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A "Faithful Saying" for the Christmas Season

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." - 1 Tim. 1:15.

THIS "FAITHFUL saying" takes us back to the very earliest times of the Gospel Age-to the days when the New Testament was only in the making, and had not yet come into common use. In those days the progress of the Gospel was largely accomplished by oral presentation, and after our Lord had ascended on high, he bestowed special gifts upon the waiting Church which were designed to facilitate this oral presentation, and thus aid in the development and increase of the Church. To supplement the labors of the Apostles he gave some to be prophets, as we read in Eph. 4:8, 11-15.

NEW TESTAMENT PROPHETS

Among the most eminent of the Christian prophets were Barnabas, the son of consolation; Stephen, who spake with the holy spirit and with power; Agabus, who signified by the spirit that there should be a great famine throughout all the world; Judas and Silas, who, being prophets, exhorted the brethren at Antioch, and confirmed them; Symeon, who was also called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod; Timothy, the man of God; and high above all this goodly fellowship in gifts and powers, Paul himself, who was both an Apostle and a Prophet.

No church seems to have been without them. In some churches, as in that of Corinth, they were so numerous, and so unrestrained in the exercise of their peculiar gift, that the Apostle had to remind them that the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets; that is to say, it was, or should be, under their control, and he enjoined them to prophesy one by one, in a decent, orderly way, that all might learn and be comforted. -- Acts 2:17, 18; 10:46; 19:6; 11:28; 15:32; 13:1; 1 Cor. 13:31, 32.

These Christian Prophets, like the Prophets of the Old Testament, foretold things to come. Agabus, for example, predicted the famine which fell upon the Roman Empire in the days of

Claudius Caesar. The Prophets of the Tyrian Church warned St. Paul, through the spirit, not to go to Jerusalem. In every city there were those by whom the holy spirit testified that bonds and afflictions awaited him. Agabus, with a symbolism which must have recalled the Old Testament Prophets to every Jewish mind, bound his own hands and feet with Paul's girdle, and said: "Thus saith the holy spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

EXPOSITION OF TRUTH RATHER THAN FORECASTING OF EVENTS THEIR HIGHEST DUTY

But though the Christian Prophets possessed and used this strange power of predicting coming events, it was not their highest gift nor was it their main duty. As Brother Russell has pointed out in the Sixth Volume of *Scripture Studies*, page 246, the word prophet means also one who expounds, tells forth, or makes plain a truth which until then is only dimly seen by others. The great gift of the Prophet in every age is that he sees eternal truths and facts more clearly than other men, and their bearing on the social and moral conditions of his own age and of other ages; and that, discerning what the will of the Lord is, he can speak it -forth with a divine force and energy -- so speak it that it arouses the conscience and penetrates the heart. And what the Christian Prophets valued most in their gift, what, at least, they were taught to value most, was this very power of so speaking the truth to a man that he could not shut out the light, but stood before it, self-convicted, and self-condemned. When they prophesied in the Church and there came in an unbeliever, the secrets of his heart were made manifest; and falling down on his face, he worshiped God, declaring that God was in them of a truth., Thus, while they doubtless held meetings specially designed for "the public," *every* meeting was, or should have been, conducted in a manner, and in a spirit which lent itself to the progress of the Gospel. (Acts 21:4; 20:22, 23; 21:10-12.) Above all, these Christian Prophets saw the secrets which had been hidden in previous times, but were now revealed to faith, and by which the future of this world was to be shaped-the secret of that fatherly and redeeming love which rose to its highest expression in the gift of Christ and the sacrifice of the Cross; the secret of the one Body of Christ, in which there was no place for national, social, or even sexual distinctions; no place for Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, but all should be one new manhood -- the secret of the new heaven and the new earth.

THE FAITHFUL SAYINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

As these inspired Apostles and Prophets labored in the ecclesias of those early days they would, from time to time, give expression to some brief, concise summary of those truths which lie at the very foundation of the faith. Once uttered in the Christian assemblies, they were found to be full of truth and grace. Those who first heard them felt that the precious truths enshrined in them had never been so happily expressed (for, remember, the New Testament was not yet in common use); nay, they felt them to be so happily expressed that it was impossible to improve on them. They treasured them in their memories and hearts, cited them in their worship, in their conversations with one another, and in their fellowship with neighboring churches. These neighboring churches also acknowledged their charm, adopted them, and made them their own; until at last, after twenty or thirty years' use, they became the common property of the whole Church, and received the stamp of universal approval. The Church pronounced them "faithful," that is to say, perfectly reliable "sayings," entitled to implicit credence; and "worthy of all acceptance," that is, either deserving to be accepted by all men everywhere, or deserving of every kind of acceptance which men could accord them, since there was food in them for brain and heart, for imagination, for faith, for devotion.

