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Thanksgiving Thoughts

"My cup runneth over." - Psalm 23:5

GRATITUDE pre-eminently distinguishes the people of God. This is the lesson of the tenth leper. Sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise continually ascend to the heavenly throne as each saint responds to the divine goodness manifested in his daily experiences. The outpourings of a grateful heart have been likened to the little bird, which when drinking, constantly raises its head as if thus to thank its beneficent Provider. So also do our hearts overflow with gratitude for the matchless grace bestowed upon us by the "Giver of every good and perfect gift," who has "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies." But where shall his praise begin and what words can our "stammering, lisping tongues" utter which will adequately convey to our Father our love and adoration? Who has not felt this lack and yearned for fulness of expression?

Poetic souls have endeavored thus to do, and truly beautiful are some of the poems which have been written. But He who searcheth the heart and knoweth our every longing, and our very thoughts afar off, has wonderfully provided for even this want. In the Book of Psalms He has graciously caused to be recorded "words" expressive of the deepest emotional feeling. Luther has well said:

"Where do we find a sweeter voice of joy than in the Psalms of thanksgiving and praise? The Psalter forms a little book for all saints, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find psalms and sentiments which shall apply to his own case, and be the same to him as if they were for his own sake alone; so expressed as he could not express them himself, nor find, nor even wish them better than they are. Therefore, God, seeing that we know not what or how we ought to pray, as the Apostle saith, and desiring to help our infirmities, after the manner of schoolmasters who compose for children letters or short prayers, that they may send them to their parents, so prepares for us in this Book both the words and feelings with which we should address our Heavenly Father, - and pray concerning those things which in the other books he had taught us we ought to do and to copy, that so a man may not feel the want of anything

which is of import to his eternal salvation. So great is the loving care and grace of our God toward us, who is blessed forevermore."

How marvelous that the Lord, in addition to all his lavish gifts, has thus also provided even the language which we may borrow to express our gratitude to him!

For this thanksgiving meditation, let us draw on these precious words, and may they reflect the heart of each one who reads them. Omitting our own comments, we shall, to accentuate the forcefulness and beauty of the Psalms, preface each separate group with verses from a beautiful poem (author unknown) which is the basis of one of our hymns. Thus, like a great strophe and antistrophe, each shall reflect and enhance the other; the lovely thoughts of a human heart echoed by the loftier and nobler strains of the spirit of God.

"When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

"O how shall words, with equal warmth,
The gratitude declare
That glows, within my inmost heart!
But Thou canst read it there."

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches." "In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul." "I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the works of thy hands." "Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: to show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep." "I will praise thee with my whole heart; before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy name. In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul. All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they shear the words of thy mouth. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord." - Psa. 104:24; 94:19; 143:5; 86:15; 16:5-7; 116:12; 92:1-5; 138:1-5.

"Thy Providence my life sustained,
And all my wants redrest,
When in the silent womb I lay
And hung upon the breast.

"Unnumbered comforts to my soul
Thy tender care bestowed,
Before my infant heart conceived
From whom these comforts flowed."

"Thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." "Thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make the trust when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God since my mother -bare me." "By thee have I been holden up from the womb; thou 'hast been my benefactor from my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee." - Psa. 139:13-16; 22:9, 10 A.R.V.; 71:6 A.R.V.

"To all my weak complaints and cries
Thy mercy lent an ear,
Ere yet my feeble thoughts had learned
To form themselves in prayer.

"When in the slippery paths of youth
With heedless steps I ran;
Thine arm, unseen, conveyed me safe,
And led me up to man."

"Thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord." "Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." "Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip." "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy Word." "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." -- Psa. 71:5; 103:13, 14; 25:7; 71:17; 94:16-18; 18:35, 36; 119:9; 37:23, 24; 40:2, 3.

"Through hidden dangers, toils, and deaths,
It gently cleared my way;
And through the pleasing snares of vice,
More to be feared than they.

"When worn with sickness, oft hast thou
With health renewed my face;
And, when in sins and sorrows sunk,
Revived my soul with grace."

"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved 'him out of all his troubles. 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." "When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell." "For by thee I have run

through - a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall." "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." "I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee. "O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girdeth me with gladness." "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." - Psa. 34:6-8; 27:2; 18:29; 61:2; 41:4; 30:2, 3, 11; 103:1-5.

"Thy bounteous hand with earthly bliss
Hath made my cup run o'er;
And, in a kind and faithful friend,
Hath doubled all my store.

"Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ;
Nor is the least a cheerful heart,
That tastes these gifts with joy."

"Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: Thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it." "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation." "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and -it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord." "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me. O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." "Many, O Lord my 'God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and 'thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." - Psa. 65:9; 68:19; 128:1-4; 139:17, 18, 5, 6; 40:5.

"Through every period of my life
Thy goodness I'll proclaim;
And after death, in distant worlds,
Resume the glorious theme.

"Through all eternity to Thee
A grateful song I'll raise;
And my eternal joy shall be
To herald wide Thy praise."

"I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord."

"I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore."
"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. For who in the heavens can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?" "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing." "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever:: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory: Amen, and Amen." -- Psa. 22:22; 34:1-3; 104:33,34; 86:12; 89:1,6; 107:21,22; 72:18,19.

Our hearts, lifted up by these wonderful strains of praise and gratitude for God's unending goodness, forget "the light afflictions which are but for a moment" and thrill to the future prospects, the bliss to come, and the praise that yet awaiteth God in Zion. For our debt of praise will never end, and the attainment of victory will but begin for us an eternity of thanksgiving opened by our "casting our crowns before him, lost in wonder, love, and praise." Our fellowship with him now will continue then enhanced, forevermore.

The words of Wihtol's beautiful hymn are appropriate to our thoughts:

"My God and I, go through the fields together,
We walk and talk as good friends should and do,
We clasp our hands, our voices ring with laughter,
'My God and I, walk through the meadow's hue.

