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Knowledge, Doctrine, and Love

WHEN ONE speaks of "doctrine" he very often has in mind some confession of faith that he deems necessary to hold in order to be considered a follower of Jesus, but a little study of the Greek words translated by our English word "*doctrine*," soon convinces him that the whole teaching of Jesus and the Apostles is embraced in the word; and that it literally means instruction, teaching. Of course it can and sometimes does mean some particular point in our faith, but we should never lose sight, of the true meaning of the word, for like our English word "hell" it seems to have taken on an ecclesiastical meaning, which often makes clear thinking difficult. As an illustration of this, the following remark was made by one of the brethren after listening to a discourse: "Wasn't that a splendid talk -- and not a word about doctrine." Now it is quite evident that such a statement shows lack of thought, and it also shows how much we are influenced by previous training.

The word "doctrine" has been very prominently held before the minds of the Lord's people in the harvest time of this Age, and properly so, because its meaning contains all that we hold dear to our hearts. But because it has been used in controversy with certain points of faith that have been under discussion these last few years, it has become odious to many of the brethren, and that is not to their benefit.

When rightly understood, our doctrine is in a sense just about the most important thing to us, excepting our Lord himself. It is that knowledge of himself which he has so beneficently given us, without which we would be as nothing, could hope for nothing, understand nothing; let us then not be afraid to look at doctrine, look at it thankfully, look at it honestly. By that we mean to look down deep into our hearts, and try to see just how much or how little the Lord has given us to have and to hold as our very own, not because of what some person mayor may not have said concerning it. We ought to look at it lovingly, holding it above anything that this world could offer. By it we are informed what **to** believe, and also what to do. When we think of the infinite care with which our heavenly Father laid the foundation for our faith in the ages preceding our Age, the care bestowed on the making of examples for us, recording everything of instructive importance from Adam down to the beginning of the Gospel Age, and from there on writing our history in advance, and not ours only but giving such knowledge of the world in general as would be helpful to our spiritual welfare, surely our hearts should overflow with love both for the truth and for our God who gave it.

Now our instructions seem to make it very clear that there are two fundamental principles upon which we are to base our hopes of being with Jesus as members of his glorious Bride: the one is to know, and the other is to do; the one pertains to a knowledge of our instructions, the other to carry them out. Jesus said: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13:17.) Since our instructions have been given by our heavenly Father for the definite purpose of "bringing many sons to glory," it behooves each of us who has this hope within himself (the hope of being with Jesus as a member of that glorified Body) to know all he possibly can concerning those "instructions." This is knowledge. How much or how little any given member will have to acquire is not for us to decide. One thing we may be sure 'of though, the great judge will expect of each one according to his ability. Even in this world the scholar who applies himself to his task of learning, though he may not be brilliant, is looked upon with favor; but he that is slack, careless, is looked upon with disapproval. It has often been said that "we are in the school of Christ." Surely we are expected to be "diligent in business" in the study of our instructions, that we may know the will of our God concerning us.

The evidence that we must have knowledge to be accepted as a prospective member 'of the Body of Christ, is amply shown in the 'experience of "Cornelius" (Acts .10:1-6) , when the angel of the Lord came to him in :a vision and told him to send for Peter and said, "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." And again, Paul speaking of his people (Israel after the flesh) said concerning them: "They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." (Rom. 10:1, 2.) Also we are not to forget the admonition in 2 Tim. 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Now these Scriptures alone prove the absolute necessity of knowledge, and there are many more that lead to the same conclusion. However it does not seem likely that' many of the Lord's people will come short of pleasing him by underestimating the value of knowledge, especially those who have accepted "present truth." They indeed have come to know both how necessary, and how good it is. Through it they" have been given a wonderful vision of God and of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ-a vision so glorious that many of us are still trying to comprehend the grandeur of it. It seems that the Prophet David had this class in mind when he wrote: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." (Psa. 4:7.) The corn and wine was promised to Israel after the flesh, but the gladness of heart was promised to us.

Aside from the inspired Apostles, it seems safe to say that the Church has never had so much knowledge as at the present time, and this knowledge is sweet indeed. It has satisfied the longings of our hearts in a manner that we never could have hoped for. Our blessed Master, true to his promise, has come forth and served his loved ones through that faithful servant. And how happy our hearts have been made, only the Master knows. Who then can sound the depths 'of joy that came with a knowledge of present truth. It has dispelled the doubts and fears engendered by higher criticism, evolution theories, and other "nightmares" too numerous to mention. By gaining an understanding of God's purposes, that peace which "passeth all understanding" came into our hearts, and as our minds became clear of the fog and superstition of the Dark Ages, joy took the place of sadness. Surely those that mourned in Zion, were given "beauty for ashes" and the "garment of praise" for the "spirit of heaviness." - Isa. 61:3.

But in this exuberance of joy some of us seemed to overlook the plain fact that gaining knowledge was not our goal, but that it was given to us as an aid to reach our goal, that we might wisely follow our "instructions" and reach the promised land. Like the Israelites of old, who had to follow their Lord awhile before they came to know his will concerning them; they had to go from Goshen through the "baptism" of the Red Sea, and beyond to Mt. Sinai before they really

'began to be instructed. So it is with us. It is from Sinai on that we begin to learn, and with some of us, it is a long way from Goshen to the Mountain.

Many of the Israelites who came out of Egypt never learned to do the Lord's will: "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said they do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest." (Heb. 3:10, 11.) The Apostle Paul, writing to the Church at Corinth, tells them that these things happened to them for examples (1 Cor. 10:6), and in Hebrews 12 'we are warned in the most forceful language, yet in language most tender, that we should not refuse him that speaketh (God speaks to us now through his Word). It behooves us therefore to apply ourselves diligently to obedience, and not be like unto them that "fell in the wilderness." When we study their behavior now, we probably think how foolishly they acted, and very likely we think had we been there, we certainly would not have done as they did; but let us not be too hasty in our conclusions, but rather let us as spiritual Israelites see to it that we do not err in spirit, as they did in the flesh. It is expected of us that we bear fruit to the glory of God. Jesus said: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." (John 15:8.) If we do not succeed in doing this, are we any wiser than they? Surely it has been proved by precept and by example, that knowledge is one thing, and bearing fruit is quite another; and that sometimes we are more concerned about the former than the latter. This seems to be about as serious a mistake as we could possibly make, for it is our fruit-bearing qualities that will constitute our worthiness to be with Jesus in glory.

One thing we can be sure of while this side the veil (and perhaps beyond it) that "knowledge" is progressive. With some, knowledge is easily and quickly acquired, while with others it is more or less a laborious task. This being true, it should not surprise us to find that some of the Lord's people have a better understanding of doctrine (our instructions) than do others; but unless this greater knowledge is accompanied by a correspondingly greater fruitage of the spirit of Christ, the one possessing it is no better off for having it, because the very reason we have been given this knowledge is that we might be conformed to the image of Jesus, and if it does not assist us in doing that, it will have been given in vain in so far as we are personally concerned. But whether some gain knowledge more quickly than others 'or not, being "changed from glory to glory" is a slow process. "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." Moreover it has been made very easy for all of us to acquire knowledge at this time, for the vision has been made plain upon tables that "he may run that readeth it." But the "mark" for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14) has not been changed, not been made easier. By that we mean it will not be easier for us to love our enemies, and do good 'to those' that hate us and spitefully use us now, than it was for our brethren in the past. It is because we have need of this greater knowledge in these perilous 'times that it has been given.