When St. Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles, more than thirty years had elapsed since the day of Pentecost, since the holy spirit had been poured out abundantly on the followers of Christ, since, in short, the inspired Apostles and Prophets had commenced their labors. Hence there had been plenty of time before St. Paul wrote his letters to Timothy and Titus for many of these prophetic sayings to come into general use in the Church, and to gather an authority which no disciple of Christ would for a moment dispute. In these letters we find St. Paul quoting at least five, and possibly more than five, sayings, which bear all the marks of having passed through the process

we have just described, and of having acquired an authority to which the whole company of the faithful would defer. For they were faithful sayings; they had won acceptance throughout the whole Church, an unchallenged authority, simply because they expressed the essential truths of the Gospel in concise, memorable, and sometimes in beautiful and poetic forms. Many, if not all of them, were put to music, and sung as hymns in their services of worship and praise. Doubtless they may be regarded as examples of those spiritual songs with which, years before, St. Paul had exhorted the consecrated to cheer one another's faith and hope.

OUR LORD'S PRE-EXISTENCE IMPLIED

It is to one of these "faithful sayings" that we turn today for a text -- the one quoted at the head of this article. And how suitable a "saying" it is for the Christmas season, for it exactly expresses the purpose of our Lord's advent--the salvation of our lost and dying race.

That "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" is still one of the grandest sayings in the world, simple though it sounds; and there must in very deed have been a divine grace and inspiration on the lips which first uttered it. It is only by a sustained effort of imagination that we can in any measure conceive what it was to those on whose waiting and prepared ears it originally fell. But even to us, whose ears are dulled by long use of the words, they grow impressive as we ponder them, and take on added meaning. Is there nothing strange, nothing startling, in the phrase, "Christ Jesus came -- Christ Jesus *advented* - into the world?" That could be said of none but him. For it implies that his coming, his advent, was a conscious and voluntary act, a self determining effort of his will. It implies his pre-existence on some other plane; it implies that he did not begin to be when he came into this world; nor come, as we come, apart from his own knowledge and choice. Nothing less than the great secret of godliness is in these words, or in the New Testament use of them; the change of nature from spirit to human of the mighty Logos, who at all times was so completely one with the Father, in aim, in thought, in purpose, that when he was here he could truthfully say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," and of whom an Apostle could write he was "God manifest in flesh." - John 14:9; 1 Tim. 3:16.

No doubt this saying won wide acceptance in the Church, and was commended as a faithful saying by St. Paul, partly because it contained the confession that Christ Jesus had come in flesh; for thus it met and satisfied the test by which the Apostles had demanded that all spiritual utterances should be tried. Yet surely it was not this alone, nor this mainly, which commended it to the general heart. Even *we* value the doctrine of the pre-human existence of Christ, and of his virgin birth, mainly because, holding those truths, we can see and believe that he possessed the ability to become our Savior if he would; mainly because, his willingness being also abundantly attested, we can and do rejoice in him as our Savior indeed. And therefore we may well believe that the early Church loved and adopted this prophetic saying, not so much for its opening as for its closing words. That "Christ Jesus *came into the world*" was much; but that he "came into the world *to save sinners*" - - *this* was the pathetic surprise, *this* the mystery of grace, which broke men down into tears of penitence and love and rapture, before which Jew and Gentile fell on their faces and worshiped him.

HE CAME TO SAVE

That Jehovah would eventually, "in due time," send a Mighty One into the world to bless, to reward his loyal and obedient servants, was no more than a pious *Hebrew* would have expected of him. The great promise to Abraham that in his Seed should all the families of the earth be blessed--a promise reiterated and amplified by all the Prophets who followed--assured him of this. That a god, a mighty one, should come into the world to aid and protect those who were specially

devoted to his service, or even to gratify his own lust and caprice, was what *any Greek* would be prepared to expect; for had not his ears buzzed with such fables ever since he had seen the stately forms of his gods towering, in their white marble loveliness, above the altars in street and temple, or listened to the wandering rhapsodists reciting the Homeric strains! But that God, in Christ, should come down into the world not to indulge his preferences and lusts, not to aid and protect his devotees, not even to succor and reward the righteous men who walked in all his ordinances and commandments blameless, but to *save sinners*, to bless his enemies, to redeem those whom the pious Jew denounced as "this people that is accursed," and the cultivated Greek scorned as "the foolish and wretched herd, debarred from wisdom" -- O this was a marvel beyond all marvels; it was a truth, if indeed it could be true, to break and win all hearts, and to revolutionize the whole structure of human life and thought!

