible Students agree that the day of Atonement of Israel under the Law, was a shadow of 'the Gospel Age substance. Difference of opinion centers on the question of the exact significance of certain sacrifices, particularly that of the Lord's Goat. Did this represent the sacrifice of the Church, or not?

The *actuality* of the Church's sacrifice must be admitted by all, because it is plainly stated in the teaching of the New Testament. Jesus said: "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple"; and he appointed the Kingdom honors to "ye . . . who have continued with me in my temptations." The Apostle John writes: "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." St. Paul beseeches the "brethren" to "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God"; and declares that "if, we died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him." The Great Apostle desires for himself above all else "the fellowship of [Christ's] sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death," that he may share his superior resurrection. Finally, the Revelator sees in the vision of the glorified Church on the heavenly Mount Zion, only those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." (Luke 14:27; 22:28-30; 1 John 3:16; Rom. 12:1; 2 Tim. 2:12; Phil. 3:10, 11, 21; Rev. 14:1-5.) These passages are unequivocal and indisputable. They furnish a full and complete basis for the highest and most intimate Christian fellowship. They are the substance-the "form of sound words" - concerning the Church's sacrifice, which all Christians accept. In spite of this shall we make the *shadow of* this reality a separating dogma, and on its basis deny some *of* our brethren our full fellowship, which includes the privilege of the Eldership, if they are qualified?

Another artificial basis for separation among the Lord's people, now happily being disregarded by many, is a difference of language used in describing the covenant or arrangement through which the Lord has been accepting and blessing the followers of Jesus during the Gospel Age. Some hold in effect that this arrangement is the first part or paragraph of the "New Covenant" prophesied by Jeremiah (31:31-34), the second part or paragraph becoming operative in the next, the Millennial Age. Others say: "No; the two parts or paragraphs of which you speak are really two separate Covenants, operative respectively in the Gospel and the Millennial Ages; the latter only being properly called the "New Covenant."

The proponents of both sides of this question agree on what is being and is to be accomplished in these two Ages. The *substance* is indisputable and admitted; the *shadow* -- a matter of types and names -- is the basis of controversy and divisions. How childish we will all realize such differences to be, when we achieve the clear vision to be ours beyond the veil!

THE PAROUSIA

The doctrine of the secret parousia or presence of the Lord in the end of the Gospel Age, before he takes to himself his power and reigns as king of earth, is most illuminating and stimulating to those who really believe it; but it is a deduction based on interpretations of Scriptural chronology and prophesied signs, concerning which it is quite possible to have a reasonable difference of opinion. It is therefore, of course, not set forth in the Scriptures as a criterion of orthodoxy -- a valid reason for division in the Church; nor is its belief a Scriptural qualification for Eldership.

Our Lord promised to be with his Church "always, even unto the end of the Age"; "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Indeed he declared "*Without me ye can do nothing.*" (Matt. 28:20; 18:20; John 15:5.) At other times, throughout the Gospel Age, earnest saints have exhorted their brethren to "practice the presence of Christ." The most sincere believer in "the Presence" as "Present Truth" in the end of the Age would have difficulty in explaining the *practical* difference to a Christian, between his Lord being "with him" throughout the Age, and "present" in the end of the Age. To draw this distinction it is necessary to be very technical and theoretical. There is a *Scriptural test* in this connection, however; it is not belief in a technicality, but a true measure of our loyalty and devotion to our Head. *This test is* stated by the Apostle Paul, and it is a very practical one. In his last recorded message, sent through Timothy to all the brethren, he said: "The crown of righteousness [a righteous crowning] is laid up . . . for all them that have *loved his appearing.*" (2 Tim. 4:8.) All those who have been close followers of Jesus throughout the Age, as St. Peter also expresses it, have "looked for and hastened [in expectation] unto the coming of the day of the Lord." (2 Peter 3:12.) This searching test suggested by the Apostles Paul and Peter may be profitably applied to *themselves* by each of the Lord's people: Do I truly look forward to the end of my earthly life and to meeting my Lord with pleasurable anticipation? Can I submit my life and particularly my attitude toward all the brethren to his searching gaze, with confidence in his approval? This is the Scriptural test the Scriptures nowhere justify the requirement of belief in the dogma of "the Parousia" as a qualification either for fellowship or for Eldership in the Church.