But all our knowledge will prove no better than a life-boat without food or water, unless it helps us to grow in the likeness of Christ. If we were left to our own understanding of knowledge, and asked to define its relationship to spiritual growth, or how deep a knowledge one could have without a corresponding manifestation of the Spirit of Christ, we would in all probability modify it with the word, elementary, and content ourselves with the thought that one could not go far in knowledge without developing the graces of the spirit. However the Apostle Paul gives us a very clear-cut statement of the relative importance of knowledge and love when he says: "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love] I am nothing."

Another thing we do well to remember in connection with general knowledge is, that no matter how well we may be instructed, our knowledge at the present time is not perfect. In our imperfect condition we can no more be perfect in this knowledge than in any other quality. Why then

should we defer our love for those who (while giving every evidence of consecration to the Lord) may see less or more than ourselves. If the great Apostle Paul could say: "Now we see through a glass darkly," he who was abundant in "revelations," caught- up to paradise, and saw things not lawful to utter, surely we must admit that we do not see plainly. That does not mean that we should not endeavor to see alike. To dwell together in unity of thought and action is certainly the ideal for which to strive. This would be perfection, but we are not perfect. We must let love abound, and cover the imperfections of our brethren with the mantle thereof. Even the Apostles did not see alike on all points, without discussion, and endeavor. This is made *very* plain in the Apostle Paul's Epistle to -the Galatians. Seventeen years after he began his ministry, he went up to Jerusalem, to compare notes so to speak. At that time there was controversy over circumcision and uncircumcision; and later when Peter was come to Antioch, Paul "withstood him face to face." This proves to us that it takes endeavor on our part, and the manifestation of the spirit of the Master to overcome our difficulties.

What a calamity it would have been had love not prevailed among the Apostles. What calamities often come among the brethren today because love does not prevail.

It seems quite certain then that love is a final test; and we might add, love for the brethren, for says the Apostle John: "If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment we have from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also John 4:20,21.) This being true, we have never had better opportunities for demonstrating our love for our heavenly Father than at the present time.

The Lord's people are divided into little groups throughout the world, and unless we take the attitude of the Papacy, we would not dare to say his saints are all in this group, or in that. No, we must admit they are in all the divisions; and since we are not able to judge who, or where, we must say they are all our brethren. If that is true, then how are we showing forth the love of Christ? Surely not by indifference. There is no such thing as "the love of indifference." Neither can we show the love of Christ by lukewarmness. What kind of love is that, you ask -- the love of lukewarmness? It is this kind. It is the kind of love that says: "I love the brethren in all these divisions, I wish them well, I certainly do not wish them any harm. I can not do anything about it, so I forget the whole thing." That is not the love of Christ. If his love went no further than that, we would be lost today. The love of Christ is a saving love, it reaches down to help us up. Jesus had to humble himself to demonstrate that love. Let us therefore go and do likewise.

Let us endeavor by prayer, and by -supplication, and by doing the things we know, "grow in grace" and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

- *W. W. Boutlier.*

Importunate Prayer

When down-hearted and discouraged
At the trend of life's affairs,
Seek, alone, the quiet places;
Give yourself to earnest prayers.

There's a hint for us, emphatic,
In the way our Savior walked;
In the open, solitary,
Oh, how oft with God He talked.

For *all* troubles that infest the
Pilgrim's tortuous, earthly way,
Holy Writ sets forth the antidote
Importunately pray.

I rejoice that God has told us
Always, how to overcome;
How the victory is realized,
The finished fight is won.

We may often feel dejected,
But we never need despair,
If we seek, with Christ, the mountain,
There to wrestle long in prayer.

Pray until the heavens open,
And the earth recedes from view;
Till in all our fiery trials,
God's grand purposes shine through.

- *Leta Hatcher.*

The Sum of All Graces is Love

1 Cor. 15:1-13.

"And now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three; but the greatest of these is Love." - 1 Cor. 13:13. (Continued from last issue)

THE MEASURE of our appreciation of divine Love will be the measure of our zeal in conforming our characters to the divine pattern. A naturally rough, uncouth, depraved disposition may require a long time, after the grace of divine Love enters the heart, 'before that grace is manifest in all the words and thoughts and acts of the outward man. Others, on the contrary, of more gentle birth and cultured training, may without the grace of God within have many of the outward refinements. None but he that readeth the heart is competent therefore to judge as to who have and who have not received this grace, and of the degree of its development in their hearts: but each one may judge for himself, and each one begotten by this holy spirit, Love, should seek to let its light so shine out, through all the avenues of communication with his fellow creatures, as to glorify our Father in heaven and "show forth the glories of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Perfect Love is patient with the weaknesses and imperfections of those who give any evidence of good intentions. More than this, it is patient even with those who are out of the way, and that oppose themselves to righteousness, realizing that the whole world is more or less under the influence of the great adversary who, as the Apostle declares, blinds the minds of the masses. This manifestation of Love was very prominent in our Lord Jesus: how patient was he with his opponents. Let us heed the Apostle's words: "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied [in well doing and patience] and faint in your minds." - Heb. 12:3.

Perfect Love is kind in its methods. It not only seeks to do, good to others, but seeks to do it in the kindest possible manner. And who has not discovered that the manner and tone have much to do with every affair of life. In proportion as perfect Love is attained the effort of the heart will be to have every word and act, like the thought which prompts them, full of kindness. It is well to remember the motto of the old Quaker, -- "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it, nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

Perfect Love is generous and has no place for envy, which, on the contrary, springs from a perverted nature -- from selfishness. Love on the contrary rejoices with them that rejoice, in the prosperity of every good work and word, and in the advancement in Christian grace and in the divine service of all who are actuated by the divine spirit.

Perfect Love is humble -- "vaunteth not itself." It does not sound a trumpet before it. Its good deeds are not done to be seen of men, but would be done just the same if no one saw or knew but God only. It is neither boastful of its, knowledge, nor of its graces, but in humility acknowledges that every good and perfect gift cometh from the Father; and it makes return for every mercy to him. Some one has truly said that-"Love saves a man from making a fool of himself by consequential conduct, and by thrusting himself into positions which betray his incompetence."

Perfect Love is courteous -- "doth not behave itself unseemly." Pride is the root out of which grows most of the unseemly conduct and boorishness so common to those who think themselves

somebody, either intellectually or financially. Perfect Love on the contrary develops courteousness along with humility. A thoughtful man has said, -- "Politeness has been defined as love in trifles. Courtesy is said to be love in little things. The one secret of politeness is to love. A gentleman is one who does things gently, with love."

Perfect Love is unselfish -- "*seeketh* not her own" interests, exclusively. Nothing in this signifies that one should neglect the duty of caring for and providing for those dependent upon him by ties of nature, that he may do good to others. In every sense, "Love begins at home." The, proper thought, as we gather it, is that the men and women possessed of the spirit of perfect love, would not think *exclusively* of their own interests in any of the affairs of life. In bargaining they would have an interest also in the welfare of the one from whom they bought or to whom they sold. They would not wish to take advantage of a neighbor, but sympathetically and generously would wish to "live and let live." Put into exercise, this element of Love would have a great influence upon all the affairs of life, inside as well as outside the home and family.