In the early Church, too, not many wise, not many "righteous, were called. It was the foolish and the wicked, the peasant and the slave, sinners of the Jews and sinners of the Gentiles, to whom, for the most part, the Gospel was preached, or preached with vital and saving effect. And what a Gospel it must have been to *them*, shut out as they had been, from all self-respect and hope; held incapable of wisdom or of goodness, banned and scorned from the cradle to the grave! What a Gospel to learn that the very Son of God had pitied them whom no man pitied, loved them whom all men hated and despised; that he had emptied himself of his glory, and come down into their low and sorrowful conditions, not to judge and condemn them, but to save them from their sins, infirmities, sorrows, to give them wisdom, to make them righteous, and to restore them to self respect, to kindle in their hearts the cleansing and illuminating fires of an eternal hope! In a Church composed of men who had been lost but were found, who had been dead in trespasses and sins, but' were now alive unto righteousness, and who felt that they owed this wondrous change and transformation, this new life, to Christ alone, is it any marvel that the saying, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," was held to be a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance; a saying more precious than all the sentences of the wise or all the ethical maxims of the good; a saying which set itself to the music of the joy it inspired, and which deserved to be had in everlasting remembrance?

"THE CHIEF OF SINNERS-WE"

Nay, though it be so simple and familiar, is it not most precious even to us, full of a divine consolation, an unfailling spring of hope? Which of us has not sinned, try ourselves by what standard we will? Which of us, despite our penitence and faith, does not at this moment sorrowfully confess that he is still a sinner, most unworthy of the mercy of God? If any man think otherwise, what need we further proof that he is the most hopeless of sinners? If any man think otherwise, let him listen to one, even St. Paul, whom even he will confess to possess a better title to saintship than himself. Even in St. Paul's writings there is no more humbling and pathetic stroke than the words he appends to this "faithful saying." Although for more than twenty years he had endured the loss of all things for Christ's sake; although he had been, and knew that he had been, more abundant both in labor and in suffering than any other of the Apostles, he cannot say, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," without adding, "of whom I am chief"! nay, without going on to explain that he, the chief of sinners, has obtained mercy, not for his own sake, not simply that he might be recovered to life and hope, but also that in him, as the greatest of transgressors, "Christ Jesus might show forth the whole of his long-suffering as a pattern for those who should afterward believe on him unto life eternal!" And if such an one as Paul -- the apostle, the prisoner, the martyr -- held himself to be "chief of sinners," which of us must not account himself more sinful than he, and less worthy of eternal life?

SALVATION FROM DEATH

But what is the extent of the salvation which our Lord came to achieve, and how far has his mission been successful? Ah! it is in the answer to these questions that we see the superiority of the Gospel over all, the various plans and devices of men for the uplift of our race. Not that we would be understood as speaking against any of these. No doubt many, if not all of them, are laudable, at least in their intention. But they are lacking both in scope and power. Their scope is limited to the present life. And even within this limit they are powerless to accomplish much. None of them even pretends to point out a way whereby we may escape death; or for those of our race who have already entered the grave, a way whereby they may be awakened from the sleep of death. Moreover even if they could do this, they would be powerless to strengthen any one to walk in that way. And what end do such plans serve but to blind men's eyes to the truth that they are dead, and that their only true hope lies in the wisdom, power, and grace of that, God who raiseth the dead?

Man's first need is not moral philosophy (which may indeed have its place and value afterwards) but a pathway out of the realm of death, and power to enable him to walk in that pathway. And the salvation Jesus came to effect includes both. He is the "Way" out of death. He is also the "Life" which enables those who lay hold of his salvation to walk in that way. Many are the plans for human uplift, but there was only One who ever made or could make, in sincerity, an offer of eternal life. None other has ever truthfully said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live." But, praise be to God, these wondrous words of life *did* flow from his lips, although they could be said truthfully even by him only in contemplation of the sacrifice of his life which he was about to make.