In the old days it was a very serious offense to draw sword "in the Presence" of an earthly king, except by his direct command. The offender was subject to immediate arrest and imprisonment "at the pleasure of the king." If we profess belief in the Presence of our great King, how much more serious is it for one of us to draw sword against our brother, because we think him partially blind!

But how embarrassed we will be if, when we enter the presence of our King beyond the *veil*, we find that through neglect or disregard of the "signs," we have failed to recognize our King's presence during the Harvest time, particularly if *we* have been critical of those who did profess to recognize it!

Surely the earnest prayer of those who hold to the belief in the actual parousia should be that, if it indeed be true, they might through loving, patient, and (if necessary) long-continued fellowship with those who do not so believe, be used of the Lord in enlightening such brethren on the subject. On the other hand, those who have not been able to accept the presence of the Lord as an established fact, should sincerely desire and continually pray the Lord that if he is indeed present

"gathering his jewels" they might be enabled to recognize it. And none should express a settled conviction on a subject of such importance until he has carefully examined all of the twenty-odd occurrences of the word "parousia" in their contexts in the New Testament; and then we should *all* heed the Apostle's warning: "Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know." For "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." - 1 Cor. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:6.

It is a lamentable fact that most of the Bible Students of the antitypical "Laodicea" - the present stage of the Church (we think) , are re-enacting the tragic folly of the entire Age. They are exchanging the substance of "the faith" for the shadow of dogma, their birthright for a "mess of pottage" - the latter *good to eat*, but a poor bargain at the price. Who will be held by the Head as most responsible for this sad condition? Let the Prophet of the Lord reply:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto them: Behold I, even I, will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because ye thrust with the side and with the shoulder, and push all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David [meaning 'the Beloved,' Christ]; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.... And they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have broken the bars of their yoke, and have delivered them out of the hand of those that made bondmen of them. ... And ye, my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord Jehovah." - Ezek. 34.

Let all who are tempted to disparage a brother's spiritual gift, his spiritual attainments or activities, thus assuming superiority, prayerfully consider this solemn warning from the Lord through his Prophet of old. No earthly success, accomplishments or emoluments will be of any value or consolation or satisfaction if, "when the Chief Shepherd shall appear" in fulfillment of the prophecy, those who claim "great and wonderful works" performed "in his name" are disowned as members of his Bride, and denied the "crown of glory that fadeth not away" because they "lorded it over his heritage" as the strong and "fat sheep" of the earthly flock. - 1 Peter 5:4.

- *H. E. Hollister.*

[N. B. - If interested in further research and comparison, please see following articles:

DOCTRINES MORE OR LESS IMPORTANT - Reprints, p R5284, *W. T.* August, 1913.

THE EPISTLE OF *CHRIST*-Reprints, p. R5967, *W. T.* October 1, 1916.

THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION-Reprints, p. R5981, *W. T.* November 1, 1916.

Also: *The New Creation*, pp. F240-F242.]

St. Peter's Sifting and Conversion

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." - Luke 22:31, 32.

THE WORDS of our text, as all will recall, were spoken by our Lord in the "upper room" just before he instituted the "Memorial" which we celebrate each spring. In our Authorized Version the meaning and effect of the passage are somewhat obscured. A better translation is given by Weymouth, who renders it: "Simon, Simon, I tell you that Satan has obtained permission to have all of you to sift as wheat is sifted. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, and you, when at last you have come back to your true self, must strengthen your brethren."

ALL TO BE SIFTED-NOT PETER ONLY

From this translation it will be seen that not only Peter but all of them were to be sifted. Our Lord's prayer, however, was for Peter. "I have prayed for *thee* that *thy* faith fail not. Why this was so, we hope to see as our meditation progresses.

In thus warning the disciples of their danger, our Lord lifted, as it were, the curtain which hides the invisible world from us. Just as in the case of Job, Satan was seen seeking permission to test that worthy one, so Jesus sees Satan earnestly begging permission - nay, even as having secured permission of God to test these, His chosen ones. Satan, who has already, by Judas' own consent, obtained full possession of *his* heart, is now preparing for an attack on the others whose heart-loyalty he had so far, never disturbed, but over whom he now hoped to obtain the mastery. As God's sieve-holder, so to speak, Satan had asked that they all be put in the sieve, and be thoroughly shaken - his hope being to find them, at the last, not wheat, but chaff, no better at heart than Judas. Then would he have them all for his own.