"He tells me of the years that went before me,
When heav'nly plans were made for me to be,
When all was but a dream of dim conception,
To come to life, earth's verdant glory see.

"My God and I will go for aye together,
We'll walk and talk and laugh as good friends do,
This world will pass and with it common trifles,
But God and I, will go unendingly."

We long for that day when the rapt strains of the new song which fell on the entranced ears of John in Patmos shall be heard everywhere, for then, as he wrote: "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honor, and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Then shall be heard the great Hallelujah, that mighty burst of gladness which is the last Psalm, like the very summit and climax of the praise that can ascend to God, the loftiest wave of the many waters that break at the foot of his throne:

"Praise ye the Lord.
Praise God in His sanctuary:
Praise Him in the firmament of His power.
Praise Him for, His mighty acts:
Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.
Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet.
Praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance:
Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.
Praise Him upon the loud cymbals:
Praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals.
Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

- *W. J. Siekman.*

Sin-Offering Made by High Priest

Question. -

For what sins do the Church suffer?

Answer. -

The members of the Church suffer for any sins of the flesh they do not properly repent of and properly make amends for. The Apostle says that if we would judge ourselves, if we would punish ourselves, correct ourselves, we would not be judged of the Lord. If we would thoroughly attend to these matters ourselves, we would not need to be chastened by the Lord. When he finds it necessary to deal with us, it is that we may not be condemned with the world.

The whole world is in a condemned condition. God is choosing some who will be justified to life everlasting on the spirit plane. If we are faithful, it will not be necessary for the Lord to punish us, but rather to encourage and help us. This would not mean that we shall not have trials and difficulties, but it does mean that if we chasten ourselves, we shall not be punished by the Lord for our sins, for the weaknesses of our flesh which we might have avoided, and for which we are to some extent responsible.

We are not to suppose that a New Creature would sin willfully. If he thus sinned, he would be no longer a New Creature. He would have gone back, like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. The sins that the New Creature would suffer for would be those sins of the flesh which he might have avoided, and which he failed to correct. These sufferings would give him a sharper' appreciation of his duties; they would be disciplining for his good.

But this may not be the thought of the questioner.

He may mean, "What has the Church to do with the Sin-offering?" The Church has nothing to do with the Sin-offering, as a Church. It is the Lord Jesus who is the responsible One in the whole matter. In the type it was not the under priests that did the offering, but the high priest. So it was the Lord Jesus that offered up himself. He offers us up as his members, but he does not do this contrary to our wills. We desire that he will offer us up as parts of himself, that we may thus have a share in "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow." It is his merit alone that gives virtue to our sacrifice.

The whole responsibility, therefore, is in the hands of the great High Priest, our Lord. We share with him in the world's Sin-offering, as *his* members. We participate in the sufferings which are accounted as *his* sufferings.. You and I could not atone for sins by our sufferings-either for our own sins or for those of others. That is all in the Lord's hands. -

Reprints, p. R5729, W. T., July 15, 1915, p. 217.

"I Have So Much to Live For"

I have so much to live for
Since Christ my soul redeemed,
Life glows with radiant meaning
Of which I had not dreamed.
Old selfish aims and pleasures
Have faded, now, from view,
And to my raptured vision
Have all things been made new.

I have so much to live for;
Henceforth my life must be
A gift of consecration
To Him who died for me;
Henceforth, my sole ambition,
To know, to do, His will
With glad, obedient service
The passing hours to fill.

I have so much to live for!
I must redeem the time
For soon I shall be hearing
The bells of ev'ning chime:
O blessed life of service
For Him I dearly love!
O life supremely blessed,
With Him -- at Home above!

- *T. O. Chisholm.*

The Voice From Heaven

"Ye must be born again." -- John 3:7

ALL members of the new creation, the circumstances which surrounded the birth to the spirit nature of the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, should ever be matters of consuming interest. As we who are still in the flesh look forward with longing to the day when the final one of the feet members of the Body of Christ shall finish his course and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, it seems natural that our thoughts should revert to that day so long in the past that witnessed the new birth of the great Leader, the Elder Brother of all those to whom has been given the privilege of being "members of the Church of the Firstborn."

It was the Apostle Paul who forever settled for us the question as to when that memorable happening occurred. In his sermon as recorded in Acts 13:33 he quoted the words of David in the second Psalm: "Thou art my son, this day have I brought thee forth." "This day," that is, on the morning of the resurrection. Just as is the case with each one of his followers, this spirit birth of our Lord had been preceded by a begetting, of the spirit, one that had taken place three and a half years before' at the Jordan, upon which occasion Jesus had instituted the rite of water baptism by himself symbolizing his full consecration in that manner. This he had done in the face of the protests of John the Baptist who, in wonder that one pure and holy as he knew Jesus to be, should need baptism, exclaimed, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" to which Jesus answered, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." 0-Matt. 3:14, 15.

And so the Lord here set us an example that we should follow in his steps. The Master's experiences at this period as he approached the hour of his begetting of the spirit was in many ways analogous to that of his followers to a greater extent than is commonly realized. When Jesus told Nicodemus (John 3:3-5) that "except a man be born [begotten] again of water and the spirit, he cannot see [eiden-comprehend] the Kingdom of God," that is, the things of the spirit, he was not excluding himself from the principle he was laying down. Before Jesus offered himself at the Jordan he was a natural man, not one however who was in any sense fallen or imperfect, for our Lord was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, but he was a natural man in the same sense that Adam prior to the fall had been one. Adam had been the perfect human image of a spiritual, heavenly Creator, and it had pleased the Father to crown him with the glory and honor of perfect manhood. Thus the Jesus of early manhood was an exact copy of the first man Adam, as that man had come fresh from the hands of his Creator. However, as at that time Jesus had not been re-begotten, in the terms he himself enunciated later, he was unable to fully comprehend the things of the spirit.

WHAT DID JESUS-KNOW OF HIS PRE-EXISTENCE?