Perfect Love is good tempered -- "*not* easily provoked" to anger. Among the evils abounding and very common today, is this one of ill-temper, fretfulness, bad humor, touchiness, quickness to take offense. Yet, to whatever extent this disposition is fostered, of willingly harbored, or not fought against, it becomes an evidence of a deficiency and imperfection of our development in the holy spirit of our Father, and of the deficiency of our likeness to our Lord Jesus, our Pattern. Very few of the evidences of a wrong spirit receive as much kindness and as many excuses for their continuance as does this one. But however natural depravity, and heredity, and nervous disorders, may tend toward this spirit of fretfulness, taciturnity, and touchiness, every heart filled with the Lord's spirit must oppose this disposition to evil in his flesh, and must wage a good warfare against it. It will not do to say, "It is my way"; for all the ways of the fallen nature are bad; it is the business of the new nature to overcome the old nature in this as well as other works of the flesh and the devil: and few show to our friends and households more than this the power of the grace of Love. This grace as it grows should make every child of God sweet tempered.

Perfect Love is guileless -- "thinketh no evil." It seeks to interpret the conduct of others charitably. If pure and good intentioned itself, it prefers, and so far as possible endeavors, to view the words and conduct of others from the same standpoint. It does not treasure up animosities and suspicions, nor manufacture a chain of circumstantial proofs of evil intentions out of trivial affairs. Some one has wisely remarked that "faults are thick where love is thin." Love makes all possible allowance for errors of judgment, rather than to impugn the motives of the heart.

Perfect Love is sincere -- "*rejoiceth* not in iniquity." It is grieved by evils wherever encountered, sympathizes with: all who fall into evil, or who are beset by temptations. In this respect Love prompts to an opposite course of action from that of Balaam, who "loved the reward of iniquity." Balaam, it will be remembered, feared the Lord, and as his prophet could not think of doing otherwise than according -to the strict letter of the Lord's injunction; but he did not have the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of Love; and hence, when a reward was offered him if he would curse Israel, he was willing (in order to secure the reward) to conform to the evil proposition in spirit, in intention, while outwardly refraining from saying aught except as the Lord indicated. So there are some amongst Christians who have a respect for the letter of the divine Word through fear, but who lack the holy spirit of Love, and who by reason of a perverted love for wealth, etc., are willing to engage in various practices which come as near to the injury of the Lord's cause as is possible, without openly opposing him. Some of these Balaams are in the ministry and for the sake of salary, and the maintenance of their positions, and the friendship of wealthy Balaks, are willing to preach doctrines which they do not believe (respecting eternal torment, etc.), and in various ways to cast stumbling blocks before spiritual Israel. (Num. 22:7; 31: 16; Rev. 2:14.) The

Apostle mentions these Balaams as being specially represented by false teachers in the nominal Church. - See 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14.

Every one who is seeking to develop in his heart the holy spirit, perfect love, should guard carefully this point of sincerity of motive as well as uprightness of conduct. The least suggestion of rejoicing at the fall of any person or thing that in any degree represents righteousness and goodness, is to be deplored and overcome. Perfect Love rejoiceth not in iniquity under any circumstances or conditions, and would have no sympathy but only sorrow in the fall of another, even if it should mean his own advancement.

Perfect Love "rejoiceth in the truth." -- However profitable error might be, Love could take no part in it, and could not desire the reward of evil. But it does take pleasure in the truth -- truth upon every subject, and especially in the truth of divine revelation; however unpopular the truth may be; however much persecution its advocacy may involve; however much it may cause the loss of the friendship of this world and of those who are blinded by the god of this world. The spirit of Love has such an affinity for the truth that it rejoices to share loss, persecution, distress or whatever may come against the truth and its servants. **In** the Lord's estimate it is all the same whether we are ashamed of him or ashamed of his Word, and of all such he declares that he will be ashamed when he comes to be glorified in his saints.

Perfect Love "beareth all things." -- It is both willing and able to endure for the cause of God-reproaches, reproofs, insults, losses, misrepresentations and even death. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith" - the very center and life of which faith is the holy spirit of Love to the Lord and to them that are his, and sympathetically for the world. Perfect Love can bear up under all circumstances and by God's grace bring us off "conquerors and more than conquerors" through him who loved us.

Perfect Love "believeth all things." -- It is not suspicious, but on the contrary disposed to be trustful. It acts on the principle that it is better if necessary to be deceived a hundred times, than to go through life soured by a distrustful, suspicious mind-far better than to wrongly accuse or suspicion even one person unjustly. This is the merciful disposition, as applied to thoughts, and of it the Master said, "Blessed are the merciful, they shall obtain mercy." The unmerciful, evil thinking mind is father to unmerciful conduct toward others.

Perfect Love "hopeth all things." -- It is not easily discouraged. This is the secret of Love's perseverance; having learned of God, and having become a partaker of his spirit of holiness, it trusts in him and hopes undismayed for the fulfillment of his gracious Covenant, however dark the immediate surroundings. This hopeful element of Love is one of the striking features in the perseverance of the saints, enabling them to endure hardness as good soldiers. Its hopeful quality hinders it from being easily offended, or easily stopped in the work of the Lord. Where others would be discouraged and put to flight, the spirit of Love gives endurance, that we may war a good warfare, and please the Captain of our salvation. Love's hopefulness knows no despair, for its anchorage enters into that which is beyond the veil, and is firmly fastened to the Rock of Ages.

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE ABIDE FOREVER

Not only is Love the greatest of all the graces, and really, as we have seen, the sum of them all in combination and unification, but it is the most lasting grace: Love never faileth -- will never cease; and he who has this character of Love will never fail,, will never cease: It is for such that eternal life has been provided in the divine plan.

Now bear in mind the Apostle's argument to the Corinthian friends:

(1) that the gifts of miracles, tongues, etc., bestowed upon them by the spirit, were divided amongst them according to talent or divine wisdom, and were not the results of their own efforts;

(2) that he is pointing out to them a grace much more excellent than those "gifts," something that God will be pleased to give to each one of them; a grace of more value than any of the "gifts" -- of much more value than all of them together; a grace that might properly be termed a fruitage of the spirit, -- Love. And the fact is that some possessed of few talents have proportionately less to contend against while seeking to cultivate the all-important Love.

Having described this wonderful and necessary element of character in its perfection, the Apostle conies back and contrasts it with those "gifts" which they so highly appreciated and coveted, and shows that the chiefest of those "gifts" are inferior to Love. The gift of prophecy he declares will fail, will cease; because the necessity for prophecy would cease: the miraculous power of speaking with unknown tongues would cease for the same reason: the knowledge of mysteries and the ability to expound the deep things of God will gradually vanish away, as the perfect light gradually comes to all men; for when the full, clear light shall have come there will be nothing hidden, all shall be revealed, and all will, be able to see; hence the gifts of ability to understand mysteries of the divine plan and to expound them to others, although two of the greatest of the gifts, will ultimately vanish in the perfect light: but Love will never fail. It is the greatest thing in this world, and it will continue the greatest thing in the world to come; for, God is Love; and all who would enjoy his favor and its reward, eternal life, must possess this, his holy character.