Such sifting would not hurt any true wheat, although it would separate any chaff which might cling to it. Now Peter was true wheat at heart, but there remained much chaff in him, and from the fact that he was also prominent -- a leader of the others -- and that therefore much depended on him, Peter was to be the most severely shaken of any. Satan knew Peter well, counted on his fall, hoped it would be permanent, and that through *his* fall he would overcome and permanently scatter the rest. Jesus therefore addresses him as the one peculiarly exposed, and through him, as the mouth or representative of the company, the others.

But Peter was not ready for the warning. Instead of being overwhelmed by the fear of any impending fall, he is sure he will stand firm as a rock. "I am ready to go into prison and into death for Thee." But Jesus knew better, and, as we know, foretold him of his coming fall. "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily I say unto thee, Peter, that before the cock shall crow twice, 'thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."

PETER A MIXTURE OF STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

St. Peter is so human, his character presents that same mixture of strength and weakness which we find in ourselves, that of all the Apostles he is the one likely to appeal to us most. Of some of them we know so little that we can be said to scarcely know them at all. And on the other hand

those with whose characters we are acquainted—James, for instance, and John, and Paul -- seem to have made such remarkable progress in the school of Christ; they have followed, the paths of righteousness with so steady a purpose, and such consistent faithfulness, that while we greatly admire them, we are apt to look up to them as having reached heights which we can hardly hope to attain. But it is not so with Peter, great as he is. He seems to be more on *our* level, travels by the path *we* tread, wanders from it, and stumbles in it, as we ourselves wander and stumble. His very faults endear him to us hardly less than his virtues. They are so entirely natural, so closely akin to the faults of which we are conscious in ourselves, that fellow-feeling makes us kind and lenient in our judgment of them and of him. His impulsiveness, and self-confidence, his passionate zeal, his promptness to speak and to strike, all serve to engage our interest, our compassion, our sympathy, and make us feel more at home with him than with men of a nature more finely balanced and composed. He has plenty of faults, but they are not mean and petty. As we study them carefully, we find that for the most part they result from impulses and emotions that are good in themselves, but carried to 'excess. *The important quality of self-control is lacking.*

Such natures are very lovable, but they lie open to many perils. And it is not until they have been subjected to testing and trial, and successfully endured temptations, and been approved of the Lord, that they can be greatly used in the Master's service.

PETER NO WORSE THAN THE OTHERS

But though the impulsive, self-confident tempera meat has special dangers of its -own, it does not follow that on the whole it is more perilous than other temperaments, cast in a different mold. Certainly Peter did not fall lower—he did not fall quite so low -as his fellow Apostles did, although the common belief is that he did. Their promises of loyalty to Christ were as confident as his; their unfaithfulness to their vow of loyalty took place sooner than his. When our Lord warned the Eleven: "All ye shall be offended in me this night," if Peter was the first to say: "Though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee," yet we are expressly told that so "likewise said they all." If Peter denied him in the hall of judgment, *they* did not even follow him to the hall, did not stop to be questioned—denying him in deeds, which speak louder than words, even before Peter denied him with oaths and curses. If when he was led away captive by the soldiers, they "*all* forsook him and fled," Peter was the first to recover himself in that shameful flight, and while *they* scattered every one to his own, he at least followed Jesus "afar off" to see what would be done unto him. In short, they fell before Peter fell, and more utterly than lie fell, *as Jesus had said they would*. For what he really recorded and foretold in our text, was that, while Satan had obtained permission to try and sift them *all*, Christ had prayed that *Peter's* faith might not wholly fail, that *he* might be the first to recover from their common fall, in order that when he was converted, he might strengthen his brethren. Rather than think of him, then, as weaker and worse than his brethren, we should think of him as the last to forsake his Master, and as the first to reascend the heights of faith; as the one who, having come back to his true self, as Weymouth's choice phrase puts it, was a fit instrument in the Lord's, hands to strengthen his brethren.

SELF-CONFIDENCE MUST BE DISPLACED BY HUMILITY

Let us now consider the passage attentively, to learn, first, what it was that was sifted out of Peter, and second, how it was sifted out of him.