The Scriptures do not give us direct and definite information as to the precise moment in his earthly career when Jesus became aware of his identity with the pre-human Logos. They are silent concerning most of the period that extended from his infancy to his maturity. The only exception is the incident recorded in the second chapter of Luke's Gospel, where in verse 46 the Evangelist describes the scene in the temple at Jerusalem in which the twelve-year-old Jesus was found discussing the Scriptures with the learned doctors of the Law. Apart from this account Luke merely tells us that "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit [character, disposition] filled with

wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him" (ver. 40), and again that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. - Ver. 52.

It seems evident that the only clues to his unique identity that Jesus could have possessed at that time were those embodied in the recollection by his mother of the miraculous circumstances surrounding his birth. The announcement that had been made to her at the mouth of the angel Gabriel, to the effect that she, the humble Jewish maiden, had been selected by the Most High to become the mother of that descendant of David who was destined to reign over the house of Jacob forever (Luke 1:31, 32), had doubtless made the strongest kind of impression upon her deeply religious mind, as well it might. Then added to this, was her betrothed husband's dream in which an angel had appeared -to Joseph, reassuring him of the purity of his espoused wife Mary, and of the heavenly paternity of her unborn child. (Matt. 1:20.) There was also the experience of the shepherds and later of the wise men from the East to deepen her conviction that this child of hers was no ordinary one. The fact that Mary accepted without a murmur the strange statement made to her by the angel, one which was contrary to all human experience, shows the tremendous strength of her faith in the power of God, and it should astonish no one to learn that Mary pondered all these things in her heart. (Luke 2:19.) As soon as Jesus had grown to years of understanding, doubtless she communicated to him all that she knew concerning him. It was to his knowledge of these things that we attribute the answer made by the child to his parents' inquiry concerning his apparent desertion of them, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49.)

The Scriptures tell us that after the temple episode, the Child returned with his parents to their home in Nazareth and "was subject to them" presumably through the years of his childhood and adolescence. - Luke 2:51.

The knowledge of the Scriptures that Jesus showed he possessed from the very beginning of his ministry, is conclusive proof that from a very early age he had had access to the prophetic writings, and with his perfect mind had been able to retain in his memory everything he had read in the sacred books. In the tenth chapter of Hebrews, from the fifth to the ninth verses, the inspired Apostle gives to the student the impression that he was mentally projecting himself into the mind of the young man Jesus of the pre-Jordan period and to be in fancy tracing the course of reasoning which had led to the offering of himself by Jesus at the Jordan at the moment he had attained the age of thirty. May we not also as Bible students, and in all reverence, endeavor by the use of our sanctified reason to follow mentally in the same course.

To begin with, the Apostle seems to picture Jesus as sharing David's thought (Psalm 40), that Israel had failed to secure everlasting atonement for human depravity through the typical sacrifices of bulls and goats, etc., and that he realized the need of a better sacrifice, one which would for all time atone for sin and restore Israel to God's favor. David had perhaps the willing heart, as his words in the Psalm seem to indicate, but Jesus with his perfect powers of reasoning saw something which David could not see, namely, that the only kind of sacrifice which God could regard as acceptable as a ransom must be a perfect one, and not that of an animal at all. In order to meet the exact requirements of the law of Justice, the perfect sacrifice must be that of a man, a man moreover in whose veins flowed none of the polluted blood of Adam, the fallen life giver. Jesus saw clearly that David could not have been speaking of himself, but under inspiration was prophesying of One who was to come who would be able to accomplish that which he himself was unable to bring about.

As Jesus studied and meditated further, his mind must have gone back to reflecting upon his own peculiar standing. He recalled all that his mother had told him concerning his paternity, and he

began to understand, perhaps for the first time, the reasons which lay behind his miraculous birth, with the consequent purity and perfection of his humanity. This was why he had been made separate from all others, from his very conception. Yes, he saw now, what Paul saw later, that "a body hast thou prepared me," one which had come to him for one purpose only, to constitute the perfect sacrifice for Israel's sin. But David had said, "In the volume of the Book it is written of me." Did that utterance apply to him? Yea, verily, the words that all the Prophets had uttered could apply to no one else.

THE EVIDENCES

Was he not a descendant of David through the line of descent of both his mother and his foster father? Did he not, according to his mother's own testimony fulfill that amazing requisite of being born of a virgin as Isaiah had foretold? (Isa. 7:14.) Was not his birthplace the royal city of Bethlehem, in accordance with the words of Micah? (Mic. 5:2.) The mothers of the slaughtered innocents could have testified to that.

Yes, the conviction that had doubtless possessed the mind of Jesus since the days of his childhood was becoming more and more strengthened. The striking evidences of his identity with the one of whom the Prophets had written, were far too complete to admit of them applying to any one else. This resemblance was no coincidence. He himself must be the promised Savior that was to redeem Israel, and as the miraculous truth forced its way into the mind of Jesus, he lifted up his voice in grateful acquiescence to the Father, and re-echoing the words of the Psalmist, cried out, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the Book it is written of *me*. I delight to do thy will, thy law is written in my heart."

Although not yet in any sense begotten of the .spirit to a new nature, the humble son of Mary, the wife of the Galilean carpenter, was and had been from earliest childhood an essentially spiritually minded child of God, one who was thoroughly consecrated to Jehovah, and had been through his entire life. As a child of twelve he had offered himself to the Lord and there can be little doubt that this action had been the subject of his questioning of the doctors of the law. Learning from them that he would have to reach the age of thirty ere he could be considered a full grown man under the requirements of the Law, he had returned with his parents to Nazareth, there to await his coming of age.