Pausing, the Apostle remarks how little we all know in the present time; even those who have the largest amount of knowledge and who can expound the divine Word and its hidden mysteries, know *only* in part; they see only obscurely: and while the obscurity will gradually vanish into the perfect light as the Sun of Righteousness arises, yet we will only know in part until that time, when we shall be "changed"; when imperfection shall give place to perfection.

Looking back to childhood we can see that as we have developed physically and grown in knowledge in earthly matters, and have changed our processes of thought and conduct and language correspondingly; so in spiritual matters we should realize that in the beginning of our Christian way we were but "babes"; and we should not be satisfied to remain such, but desire individually to grow up into Christ in all things. And what is true of each individually is true of the Church collectively. The period of the gifts of tongues and miracles was the period of infancy, childhood; as progress was made, under the leading of the holy spirit, certain of those features *very* necessary and well adapted to the childhood stage passed away, and instead came other experiences, methods and leadings in the truth. Hence, today the "tongues" are gone, the "prophesying" in the sense of foretelling future events is gone, the "miracles" are gone, etc., after having served their purposes well. But the Lord still continues to provide in the Church "knowledge," even though it be but imperfect knowledge; he still continues to provide methods for evangelizing or spreading the news of the truth to the unbelieving; he still provides teachers and helps in the Church. But these are not usually provided miraculously, as at first, but naturally and by the addition of the Lord's blessing to natural qualifications. But all these will cease so far as the Church is concerned when her course is finished; -- "when that which is perfect is come," she will have no further need of these imperfect helps.

Three gifts of the spirit, of the kind developed as fruits, will survive; and these three are to be earnestly sought and diligently cultivated; they are Faith, Hope and Love: but the greatest, the chiefest, of these is Love. Faith and Hope, although they are two of the most necessary qualities

for the present time, in aiding us in making our calling and election sure, and two which will never cease to all eternity, will measurably lose their active operations, "when that which is perfect is come"; "because in a large degree and in reference to many subjects, sight and knowledge will take the place of Faith and Hope. But Love will never fail, never fade, never grow dim. It will be as active and glorious and useful in the life to come as it is now. Indeed, the sum of the future perfect life will be Love.

Let us, dear readers, with all our getting, get Love -not merely in word, but in deed and in truth; the Love whose roots are in the "new [heart," begotten in us by our Heavenly Father's Love, exemplified in the words and deeds of our dear Redeemer. All else sought and gained will, be but loss and dross unless with all we secure *Love*. - *Reprints*, pages R2204-R2205.

"Many Infallible Proofs"

No. 3

A short series of meditations, both devotional and doctrinal, on "Jesus and the Resurrection."

"The Lord is risen indeed." - Luke 24:34.

IN THE previous meditation of this series our attention was drawn to the fact that in the paragraph which extends from verse 5 to verse 19 (of 1 Cor. 15:5-19) the Apostle runs together and interweaves two themes. One of these, namely, the historical testimony to the resurrection of Christ, we considered. In this meditation we propose to consider the other, namely, the moral absurdities which one is forced to maintain who denies the resurrection.

In this part of his argument the Apostle develops four logical consequences which must follow if the resurrection be denied. If there be no resurrection of the dead, he insists, then these four things must be true

- (1) Christ is not raised. - 1 Cor. 15:13.
- (2) Our preaching is vain and your faith is vain. - 1 Cor. 15:14, 17.
- (3) Those who fell asleep in Christ are perished. - 1 Cor. 15:18.
- (4) We are of all men most miserable. - 1 Cor. 15:19.

Now his first point is obvious. Jesus was a man, a human being, and if all men perish in the grave, the Man Christ Jesus perished in the grave. But to suppose that **this** man thus perished is, in St. Paul's view, impossible.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, gave expression to the same thought when speaking of Jesus, he declared: "Whom God raised up, having loosed the grip of death, because **it was** not possible that He should be holden of it." -- Acts 2:24.

Death is the wages of sin, and Christ was without sin. It was morally impossible that **He** should remain in the grave. If **He** did not rise -- if all He gained by His grace and wisdom, His piety and love, was thirty odd years of toil and sorrow, culminating in a shameful death under a frowning

heaven, what is God that we should serve Him? what is life that we should love it? what is virtue that we should pursue it? If we believe in a God at all, if we believe that righteousness and love are His attributes, it is utterly, monstrously illogical to suppose that under His rule, by His ordinance or permission, the best Man, the Man so wise, so gentle, so pure and holy, that at His Name every knee bows in reverence, after a brief, sad, life, full of labor, grief and defeat, went down into the thick darkness of annihilation. Such a life as His morally **demand**s a life beyond the grave. A story so fair must have a sequel. A work so divine must mount to its natural and appropriate conclusion. If He who hung upon the cross did not rise to the very heights, there is no God, or God is not righteous. This is the dilemma to which Paul reduces those who deny a resurrection. We can no longer believe in a just and holy God if Christ was not raised. But if He, if one man, if the Man Christ Jesus was raised from the dead, how say some that there is **no** resurrection of the dead? The raising of one man proves that there is a resurrection, that that there **may** be a resurrection for all.

Raised Again for Our Justification

His next point is: If Christ be not raised, then is our preaching (not the act of preaching, but the substance of what was preached) vain, and your faith is also vain; ye are yet in your sins. - 1 Cor. 15:14, 17.

To affirm that the Christian faith should fail to redeem men from sin is as absurd, in the Apostle's judgment, as that the life of Christ should end in death. This time the absurdity is not so obvious; it needs to be elaborated. What, then, did the Apostle mean when he said that if Christ be not raised, they were yet in their sins? Some have supposed that he meant that they were left without any standing before God—that they were still without justification, still reckoned unrighteous by God. In Romans 4:25 the Apostle tells us that Jesus "was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Here, then, in agreement with that Romans passage, he must mean that if Christ be not raised, we are not justified; the burden of our sins must have proved too great a burden for Him; by His death He has failed to expiate sin: He has not accomplished the atonement for which we had hoped; we remain under the condemnation from which we had thought to be saved.

This may, indeed, be in part, his meaning; but it falls very far short of being his complete meaning. Those who do take it as exhausting the Apostle's meaning do so because of a tendency to resolve Christ's work almost, if not quite, wholly into 'a plan of procuring pardon for the sinner, to view it too exclusively in its relation to the penalties of the law, **and to make holiness a consequence rather than an integral part of salvation.** The resurrection of Christ is certainly a proof -- nay, it is the proof -- that His death has been accepted by the Almighty as an all-sufficient offering on our behalf. But while this is doubtless true, it does not seem to us to be the point the Apostle is here making, and is certainly not his whole meaning.

The Power of His Resurrection Manifest in Lives of Believers

The point of his argument, it seems to us, may be expressed in this way: Any faith or religion which does not hold out a hope of eternal life, a hope of life beyond the grave, is incompetent to deliver men from their bondage to evil. The same thought finds expression in verse 32 of this chapter. There he affirms that if men believe they are to die like beasts, they will live like beasts; that if they have no hope of a resurrection, they will say "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." He does not say that this should be so, and for himself and other noble specimens of our race it would doubtless not hold true; but for the great majority of us, alas, it would prove unquestionably true.