First, then, what was it that was sifted out of Peter? This may be told in few words. The cause and spring of the most obvious defects in the Apostle's character was that large and assured confidence in himself which made him so quick to speak, so prompt to act. But throughout the

Scriptures self-confidence is everywhere shown to be the opposite of faith or confidence in God. Everywhere there, too, we are taught that God dwells only with those of a humble, lowly, contrite heart. If, therefore, God was to take up his abode with Peter,-if the impulsive and ardent strength of the man was to be schooled into steadfastness, and hallowed by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in order that, being himself led and controlled by the mind of Christ, he might rightly lead his brother Apostles during those first critical months in which the foundations of the Church were to be laid-then, obviously his self-confidence must be purged out of him, and be replaced by the humility with which God delights to dwell. On no other terms *could* he be fitted for the work to which he was called. And therefore it was that Satan "obtained" him, that is, obtained permission to sift and purge self trust out of him. If the process was severe, the task and honor for which it prepared him were great, and greatness is not to be achieved on easy terms. If we are tempted to think the process too severe, let us ask ourselves whether any milder process would have sufficed.

HUMILITY DIFFICULT TO ACQUIRE

That point is one which is easy to decide. We all know ' men who think a good deal of their own opinions, and who have a very good opinion of themselves; self-confident men, always ready with their advice and censure, however difficult and complicated that may be of which they speak, and however ignorant of it they may be; men who believe, apparently, that all the world is out of step, and that they were born to set it right; men who assume to teach, to judge, to rebuke, even those whom, when pushed, they acknowledge to be far wiser and better than themselves -- just as Peter rebuked Christ, and said: "This be far from thee, Lord!" Is it easy, when this self-confidence has been much and long indulged, to purge it from them? We all know that it is not easy; on the contrary, it is hard, so hard as often to seem impossible. We have seen such men tried in many ways; the advice they gave has been followed and shown to be disastrous, or their censures have been disregarded with manifest impunity; their own affairs have fallen into ruin about them while they were affecting to guide the counsels of the Church or nation; shame has invaded their homes and families through their sins or their neglect; they have been publicly censured and disgraced; and yet, when all was done, we have seen them carrying the same pretentious air, and heard them taking the same tone of assurance, apparently as full as ever of confidence in their own wisdom and importance. Of all qualities, self-confidence is perhaps the last which most of us lose; of all virtues, humility the last we acquire. We need not wonder therefore, to find St. Peter exposed to a most penetrating and fiery trial. For, strange to say, his self-confidence, though it had been so often rebuked, comes out more conspicuously than ever in the last moments that he was to spend with the Son of Man -- the need for sitting grows most apparent as Satan draws near to sift him.

PETER'S SELF CONFIDENCE CONSPICUOUS JUST PRIOR TO HIS FALL

On the very night on which Jesus was betrayed, and as they gathered round the table at which they were to eat and drink with him for the last time, Peter and his brethren contended among themselves which of them should be greatest. The couches on which they reclined at the Last Supper each held four or five, and each, according to Eastern custom, had its highest and lowest place. Possibly it was in claiming the better places on these couches that the contention broke out, if it was not rather in the strife as to which of them should wash the others' feet. The petty and shameful strife was silenced by the gracious rebuke of Christ. But the flush and excitement of it seem to have left their traces on Peter's mind, for when, to enforce his lesson of humility Jesus arose and girded himself with a towel, and began to wash their feet, Peter first exclaims: "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" and then: "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"

No doubt the impulses which moved Peter to these exclamations were fine; but impulses which lead a man to correct Divine Wisdom now in this way and now in that, betray a blind and impetuous self-reliance, however fine they may be in themselves. Emotions, however good, become evil, they become both signs of evil already existing, and indicate evil about to take place, when they run to excess. The wish to be near Christ, and to stand high in his love and esteem is good; but it becomes evil when it grows into a wish to be nearer than others, and to stand higher than they. The reverence which prompted Peter to cry: "Wash not my feet, Lord," was good; and the love which prompted him to cry: "Not my feet *only*," was also good. But reverence becomes irreverence and love unloving, when they lead us to assume that we know what is meet and right better than our Master and Lord, and when they lead us to presume to suggest that there may be something lacking in the way he takes with us.