SALVATION FROM THE POWER OF SIN

Commencing, then, with salvation from the depths, even from death itself, Christ Jesus proceeds to save "to the uttermost." A work of transformation is begun in us. This work is accomplished by a further appeal to our hearts, for while it by no means ignores the intellect, the Gospel of God in Christ Jesus makes its chief appeal, with all the attraction of a personal love, to the heart (the center of the will and affections) . - Prov. 4:23.

"It is the heart and not the brain, That to the highest doth attain."

Not content with explaining to a man what it is right to do, our Lord undertakes to make him disposed to do it. This he accomplishes by revealing to his wondering eyes all the beauty of his own loveliness. As the Apostle declares: "We all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." The poet has well expressed the heart sentiment of those to whom the Lord is thus gracious, in those well known lines:

"Show me Thy face -- one transient gleam
Of loveliness divine,
And I shall never think or dream
Of other love than Thine;
All other lights will darken quite,
All lower glories wane,
The beautiful of earth will scarce
Seem beautiful again."

That, at least, is the first result in those who "behold" him. But we have this treasure in an earthen vessel, and it is not long before we learn from experience the truth of the Apostle's words: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5:17.) "Here," as Brother Russell has observed, "is the great and continual battle, for although the new will asserts itself and puts the body under and compels its subjection to the new mind, nevertheless, the mortal body, not being actually dead, is continually coming in contact with the world and the Adversary and is continually being stimulated by these and reinvigorated with earthly cares, ambitions, methods, strivings, conflicts, and insubordination to the new will. No saint is without experiences of this kind-fightings without and within."

"MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU"

But while our transformation is not instantaneous, but gradual, and progresses more or less rapidly, depending upon the degree of our consecration, and steadfastness in "beholding" him, it is nevertheless sure, in all whose hearts are right. Little by little, as our gaze is fixed upon him, the old traits and dispositions which are unlike him are replaced by his own characteristics. Thus the Living Word (Christ Jesus), operating through the written Word and the holy spirit, becomes the Regulator and Transformer of the minds of those who diligently seek him. Under his powerful influence, confusion of thought, perplexities, sinful propensities, self-occupation (a sure breeder of unhappiness and discontent) morbid tendencies, craving for excitement and sensation, evil imaginations, appetites, tastes, inclinations and desires, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God (as he may be known in the person of his Son) all these are displaced; and a new mind substituted. We come to possess "the mind of Christ." His serene tranquility and repose of mind are actually reproduced in those whom first he redeemed by his precious blood.

This is peace on earth, amongst, men of good will, indeed! Alas, those who share this peace, "My peace, are few in number-in all but a "little flock." Yet faith's vision looks beyond the present tumult and strife with its intermittent "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," to the time now near at hand, when the Master shall speak with authority, rebuking the fierce and angry passions of men as he did the winds and the waves of yore, and bring in everlasting righteousness and peace. In that day the "government shall be upon his shoulder: and his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. And of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." - Isa. 9:6, 7.

- P. L. Read.

Some Glimpses at Ephesians

"Wherefore I also cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." - Eph. 1:15-17.

SOME ONE has called the letter to the Ephesians the "Alps" of the New Testament. The privilege, however, of viewing its full beauty and grandeur is limited. Just as the thrill of scaling the Alps is for only those whose hearts are good, likewise the full measure of enjoyment of this exalted letter is for only those whose hearts are so rooted and grounded in love that they can comprehend what are the breadths and lengths, the depths and heights.

The address on Paul's letter makes it exclusive. It is written to a limited class, to those who are "in Christ"; moreover, to "those who are faithful." How heart searching are these words! Have I a right to read this letter? Have you a right? Are we in Christ? And furthermore, are we faithful? The words, "in Christ," or their equivalent, occur twenty times in the epistle. It means much more than the casual Christian is able to grasp. When the Greek language speaks of "believing in Christ," it really says we "believe *into* him," not as one merely believes in, or has confidence in a doctor or lawyer, but that our belief is a living, moving force; and we go about from then on with a new head, a new will, which is Christ's, under whose direction we are as fully his servants as was his hand or foot when in the flesh.