Does not universal history confirm his thought? Have not men in every age when hopeless and despairing of the future, resigned themselves to the cravings of appetite and passion? Is it not because of a practical atheism—a practical belief (whatever the outward profession) that this life ends all, that the world has reached its present state of chaos, and is heading rapidly towards anarchy? If St. Paul had not been able to point to a resurrection which gave assurance of a life to come, he might well have felt that the Gospel he preached was vain and that the faith of his hearers was likewise vain. But the Gospel hope of a resurrection, which he had preached amongst these Corinthians, and which by faith they had embraced, had not only justified them from sin in God's sight, but had changed their lives. It was accomplishing their deliverance from sinful lusts, was doing that which, if there be no resurrection hope, could not have been accomplished.

It may thus be seen that the Apostle's point of emphasis, whatever else his words may be taken to mean, is that the changed lives of the Corinthians was a proof of the soundness of their resurrection hopes. If Christ be not raised, we are yet in our sins. We remain under the penalty certainly, but especially under the **power** of sin. In ourselves we are "without strength." It is only as we are joined to the risen Christ, as branches to the Vine, that we are introduced into that "newness of life" and given strength to walk therein. The fact that these Christians to whom Paul wrote had already come so far from the darkness of their old lives, and were progressing so well in the new, was in itself a proof that there was a living, risen Lord to whom they could thus be joined. If Christ be not raised, ye Corinthians are yet in your sins, and this, manifestly, is not the case, for you have forsaken sin as your natural element, and no longer live therein.

Are Those Who Fell Asleep in Christ Perished?

His third point is: If there be no resurrection for men, and there can be none if the perfect Man was not raised, then those who fell asleep in Christ perished.

This, of course, is simply a deduction from the first consequence; for if Christ were not raised, those who slept in Him would share His fate—the Christian dead would perish as He perished, whom they loved and served. But St. Paul draws out this deduction, and lays emphasis upon it, we suppose, because he knows it would touch the hearts of his readers and predispose them to receive the truth. It is hard for us to believe that **we** shall perish when we die; for even when the body grows weak with age, the spirit is young and strong; we feel capable of much and higher work; life has held out many promises not yet fulfilled. Imperfect, weak, and faulty as we know ourselves to be, we feel that we have it in us to become good and brave and wise, if we can only rise into more favorable conditions; and therefore we find it hard to believe that God will cast us away, and with us all the pains He has taken with us—that He will not condescend to find a place and service for us in some mansion of His house. But it is harder still to believe that the men and women we have loved, those noble teachers who taught us what we know, those godly parents who brought us up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, who even amidst the frailties of the flesh were yet distinguished by so much that was pure and noble and beautiful, who so wound themselves about our hearts, not only by the ties of natural affection, but by secret charms of character, hidden, it may be from the world, but known in the privacy of the family and the home, and who fell asleep peacefully in Christ -- it is hard to believe that these have perished.

Deep down in our hearts, beneath all our hopes of life and goodness for ourselves, there may lurk a profound distrust of ourselves; but these, who have been so good, who have loved us so well, who have done so much for men, who have been so serviceable and honorable, and who, when they went from us, seemed more fitted for usefulness than ever, are we to believe, can we believe, that they also have perished? that they have no hope of a resurrection? It is incredible,

inconceivable. What! all the wise teachers who have departed this life stored with high faculties trained to noble uses; the martyrs who, for the love they bore to the truth, went bravely to their deaths; prophets and apostles who wrought righteousness; our fathers and mothers who, in their generation, served God with a constant heart; our innocent children whom we lost in infancy or childhood, whose brief lives were a round of love and purity—are they all gone, never to be resurrected? Has God no place for them, no use for them in His vast universe? Have they after delighting the world with their nobleness, their large charity, their wisdom, their self-sacrifice, their innocence, passed into an oblivion from which they will nevermore emerge? If they have, what is life but an evil dream, with no God to order it, but only a dark, blind chance? That the obstinately wicked and perverse should thus perish we could understand; but that the holy and beloved dead who fell asleep in Christ should have perished -- this is incredible to us as long as we have any faith in God and His wise ordering of human life. They have not perished; they do but sleep; and in God's due time they will be awakened from the sleep of death in resurrection.

Virtue is Its Own Reward

The fourth and last absurdity which St. Paul mentions as resulting from a denial of the resurrection is found in verse 19 which reads: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

It is not that the value of virtue and piety depends altogether on there being a life to come. The Apostle is not discussing the question whether virtue and goodness are not in themselves a great reward. They have their intrinsic claims upon us. Even though we expired at death with no hope of resurrection, it would still be well with us that we should deny the lusts of the flesh and, remembering God, live soberly and righteously in His sight, dwelling, so far as lieth in us, at peace with all men. The Apostle who proclaimed to his hearers at Athens a God in whom all men live and move and have their being; who recognized the craving of the human heart, apart from direct Christian instruction, after an invisible and supreme Ruler of the universe; who exhorted the Philippians to the practice of whatever things were true and honorable, just and pure, lovely and of good report -- he could never have said that a virtuous life, in the commonest acceptation of that term, and apart from the hope of a resurrection, would have made men "pitiable." No one would have allowed more fully that virtue must bring with it its own reward, and that even for its own sake it was worthy to be pursued.

We Labor for Eternity

What, then, does the Apostle mean in the language he employs in this 19th verse? We answer: The Christian life is self-conquest, self-denial, for ends so large that they cannot be reached in this world. To us, as we often say, the present life is our preparation, our school, in which we painfully acquire the virtuous habits, the likeness to Christ, we are to manifest hereafter. If there is to be no hereafter, our painstaking efforts have been largely wasted; we have been mocked and deceived. Our life has been built up on a delusion; it has been ordered on too vast a scale. We have labored for eternity and in preparing for that, we have failed to secure from the few short years of time that have been ours, all they might have yielded us of innocent pleasure and enjoyment. Can anything be more disappointing, is anything more "pitiable" (as the word translated "miserable" more exactly means), than to have thus been diverted from our proper aim and happiness? to have flung away our years in chasing a bubble that bursts as we stretch out our hand to grasp it?

Think of St. Paul. Here was a man of the highest capacities and gifts. He devotes them to teaching a mere fiction. To teach it he endures innumerable hardships, incredible labors; denies himself (not the gratification of sinful cravings which he does well to mortify, but) all the sweet, innocent pleasures of

life, which he might otherwise have enjoyed. And all for what? All for nothing -- all for a lie. Here is a life the most toilsome and hazardous, and it closes in frightful, irreparable disappointment. Is it so much as conceivable that God should betray His noblest and most heroic children into a confusion so pitiable, a defeat so hopeless?

'What Shall We Say to These Things?'