However good Peter's impulses and motives, then, it is easy to see that even at the Lord's Supper he was in his most self-assertive and self-confident mood. And the impression grows on us as we follow him to Gethsemane. There, in the Garden, he shows that he trusts more in his own loyalty than in the wisdom and grace of his Master. "Though all men should be offended in thee, yet will not I!" he cries. And when the Lord repeats the warning, Peter only "speaks the more vehemently," saying, "If I should die with thee, I will not in anywise deny thee." Even when he falls asleep in the Garden, thereby belying his vehement protestations of loyalty and love, and proving that he could not watch an hour with him with whom he thought he was ready to go both to prison and to death, his confidence in himself is no whit abated. Startled from 'his untimely slumbers by the clash of arms and the glare of torches, St. Peter, having a sword drew it, and smote off the ear of the High Priest's servant, never doubting that that was -the right course to take, since it was the first that suggested itself to his mind. He looks to his Master for no sign, waits for no word of command, or he would not have fallen into that sin. Christ has to undo his evil work and to rebuke his spirit. Peter is put to shame but not to a saving shame. As his Master will not let him fight, he runs away, forsaking the Friend for whom he had professed himself ready even to die. As he runs, however, his natural boldness returns; he detaches himself - from the other disciples who have also forsaken Jesus, and turns back to follow his Lord, even though following afar off. But when he reached the palace, instead of pressing close to his Master's side as much as to say: "I, at least, will be true to him, he lingers in the open court, outside the judgment hall, and joins with soldiers round the fire, casting in his lot with -the *very* men who had arrested his Lord, instead of with the Lord himself. And here, when he is questioned, he again and again denies him, affirming in the broad Galilean accents which betray him, "I know not the Man." Not only so, but with the furious passion and impulsive vehemence which are a part of his nature, he backs his denial with oaths and curses.

PETER BROKEN AT HIS STRONGEST POINT

Now it occasions in us no surprise when we learn that a man who is an habitual liar has been discovered in an untruth, or that a man known for his cowardice has once again proved to be craven-hearted. But Peter was one *of* the bravest of men, possessed of fearless, honest, speech. He was a veritable John the Baptist, whose disciple he had been, and was always outspoken and courageous. It surely must have been in a moment of passionate excitement, and bewilderment, that *he* told a lie, and denied the Master he loved. Such sins were certainly foreign to his nature, sins from which he might well have believed himself safe.

It is a cruel spectacle-one of the saddest on which the stars have ever looked down -- a brave man -- turned coward, a true man turned liar, a strong man weeping bitterly over those very sins Which, of all sins, might well have seemed impossible to him! But would anything short of this open and shameless fall, this break at his strongest point, have been sufficient to purge him of that

self-confidence which we have seen to be so powerful and active in him right up to the very moment of his 'fall'? And if nothing else would have so suddenly and sharply sifted it out of him and brought about in him the humility which fitted him to receive -the Holy Spirit and become a pillar of the Church which our Lord was about to redeem with his precious blood, shall we be disposed to complain of the severity of the process by which he was purged from a dangerous self-trust and made meet for a service and ministry so honorable and blessed? Shall we not rather ask that we, too, may be sifted, even by the most searching trials, if we, too, may be thus made to possess the Holy Spirit in larger measure, and to be better qualified and fitted for the Master's service?

"I HAVE PRAYED FOR THEE"

We have seen how Satan obtained Peter that he might sift him. But if Satan *obtained*, Christ *prayed* for him, and even *obtained* him in a far higher sense; for *he* obtained that Peter should be sifted *only*, not completely overthrown, that however heavily his faith might be tested and strained, it might not snap and part; that the sifting should issue in his conversion, and complete restoration to favor and joyous service. It is to this second part of his experience that we now turn our thoughts. For the conversion and restoration of Peter were no less complete and wonderful than his fall. Space is sufficient to tell this part of the story only very briefly, but fortunately it is very familiar to our readers, so that few words will suffice.