It seems probable that the one reason that stood in the way of the Father's acceptance of Jesus before that time was "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks had shown that Messiah would not come until the start of the seventieth week, and that would not take place until about 29 A.D. Thus we read that at that time "all men were in expectation." (Luke 3:15.) To have accepted Jesus before that time would have thrown out of alignment all the chronological prophecies. Moreover it was essential -to the Father's Plan that Elijah should first come to do his preparatory work (Matt. 17:10-13), and John the Baptist, who was the Elias, was but six months older than Jesus. The assignment to preach, which John had received (John 1:33), was probably timed not to go into effect until he too had passed his thirtieth birthday. He had already commenced his campaign of reform at the time when Jesus became thirty years of age.

The long awaited hour in which Jesus was to present himself was now at hand, and he left his home at Nazareth in Galilee and turned his steps directly toward Jordan where his cousin John was already engaged in his work of baptizing all who came to him professing repentance for sins committed against the Law. At this time there may still have remained in the mind of Jesus some uncertainty as to whether he was indeed the promised Redeemer of Israel. As the great Apostle

pointed out some years later in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 5:4), "No man taketh this honor [of being the sacrificing High Priest] to himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." Was he the called one? True, the angel who had appeared to Joseph before Jesus' birth had said (Matt. 1:21): "His name should be Jesus, for he should save his people from their sins." Yet, could he be sure that he would be counted worthy of this high honor? Jesus might have longed to receive some confirmation of his belief from some higher authority than his own reason and understanding—in a word, from the most High God himself. But in any event he would offer himself as a willing sacrifice to the Father and accept whatever destiny God had in store for him. This course was the one he had waited since childhood to take. Therefore he presented himself to John at Bethabara, where the latter was carrying out his appointed task, in harmony with the instructions he had been given.

The Baptist, who had known Jesus all his life, and was aware of his pure and blameless character, received him with something like amazement, for he well knew that Jesus was no sinner needing baptism to denote repentance for sin. However after uttering his word of protest (Matt. 3:14), John carried out the Lord's request and immersed him in the Jordan. The thought that his own relative might be the promised Savior of Israel had apparently never entered his mind, and it was not until the events occurred immediately following the baptism of Jesus that John realized who it was he had just immersed.

THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN

Perhaps the most exact accounts of what followed are those of Mark and Luke. (Mark 1:10, 11; Luke 3:21, 22.) In these places we read that as Jesus left the water, the heavens were opened to him and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descended and alighted upon him. And then a voice from heaven was heard. The records indicate that while both Jesus and John saw the Spirit descending, Jesus alone heard the words that the voice uttered. And wonder of wonders, those words were addressed directly to him for they were couched in the second person. The heavenly message was "THOU ART MY BELOVED SON IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED."

There, then, was the attesting to his identity for which Jesus had longed. When the sound of that voice with its loving assurance came to his ears, the last vestige of uncertainty which may have lingered in the mind of Jesus was forever banished. He knew positively now that he was indeed the One of whom the Prophets had testified. It was now clear to him that he had been called of God as Aaron had been. But even this confirmation of his long held belief was of lesser importance than the heavenly revelation which flooded his mind. For now the full recollection of his former estate came to his enlightened mind with absolute clarity.

It seems to us that there must of necessity have been in the human mind of Jesus a gap in his memory that covered the space of time which had elapsed between the divesting of himself of his heavenly glory as the great Logos, and his awakening to consciousness of life as a young child in Nazareth. That gap was now bridged, and he was able to look back and see his entire life stretching as an unbroken thread from those days, eons of time away in the remote past when he had been alone with the Father before the very dawn of creation as the Father's only begotten Son, his only direct creation, and then through the ages that had witnessed the making of "everything that was made (John 1:3), down to the present moment, the moment in which he had just experienced his begetting to a new nature. This newly recovered consciousness of his continuous existence may probably have been what prompted our Lord's reply to his skeptical questioners who had in derision sneered at his claims, saying: "Thou art not yet fifty years old and hast thou seen Abraham?" (John 8:57), to which Jesus answered, "Before Abraham was I am" - an utterance that so incensed the hearers that they took up stones to stone him.

The immediate effect upon the mind of the Master, of his wonderful experience, was the realization of his need for solitude. He had to be alone for communion with the Father, and to seek divine guidance in mapping out his future course. This compulsion was so strong upon him that Mark is inspired to describe it in the words, "And immediately the spirit *driveth* him into the wilderness." (Mark 1:12.) This occasion of our Lord's baptism marked the first of the only three instances during his ministry in which the Father deemed it necessary to allow his voice to become audible to Jesus. Upon this first occasion the heavenly utterance was obviously designed to confirm the conviction of Jesus as to his own identity, for he alone heard the message. But there were others who it was essential should be informed concerning the fact that Jesus was not only the one who was to redeem Israel but was by nature the Son of God himself.

ON OUR BEHALF

The convincing of certain witnesses was a matter of vital importance in the development of the Church of Christ, for upon their testimony was to depend in large measure the faith of all followers of Christ throughout the Gospel Age. Consequently the vision later seen upon the Holy Mount of Transfiguration was for the special benefit of the three disciples, Peter, James, and John. Thus at that time the voice was not directed to the Lord but to the three disciples, and the form of words was changed to "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." Years afterwards Peter cited the heavenly utterance as proof that "We are not following cunningly devised fables." - 2 Pet. 1:18.

Then, once more, and for the last time, the heavenly voice was heard. On this occasion our Lord explained to his hearers that "the voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." (John 12:3.) To those who are pupils in the school of Christ, those words of the Master must of necessity settle every controversy, and yet in reviewing the incident with the record before us of what happened to our Lord in the days that were to follow, it would surprise us but little to learn that in addition to the purpose ascribed to it by the Lord there may have been still another design in the mind of the Father, prompting him to send the message at this time, an action which was occasioned by our dear Redeemer's dire need for comfort and reassurance to strengthen him through that last terrible week of his earthly career.