To those who are in Christ, the startling reality of their closeness and true relationship to their Head is proved by the words of Jesus to the blinded and deeply shaken Saul on the Damascus road: "Saul, Saul,-why persecutest thou *me*"? Yet Saul had never seen Christ before. The defenseless, unresisting sheep whom Saul was trying to exterminate, were closer and dearer to the Savior than his human life had been. They were "in Christ," a part of him, and every pain or loss of theirs was instantly noted by their glorious Head.

This class is the possessor of "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly sphere," says Paul. What a statement! Who, but the Body of Christ, can believe this? Even to the Body members who reflect briefly upon its scope, it seems that their faith must stagger under the impact, at least momentarily. Some of a lesser faith may say that Paul's oriental imagination and fervor have caused him to overstate the matter. The seemingly more conservative Peter says that "all things that pertain to life and godliness" are ours, but Peter is talking of things that are in use and enjoyment *now*, while Paul is speaking of those things stored up in God's designs which will ultimately become the heritage of the saints. As all things were *created for* God's first-born Son (Col. 1:16), they are to be shared by God's adopted sons.

They were "marked out" or predestined to the praise of the glory of his grace. The hundreds of millions of angelic sons who shouted for joy at Adam's creation (Job 38:7), stood in silent awe and wonderment at his casting down. For scores of centuries God's glorious grace in its fulness has been hidden, even from the angels, although they have earnestly desired to look into the divine purposes. (1 Pet. 1:12.) Now they are seeing the "exceeding greatness" of God's power in its transforming work upon the "adopted" sons. It is a work far greater than that performed at Adam's creation. Its completion will fill the mouths of both angels and men with a song of "praise of the glory of His grace."

The first of the spiritual blessings which paved the way for adoption, opening the "living way" into the new "room" or mansion, was the "redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Then came the

blessing of knowledge. The mystery of God's secret designs was opened. The panorama of time and eternity was unrolled. The reuniting of all things in heaven and earth under Christ was revealed as the hope of human kind. However, the first of mankind to hope, or those who "first trusted in Christ were, and are, the Church. They are a "first fruit." (Jas. 1:18.) Afterwards will come the "second" fruit, so to speak, or the general regathering of all things in earth.

Pursuing his hidden purposes from before- the foundation of the world, providing redemption at a cost to him immeasurable by man or angel, God then gave a "pledge" to these redeemed ones, a "down payment" of their inheritance, which, if retained to the end of their course, will identify them as the ones who are "in Christ," who are to receive "his eternal glory."

This pledge is also a "seal, an imprint of the divine character which becomes manifest even to those not among the "first fruits" -- those, the eyes of whose hearts are not yet opened, but are blinded by the god of this world.

The angel from the Sun-rising (Rev. 7:2) had begun his sealing of these sons by adoption, possibly a quarter century before Paul's letter. The manifestation of the seal in the saints of Ephesus, their victorious faith and their fervent love, one toward another, was a source of unceasing thankfulness to the Apostle. That their warm, softened, humbled hearts might receive the imprint of the Lord's image in deeper, ineradicable lines, it was needful that they should be impressed by a close contact with him whose image they were to carry.

As the sealed ones are to inherit the very nature of their adopted Father, which is the divine nature, they must first acquire his character traits and grow into his image. They can grow into his image only by gaining a knowledge of him, an intimate, first-hand knowledge through his Word and providence, through meditation and prayer.

For this reason, Paul "ceased not to give thanks" and to make mention of the Ephesians in his prayers that God would give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the "full knowledge" of himself. In his last, prayer, our Redeemer said, "This is life eternal, to *know* Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." It is not for us just to know *about* God, or *about* his Son, Jesus, so that we can impress people by our ability to explain the Divine Plan or Purposes. It is to know God himself, by means of all the avenues which he has opened, and to keep these avenues unhindered or unobstructed.

The knowledge which Rebecca of Mesopotamia gained on the way to Shechem, concerning the great; and honored Abraham and his son Isaac, her -promised lord, from the servant Eliezer, illustrates somewhat, the knowledge which the Church now is gaining under the guidance and instruction of the holy spirit as she covers the long journey to meet her espoused Lord and Head.