St. Peter's conversion began at the very moment when he had fallen lowest. For it was when he had denied his Lord for the last time that Jesus turned and *looked* upon him; and this look was the turning point in the great crisis of his life. Jesus does not *speak* to him; words are not necessary; and even in the very depth of his fall Christ is too tender and considerate of Peter to confirm the suspicion of the bystanders and to prove him to be the disciple he has denied himself to be. He simply looks at him -- bends on him, we may well believe, a glance of blended pity, reproach, and love. And that look is *sufficient*. As he met it, Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him. And when he thought thereon, he wept -- wept bitterly.

PETER TRUE WHEAT AT HEART

There we have the true Peter. He did not seek to stifle his conscience. He did not try to forget his Lord's prediction. He remembered it. Not only so, but he thought upon it. Scholars tell us that the word translated "thought thereon" (Mark 14:72) literally means "flung himself upon." With passionate vehemence he flings himself as on the sharp edges of his Master's gracious warning and rebuke -- bruises himself against them, rends and tears himself upon them, till the difficult tears of a strong man in his agony are wrung from him. The man is all broken with remorse. He cannot face his old comrades, for though their sin has been as great as his, it does not seem so to him. Nothing seems to, him quite so bad as his own miserable failure and denial of his Lord. So he creeps away into seclusion, withdraws into a solitary hiding place, where he may weep alone, and see no reflection of his shame from other eyes; and here, apparently, he remained during the days that Jesus remained in the tomb. For, of all the other Apostles, only John seems to have had any idea where he was, to have sought him out, and to have spent an hour with him, when he could leave Mary, *his* mother now.

Now when men have fallen into a great sin, a great shame, a great misery, we all know how apt they are, as they brood over it, to recall the similar sins of which they have been guilty, to deepen their anguish by tracing back their recent offense through previous offenses which led to, which paved the way for, their last and crowning transgression. We may be sure, therefore, that in his solitude and grief, Peter would compel himself to dwell on the many occasions on which he had

been betrayed by his self-confident temper into sin and shame. He would recall, for instance, how boldly he had once cast himself on the billowing waters of the lake in Galilee, only to lose courage and faith, only to sink, and perish, but for the grace of Christ. He would remember how, while he had been the first to confess Jesus as Christ, the Messiah of God, no sooner did Jesus begin to speak of his death and of the glory that should follow, than he had rudely broken in upon him with: "There shall no such thing happen unto thee." And, as he flung himself upon these remembrances, he would feel that his recent sin was but a repetition, only on a worse scale, of former sins; that what he had to mourn over was not simply this faithless act or that, but a radical weakness in his very make-up, a self reliance which was perpetually leading him astray and landing him in open guilt and shame.

"GO-TELL MY DISCIPLES-AND PETER"

And how wonderfully does the Master meet the need of his sorrowing, contrite follower. Not only does the risen Lord tell Mary Magdalene to go tell his disciples *and Peter* that he had been raised from a grave that could not hold him; not only does He confirm this special and tender sign of grace by appearing to Peter *before* he appears to the other Apostles; but having touched Peter's heart with these proofs of a love stronger than death, of a love not to be alienated even by Peter's unfaithfulness and desertion; having -thus shed the light of hope into the darkness of his remorse and despair, and turned his remorse into a humble and healing contrition, our Lord proceeds to convert him, and to prove him converted, by leading him to unsay all his foolish boasts, and to retrieve all the failures which had sprung from too much confidence in himself, from too little trust in God and in Jesus.

It was on that never-to-be-forgotten morning when after toiling all night and catching nothing Jesus appeared on the shore, told them where to cast their nets, and after they had come to shore with a multitude of fishes, had himself prepared breakfast for them. Now on the night that Jesus had been betrayed, Peter had boasted of a love beyond that of his brethren. "Though all should be offended, yet will not I." And this vain boast had been followed by no less than three open and shameful denials of his Lord. These false steps have now -to be retraced, these failures to be retrieved. Hence when they had had breakfast, Jesus turns to Peter with the question: "Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" - do you still hold by your boast? But Simon had not been sifted in vain. There is a tone of shame and disavowal in his reply: "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee" -- Lord, thou knowest that I love thee, not more than these, perhaps, I no longer measure myself against them; they may love thee more and better than I; still, I love thee with all my heart, and *this thou knowest*. Three times .the question is repeated, till "Peter is grieved." He does, not see, what we see plainly enough, that as he has been guilty of three denials, so our Lord is constraining him to undo them as far as they can be undone, by witnessing three good confessions. Once Peter's grief would have been anger had he thrice been asked: "Lovest thou me?" He would have exploded into vainglorious boasts, perhaps have even rebuked the Lord for suspecting his fidelity. But there is no anger, no boasting, no vainglorious self-confidence now. All *that has* been sifted out of him; and he answers only by a quiet appeal to the Searcher of hearts: "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