The day was what we now call Palm Sunday. Jesus knew that the hour of his departure was rapidly approaching, and although he had just ridden into Jerusalem amid the plaudits of the crowd, yet as he looked forward to the impending ordeal of suffering, his heart was troubled. (John 12:27.) Perhaps he wondered whether he would have the sublime faith and confidence in the Father's designs for him, to go through the suffering to the bitter end unflinchingly, and without a word that would show any resentment on his part against those who were so shamefully abusing him. Therefore he pondered, "Shall I say, 'Father save me from this hour?' Then answering his own question, he reflected, "But for this cause came I unto this hour." (John 12:27.) No, I will leave the matter entirely in my Father's hands." Then addressing his prayer to that beloved Being, he said, "Father, glorify thy name, and immediately the heavenly voice replied, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." That was assurance enough for the Son of God. Jesus well realized the fickle quality of mere popular acclaim. It is recorded in John 2:23-25 that many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself to them, *because he knew men*, and "needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." Yes, he was well able to correctly evaluate the comparative worthlessness of popular approval, so he was not overmuch surprised when many who may have been part of the throng that hailed him with hosannas that five days before, now stood idly by as the cries "Crucify him, crucify him" rang out.

But the most terrible and apparently unforeseen ordeal he was destined to endure, must have been his discovery of the fact that the Father himself had seemingly abandoned him and turned away in the hour of his greatest need. It was this final blow that broke that faithful heart and wrung from him the anguished appeal, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And with that cry the Son of God yielded up his spirit. That last terrible experience, it would seem, embodied the ultimate depth of deprivation and lonely misery through which, as the Father had foreseen, his beloved Son must pass, and for which he had sought to prepare him, by one last word of comfort and encouragement. If a fallen man, a fratricide such as Cain could be moved to exclaim in agony as he heard his sentence, "My punishment is greater than I can bear from thy face shall I be hid" (Gen. 4:13, 14) what torture must have been suffered by the one whose every heartbeat had been attuned to joyful obedience to the Father's slightest wish.

And so on that resurrection morning of long ago when he that had been put to death in the flesh was raised a Divine Spirit, that glorious event constituted for all the faithful Firstborn a blessed assurance that they who share in his death shall be partakers of his resurrection glory. "Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave where is thy victory!"

- *J. R. Hughes.*

Items of Interest

Recently Deceased

Mrs. Elizabeth Warren, Lunenburg, Mass. - (July).

Mr. Frederick Bruce, Rochester, N. Y. - (August).

Mrs. C. F. Hummel, Columbus, Ohio-(August).

Mrs. A. R. Robinson, Boston, Mass. - (August).

Mrs. Julia Vera Thorogood, Santa Rosa, Calif. - (August).

Mrs. Nina M. Ritchie, Alhambra, Calif. - (September).

Mr. Benjamin Boulter, Plainfield, N. J. - (October).

Mr. W. J. Dougherty, San Diego, Calif. - (October).

Mr. Alvin B. Swan, New York, N. Y. - (October).

The Question Box

Question:

Will you please discuss 2 Cor. 3:18, particularly in reference to the word "beholding"?

Answer:

In the Authorized Version this verse reads: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The American Revised Version translates: "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." In the *margin* an alternative translation is given: reflecting as a mirror."

It has been held that "reflecting" must be rejected on three grounds: (1) grammatical form, (2) context, and (3) doctrine. Let us examine the question from these three points of view.

GRAMMATICAL FORM

In regard to the grammatical form of the Greek word, the writer is without qualification to pass over the question. In the two translations above quoted, it will be noted that "beholding" is preferred. However, "reflecting" is given in Weymouth's translation and appears in Rotherham's. It is preferred in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, and also in the *Devotional Commentary* published by the Religious Tract Society; and, in addition to the *margin* of the American Revised Version, is adopted *in the main text* of the English Revised Version.

In the light -of the foregoing, there would appear to be plenty of scholarship of the highest type in favor of "reflecting," and in the presence of such testimony we do not know that "laymen" such as the writer, can reach any other conclusion than that, so far as its grammatical form is concerned, the word is capable of being so rendered. Moffatt's translation reads: "We all *mirror* the glory of the Lord," and in a note on the verse Rotherham comments: "If we could say so, 'mirroring,' both 'receiving' and 'reflecting.' "

Another eminent writer, J. E. McFadyen, in the *Interpreter's Commentary on the Epistles*, although himself preferring "beholding," admits that "reflecting" is possibly correct. He writes: "The word KATOPTRIZOMENOY has been the subject of much dispute; the two possible meanings are given in (English) margin and text respectively-beholding and *reflecting* (as in a mirror) . The active voice must be determined by the context."

CONTEXT

In examining the context we find that St. Paul is here contrasting the glory attending the "ministration of death" (the Law) with the far greater glory of the "ministration of the Spirit" (the Gospel)see verses 7 and 8. However, there is some difference of thought as to the points of contrast he is making. We submit the following to the consideration of our readers:

To properly understand the passage it seems necessary to keep in mind the fact that one, of the prominent purposes, if not the main idea of the Epistle, is that of vindicating the Apostle's own preaching and conduct. In other words, and because it was necessary in the interests of the true Christians in Corinth, he is, in this Epistle, making a "fool" of himself (so his enemies would say) by "boasting." (2 Cor. 11:16, 19, 23, etc.) And it is important to observe that even so magnificent a subject as the contrast between the old and the new dispensations *is incidental - to this "boasting,"* and is introduced into the Epistle primarily because, when rightly understood, such contrast will materially contribute to the Apostle's personal vindication. Consistently *with this purpose,* the contrast he is here presenting is not between Moses and Jesus, as many appear to think, but between Moses and himself. "We," he says, speaking of himself, "use great plainness of speech and not as Moses," etc. - 2 Cor. 3:12-13.

We next inquire: In what respect does the Apostle contrast himself with Moses? To answer this question it is necessary to refer to the narrative in Exodus 34:29-35. Here we read that when Moses appeared from communing with Jehovah, the children of Israel were at first afraid to come near him because of his shining face, but that he overcame their fears and *with unveiled face talked* with them. Then having, *with shining face,* delivered Jehovah's message, *and not until then,* he put the veil on (a point misrepresented in the Authorized Version, which in Exodus 34:33 wrongly reads "till" for "when"). That this procedure was invariably followed may be seen from the remaining verses of the Exodus passage.

