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"This Do in Remembrance of Me"

"For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do show, the Lord's death till He come." - 1 Cor. 11:26

CHRIST OUR Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5:7, 8.) Here, in one sentence, brief, but pregnant with meaning, the beloved Apostle Paul, writing as always under the guidance and in the power of the Holy Spirit, draws our attention to the great Antitype, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, of whom the Jewish Passover lamb was but a type.

How well the type prefigured our Lord! To begin with, the lamb selected was to be *without blemish*, reminding us of the fact that our Lord Jesus had no blemish of sin in himself, and that he did not contract any stain or spot of sin by his contacts with the world. As the Apostle Peter reminds us: "We were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." - 1 Pet. 1:19.

The blood of the typical lamb was sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels of the Israelite's *house*, but the blood of Jesus, the unforfeited life which was made available to us by the shedding of *his* blood, has been graciously applied to *our hearts*, removing from us the burden of unforgiven sin, setting us free from all consciousness of evil.

Again, in instituting the typical passover, we read in the 12th chapter of Exodus that the Lord said unto Moses: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you." How truly this feature is fulfilled in the experience of a consecrated believer of this Gospel Age! Everything in his life dates from the time when he came "under the blood." Before that, all is darkness; before that, all is death. He does not care to even think of the darkness of his unconverted days, and when he does occasionally mention them, it is only that his Savior may be the more magnified in the hearts and minds of those to whom he speaks; and that the contrast of that past with his present happy state may awaken in him a still greater sense of gratitude and devotion.

JESUS OUR PASSOVER LAMB

As the Jews fed on the literal lamb, so we are to feed on Christ; that is to say, we are to appropriate to ourselves, by faith, his merit, the value of his sacrifice. Not only so, but if we would be strong spiritually, and prepared for the deliverance in the morning of the new dispensation, we must eat of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. What is it to "eat" of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth? Ah! this means much more than might at first be supposed. It involves not merely a belief in the truth concerning Christ and his atonement -- it goes beyond even a confession of that belief. It includes a loving surrender to this and related truths, so that they are grasped by the moral, no less than by the intellectual side of our complex nature. Thus partaken of, the truth will accomplish our sanctification; day by day, the renewing of our minds with his precious Word will gradually transform us into his likeness.

In the typical arrangements bitter herbs were included, which aided and whetted the Israelites' appetite for the lamb and unleavened bread. Commenting on this feature, Brother Russell has observed that instead of these, "we have bitter experiences and trials which the Lord prepares for us, and which help to wean our affections from earthly things and to give us increased appetite to feed upon the Lamb and the unleavened Bread of Truth. We, too, are to remember that we have here no continuing city; but as pilgrims, strangers, staff in hand, we are to gird ourselves for our journey to the Heavenly Canaan, to all the glorious things which God has in reservation for the Church of the First-borns, in association with our Redeemer, as kings and priests unto God."

On the night of his betrayal, just before his crucifixion, our Lord Jesus clearly identified himself as the antitypical Passover Lamb. Peter and John had been sent ahead, and in the "upper room" to which they had been led, they had "made ready the Passover." At the appointed time, "when the hour was come," he gathered his Apostles round him and said: "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." "It was necessary that as Jews they should celebrate the Passover Supper on that night -- the night of the anniversary of the slaying of the Passover lamb in Egypt, of the saving of the typical first-borns from the typical 'prince of this world' -- Pharaoh - - the same date on which the real Passover Lamb was to be slain. But as soon as the requirements of the type had been fulfilled, our Lord Jesus instituted a new Memorial upon the old foundation, saying, 'Do this in remembrance of me.'" *

* In our February issue we noted that the appropriate time for observing the Memorial this year will be after six o'clock in the evening, on Thursday, April 22.

"THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME"

We recall the circumstances of the first Memorial -- the blessing of the Bread and the Cup, the fruit of the vine, and of our Lord's words in connection therewith. Year by year, as we "keep the feast," and the time of our departure draws nigh, the appropriateness of the symbol's, and the humility and love of our Lord are more deeply impressed on our hearts, and the longing desire within us grows more earnest that we, too, though imperfect, may faithfully follow in his steps.

Quoting again from our dear Brother Russell: "In presenting to the disciples the unleavened bread as a memorial, Jesus said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' The evident meaning of his words is, This symbolizes, or represents, my body. The bread was not actually his body; for in no sense 'had his body yet been broken. In no sense would it then have been possible for them to have partaken of him actually or antitypically, the sacrifice not being as yet finished. But the picture is complete

when we recognize that the unleavened (pure, unfermented) bread represented our Lord's sinless flesh, leaven being a symbol of sin under the Law, and especially commanded to be put away at the Passover season. On another occasion Jesus gave a lesson which interprets to us this symbol. He said, 'The Bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.' 'I am the Bread of Life.' 'I am the living Bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever; and the Bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' - John 6:33, 35, 51.

"In order to appreciate how we are to eat, or appropriate, this living Bread, it is necessary for us to understand just what the bread signifies. According to our Lord's explanation of the matter, it was his flesh which he sacrificed for us. It was not his prehuman existence as a spirit being that was sacrificed, although that was laid down and its *glory* laid aside, in order that he might take our human nature. It was the fact that our Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners -- without any contamination from Father Adam, and hence free from sin -- that enabled him to become the Redeemer of Adam and his race, that permitted him to give his life 'a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time.'-1 Tim. 2:3-6.

"When we see that it was the pure, spotless nature of our Lord Jesus that was laid down on behalf of sinners, we see what it is that we are privileged to appropriate. The very thing that he laid down for us we are to 'eat,' appropriate to ourselves; that is to say, his perfect *human* life was given to redeem all the race of man from condemnation to death, to enable them to return to human perfection and everlasting life, if they would; and we are to realize this and accept him as our Savior from death."

The unforfeited life of Jesus, laid down in sacrifice for us in obedience to the Father's will, is thus seen to be that which alone has value in the Father's sight. As the Apostle declares: "the Man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2:6.) It is important to observe, however, that the work of recovering Adam and his race from the power of sin and death, while based on that ransom price, goes beyond the mere provision of the ransom. While the provision was made now nearly two thousand years ago, it is manifest that the work of recovering Adam and his race from the power of sin and death has not yet been accomplished; indeed it has scarcely begun. The only disposition thus far of that ransom has been to make it available for the Church, and this only by faith. Only by faith has even the Church passed "from death unto life"; not even this *little flock* has been fully recovered from the power of sin and death; still less has the rest of the race. Manifestly, then, it will require a considerable time (the Scriptures indicate the entire thousand years of Messiah's Kingdom), to restore, to deliver, to set free, from the power of sin and death, Adam and his children. Evident it is, that the work of restoration, for which the foundation was laid nearly two thousand years ago, is still to be accomplished. To quote once again from our Pastor:

"In order that any of the race of Adam might profit by the sacrifice of Jesus, it was necessary that he should *rise from the tomb* on the divine plane of life, that he should ascend to the Father and deposit the sacrificial merit of his death in the hands of justice, and receive from the Father 'all power in heaven and in earth.' As relates to the world, it was necessary also that in the Father's due time he should come again to earth a glorious divine Being, then to be to the whole world a Mediator, Prophet, Priest, and King, to assist back to perfection and to harmony with God all who will avail themselves of the wonderful privileges then to be offered."