Unless, then, we are prepared to believe these monstrous absurdities, that, though there is a just and wise, a powerful and loving God, the best of men are the most to be pitied, the noblest perish unrecompensed, that God rewarded the perfect life of Christ with annihilation, we must believe, as the Apostle goes on to say in the next verse: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep." St. Paul will not permit us to detach the resurrection from the Christian faith and still call ourselves Christians. He affirms it to be of the very essence of the faith. In our previous meditations we saw that he will not suffer us to suppose that he and the other witnesses of the resurrection were misled by their hopes, or were deceived; he affirms that they were **false** witnesses and not mistaken if Christ did not rise. Our only alternative lies between believing a series of incredibilities, to believe in which, would simply be the death of all love to God and man; or believing in the resurrection of our Lord, and in the hope of a resurrection for all mankind, which His death secured for our race, believing in which, promises life and peace and joy everlasting. If it be hard for us to believe a miracle of grace and mercy, it would be harder still for us to believe in an unjust and cruel God, who betrays us, by a lie, into vain endeavors after holiness and virtue, and then, as a reward for our credulity, smites us into sudden and eternal death. With this sole alternative before us, if we must accept four absurdities so monstrous and unnatural that they dethrone God and reduce human life to an evil dream, or believe in a supernatural act of grace-supernatural to us, but most natural to Him-our choice is not hard. We cannot part with God; we must believe in Him; and therefore we believe also in Christ. We believe that God raised up Christ from the dead, and rejoice in the sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection unto life. We believe that God both raised up the Lord Jesus, and will also raise us up by His power.

"Put to Death in Flesh, but Made Alive in Spirit"

Before closing this meditation we wish to add a word of caution. Up to this point in the Apostle's argument (verse 20), he has carefully refrained from all mention of the question as to the various natures to which it is possible men may be raised. Not until verse 35 does he introduce that phase of the subject into his exposition, and take up the question: "With what manner of body are the dead raised?" He has been occupied with the basic, fundamental theme that there is a resurrection of the dead. He has insisted that Christ Jesus was raised, but he has not said He was raised as a man.

He has insisted that there is to be a general resurrection of the dead, but whether they are to be raised as men or to some other plane of life he has yet to inform us. That he will do so clearly and authoritatively we have no, doubt, for our inspired instructor is one who "shrank not from declaring anything that was profitable." (Acts 20:20, A. R. V.) It is our hope to consider this intensely interesting and profitable portion of his exposition in our next meditation. Meantime, while rejoicing in the words he addressed to the men on Mars Hill, that God had appointed a day in the which He intended to judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He had ordained; "whereof He bath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31), we may be preparing our minds for his further enlightenment by pondering the words of the Apostle Peter in reference to our Lord: He was "put to death in flesh, but made alive in spirit." - 1 Pet. 3:18, Diaglott, word for word translation.

- P. L. Read

The Meeting of the Posts

"One post shall run to meet another." - Jer. 51:31.

A CORRESPONDENT calls our attention to the difference in the reading of various Greek MSS. of Acts 13:18-20, and to the fact that there has arisen quite a controversy in the ranks of the textual critics and translators of the New Testament over this difference. Our correspondent is particularly interested in the bearing it has on Bible Chronology.

This passage is a portion of the Apostle Paul's address before the Jewish congregation in the synagogue at Antioch. The Authorized Version reads: "18. And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 19. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the Prophet."

The essential difference in the original text is in the twentieth verse. Tischendorf, in a foot-note in his annotated New Testament, calls attention to this variation from the Authorized Version, in the three oldest Greek MSS., the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrine Codices, all of which read: "He distributed their land to them for an inheritance, about four hundred and fifty years: and after that he gave unto them judges until Samuel the Prophet."

The latter translation, taken *verbatim et literatim* (word for word and letter for letter), would seem to say that Israel occupied the land for 450 years, *then* were given judges for an *additional* time, which can be shown from the Book of Judges to be 450 years. But we have been unable to find any chronologer who holds that the period from the division of the land to Samuel, or Saul, was twice 450, or 900, years.

The Rev. Philip Doddridge, "an English dissenting divine, 1702-1751," together with some more recent expositors, dates the 450 years back to Isaac's birth. This quite obviously does considerable violence to the Apostle's line of argument. He is giving a consecutive account of the events of Israel's history. If Rev. Doddridge's theory were correct, the Apostle would be retracing his steps for 450 odd years -- he has already mentioned the deliverance from Egypt, the forty years in the wilderness, the destruction of the seven nations of Canaan, and the allotment of the land to the Tribes. He goes right on from there to the Kings and the coming of the Messiah of David's line. To say that the Apostle interrupts his narrative by referring back to the time of Isaac's birth, without mentioning that event, seems to us, as the well-known commentator Barnes remarks, "a forced and strained interpretation, manifestly made to meet a difficulty." Dean Alford, another very able commentator, says: "Treating the various readings as an attempt at correcting the difficult chronology of our verse, and taking the words as they stand, no other sense can be given them than that the time of the judges lasted four hundred and fifty years. The dative (*etesi*, in years) implies the duration of the period between (*tauta*, these [events]) the division of the land and Samuel the Prophet inclusive."

However, it seems to us, the passage as it appears in the three oldest Greek MSS. and in the translations following this version, may be readily understood in harmony with the statement as it is rendered in the King James Version, if we make due allowance for the differences in Greek and English idiom; and consider the context of Paul's address, from its beginning in Acts 13:17 to its end in verse 41. Herein the Apostle reviews the history of Israel from two standpoints, man's and God's, the civil and the spiritual. With the former his hearers were all familiar, and they

believed it; but not all believed in God's personal supervision of their affairs, which the Apostle was seeking to convince them of. In opening his address Paul recognized these two classes before him: "Men of Israel [in general] *and* ye that fear God [in particular] give audience." He then proceeds with his review of Israel's history, with frequent interpolations pointing out God's overruling care, and closes with a stern note of warning to the "despisers" of his announcement of the Messiah, whom God had at long last sent.

This understanding of Paul's mind and audience makes clear his meaning in verses 19 and 20. As a matter of historical fact, Israel had received the land of Canaan from their fathers, to whom it had been promised, and enjoyed its possession for four hundred and fifty years. During that time they did with it as they pleased. After that they relinquished their inheritance to their kings, and they became the servants of their rulers. Samuel, the last of the judges, makes this clear in his address to Israel, when they came to him demanding a king, as related in 1 Samuel 8:10-18. Under a king, he said, their lot would be very different from the free-and-easy pastoral life they had been leading under the judges. It proved to be just as Samuel said; as, for instance, King Solomon's "levy" or "tribute" (margin) of a hundred and eighty thousand men . for forced labor-as detailed in 1 Kings 5:13-16.

These are some of the things of which Paul is reminding his hearers. "The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers . . . brought them out of Egypt . . . [to] Canaan ... divided the land to them by lot . . . [for an inheritance for four hundred and fifty years] and after that [not after the 450 years, but, logically, after the last previous thing he had mentioned that the Lord had done for them, the subjugation and allotment of the land-the giving of an inheritance-now he gives them the leadership they need to enable them to hold it] *he* gave them judges until [up to and including] Samuel, and afterward *they* [not God] desired a king."

God had given them release from Egyptian bondage; the promised land for their possession; judges -- champions -- supermen -- to be their leaders for 450 years; then kings at their demand; and now, finally, a Messiah. This was the burden of the Apostle's message; all else was merely incidental.