As she watered the camels, Rebecca's ears were open to Eliezer's story of the promised land and the wealthy and mighty Abraham, subduer of kings, who was inviting her to become one of his household in a far country hundreds of miles away. During the weeks that their long camel caravan was en route to Canaan, her ears were constantly alert as Eliezer instructed her. She learned of the goodness, the faithfulness, the wealth, the power of Abraham, and his destiny to become the father of nations. She learned of her own part in that destiny if she would be faithful. Through the care which Eliezer bestowed upon her, providing for her safety and comfort of body and mind (according to Abraham's instructions), she began to get a knowledge of the true character of the being she was in due time to meet face to face. She wished to know the wise things to do and say; the way she could perceive the will and desire of her accepted lord; and Eliezer told her. Through this able and trusted servant she had acquired a revealing knowledge of

the one with whom she had to do, and her heart rejoiced. Truly her ears were blessed. How appropriate were the golden adornments which graced them! Jesus said, "Blessed are *your* ears, for they hear." (Matt. 13:16.) He also said, "Blessed are your *eyes* for they see." Paul explains further: "The eyes of your heart being enlightened." - Eph. 1:18.

So, like Rebecca, the eyes and ears of our heart having been enlightened and opened in increasing measure as we proceed with patience on the long journey to our heavenly Canaan, we really begin to understand the true character of him with whom we have to do. In our hearts, we sing with David, the king, "How precious is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." - Psa. 36:7.

The instructions of the holy spirit are in the books of the Law, of the Prophets, the words of Jesus and the Apostles. As we read and memorize these instructions and meditate upon them, the voice of the antitypical Eliezer is truly sounding in our ears. It is pleasant to hear and to obey. We learn to use his words in the proper way. They become "fitted in our lips" (Prov. 22:18), in our communion and fellowship.

Obedience to what we learn gives newer, deeper, expanded meaning to the Words of Life. The character of our heavenly Father and his heavenly Son begins to shine through these words with a beauty and strength which we had never before comprehended. His lovingkindness is so precious, it binds our hearts to him, and we put our trust more and more completely under the shadow of his wings.

Believing that "all things work together for good to them that love God," we can see with "the eyes of our heart" in the smallest experiences of every day along the way some indications of the Father's will and care concerning us. The more we keep our eyes away from self, the more clearly do we see our Father's glory. Ofttimes in the seemingly most trivial incident, we will see the answer to, a prayer or an earnest desire. It comes like a "still small voice"; inaudible, yet distinctly discernible; small and easily passed by if we are not "watching," yet moving and warming our hearts, increasing our faith and drawing us nearer to him who has called us.

The nearer we approach, the more complete and intimate becomes our knowledge of him. Paul says (Eph. 1:17, Weymouth), "I always beseech the God of our Lord Jesus Christ-the Father most glorious-to give you a spirit of wisdom and penetration through an intimate knowledge of him." Why does Paul thus pray? Why is it necessary to gain the spirit of wisdom and penetration through an intimate knowledge of God? The reason is twofold:

First, it is necessary in order to properly evaluate or appreciate this first "installment" of our heavenly inheritance, this "pledge," this "treasure" which we hold in "earthen vessels." If we lose it, the gates of eternity become closed against us. We are "rainless clouds, swept along by the wind, trees in autumn without fruit, doubly dead and so uprooted, wild waves foaming out their own shame, wandering stars for whom the nether gloom of darkness has been reserved eternally." (Jude 12, 13, Moffatt.) It were better that we had never been born or known the way of life.

Secondly, it is only through an intimate knowledge of our gracious heavenly Father that we are strengthened in the inner man sufficiently to hold fast to the end, the hope that is in us. "The eyes of our heart," Paul says, "having been enlightened," that we "may know what is the hope to which he has called us." It is not the hope, essentially, of immortality, of deathlessness, or of position above every name that is named, or of personal glory and beauty transcending every other created thing. These are incidentals. It is the hope of being drawn so close to our Father that we can never lose him; that we can have him for our inheritance. That is what God told the Levites when they

could not have inheritance in the land. He said, "I am your inheritance." The Levites possessed him in a shadowy, typical sense, but it remains for the sons of adoption through Christ to possess him in reality. How necessary to gain an "intimate" knowledge, a "full" knowledge of him now! As Paul says, "that" [we] "being rooted and grounded in love may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth," of the riches of God's grace, "and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that" we "may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Eph. 3:17, 18 - Revised.) Jesus said, "I have made known to them thy name" an intimate knowledge of thy character ". . . that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them" - John 17:26, Revised.