This blessing, restoration to *human* perfection (not perfection on the spirit plane, but on the human plane) which will be the happy portion of the entire race (all the willing and obedient), the Church of this Gospel Age receive *now*, by faith; that is to say, *human* perfection is *reckoned to*

them by God. And the partaking of the unleavened bread at the Memorial season means to us, primarily, the appropriation, by faith, of this right to perfect *human* life, with all its privileges, the blessing which, at the cost of his own life, our Lord procured for us. Likewise the fruit of the vine symbolizes our Savior's life given for us, his *human* life, his being, poured out unto death on our behalf; and the appropriation of this by us also signifies, primarily, our acceptance of *restitution* rights and privileges secured by our Lord's sacrifice of these.

TWO ADDITIONAL SIGNIFICATIONS

In our showing forth the Lord's death in this, the way appointed (1 Cor. 11:26), we may not improperly associate in our minds two additional thoughts of great beauty and solemnity: (1) Our consecration to be "dead with him" (Col. 2:20), even as we remember the Apostle's words, "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him (2 Tim. 2:11), and (2) the oneness of spirit which obtains between fellow-members of the Christ company.

The fruit of the vine fitly represents the life given by Jesus, the sacrifice-the death-"this is my blood [symbol of life given up in death] of the New Covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins"; "Drink ye all of it." (Matt. 26:27, 28.) It is by the giving up of his life as a ransom for the life of the Adamic race, which sin had forfeited, that a right to life comes to man. (Ram. 5:18, 19.) Jesus' shed blood is the "ransom for all"; and the dominant idea of our "feast" is this fact and the benefits which as consecrated believers we derive therefrom; but in addition we may remember also and rejoice in the fact that we may (indeed we have covenanted, have we not? to) drink of his cup, even as (though beyond their then understanding) he spake to his close disciples: "Ye shall indeed drink of my cup." (Matt. 20:23.) Verily this is a "high calling" (Phil. 3:14), and well might we question our ability to drink (unaided) of his cup. But our sufficiency is of God, and so with the Apostle we too count all things loss, that we may know the power of his resurrection, the *fellowship of his sufferings* (Phil. 3:10), not repining, but all the more rejoicing at any evidence which may come to us that the sufferings of Christ may be abounding in us. - 2 Cor. 1:5.

With regard to our second additional thought that of the oneness of spirit possessed by fellow members of "his body," the Church (Eph. 1:23), how close to the heart of our Lord does this thought bring us when we recall that it was just about the time when he instituted this "remembrancer" that he offered that matchless intercessory prayer on our behalf, that is recorded in the 17th chapter of John: "That they all may be one." (Not his close disciples only, but us also, who have since believed.) "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." (John 17:20, 21.) What thoughts are these, which just before his passion our Lord entertained with regard to his consecrated followers! What grand and noble hopes respecting the mutual love, the sympathy, affection, and interest which should prevail amongst the members of this "one Body" of our Lord!

WHO MAY PARTICIPATE?

Just one word more. Who may participate in this memorial? To this question we would reply: No one should join in this celebration who does not trust in Christ as his or her personal Savior from sin and death, and who does not purpose to walk worthy of the Name of Jesus, in his footsteps wherever they may lead, to the best of his or her ability. No one should come to the Lord's table lightly, carelessly, but, as the Apostle exhorts: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." (1 Cor. 11:27-29.) But on the other hand none should absent himself or refrain from this communion from a sense of unworthiness. Thank God for a sense of sin, for a keen conscience about it, but let not that keep any away. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." - (1 John 2:1; 1:9.) Thus cleansed, let us draw near, gladly confessing our love for our Lord, rejoicing in the pleasure and privilege of remembering him in this, the way appointed. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." - 1 Cor. 11:26.

"UNTIL HE COME"

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

"When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above,
Seems the earth so poor and vast,
All our life -- joy overcast?
Hush! be every murmur dumb;
It is only 'Till He come.'

"Clouds and conflicts 'round us press;
Would we have one sorrow less?
All the sharpness of the cross,
All that tells the world is loss,
Death and darkness and the tomb
Only whisper, 'Till He come.'

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

- P. L. Read.

The Shepherd's Care

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters." - Psalm 23:1, 2.

THERE seems to be a special divine significance in the location of this twenty-third Psalm among the others, as the matter which it contains bears peculiar relationship to that in the twenty-second and twenty-fourth. The twenty-second Psalm is very evidently prophetic, and refers to the deep humiliation and sufferings of the Redeemer. In his deepest distress and agony while on the cross, the Savior uttered the very words with which the Psalm opens: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The entire Psalm speaks of the One who was despised and rejected of men, the One who was mocked and railed, and spit upon. It speaks of the piercing of his hands and feet. It describes the ignominy and shame he bore for us. For this reason it is called, "The Psalm of the Cross."

The twenty-fourth Psalm opens with the inquiry, "Who shall ascend into the hill [Kingdom] of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" It closes with what is evidently a description of the Millennial Kingdom, when Christ, who, is designated by St. Paul "the Lord of Glory" (1 Cor. 2:8), shall wield the sceptre of earth in Jehovah's name and power. It reaches in its description to the time when the Kingdom, in this phase, shall have attained the highest degree of its glory, when it shall be delivered up to the Father, the great King of Glory referred to in the Psalm. On this account it is *very* appropriately called, "The Psalm of the Crown."

The twenty-third Psalm tells of the Great Shepherd. In the first and deepest sense the Great Shepherd is Jehovah. In another sense the term is properly applied to Christ, the Under-shepherd, appointed by Jehovah, who gave his life for the sheep. He is the One who purchased them and therefore owns the sheep, and who, with untiring devotion, cares for and guards his sheep from danger, counting not the cost, and taking no reward. This Psalm is therefore very fittingly called, "The Psalm of the Crook."

"SAVIOR, LIKE A SHEPHERD LEAD US"

The words of the Psalm are the words of David, and doubtless have primarily a reference to experiences. In a prophetic sense it is Christ who is speaking -- Christ in his life when on earth -- and it describes his relationship to the Great Jehovah as his shepherd. In another sense it is prophetic of the Church and shows the Christian's relationship to Christ and also Christ's relationship to the Christian. Christ is the Good Shepherd. This is evident from his words in the Parable: "I am the Good Shepherd." It is this aspect of the Psalm that we desire to consider.