KING DAVID'S ANCESTRY

The length of the period of the judges is an essential link in Bible chronology, and the Apostle's statement is particularly important, as other references to this period are indefinite and apparently incoherent. It has been asserted, as indicating that the period could not have been 450 years long, that the genealogy of King David during this time, as given in Ruth 4:21, 1 Chronicles 2:11, Matthew 1:5, and Luke 3:32, shows but four 'generations, which would make the average age of each of these ancestors at the birth of his son considerably in excess of one hundred years; and that this is not consistent with the average length of the generations immediately preceding and following this period.

This difficulty again arises from failure to recognize the difference between Hebrew and English idioms. In Scriptural Hebrew there are no words corresponding in exact meaning to the English words ancestor, descendent, grandfather, grandson, etc. The Hebrew words for father, son, begot, etc., may refer to immediate generations, or to descent with several or many intervening procreators. New Testament writers in Aramaic and Greek follow the Hebrew usage; the genealogical records of the ancestors of Joseph and Mary, which included those of King David, being copied in abbreviated form, from the Hebrew.

Thus the Greek word used by Matthew, which is translated "begat," has the same broad significance as the corresponding Hebrew term. In Luke's genealogy the word "son" is supplied by the English translators, except in the case of Jesus himself. Of him it is written that he was "supposed" to be the "son" of Joseph, whose father was Jacob (Matthew 1:16); but according to Luke, Jesus was actually "of" Heli, who was presumably the father of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Joseph is said to be "of Heli" because he was the legal heir of Heli; which is perfectly good Hebrew idiom. (Luke 3:23.) Our object, however, is not now to offer a reconciliation of the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, but to call attention to obvious shortenings of their lists.

These two genealogies indicate that Joseph and Mary had a common ancestor about four hundred and fifty years before Jesus' birth, named Zerubbabel. Matthew shows ten progenitors between Zerubbabel and Joseph; Luke lists nineteen for the same period. Between David and Zerubbabel Matthew names seventeen generations; Luke shows twenty-two for this period. This discrepancy is partly explained by Matthew's omission of the names of three kings of Judah from his list. He says "Joram begat Uzziah" (Matt. 1:8), whereas the Books of Chronicles and of Kings state that Joram was the great-great-grand father of Uzziah (or Ozias); Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah intervening. Hence it is seen that it is as entirely proper in Scriptural language to speak of an ancestor "begetting" a descendent in the fourth generation as it is of a father begetting his own son.

Recognizing these facts, it is not hard to believe that there were several generations omitted in naming those from Salmon to Jesse, the father of King David. It would be entirely proper to translate the Hebrew of Ruth 4:17, 21 to read: "Salmon was the ancestor of Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, and Obed was the progenitor of Jesse, and Jesse begat David." This presumably is the oldest record; the others are all copies, with the same significance.

Certainly this genealogy of the period of the Judges need give us no difficulty, in consideration of the inspired Apostle's statement that "God gave them judges until Samuel the Prophet," for a period of "about four hundred and fifty years"; particularly as the sum of the "servitudes," judgements and "rests" mentioned in the Book- of judges amounts to just what the Great Apostle *said* -- "*about* four hundred and fifty years" - certainly not substantially *less* than that.

- H. E. Hollister.

Report of British Pilgrimage

Dear Brethren:

Warm Christian love and greetings to you and all of like precious faith. These lines come to you in the nature of a report of my pilgrim trip thus far in the British Isles.

The journey across the Atlantic was uneventful save for the tokens of love and thoughtfulness which were delivered to my cabin the day following departure from New York harbor. Kind friends had anticipated my needs and the scarcity abroad and had made up a generous box of things too numerous to mention. Both before leaving home and since reaching this land, I have experienced blessings from the Lord in the many manifestations of love shown me by brethren who have done much to make my journey a comfortable and happy one.

England has experienced the worst winter and spring that any of the present generation can recall, and there has been much suffering and loss as a result of the cold, snow, and floods. Millions of sheep and cattle died, and much of the land is too wet to produce crops. Many have been a part of the time without a fire, due to a coal shortage, and all are severely rationed on nearly all the necessities of life. However, I have yet to hear any complaint from brethren.

It was raining when we landed and has rained every day since. I did not expect any one to meet me until I arrived at Waterloo Station, my London destination; and so was agreeably surprised when, having finished with the customs officials, I was hailed by Brother Jennings of London who had left London at 2 a.m. in order to reach Southampton in time to aid me in my train trip to London. He spotted me by first locating my baggage, which was of course tagged with my name, and then waited until I came along and claimed it. Needless to say I greatly appreciated the kindly spirit that prompted him to go to so much inconvenience on my behalf. There were four brethren waiting to receive us at Waterloo Station, who extended to me a very hearty welcome, a foretaste of the spirit that has been manifest wherever I have gone.

Up to the present time it has been my privilege to meet with sixteen different groups and also an Eastertide convention held at Warrington. The Classes here compare favorably in size with those of our own land, and I have found them deeply spiritual and zealous for the truth and for the ministry of the truth. I have addressed only one meeting for the public thus far, but I am told that there are several scheduled before I reach London. Yelvertoft, the place where the one public witness was given, is only a small village, but there were 27 visitors present beside the 20 friends from Rugby. The brother who arranged the meeting had worked hard to advertise it, mostly by personal invitation, and so was gratified when in addition to people of various beliefs, three ministers of local churches turned out and gave close attention to the message, "The Desire of All Nations at Hand."

I very greatly enjoyed the convention at Warrington which opened Saturday afternoon, April 5th, and closed Monday night, April 7th, but found myself wishing that all of you might have been present to enjoy it with **me**. The only item on the program that appeared more than once was "Tea." This possibly does not mean much to most of you, but when one realizes the sacrifice of the friends, the self-denial practiced in the use of their valuable points (stamps in their ration books) in order that they might provide food and drink for all those, who would attend, he eats what is set before him with a deep sense of appreciation for the spirit of God in his people. That was a Lenten self-denial of which I feel sure the Father took notice.

The greatest number present at any one time was about 265. Some, however, could be there for only a portion of the time, so I presume that at least 300 did attend. I took no notes, so cannot attempt to give a report of the discourses. The subjects used were all presented in a very interesting and helpful way, and were quite evidently designed to encourage us to faithfulness in fulfilling our consecration vows.

The first subject, "Remember," made us think of what God has done for his people in the past so that we might keep alive our confidence which hath great recompense of reward.

We next were admonished in "Redeeming the Time" -- buying time back from daily occupations that we might both study and also serve the Lord in whatever opportunities we have to witness.

"The Gift of God," as set forth, helped us to **see** not only the value to us in the sacrifice of our Redeemer, but also the great cost of that Gift and the love that prompted it.

"The Perfecting of the Saints," was described as being God's work in us, a work which only his spirit can accomplish, but a work in which he requires our daily and whole-hearted cooperation.

"The Final Warning" was educed from Rev. 14:9, and reminded us that the ones whom God will approve will take no part in assisting the civil or religious organizations of this evil world.

"Ephesians 1:18" was discussed in the light of the purpose of God as revealed by Paul in this wonderful Epistle-the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus-a hope that would stagger belief if it were not so fully and definitely promised. Manifestly, no one could merit such a hope: it is wholly of God's grace and will. Our part is to exercise faith, to take God at his word.