Ah! he is truly converted now, and thrice is he reinstated in the pastoral, under-shepherd's office. "Feed my lambs" -- those who are just beginning in the path of discipleship. "Feed my little sheep" - those who have been in the way some time, and who are already somewhat developed in grace and knowledge. "Ah! Peter, you are a new man at last. I can depend on you now. There is no pastoral duty to which I hesitate to assign you, now. Feed not only my lambs and little sheep, but feed my sheep, too, those who are full-grown, matured Christians. You will be profitable -to them also. Henceforth your ministry will be blessed to the whole Church."

How complete was Peter's restoration is strikingly seen by comparing the conversation which took place between Peter and Christ before Peter's sifting, with a fragment of the conversation which passed between them after Peter's conversion. The first conversation went this way: "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now." "Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily I say unto thee, A cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice."

In the second conversation Jesus says to his sifted and converted disciple: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou didst gird thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou art grown old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he signifying by what death he [Peter] should glorify God. And having thus spoken he saith unto him, Follow thou me."

Could Peter's restoration be more complete? Christ now foretells Peter, not an open and shameful denial of his Master, but a public and honorable death for his Master. It is no longer: "Thou *wilt not* lay down thy life for my sake," but "Thou *shalt* lay down thy life for me." It is no longer: "Thou *canst not* follow me," but "Follow thou me." And this striking change and contrast indicates that at last Peter was truly "converted" -- converted from rashness to sobriety; from vainglory to humility; from self-confidence to self-distrust and steadfast trust in God. Every step of his fall has been retraced, every failure retrieved. He is now prepared to become the temple and mouthpiece of the Spirit of God, a solid pillar of the Church, against which the waves and billows of temptation will beat in vain.

THE LESSON FOR US

As we close this meditation on St. Peter's sifting and conversion, let us not do so without making practical application of its lessons--each to himself: As we examine our own hearts it is possible that we may find there the selfsame condition which proved such a hindrance to Peter's development and usefulness, until it was sifted out of him. Or it may be that our difficulty is along other lines. None of us will be wise if failing to walk in the footsteps of Jesus to the best of our ability, we rest complacently in the fact that years ago we were converted, and did consecrate ourselves to God. That consecration will avail us nothing, if in the present we cease to watch, and strive, and pray. We need a daily conversion, a life-long conversion -- from impurity to holiness, from worldliness to spirituality, from selfishness to love. So long as there is any evil in us, we need to be changed, turned, purged, to have the evil sifted out of us, just as Peter, long after that moment of supreme spiritual perception in which he confessed Jesus to be the Christ of God, needed to be converted to a truer, higher, and more steadfast faith in him.

And on the other hand, if because of our failure to watch and pray, we have been permitted by God to be sifted by Satan, and have fallen into a shameful denial of our Lord, by our conduct if not in our words, let us be comforted in the thought that, provided our repentance be real and earnest, he will not cast us away. If we prove the sincerity of our repentance by forsaking the evil, whatever it may be, by undoing, to whatever extent it may be possible, any wrong we may have done, and by determining by God's grace to walk circumspectly and worthy of our high vocation henceforth, we may take comfort from the restoration of Peter. For how large, how generous, how unqualified is the trust our Lord reposes in those who have truly repented. How complete is his restoration. How full and free and final is his forgiveness. The love of Christ truly passeth understanding. It is all powerful -- it conquers everything. When there has been true and thorough repentance, the past is forgiven and forgotten, as if it had never been. Praise God for a Gospel full of both truth and grace.

- P. L. Read.

Change of Date for Annual Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute will be held this year, May 31st or July 5th, and we trust that falling at either of these holiday seasons will give to more of the friends freedom to attend than the' usual first week-end in June. The prayers of all the friends are solicited both on the arrangements that must be made in advance and the conduct of the business when the meeting convenes.