In order to understand the blessedness of this relationship -- the blessedness of realizing Christ as a shepherd -- it will be helpful, indeed necessary, to note the relationship and duties of an Eastern Shepherd to his own sheep. The first and most blessed and helpful thought is that as a rule a shepherd in David's time owned the sheep that he cared for. He was no hireling; he asked and received no wages. He was acquainted with all his sheep. He was quick to discover and to supply their individual needs. It was his duty in the morning to lead the sheep out and to find good pasture for them. To do this the shepherd must have a wide territory. He needed to be familiar with the territory -- to know the special places where good pasturage could be found. It was his duty to find quiet waters to quench their thirst, and shady places to protect them from the heat of the noonday sun; to guard them from danger, to defend them when attacked by their enemies the

wolves. Frequently it was his duty to seek for a wandering, a straying sheep, and when it was found to bring, it back to the fold. Sometimes he would carry a tired, weak lamb in his arms, and gently "lead those that were with young." Occasionally he would be called to protect his sheep, with the assistance of his faithful dogs, against the ravages of the wolves who were lurking near some of the best feeding places and were alert for opportunities to pounce upon, wound, and destroy the sheep. After the day was over, before darkness set in, it was the duty of the shepherd to lead them back to the fold. Reaching the sheepfold, he stands at the door, and with his rod holds back the sheep, while he inspects them, as they, one by one, "pass under the rod" into the fold. As he discovers a wounded one, he, pours oil into the wound and bathes its bruises; when he finds one hot and thirsty and almost exhausted, he fills the large cup that hangs by his side with cool water and gives it drink. The day's toil of the shepherd is over, and then comes the duty of guarding the sheepfold until another dawn.

"JESUS IS MY SAVIOR"

All these things describe figuratively Christ's relationship to his sheep. They tell of his loving interest and care for his own. They are intended to portray his wisdom, his love, his power, and his mercy operating in behalf of his sheep. Let us come, then, and have our memories concerning these most precious and important matters refreshed, and our spiritual faculties quickened, and thus enter more fully into the blessed experiences portrayed in this wonderful Shepherd Psalm.

We notice first how full of meaning is the introductory expression, "The Lord is my Shepherd." There is suggested in these words the vast difference between having merely a theoretical knowledge of a thing, and that of making a practical use of the knowledge, or being affected by it. What a world of meaning is associated with the use of that little word "my." Let us illustrate: We hear of a neighbor's child who is sick and under the care of its mother. The news comes to us that the child is dead. We feel a sympathy for the mother, because *her* beloved child is taken from her. But how different seems the experience when sickness comes in to our own home -- my child is sick -- I do all that I can *for my* child for whom I have a special love. My child dies; my child is dead! The experience becomes personal. It is felt. It touches our heart. So it is in the words of this Psalm. The emphasis then is transferred from all other words to the little word "my." "The Lord is my Shepherd. It makes all the difference in the world whether we can say Jesus is the Savior of men, or Jesus is my Savior. Have I made him my Shepherd? Have I ever realized that I was once like a sheep gone astray? This is our natural state in Adam, and this state is expressed in the words of Holy Writ: "All we like sheep have gone astray; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Have I returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of my soul? Can I say, "He laid down his life for *me*?" If so, I can also say in truth: "I shall not want." Then to me belongs the promise, "They that wait upon the Lord shall not want any *good thing*." Then can I say, All things work together for my good, and realize that the one great "good" is to be conformed to the image and likeness of my Savior -- my Shepherd. How these precious words, "The Lord is my Shepherd," are illustrated in the care of the literal shepherd over his sheep. We have seen how the shepherd looked after all the needs of his sheep, even the special needs of the tired, the hungry, the thirsty, the wounded, the sick. So the Good Shepherd looks after the needs of his sheep. Jacob on his dying bed, as he, looked back over the long years of his pilgrimage, could say, "The Lord that fed [shepherded] me all of my life long."

I SHALL NOT WANT

In the expression, "I shall not want," is summed up in a general way all that is described in more detail in the other words of this Shepherd Psalm. In the words, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters," we have expressed the first great longing of the soul that is desiring to belong to Christ. That want is "Rest." This is the beginning of the heritage of those who become Christ's sheep. As we read these words, how vividly do they bring to our minds, the words of our Good Shepherd, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I *will give* you rest." In the Good Shepherd who died for the sheep is this rest secured. It is the blessed privilege of those who come to him to have rest -- rest from condemnation, rest from guilt, rest from the power of sin. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall *find* rest unto your souls," are the further words of this Great Shepherd. We accept the invitation, after experiencing the blessing of the first invitation, and yield our wills unto him in consecration, and when this is done fully and unreservedly we can say with the poet:

"Then He drew me closer to Him,
Bade my doubting, fearing cease;
And when I had fully yielded,
Filled my soul with perfect peace."

The experiences of the Lord's true sheep are varied. A large part of their experiences are associated with trials, distresses, and difficulties on every hand. The Great Shepherd sums them all up when he says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." If this be so, some one may say, how can it be true that one of the primary, as well as one of the lasting blessings of the life of the faithful Christian is that of "rest"? The words of the Savior, "*In me* ye shall have peace," uttered in the same connection, answers this question. It requires a careful, prayerful meditation to appreciate these words and experience their meaning. "*In me* ye shall have peace." While it is true that it is *difficult* to learn how to experience this constant rest of soul, this peace that passeth all understanding, yet it is also true that it is possible to experience it. However, it is only as we fully learn to trust and obey, to watch and *pray*, that we may have this blessed rest, this undisturbed peace. The poet seems to have realized and expressed all that is involved in the matter when he said:

"Now I'm trusting every moment,
Nothing else can be enough;
And the Savior bears me gently
O'er those places once so rough."

THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH

The thought here is not rest *from* conflict, not rest *from* service, but rest *in* conflict, rest *in* service. It is an *inner* rest, an *inner* peace; physical pain may rack the body, but the consciousness of being in him lifts above the pain and enables one to endure the pain without murmuring or repining. Everything that is needed to enjoy this inner rest of soul, is provided for in Christ, and is realized by appropriating the exceeding great and precious promises. It has been truthfully said that there are various things required in order to enjoy this rest. The first of these is a consciousness of safety. "The growl of a lion, the bark of a dog, the presence of a little child, will be quite sufficient to spoil the rest of a flock of sheep and to drive them trembling and timid into an affrighted group. And how can we rest so long as we feel ourselves liable to the attack of the 'roaring lion' of the pit? Who can rest so long as eternal destinies lie uncertainly in the balance?"

When threatened with danger, we have a place of refuge to fly to; we have the promise to lay hold of -- "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." The experience of abiding in Christ is figuratively spoken of as "dwelling in the secret place of the Most High," and we are told that "He that dwelleth in the secret place of 'the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." This ninety-first Psalm is the "Safety Psalm." It describes all the dangers that lie in the pathway of the Lord's sheep, and tells of an impregnable fortress, inside of which it is our privilege to dwell.

HE SHALL FEED HIS FLOCK

Another requisite for a sheep to enjoy this rest is plenty of food and drink-nourishment and refreshment. This the human shepherd supplied. How true is it also of the heavenly Shepherd. Of him it was said: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd." He first tells us how we may develop the desire for this necessary sustenance of this life of rest: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." Those who have not followed the Great Shepherd's advice must not be surprised if they lack a desire for this heavenly food, the partaking of which imparts and preserves this inner rest of the soul.