No reason is assigned in Exodus as to why Moses veiled his face, but the Apostle does not infer, as many students of the Bible do, that it was to hide the reflected glory of the Lord which shone from his countenance. Recognizing the fact that the delivery of Jehovah's message *was accompanied by the shining face,* the Apostle infers from the donning of the veil *immediately afterwards,* that the glory began thereafter gradually to vanish, and *the veil was to hide its evanescence.* - 2 Cor. 3:13.

Quoting from Moffatt's translation we read: "Such being my hope then, I [Paul] am quite frank and open-not like Moses who used to hang a veil over his face to keep the children of Israel *from gazing at the last rays of a vanishing glory.*" - Verses 12 and 13, italics ours.

Moses, then, had something to hide, namely the fact that the glory of his countenance was a fading glory. True "reflection," though the glory of his countenance was, of Jehovah's own shining countenance, and symbolizing, as it did, the glory of the Mosaic dispensation, it was but a vanishing glory. The Apostle, on the contrary, had nothing to hide. The Gospel he ministered was not transient but permanent-"everlasting." (Rev. 14:6.), He "reflected" or "mirrored" it *continuously.* His opponents might accuse him of dishonorable practices, but such accusations were false. "Boasting" in the surpassing glory of the Gospel and in the firm conviction that its glory will never fade before a yet greater glory, he assures the Church at Corinth that, unlike even Moses, he had nothing to conceal, but at the risk of being accused of self-commendation, preached with confidence, frankness and courage. True, his Gospel was veiled to some, but only to those whose minds were blinded by the Adversary. (2 Cor. 4:3, 4.) But so far as his own personal intentions were concerned, he says: "I disown those practices which very shame conceals from view; I do not go about it craftily; I do not falsify the Word of God; I state the truth openly and so commend myself to every man's conscience before God." - 2 Cor. 4:2, Moffatt.

After 2 Cor. 3:13 the Apostle's argument proper would appear to be resumed in 2 Cor. 4:1 -- "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry [Oh! how glorious a ministry contrasted with even that of Moses] as we have received mercy, we faint not." But there is another lesson which the metaphor of the veil has stirred in his mind, and he pauses long enough to give it expression. It

was not alone from the Israel of Moses' time that the *transience* of the Law Dispensation was veiled. It was veiled also from the Israel of his own day. And this lesson, by a slight variation in the metaphor of "the veil" he proceeds to press. "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil [of prejudice, etc.] is upon their heart," (2 Cor. 3:15) and thus they still think of their covenant as permanent. It is only when any one of them turns to Christ that the veil is taken away and they recognize that the glory of the old covenant is a fading glory.

This happy thought, that others besides himself had had the veil removed from their eyes, suggests yet another contrast. The Old Law Covenant was ministered by a single man, Moses, but *the New Law Covenant is to be ministered by the entire membership of the Christ Company*. "We all," says he (referring, in our understanding of the passage, to *all Christians*, who have consecrated themselves to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, even unto death), "with unveiled face behold, reflect, mirror, the glory of the Lord." - 2 Cor. 3:18.

In their consideration of this passage some hold the thought that the Apostle does not here refer to any veil that may have been lifted from our eyes, but, understanding him to be contrasting Moses with Jesus, refer to the "unveiled face of our Master Jesus Christ." But we submit, and in the foregoing paragraphs we have sought to show, that the contrast is not between Moses and Jesus but, in the first place, between Moses and Paul and next between Moses and the entire Church. In this view of the context it appears that the Apostle does indeed refer to the veil, now happily removed, which used to be on our hearts. We might have expected him to say: "We all with unveiled *hearts*" (in view of the word he uses in 2 Cor. 3:15), but the metaphor of the veil is not worked out with strict consistency, but is varied somewhat in the same way as he varied the metaphor of "the epistle" earlier in the chapter. (2 Cor. 3:1-3.) There, it will be remembered, "the epistle in one place is said to be written on Paul's heart (2 Cor. 3:2), while in another place it is said to be written on the hearts of the Corinthians themselves (2 Cor. 3:3), yet the meaning is not difficult. So here, the veil is at one time on the face of Moses (2 Cor. 3:13), at another it is on the heart of Israel. (2 Cor. 3:15.) . But the thought of the Apostle seems clear. Just as Moses reflected the glory of the Old Dispensation, so did Paul reflect the glory of the New. Just as Moses reflected the glory' of the Old Dispensation, so do we, the Church, reflect the glory of the New. Unlike Moses, Paul needed no veil, neither do we, but, like Paul, we may continuously reflect the surpassing glory of the Gospel Dispensation. "Reflecting" in this view of -the matter does not appear to be out of harmony with the context, while Moffatt's translation: "We mirror," together with Rotherham's interesting comment: "'Mirroring,' both 'receiving' and 'reflecting,'" to our mind still further illuminates the passage.

DOCTRINE

Onee further point: To some minds the thoughts contained in the words "beholding" and "reflecting" are incompatible -- in doctrinal conflict and must, therefore, mutually exclude each other. In this view, the one who "beholds" remains passive; the change which takes place in the "beholder" is clearly seen to "result not from anything he did, but from the influence of the One beheld. On the other hand, *so such* reason, "to reflect" is an activity accomplished by the "reflector" and, therefore, his trans-, formation, resulting as it does from his own efforts, must be held attributable to -the individual himself. Those who thus reason believe the translation "reflecting" must be rejected as in conflict with the general tenor of Scripture which teaches that our transformation is "all of grace."

To our understanding "beholding" and "reflecting" are not incompatible but complementary to each other. It is impossible to *truly* behold, without *faithfully* reflecting. The faithfulness of the reflection is always a certain indication of the clarity of the vision. Nay, more than this, it is the

only certain indication of it. And where Christ is not reflected it is reasonable to conclude that he is not beheld. " I will show thee my faith [and my clearness of vision] by my works [my reflecting]."