"Jesus: the Light of the World," as set forth in the 9th chapter of John's Gospel, clearly shows the importance of the heart condition if we would see the light and profit thereby. The man born blind was typical of all who come out of the darkness of this world into the light of truth as revealed in Christ.

The last speaker brought to a climax a series of talks that had been uplifting and inspirational to Christian living, by invoking "The High Priestly Blessing." (Num. 6:24-26.) He pointed out that the vital thing in faith was whom we believe rather than what we believe; and he urged us to a full and unreserved renewal of our consecration vows, so that the Priestly Blessing might rest upon us in full measure. Such a blessing was the final act of our Great High Priest before he ascended up to heaven. - Luke 24:50,51.

Our British friends love to sing, and they use many hymns that are not familiar to us. Unfortunately, for me at least, the tunes are not in their hymn books, so each Class has a book it has compiled for the organist to use. They are planning to publish a book that will combine both words and music, and when finished, I feel sure many of us will wish copies.

I am appreciating very much the opportunity of fellowship with our British brethren, and am hoping that our Heavenly Father may make my sojourn with them a means of blessing to all with whom I meet, for many have assured me of their prayers to this end.

Your brother and fellow-servant by his grace,

- *John T. Read.*

"Heaven"

The Great Company are made to feel their failure by the fierceness of judgment sorrows, and they come to a better mind. By the depths of their penitence, and by the sorrowful earnestness of their seeking unto Jesus in the last extremities, they obtained forgiveness and are admitted into heaven. Ashamed for a time as to their unfaithfulness, and though having lost their place among the crowned ones, the elder explains that they are permitted "to stand before the throne of God" and are made servants in God's house. A few observations might be in order:

They are in heaven. This is a great thing to say of any one. It is to be in the enjoyment of an estate, by the side of which all the exaltation, honor, and glory this world can bestow, shrinks into utter nothingness. "Oh, if I can only get to heaven," is often the highest word and thought of the noblest and purest hearts. And this goal of pious longing, these palm-bearers have reached.

They are where the golden-crowned elders and glorious living ones are. They are where the holy angels stand round about them in serried ranks of glory upon glory. They are where the almighty throne is located, where God is, and where the Lamb shows himself in all his sublime kindness and power. They are where the pure worship of God ascends forever in the presence of the eternal Deity, and the Amens to every strain of adoration come in from principalities and powers.

They are in heaven! True they have no crowns, no thrones, no dominions. They stand while others sit, and serve while others reign. True they come in after all the places of the First-born are filled. But still they are in heaven. Bright, beautiful, lovely, untainted, imperishable, heaven.

And yet this is only a lesser part of heaven. There are higher dignities, and sublimer joys. As glorious crowns exceed palm-branches, as kings are above servants, and sitting in a throne is greater than standing before one, and being a "pillar in the temple" is beyond that of serving in it, even so is the heavenly estate of "him that overcomes" greater than that of these palmbearers.

It is something to have one's name introduced to the favorable consideration of kings and great men of this earth, and the higher the dignity of the one who presents, the sublimer is the honor. The overcomers are to be confessed before the Father, and his holy angels, and there is a blessedness in this promise beyond what we might on first hearing suppose.

It means that the very Son of God, to whom all authority in heaven and earth has been given, proposes to present these overcomers to the eternal Father, as his acknowledged friends, for whom he vouches and for whom he stands, as candidates for enthronement amid the principedoms and sublime fellowships among the heavenly powers.

- Written about 1865, by *J. A. Seiss*.

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren in Christ:

My last letter of October 27, 1946 I suppose reached you. The post connection is getting better.. We hope, therefore, it will soon be possible to receive again the "Herald of Christ's Kingdom," to which we are looking forward with pleasure.

A few days ago we received a glad surprise. It was a package sent by the Institute. It arrived just at the right time, because never was there so much need in our country as just now. This winter most people in our city have neither potatoes nor fuel. Many people are hungry and cold. The schools, and business places are closed, as there is no fuel, and we do not know how long it will last. So we received the package as sent through the "raven" of Elijah. We have no relatives after the flesh in America, so much more we rejoice over this gift, and we share it with other needy friends. They all send you their, heartfelt thanks. May our Lord reward you for *your* love and care. Grace and peace be unto you through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear brethren in Christ, it is wonderful to know that we are all members of one Body and that we are united through the spirit of God with the Head of the true Church. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Rom. 8:16.) If we always stay in harmony with God's Plan and do not try to go our own way, then God's help and grace will always be with us. We have received many proofs of his grace in the past years. Our house is exposed on a hill of our city. All around us, other houses were demolished or damaged; our house stood intact. Once Satan arranged it that on top of our house a defense post was raised. All our neighbors were alarmed; but God protected us marvelously. Often we heard people say, On this house there rests a special blessing; and it was so. Over my desk hangs again the picture of our dear Brother Russell. For a time we had to hide it. Also the *Studies in the Scriptures*, the "Herald" and other Bible helps we had to hide. But they were preserved for us and today we are able to help others.

At the end of 1944 I received the command to help in military training. I refused and was taken by the N. S. D. A. P. Then I went through a sad time. Later I came in American and French prison camps. I am not permitted to write about my experiences, but everywhere I proclaimed the message of the Kingdom of God, and I brought blessings to the desperate and homeless people. For one year I have been home among my dear ones, and I can say the Lord led us wonderfully through all the trouble. Our faith has increased.

The good years that helped to build our faith passed quickly, then came war with the power of evil, and we still wait for the manifestation of the sons of God, and the triumph of faith. By the signs of the times we recognize that the Kingdom of God will soon be made manifest. There are three things that come to our attention: the signs among the Jews; the signs among the nations; and the signs among the Church, both true and false. Much could be said on the subject, but not in this letter. The love of Christ surpasses all knowledge. Love was with our Lord the guiding point of all his work, so we also can serve one another in love. (Gal. 5:13.) Only then can our hope be a living hope, and we can say with the Apostle Paul: Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, what God hath prepared for those that love Him.

We thank the Lord for he is good. May the peace of God rule in your hearts and keep you to the end. With greetings and best wishes,

Your, brother in Christ,

F. P. -- Germany.

Dear Brethren:

We have received safely a little while ago your valuable package of food. The contents has us very rejoiced. Many thanks for your work of charity and your trouble. May God reward you. The nourishing food helps to regain my health, because I have fallen ill of abscesses in the jaw since the middle of January, and afterwards I had a face and head erysipelas. It is very painful and disagreeable. The whole face and head are covered with salve. Now I hope that the critical phase is passed.

I will write you fully as soon as the Lord, gives me back my health. You must excuse this short letter.

Since New Years Day it is very cold in Germany. It is the fifth wave of coldness in this hard winter. The displaced persons suffer' most of all. It is impossible to describe.

Our ardent desire is for that blessed condition coming when the King of truth and peace will take his power and reign. Then all will see the futility of human efforts to bring in this reign of peace.

This letter is written and translated in English by my son Charles, named after Brother Russell. You will excuse the poor English as my son has only his knowledge from the school.

We greet you with 1 Thess. 1:2-4, Col. 3:4, and 1 John 2:2i8.

Your brother in Him,
J. O. -- Germany