Furthermore, in order for the Lord's true sheep to enjoy this perfect rest of soul, they must recognize that all necessary provision has been made for them while they sojourn here in the present life. It is absolutely true that this provision comes from the divine, heavenly Shepherd, yet the supplies necessary for our present and future, whether temporal or spiritual, are realized by complying with certain divinely stated requirements. We are told to "seek first [above everything else] the Kingdom of God and his righteousness" and then all things necessary will come in the divine order. Meeting these conditions, and -trusting in this promise, will enable" us to have no anxiety about what we shall eat or drink or wherewithal we shall be clothed, for our Great Shepherd, who is our Father, knoweth that we have need of all these things; and to have this confidence and trust is absolutely necessary to enjoy this inner rest of soul.

In order to enjoy the perfect rest promised to the faithful, one must recognize the provision made for life beyond the tomb; the true sheep of the Lord may be relieved of any and all anxiety and worry concerning the future life. We are indeed exhorted to have *a godly* fear lest having a promise to enter into that rest we may come short of it, but godly fear is of itself an important element of the rest at present realized, and it assures us of an entrance into that rest that remains to the people of God. It is not presumption for one who possesses this reverential, godly fear to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." It is an exhibition of faith and confidence in God on the part of one who realizes this godly fear, to say with confidence that "He that hath begun a good work in me will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." And when we are beginning to realize that we have about reached the end of our earthly service, that we have about completed the journey of our earthly pilgrimage, we may say with St. Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

- R. E. Streeter.

The Question Box

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel . . . for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." - Rom. 1:16, 17.

Question:

Will you please discuss this text, dealing particularly with these three questions:

- (1) Does the Apostle mean that righteousness is communicated to us or merely imputed to us? In other words, are we made righteous or merely reckoned righteous?
- (2) If we are only reckoned righteous, how can God reckon us as being what, as a matter of fact, we are not? That is, how can he do so justly?
- (3) What is the relationship which justification bears to sanctification?

Answer:

The Apostle was one who had hungered and thirsted after righteousness. Like many another before him, he had sought to achieve this noble objective by attempting to keep God's law, only to find that he could not do so. He found, as every other member of Adam's race will find if he makes the attempt, that while his mind readily approved God's law as being "holy; just and good" (Rom. 7:12), he lacked the power to comply with its commands. Another law-the law of sin, with death as its fruitage-he found operating in the members of his fallen flesh, bringing him into captivity. - Rom. 7:23.

In his extremity the Gospel reaches him. Therein, according to our text, he finds revealed a righteousness which may be had as a gift. This righteousness has its origin in faith, and is a gift from God.

According to the scholars the word here translated "righteousness" is derived from the same Greek word elsewhere translated "justification" (e.g. Rom. 3:26). The word "justification" is a judicial, or as it is called, a forensic word; that is to say, it is a word derived from court usage. The opposite thought to justification is condemnation. Thus, after a case is heard in court, a man is either justified or condemned by the Court. Now, when a man is condemned as unrighteous by the Court, does the Court "make" the man unrighteous? Surely not. The man may, as a matter of fact be "not guilty," even though the Court thinks otherwise. What the Court has done is to *declare him* to be unrighteous in its eyes and in the eyes of the nation represented by the Court. So also, when a man is "justified" by the Court. He is not thereby "made" righteous; he is merely "declared to be" righteous in the eyes of the Law.

In the New Testament, and especially in the Epistle to the Romans, after establishing the fact that we are all, as a matter of fact, unrighteous, the Gospel reveals (we would never have found it out ourselves) the glorious truth that God is willing to reckon us righteous on the sole condition that we believe in him and in his Son. Let a man-any man -believe, or take God in Christ Jesus at his gracious word, and the value of this act of trust or allegiance is such that God reckons it for righteousness, and admits a man into his fellowship, as if he were already fit for such fellowship in his actual habits or character.

This, of course, is imputation, but it is the right sort of imputation. It is dealing with us not as we are, nor as we are not, *but as we are becoming in virtue of the new attachment under which our life has passed*. Not the standard already reached, but the direction in which we have begun to walk, is in God's sight, the important matter. Faith, then, is reckoned for righteousness, because it puts us upon the right basis and in right relation to God; and therefore *it is a root out of which, provided it continues to subsist, all righteousness can healthily grow*. To believe in God and in Jesus is to have the root of the matter in oneself. Therefore, when a man first believes, God can ignore all his previous life, and deal, with him simply on the new basis, in view of the man's new prospects.

JUSTIFICATION MAY LAPSE

Of course this preliminary acquittal, acceptance, or justification (sometimes spoken of as tentative), is provisional, or conditional. As the servant (Matt. 18:23-35) who had been forgiven his debts found them rolled back upon him when he believed in a manner utterly inconsistent with the position of a forgiven man, so our preliminary (tentative) justification may be promptly cancelled by our future conduct, if we behave as one who has forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. (2 Pet. 1:9.) The prodigal son, after he has been welcomed home, may go back again to the "far country." Or, to quote from Brother Russell: "This reckoned justification, or justification by faith, holds good so long as the faith continues and is backed by endeavors to do the Lord's will. If faith and obedience cease, at once the justification ceases to be imputed." ' (S. S. Vol. VI, p. 103.) But it remains the fact -- of such infinite value and fruitfulness is faith in God, as he has shown himself in Jesus -- that when a man first believes--yes, whenever, over and over again, he returns to believe after possible periods of backsliding--he is in God's sight on a new basis, however dark be the background of his previous sins; and he can be dealt with simply on the new basis, according to the movement of the Father's heart of love which the man's renewed faith has set free.'

JUSTIFICATION MERGES INTO SANCTIFICATION

But this simple reliance on the merits of Christ, and acceptance of forgiveness at his hands and for his sake, involves much more than at first appears. They are hopelessly wrong and quite unlike St. Paul, who isolate this mere reliance on Christ's merit, and setting it apart from all deeper movement of will or love, teach that it, and it only, is concerned with our justification. To St. Paul even the first exercise of faith is a surrender of independence, and a recognition in intellect, and much more in will, of the lordship of Jesus. It is, in other words, a change of allegiance--and this is the important thing about it. The man who has been forgiven, in thanking God for his forgiveness, finds himself, as it were, *inevitably* embarked on a new life, to serve a new Master. If he does not find this, he is not a man of faith at all (in the sense in which St. Paul uses the word faith) *'and therefore not justified in any sense of the word*. With St. Paul the faith which justifies is always inseparable from hope and love. It is the basis of things *hoped for*. (Heb. 11:1.) It is faith *which worketh by love*. (Gal. 5:6.) Faith is so deep a principle, with St. Paul, that it *always* includes the thought of consecration. While it may show itself, first, as the mere acceptance of an undeserved boon from the Divine bounty, it involves such a grasp of *God as necessarily* enlists the *will* to choose and serve him, the *intellect* to know and worship him with a growing perception as he is revealed in Jesus, and the *affections* to desire and love him.