"One ship, sails east, another west,
By the self-same wind that blows;
It is not the gale,
But the set of the sail,
Which determines the way they go.

While, therefore, for the purpose of clearness in thinking, we may separate in our minds the two ideas, "beholding" and "reflecting," we should ever remember that they are inseparable in fact.

It was not an advocate of "great works," of "much preaching," of "converting the world in this Age," etc., but our beloved Brother Russell himself who, in commenting on 1 Pet. 1:14, 15, wrote: "Some Christians have the erroneous idea that God does all the fashioning, and that his children are to be merely passive in his hand; but Peter does not so express it. He exhorts us to fashion ourselves according to the divine instructions." Brother Russell elsewhere reminds us that "our' Lord always links the progress and development of our spiritual life with our *receiving* and *obeying* the truth," and in a direct reference to 2 Cor. 3:18 he wrote: "This change comes in proportion as we 'behold the glory of the Lord'-in proportion as we come to appreciate and *learn to copy* the grandeur of the divine character."

"Too long have I, methought, with tearful eye
Pored o'er this tangled work of mine, and mused
About each stitch awry, and thread confused;
Now will I think on what in years gone by
I heard of them that weave rare tapestry
At royal looms, and how they constant use
To work on the rough side, and still peruse
The picture pattern set above them high;
So will I set my copy high above,
And gaze, and gaze till on my spirit flows
Its gracious impress, till some line of love
Transferred upon my canvas, faintly flows;
Nor look too much on warp or woof, provide
He whom I work for sees their fairer side."

- P. L. Read.

Our Lips Kept For Jesus

"Keep my lips that they may be, Filled with messages from Thee."

The days are past forever when we said, "Our lips are our own." Now we know that they are not our own. And yet how many of my readers often have the miserable consciousness that they have "spoken unadvisedly with their lips"! How many pray, "Keep the door of my lips"! when the very last thing they think of expecting is that they will be kept! As their faith went no farther, the answer went no farther, and so the door was not kept.

Trust necessarily implies expectation that what we have entrusted will be kept. If you have not expected him to keep, you have not trusted. All who have heard the message of salvation for themselves are called to be his messengers.

It is a specially sweet part of his dealings with his messengers, that he always gives us the message for ourselves first. And so the more we sit at his feet and watch to see what he has to say to ourselves, the more we shall have to tell to others. Then comes the prayer, "O Lord, open thou my lips," and its fulfillment. For then comes the promise, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."

Then of course, "the lips of the righteous feed many," for the food is the Lord's own giving.

- F. R. Havergal.

Waiting and Watching

"Waiting and watching the livelong day,
Lifting the voice of her heart to pray;
She stands in her sorrow the bride and queen,
Counting the hours that lie between.

"Lone as a dove, on a storm-swept sea,
Teaching her heart hope's minstrelsy;
With a cheerful note, though a weary wing,
She learns o'er sorrow to soar and sing.

"Abroad through the earth is a sound of war,
Distress among nations, wide and far;
And the failing of strong men's hearts for fear
Of the dreadful things that are drawing near.

"Famine and pestilence stalk abroad;
Scoffers are slighting the Word of God;
And the love of many is waxing cold;
Dimmed is the sheen of the once fine gold.

"But she stands in her safety, the bride and queen,
Leaning as only the loved can lean
On the love that broke its heart for her,
When bearing the burden she could not bear."

- Reprints, page R195.

"One by One"

Friends who have known and loved our Brother Benjamin Boulter will be moved on learning of his sudden death on Friday morning, October 10th, from a heart attack while engaged in his daily tasks. A serious illness in January 1946 resulted in a heart affection which finally ended his earthly course. Our sympathy goes out to his life companion and family who also have, our prayers, and we are certain the sympathy and prayers of many friends.

For many years Brother Boulter has walked in the light, trusting in the Lord, seeking and using such precious opportunities of service as came to his hand. His home was from the first opened for the fellowship of kindred minds after he had learned to know of a God of wisdom, justice, love, and power, for he was blessed in that his wife embraced the truth with him.

Upon learning in 1908 of the breadth of the heavenly Father's Plan of the Ages, the zeal of his service, previously given under the direction of the Salvation Army, was devoted to telling of a "mercy that endureth for ever."

He was active with the free brethren in the days of the formation of the Pastoral Bible Institute, and served for a number of years as one of its directors, serving also as a pilgrim both locally among the brethren of the East, and occasionally on longer trips, in which service his sincerity and sweet spirit of humble devotion was always appreciated. We rejoice with him that he has finished his course and "kept the faith."

No better commentary can be made on his life principles than the hymn sung at his funeral, because it was one of his favorites:

"O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me Thy secret; help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

"Teach me Thy patience; still with Thee
In closer, dearer company,
In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
In trust that triumphs over wrong,

"In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broadening way;
In peace that only Thou canst give,
With Thee. O Master, let me live.

Consolation

God glories, in the appellative that he is, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, and therefore to minister in the office is to become like God, and to imitate the charities of heaven; and God hath fitted mankind for it; he most needs it, and he feels his brother's wants by his own experience; and God hath given us speech and the endearments of society, and pleasantness, of conversation, and powers of seasonable discourse, arguments to allay the sorrow, by abating our apprehensions, and taking out the sting, or telling the periods of comfort, or exciting hope, or urging a precept, and reconciling our affections, and reciting promises, or telling stories of the divine mercy, or changing it into duty, or making the burden less by comparing it with greater, or by proving it to be less than we deserve, and that it is so intended, and may become the instrument of virtue. And certain it is, that as nothing can better do it, so there is nothing greater for which God made our tongues, next to reciting his praises., than to minister comfort to a weary soul. And what greater measure can we have than that we should bring joy to our brother, who with his dreary eyes looks to heaven and round about, and cannot find so much rest as to lay his eye lids close together, than that thy tongue should be tuned with heavenly accents, and make the weary soul to listen for light and ease; and when he perceives that there is such a thing in the world, and in the order of things, as comfort and joy, to begin to break out from the prison of his sorrows at the door of sighs and tears, and !by little and little melt into showers and refreshment? This is glory to thy voice and employment fit for the brightest angel.