It has been truly said that while it is faith alone which justifies, yet the faith which justifies is not alone, just as it is the heat alone of the sun which warms the earth, and yet in the sun, heat is not alone, but is always conjoined with light. Those who speak of faith as existing apart from consecration, are speaking of something of which St. Paul knew nothing--of which, at least, he

wrote nothing. Nowhere in either the Old or New Testaments do we find a man of faith who was not also consecrated.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED AND IMPARTED

We see, therefore, that not only (by his death on Calvary's cross) did our Lord perform a work for us, which constitutes the basis of our righteousness or justification, but also (in his risen and glorified condition) he is carrying on today a no less important work *in us*. For, says the Apostle, if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the *death of* his son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his *life* (his resurrection life, of course). - Rom. 5:10.

It is a blessed experience, undoubtedly, to have the peace with God which comes from being justified by faith, but a true lover of righteousness could never be satisfied with an imputed or reckoned righteousness only. His ardent desire is to be saved, not only from the guilt and punishment of sin, but also from its power. The words of the Psalmist express the sentiment of the true believer's heart: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." (Psa. 17:15.) And he will not be satisfied until then.

By faith in Christ's work *for us*, righteousness is imputed to us; but as, by his spirit, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, righteousness begins to be, praise be to God, *imparted* to us. Christ *in us*, therefore, that is to say, the Christ-spirit, or the Christ-mind in us, is-, indeed the *hope of glory*. Though, therefore, the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed. When? is it asked? Daily, replies the Apostle. Though therefore the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed, *day by day*. (2 Cor. 4:16.) Under the gracious influence of the spirit of Christ (that blessed promise of the Father), we are to be no longer conformed to the spirit of this Age, but we are to be day by day transformed by the renewing of our minds. (Rom. 12:2.) Concerning Christ's work *for us*, the all sufficient ground of our acceptance with God, our Lord cried from the cross, "It is finished." In regard to Christ's work *in us*, the Apostle writes: "Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." - Phil. 1:6.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the foregoing discussion, our conclusions on the three questions before us may be briefly summarized as follows:

(1) When a man is justified by faith, righteousness is not communicated to him, but is imputed to him; he is not made righteous, but reckoned righteous.

(2) *In* imputing righteousness to believers, God does not thereby declare that we who are not righteous have become righteous, but he thereby undertakes to regard and deal with us as though we had, extending to us all the privileges that would be ours if we had become righteous. Is it asked: How can he do this justly? We answer: He is able to do, so because there is in living faith an active principle, the tendency of which is ever towards righteousness; it is this tendency or inclination towards righteousness, inherent in living faith, which enables God, without violating the principle of justice, to fellowship with imperfect men of faith as though they were perfect (or righteous).

(3) It seems to us that it conduces to clearness of thought to distinguish justification by faith from Sanctification. The Reformers distinguished them; so also did our late Pastor, Brother Russell. Justification is correctly understood as preliminary to sanctification; justification meaning

righteousness instantaneously imputed; sanctification meaning righteousness gradually imparted. On the whole St. Paul does seem to keep the two subjects separate from each other. At the same time we heartily concur in the thought that the matter is rather one of clearness of thought and convenience of thinking than anything more material. Although separate, the two subjects run into each other and are connected by real links. There is an organic unity in, the Christian life. Its different parts and functions are no more really separable than the different parts and functions of the human body. Justification and sanctification may be distinguished by the student, as are the arterial and nervous systems in the human body; but in a living being they are inseparable.

If we were asked to answer all three questions in one brief statement, perhaps we could not do better than commend our inquirer to that choice sentence from an old writer, a writer be it remembered, who did not enjoy the light and privileges of our day, but whose words contain the very pith of the matter: "The righteousness wherewith we shall be clothed in the world to come is both perfect and inherent; that whereby we are justified is perfect but not inherent; that whereby we are sanctified inherent but not perfect."

- P. L. Read.

The Unity of the Spirit

*"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." - Eph. 4:3.
(Continued from last issue)*

HOW CAREFUL God has been to safeguard us against a too hasty conclusion that in so far as we are concerned all his requirements have been met. How many there are who will agree fully with all that has been thus far set forth in this examination of Christian unity, and yet can it be said that all such clearly understand *all that is involved* in the unity of the Spirit? All that has been covered foregoing has to do with the beginnings merely of spiritual unity. It is a well known saying that "Birds of a feather flock together," and it expresses a fact everywhere manifest. In the things of the Spirit the same selection of fellowship holds true. Some there are who confess to a love for the Lord, and whom we must accept into the unity of the Spirit as thus far discussed. But Paul advances the further qualification, "and of the knowledge of the Son of God." Is he in this, merely rounding out his previous statement, or are we to conclude that this additional remark is a very essential part of the conditions which underlie the "unity of the Spirit"? We believe that this emphasis is intended. Paul himself surely knew and practised the unity described thus far, yet notwithstanding his attainments in that regard, we find him still confessing that "the excellency of the knowledge of the Son of God," and the prospect of attaining to yet greater knowledge of him, had become the absorbing theme of his life. Time and again we find him addressing his letters to "saints" and to "brethren," and then proceeding to tell them in no uncertain terms that he could not write to them as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. Therefore his fellowship of spirit with them was regrettably hindered. Again we have him saying of others more mature, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect." Is it not evident that there was a very much greater measure of "the unity of the Spirit" present when Paul was in the presence of the latter brethren? Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, yes liberty in thought, liberty in spiritual conversation, liberty in Christ, a liberty to let the Spirit express itself without hindrance, because of an atmosphere free from the carnality Paul deplored, and free from the limitations -- proper enough for babes, but wholly incompatible with full grown manhood. This surely is a very greatly enlarged enjoyment of the "unity of the Spirit."

STRENGTHENED WITH MIGHT BY HIS SPIRIT

And what is "the knowledge of the Son of God" to which the Apostle refers? Surely it is that revelation of him that so captivates the heart capable of knowing him, that every other object is lost sight of. It is that knowledge of Jesus in all the glory of his character, in all the beauty of his devotion to God, in all the complete surrender of himself to God in carrying out the plan of salvation, and in all the myriad manifestations of his altogether loveliness. If we would know him thus, we must advance far beyond the mere elementary understanding of first principles. We must learn what the will of God really is as respects our own personal relationship to him. The first step in this advanced life is to learn and heartily respond to the invitation to "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." We must be "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner, man" to behold the completeness of the life of surrender which was in the mind of Christ; and to teach us these selfsame things, Jesus declared he must depart to heaven, that the Spirit might come to perform so remarkable a work in us.

But how can that Spirit lead, purify, transform, fill, and use a life unless it is yielded to Him? What can the spotter do with the unyielded clay? How can God (fashion the unyielded life? If every idol he shatters is secretly mourned: if every chastening stroke is bitterly denounced *if every higher purpose is resisted by a hostile will*, how can he mold, and transform, and bless? Surely the ship which God is not piloting is destined to disastrous wreck; surely the harp which God does not attune will ever be a jangle of discordant notes to his listening ear. If we would have them restored to their perfection, we yield our disordered time; piece to the watchmaker: our costly gem with its broken setting to the jeweler: our wounded, bleeding limb to the surgeon. Can we do less toward God with the priceless treasure of life if we would have, it meet our highest aspirations? Wherefore the Word of God calls upon us again and again to yield, yield, yield yourselves to God (Rom. 6:13, 16, 19) if we would have his spirit hold full sway in our lives. He will not compel such stir - render. He wants consecration, not coercion. But his fullest purpose of grace, blessing, and ministry is simply baffled in the life which will not yield to him. Nothing is more striking in Christ's earthly life than this attitude of absolute submission to the Father. 'Lo, I come to *do Thy Will*' was the complete expression of his life and ministry."

Oh! how blessed it is to take time to learn at the feet of Jesus some of the most wonderful lessons of what the Father longs to do for us. How possible it is to believe oneself fully informed regarding the will of God, and to go through years perhaps of struggle, disappointment, and discouragement, and through years of a limited understanding of all his will, and then to find that the chief difficulty was in our imperfect understanding of the very things we felt so qualified to teach others. Had we been told that it was all a lack of a rounded out study of his Word, and a full surrender to God, we would have challenged the statement and declared it untrue, and yet the discovery is being made by one here and there, that after all, there was too much of self-will present, and too little of the faith to appropriate the statements of God's Word regarding *'what he can do in us* and for us. The Bible always puts the emphasis on the work of the Spirit, and ever reminds us of the imperfection of our own works. In God's Word it is not consecration in order that we may do something for God, but consecration, which means surrender, in order that God may do everything for us. That he will graciously permit us a part in a service angels might well covet to enjoy, is clear from his Word, and that "He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto eternal life," is also true, yet our boast can never be in what we are permitted to do for him, but our glory is ever in the fact that he can do so great a work in us. Yes, and unless that great transforming work is done *in us* we have received the grace of God in vain, whatever we may do for him.

ONLY SPIRITUAL PEOPLE CAN BE LIVING STONES

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness" is our Lord's message to us, and the saving element in the Church throughout the Age has been just such as these. The great Bible words such as "holiness," "purification," "transformation," "changed from glory to glory," "in Christ," "separation," and others of similar import have been thrilling words to hearts hungering after righteousness, and thirsting after God, as the hart pants for the water brooks. To such hearts there comes a thrill of joy when the high, lofty standards of God's Word are magnified, when the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord is emphasized, and when the clean hands and pure hearts (absolutely necessary if any would ascend into the hill of the Lord), are set forth as imperative.

But those thus disposed, and thus emphatic for these great principles and who have such noble aspirations are found to be few. The presence of the mighty transforming, life-changing, heart-searching Spirit, the power that is able to raise us up from defeat and failure, and able to "keep us from falling" and to present us at last "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," is not generally manifest. And when these things are not present in- the life and service, nothing else avails. The Church is called to be a "spiritual house, an holy priesthood." Only spiritual people can be its "living stones," and just as surely, only *spiritual* characters can be that "*holy priesthood*." There may be plenty of outward show, plenty of adherence to sound doctrine even, and yet no Shekinah manifestations of God's presence.

All of these admitted possibilities have much to do with the unity of the Spirit, in the lives of saints. Harmony amidst diversity, there can be when it comes to a matter of divergent views on debatable points of Bible interpretation, and it is the duty of every member of the Body to recognize that unavoidable diversity, and yet love and fellowship without partiality the weak and the strong as brethren in Christ. But as to our reaction toward those who are spiritual and those who are not, the matter is somewhat different. A higher unity of the Spirit must be possible among those who have risen far above the carnal distinctions, than can be possible among such as continue to follow along on the lower levels. Why did Jesus display a special love for John? It were foolish to conclude that the good appearance of John, or his position in life, or his exterior make-up, drew out our Lord's special affections toward him. It is much more reasonable to suppose that it was the possession of beautiful, inward qualities that attracted the love of Jesus. The same must have been true in a little lesser degree in the case of Peter and James. The law of affinities can not be ignored. The Lord himself so deals with us, and he will come in to sup with us only in proportion to the warmth and sincerity of our invitation. And so it is with the spiritually minded. There are hindrances caused by the lukewarmness, carnal-mindedness, etc., in some of the "many called" by reason of which all who revel in the deeper things of inspiration find it impossible to enjoy the unity, oneness, delightful intercourse, and spiritual benefits obtainable when the truly spiritual have found the spiritual. All of these facts are so much a part of the "unity of the Spirit" in its larger dimensions, that they must be taken into consideration, lest we mistake the beginnings of such union for the finished article, and rest satisfied with less than spiritual unity.

A HIGH PRICE TO PAY IF WE GO FORWARD

Since sanctification is a progressive matter, and since it is so manifest that some have gone on to greater degrees -of sanctification than others, it follows that the varied viewpoints taken regarding this subject must inevitably affect our association together with others of the Lord's people. It is because of this that it is well for the one who would "go forward" to "sit down and count the cost." Not to count the cost from the standpoint of whether he will find "the regions beyond"

worth the effort, for no one has entered that happy sense of *full surrender* and return to report disappointment. But cost it will, and the reason is obvious: God first, means everything else subordinated. It means getting God's viewpoint of sin and holiness, and God's promises riveted on one's heart as possibilities, and then like faithful Abraham launching out into the inheritance on faith, and if necessary being willing to go on alone. "The same light that shows us sin will show the way out of it" says a very recent writer, and, "thus it is that the surrendered child of God soon finds himself walking the pathway of separation. Things which were *doubtful* before are now seen to be *sinful*. Many aforesaid pleasures are relinquished because they no longer bring enjoyment but condemnation. Hosts of so-called innocent gratifications are clearly seen to be wasteful ones in him who is here now not to do his own will but the will of him that sent him. The deep change in the inner motive of life-'Ye are not your own'-soon works out its consequent changed view of what he dare do with the time, talents, and possessions which are in the stewardship of the man who now belongs to another. He disjoins himself from former favorite pursuits or indulgences because he sees them in an entirely new light, wondering meantime why he did not always, or why others do not now see them thus. And, handfast with separation from things comes isolation from men. *Differences in desires raise barriers, as surely as accord therein begets fellowship*. How far fellowships hinge upon community of interest is seen only when the latter vanishes. The truly consecrated man or woman is the last in the world to cherish a 'holier than thou' spirit that might repel men: longs to be closer to the heart and life of all men than ever before: is filled with love beyond all previous experience. Yet companionships change; friends seem to be drifting away; a conscious loneliness begins to steal into the heart. Part of the price of a persistent determination to climb to the highest mountain peaks of separation and fellowship with God is to lose the comradeship of those who will not climb there with you. It seems a high price to pay but, necessary to win the prize, it is worth the paying. Better a thousand-fold the loneliness of separation from the world than that of separation from God. Better the loneliness of Enoch than the companionship of Lot. There is much danger that our false conceptions of 'all things to all men,' may make us to be nothing to any man. Isolation is insulation. But insulation is power, in the spiritual as well as the electrical sphere. *The hearts that need help and light seek it not among those who walk on the level with them*, but from those who walk on the heights with God. If loneliness comes into the consecrated life because of its close and conscientious walk with God, then welcome such loneliness, for it only brings a closer fellowship with that Lonely One who was the greatest Helper a needy, sorrowing world has ever known, even though he walked in utter separation froth it." *

*"The Surrendered Life."