But so have I seen the sun kiss the frozen earth, which was bound up with the images of death and the colder breath of the north; and then the waters break from their enclosures, and melt with joy, and run in useful channels; . . . So is the heart of a sorrowful man under the discourses of a wise comforter; he breaks from the despairs of the grave and the fetters and chains of sorrow, he blesses God,, and he blesses thee, and he feels his life returning; for to be miserable is death, but nothing is life but to be, comforted; and God is pleased with no music from below, so much as in the thanksgiving songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing and comforted and thankful persons.

-- *Jeremy Taylor.*

In His Image

The Lord will perfect that which so concerneth thee.
Some day, on His own likeness in us He shall smile;
And for that Day of days faith reaches out, to see
How grace so long hath wrought, that we might learn, this while,
To rest in Him.

His love grants every gift of faith, and love surveys
The image formed in yielded hearts. It is Love Divine
That fans the glowing, whitening heat, then lifts and weighs
The gold-keeps watch lest ill befall His own design,
And mar or dim.

It can not now be long, it seems, till we shall stand
Resplendent in the robes He will in love prepare
For all His own; and He shall take us by the hand
And lead us to the Father's side, that we may share
All heaven with Him.

- *Nellie Florence Jolly.*

He Scatters All the Darkness

Long years have passed since to my Lord I yielded,
Things present, past, and things to come,
And set my sails for that blest port of heaven;
Now by his grace I'm almost home.

The sea seems calmer than when, first I started;
And yet I know the waves run high;
For there's a tempest brewing on the waters,
And angry clouds o'erspread the sky.

'Tis not because the winds and waves are stilling,
That there's a calm within my breast;
Nor that my own heart bears no trace of sorrow,
That I can sing of peace and rest.

Sad are the groans of earth's despairing millions;
For death with life goes hand in hand;
The mighty foe whose pride wrought man's destruction,
Seems to have conquered sea and land.

But there's a light shines o'er the troubled waters,
That all the darkness cannot hide;
For He who braved for us death's raging billows,
Has safely reached the other side.

He is the light that scatters all my darkness,
It is His peace that keeps me calm;
He is the source of all my joy and comfort
His precious name my sweetest psalm.

Dear Lamb of God! ah, who can tell His goodness,
Ten thousand tongues would not suffice!
Through all the coming ages God will pour forth
The blessings of His sacrifice.

Oh, may I seek more earnestly to know Him,
And all the fulness of His love;
Count all things else but dross that I may win Him,
And reign with Him in light above.

- *Margaret H. Black.*

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Yesterday we had the pleasure of receiving from your hands a package with gifts of love. We hasten to thank you for it sincerely. . . . May God recompense you according to the fulness of his grace for what you have done for us. This donation enables us to better weather this time of need and misery. Your help is at the same time a help from the Lord, who has various ways and means to assist his own in their different situations. Again we have been allowed to experience how wonderfully he cares for his own. Such experiences greatly strengthen our trust in his ways and leadings. They show us that we can depend on him altogether, for he is faithful and true. He has promised never to leave nor forsake us, and he keeps his promises. Even when he takes things from us, it is not to hurt us, for he does not take anything which would hinder us in making our calling and election sure. In all he does for us and in all he permits to come to us, his purpose always is for our good; for we are in his school and there we are subject to his leading and to his corrections. (Heb. 12:7, 8.) As his Son was made perfect through suffering, so it must be with us. We are to learn loving sympathy and mercy towards the world that we may help them out of their degradation in the coming times of restitution, and this takes our whole life. May we always keep still in the hand of the heavenly Potter, and bear without murmuring what the Lord puts on us. His strokes are strokes of love.

The night is far advanced, dear brethren, and the day is near. We see, with you, how this world is ending in convulsions, "as travail upon a woman." (1 Thess. 5:3.) It is getting darker; new clouds make the people fear. A great tension is in the political air which can explode at any time. It is coming soon, but behind it all is the Lord and his Kingdom. Soon also shall all the saints be perfected. Then we hope to enter in with you, dear brethren, to the marriage chamber of joy and happiness. Then we hope to be able to thank you brethren in glory!

We beg to give our thanks to all who thought of us in this food package. We remember you all before the throne of grace. . . . We greet you all in the bonds of Christian love and thankfulness. - Heb. 10:35-37; 6:10.

Your fellow-travelers in the Narrow Way,
O. and A. S. -- Germany.

Dear Brethren:

I have been asked by the Forest Gate Church and by the brethren meeting at Ilford and Walthamstow to send you an expression of their heartfelt gratitude for the ministry of Brother J. T. Read and to you, dear brethren, for having made this possible.

His ministry in our midst was powerfully blessed of the Lord and we know this to have been true throughout the country. No brother could have more faithfully discharged the stewardship with which he was entrusted.

Whatever sacrifices financially you dear ones there have made for us have been fruitful one hundred fold, and the dear Lord is not unrighteous to forget your love and zeal thus manifested.

A spirit of Christian forbearance and tolerance has been filling the hearts of the British brethren more of late than ever before so that a unity of spirit is sincerely maintained in spite of the fact that on some doctrinal matters we may differ. Brother Read has intensified this spirit in our midst. His every word has been calculated to bind us together, to build us up, to edify and not to tear down.

Our words are feeble vehicles to tell you all that is in our hearts, but again I would assure you of our gratitude in the Lord for the service that has been wrought in our midst.

With warm love in the Lord to you all,

Your brother by His grace,
F. H. G. -- Eng.