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

Thus viewed, we can see that "the unity of the Spirit" is a subject of almost unlimited enlargement. Babes in Christ may enjoy that unity, and seemingly to themselves, enjoy it to the full, and therefore very easily fall into the mistaken belief that anything beyond their limited horizon would be an element of disturbance definitely opposed to "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Others who have advanced to a further understanding of truth and the things of the Spirit, may likewise enjoy what will appear to' themselves a full and satisfactory realization of this desirable unity, and then, like the less developed ones, fall into the same unfortunate mistake of concluding -that they have reached the summit of Christian experience, and verily believe themselves defenders of the faith when opposing higher viewpoints of the Christian's possibilities in God's marvelous grace. Still others, thank God, believe that when Paul talks about "the fulness of Christ" and going "on to perfection," he visualizes for us "regions beyond" that wait for our appropriation. And such possibilities there are hidden for us in "a mine, aye, deeper too, than can

mortal ever go." O ye of little faith, search and see. "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive." Be one of those full of faith to believe that "Still there's more to follow" and claim all that God has promised, and then be prepared to receive his overflow of blessing. "Only believe and thou shalt see greater things than these."

Such dear souls must not be considered unfaithful to the appeal of the Apostle's entreaty, that they strive to preserve the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. How very unfortunate it is that they are so frequently considered disturbers of the peace, for most certainly they are true to the very ideals Paul set forth. The Apostle would be the last in the world to give encouragement to babes in Christ to remain content with their limited views, and he speaks in no uncertain terms of his disapproval of all immaturity in any saint, though developed a stage beyond babyhood. Present attainments are *never the end* with Paul either for himself or others. His whole appeal in our text and its connections, is an urge to press on to a very much to be desired goal, which is the only objective consistent with a profession of whole-hearted surrender to the will of God. Can any real saint miss the point in such an appeal to go forward, "till we all come [1] in the unity of the faith, [2] and of the knowledge of the Son of God, [3] unto a perfect man, [4] unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Can any one today forget the fact that all believers among whom we move must represent varying degrees of development, and admitting that anything less than the fullest possible development of Christ being formed in us, is to that extent unsatisfactory to God, shall we not unite in emphasizing this higher ground, until "we all come" to a blessed individual experience of the realities of the life which is hid with Christ in God. , "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

- J. J. Blackburn

The Scriptural Basis of Christian Unity

CONSIDERING this subject, genuine and zealous Bible students enjoy a great advantage over their fellow Christians because they understand the Plan of God. They know what God is doing, and can, therefore, cooperate intelligently with him in the accomplishment of his purpose. Moreover they know that he is seeking and finding 144,000, the full number of the elect, who must become copies, of the likeness of his Son. Moreover, they understand more clearly the divine character, and comprehend better what is meant by Christlikeness. In searching the Scriptures for the basis for Christian unity we are amazed to find that the ideal unity set before the Christian is the oneness which subsists between God and Jesus Christ. When Jesus said "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30), none who heard him could understand what he meant, and the vast majority of Christians who have ever lived do not appear to have understood the meaning of those mysterious words. And when he used the equally mysterious words, in his prayer for the Church, "And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given unto them; *that they may be one even as we are one*" (John 17:22), it is safe to say that the number of Christians who understand must be small indeed. To the humble Christian these words are truly awe-inspiring. How small and trivial our hopes and aims and ambitions appear in the light of those solemn words, and in considering the vast aims and purposes of the Heavenly Father and Son. But have we not often spent hours on doubtful disputations over matters which are of relatively small importance? How often has a study of the deeper, spiritual truths been marred by some one, not in the spirit, insisting on the introduction of a point, which could only lead the brethren far away from where the spirit of God was leading? It is safe to say that the Christian who lives in the expectation that our Lord's words concerning true unity or oneness can and will be fulfilled, has a tremendous advantage over those who allow their time and energy to be absorbed in attempting to define and adhere to what may or may not be truly orthodox. When the convicted sinner draws near to the Savior, he is not troubled about theology. He is troubled in mind, and wants peace. He is carrying a burden, which grows heavier every moment, and wants rest. How does he obtain peace and rest? Must he wait until he understands the Bible? Nay: when he comes to the Savior there are no theological tests. The great question concerns the condition of the heart. It is safe to say that the sinner who comes to the Savior wants to have done with sin. Not only so, but he will wish to have the Lord's will done in him. This is all that is required at the beginning. He will grow in grace and in knowledge, while he retains the spirit of obedience.

The Word of God will sanctify him. However, at the very beginning, voices from various groups of the Lord's people reach him, appealing to him to throw in his lot with them. He decides on a particular group; but, if -he continues to grow, he becomes restless and dissatisfied. He passes often from group to group, and finally he may become associated with people who claim to be genuine Bible students. These appear to have many advantages over the Christians he has known in the past. Their theology is more comprehensive, and seems to include the best out of all the various groups. For a time he is satisfied, but he learns that divisions exist even amongst Bible Students; and even when he decides to adhere to a particular group, he cannot be sure that he has found the true Church at last. He is now where the Lord wants him to be. God is dealing with individuals. This becomes more and more apparent to him as time goes on. He sees that from the beginning of the Gospel Age aggregations of believers, called churches, existed. The members of these churches enjoyed much light. The light was for a purpose, to help them to put on Christ.

Some sincere Christians believe that light, in the Scriptural sense, is a test. When they come to understand a particular subject they believe that this is a very special favor or evidence that God specially approves them. When other Christians fail to see the subject clearly, they conclude that God wishes them to separate. In the Apostolic Church this led to various sects which were named after prominent leaders. In later times the same false reasoning led to the formation of the various Protestant Churches, and many earnest Christians found themselves separated from other Christians by creeds, which encourage the feeling of spiritual superiority, and which prevent the members of the Body of Christ from functioning as directed in the Word of God. It will not do to say it was God's

will, and that he has overruled it for good. This is to admit the offense. Let us look at Truth as a building up agent or agency, not as a separating agency.

EPHESIANS 4:3-6

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your -calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." In these remarkable verses we have seven reasons for diligently endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit. The words include all true Christians.

- (1) We all belong to one, that is, the *same* body.
- (2) We all partake of the *same* spirit.
- (3) We were all called in the *same* hope of our calling.
- (4) We all acknowledge the *same* Lord.
- (5) We all must have the *same* faith (the same basis of acceptance into favor with God) .
- (6) We all must experience the *same* baptism (the baptism into death) .
- (7) We are all children of the *same* God and Father.

God, through his Word and spirit, foreseeing how difficult it would be for his children to keep the unity of the spirit (the oneness which it is the work of the spirit to promote and perfect) reminds us in the above verses, of all those privileges we share in common, to induce us heartily to forbear one another in love. Severe and heavy losses must be experienced by those who fail to heed the word of exhortation.

THE UNITING BOND OF *the* PEACE

The peace of God, the peace of Christ, is here referred to. We receive it from God, through Christ. We know that peace and righteousness co-exist in God. As we learn to love righteousness our peace should be ever increasing. The true children of God inherit this peace. It was bequeathed to them by Christ. It implies a love for righteousness, even at the very beginning of the Christian life. In the above verse this peace is called a uniting bond. In line with this thought we read that heavenly wisdom is first pure, then peaceable. Can we aspire to be one, as God and Christ are one? Can we aspire to live as individual Christians so that our influence may always tend- to strengthen the Uniting Bond of the Peace? Is not this the true way to keep the unity of the spirit? On the contrary are not creeds and confessions often the means by which sincere Christians are kept apart? Moreover, can any group of Christians, pr Bible Students, honestly claim that they have *all* the truth, and that each and all in the group possess a clear understanding of all the truth they claim to have?

In conclusion, may the Lord give each true Christian such a clear vision of the divine love for each of his children, that the result will be a great enlargement of heart for one another, leading us more and more to desire and pray that the perfect will of God may be fulfilled to his glory and our eternal welfare.

- D. W. Black

Encouraging, Messages

Dear Brethren in Christ:

Greetings of peace, with Hebrews 13:20,21. We are glad to be able to tell you that the package of food arrived safely. . . . Dear brethren, you have our thanks, our heartfelt thanks, for this act of love. We cannot tell you with words how much this gift has helped us to make our living conditions better. We are amazed to see the wonders of our loving Father, who always knows when help is needed. We have such a good and faithful God. How often he has made us to feel ashamed of our little faith. At the same time these experiences strengthen our faith and confidence in his loving guidance and his overruling in all our ways. Sometimes he permits it to come to the worst before he says, It is enough. But if he is to give us some day that glorious inheritance, he must prove our faith now to the uttermost. Dear Brethren, if we could tell you how the Lord has led us, especially the last three years, you would be astonished. We have richly experienced 2 Corinthians 4:8. When I was still in my home, without a piece of bread, I suddenly received bread from unexpected sources; and when I traveled westward, by the road I found meat and cheese, and I knew that the Father in heaven had so prepared and overruled. How often in this year he has shown us that his way is best. If we always had our inner ear tuned to listen to his voice and lay down all our self-will, he could work out his good pleasure in us. Whatever he does with us, and however he leads us, his will is always best. All things work together for our good. Knowing and experiencing these things brings blessings and peace to us.

How different it is in the world. Peoples and nations are full of unrest and enmity. The great Adversary is bringing mankind always into new troubles and sufferings. But the King of kings will soon break his rule. (Isa. 14:4-6.) May the wonderful time of peace soon come. We wait with longing hearts for that time when we may be united with our dear Lord. This day seems very near. . . .

May the Lord recompense you for your love. We "remember without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love," and this includes all the loved ones who have helped. We will not forget it.
With much Christian love,
O. and A. S. -- Germany.

Dear Brethren in Christ.

I received the "Herald" and it is a great joy to me. It was always a very good friend of mine. I have missed it very much and am so happy to have it again. It is a precious Christmas present for me. I see it is written in the same spirit as in former days. It gives yet the same inspiration, and encourages the children of our Lord. I see that our Good Shepard still cares for his sheep. I thank you so much that you have provided me with this food, which is so good and so important for us.

Another great joy that has come to us is a letter telling us- that there is a parcel on its way. You cannot imagine what that means to our whole family. Now we shall have a really happy Christmas even in-this dark time. We will give thanks to Him who is always our help, and to those dear brothers and sisters who sent it. May our Master reward them as he promised.

My daughter who lost her husband in the war has consecrated, and is very young in the truth. . . .
With my hearty greetings, and with Hebrews 13:20, 21, I remain

Your sister in Christ,
M. M. -- Germany.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

It is true what my mother says, I'm a babe indeed. I am very much ashamed because of that, for I heard of all these precious things which are written for us in the Bible, since I was but a girl. I believed that all mother told me was true and would happen, but I did not think to give up *myself*. I thought it to be enough to believe and to help where there was opportunity, but I did not want to wear the cross and to leave the world. Now I'm so happy, as I never was in. all my life, for now I know my way, and now I have found all the happiness I thought to find in the world, and, did not find. But it was a long way! I would never have found the way by myself. . I have no friends near to whom I can speak about these things. They all laugh about them, for they think themselves clever and wise and have much of the knowledge of the world. . . . Now I shall hurry to translate the Heralds, for mother is very eager to read them. With my best wishes for you and my hearty greetings, I am

A babe in the Truth,
E. S. -- Germany.

Dear Brethren:

First I want to thank you with all my heart for the package containing clothing from California, forwarded by you. It arrived just in time-when its need was keenly felt, and it has deeply touched us. With thankful heart I remembered all the goodness of God, that now again has come true, in the fulfilment of his promise: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." I ask myself: "Am I am worthy of all his goodness? Why should I be so favored?" We thank "you very much. Special-thanks we send to the brethren in California.

Dear brethren we thank you also for regularly sending the "Herald." Some articles I have translated into German and given to others. I have been much blessed in translating. I am fond of this work and am glad to have the privilege of doing it. How precious are the articles, written in humility! There is the breathing of the holy spirit and we have been refreshed. As a sister remarked, "It can be said that it is meat in due season." Like as of old God supplied the daily manna, so he feeds us now.

I am glad to hear the Diaglott is on its way to me. Dear brethren, I am unable to pay for it, but one thing I will do, I will strengthen my efforts for serving the Lord. God may bless them.

We received your message telling us of Food packages and Woolen and Blanket packages being forwarded. I, will write' you immediately upon their arrival. The elders, will distribute them according to the spirit of the Lord, in love.

May the God of love bless your service during the year, and may he help us to grow in the inner man, that we may more and more appreciate his truth and be possessing it in love.

Your brother,
E. S. -- Germany

Dear Brethren:

I have read the first volume of the Revelation series with deep interest, and it has been a great blessing to me. It is by far the best interpretation I have ever read. It is so much more harmonious with reason and Scripture, and I doubt if, it could be much improved on. I am anxious to read the rest of the interpretation, as given in Vol. II, and will be very grateful to you for the loan of it. . . .

Your brother in Christ,
F. S. -- Calif.

Deceased

Mr. Dan Maglaras, Dover, N. H. - (1947).
Mr. M. P. Bridgland, Toronto, Ont. - (January).
Mrs. Eva Czajkowski, Milwaukee, Wis. - (January):
Mrs. Elizabeth Hinz, Black Creek, Wic. - (January).
Mrs. Florence Moore, Columbus, O. - (January).
Mrs. Margaret Newcomb, Quincy, Mass. - (January).
Mr. J. M. Ashley, Dallas, Tex. - (February).
Mr. Albert Kipp, Saginaw, Mich. - (February).