The saints are to receive a double inheritance. As joint-heirs with Christ, they are to receive the "heaven" for an inheritance, imprinting in their hearts the divine image, preparing them for adoption and putting in their lips the praise of the unsearchable riches of God's favor. In addition is the privilege of being servants eternally in the very presence of our God and knowing that every act is bringing him pleasure. As the Revelator tells us (Rev. 22:4): "We shall see his face." We, adopted orphans that we are, shall inherit a Father who will be our everlasting portion and delight.

That is why a full knowledge of God now opens the eyes of our hearts to know the "riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," or "the inheritance of him, as the idiom of the Greek text expresses it. The meaning of immortality as a personal prize apart from God, is no more comprehensible to us now than it was before our eyes were opened, because John says (1 John 3:2), "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Immortality is a means to an end-that we may understand and serve our God in the highest degree, but *he* is our inheritance.

Another privilege of insight coming from our close relationship to the Father is the knowledge of the surpassing power that is working within us. Never, before the anointing and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, had there been such an exhibition of divine might in all the great universe. In all God's creative works, never had he made an immortal creature of his own identical substance and nature. The resurrection of Jesus was the pinnacle of God's creative acts and power, yet this same force is at work within us and about us to the extent that we, with Christ, are a spectacle to creatures seen and unseen. As with Adam's bringing forth, so with ours-we are the focal point of hundreds of millions, possibly billions, of heavenly eyes, and even unseen beings who are not so heavenly, whose destiny may be affected or determined to a great extent by observing our submission to and transformation by this Holy Might.

We need to see this miracle working within us. We need to see divine providence working around us. . The perception of these manifestations by the eyes of our understanding binds our hearts more closely to God and contributes to that faith, without which it is impossible to please him. It insures us, against loss of that "pledge," that "first installment" of our inheritance, which Paul was so solicitous in prayer that we guard.

In Eph. 1:10, Paul says that *all* things in heaven and in earth are to be gathered together a thousand years hence under the headship of Christ. We who *first* hoped in him (Ver. 12) and are a first-fruit of the "all things," are gathered now under that glorious Head. When the marriage of the Lamb is consummated, the Church will then be the "completeness" of the heavenly Groom (or the "fulness," as the common version states it) as Eve was the completeness of the First Adam. Until the marriage, the espoused Church must keep and guard the shining treasure, the "seal" and evidence of the sacred espousal which was sent to her at Pentecost by her Lord.

- *Contributed.*

The Question Box

Question:

Is it proper for a Christian to have a creed?

Answer:

It is not only proper for a Christian to have a creed, it would not be possible to be a Christian without one. We content ourselves here in quoting from Brother Russell, who wrote very helpfully on the subject years ago:

"The word 'creed' comes from *credo*, and means *I believe*. It is entirely proper that every Christian have for himself a creed, a belief. And, if a number of Christians come to a unity of faith upon the lines of the Word of God, their assembling together for fellowship and communion is both proper and helpful, as the Bible declares. The general difficulty is that, when groups of Christians meet as brethren, they either make a written or an understood creed, which goes beyond the Word of God and includes, human tradition; or else they ignore all faith, and make morality -- good works -- the only basis of fellowship. But, as the name indicates, Christians are *believers* in Christ, and not merely moralists. While, therefore, a creed is necessary, and he who has none has no belief, and would therefore be an unbeliever, and while' in Christian fellowship harmony of faith is necessary to communion, all should see that the fellowship and faith of the early Church, under divine direction, were built upon the *first principles* of the doctrine of Christ; and nothing more nor less should be the basis of Christian fellowship here and now.... And since the *credo* or belief of each Christian professes to be built upon God's Word, it follows that each should be not only willing but ready at all times to change his belief for one more Scriptural, if such can be pointed out to *him*." - *Reprints, p. R1578*.

In another illuminating discussion Brother Russell himself raised the question: "Why not abandon all human systems and confessions, now used for tying men's tongues and consciences, and let each other stand free to study God's Word untrammelled, and to build, *each for himself*, such a creed as he shall find authorized in God's Word; adding to his creed or subtracting therefrom continually, as he continues to grow in grace and in knowledge and in love of God. This is the attitude which God designed; this is the liberty wherewith Christ made us all free. Why surrender our liberties and enslave our consciences and tongues to a sect, or the decisions of majorities in sects? If all of God's children were really free, thus, it would not be long before they would be at perfect oneness of heart and nearly at one in faith and work -- the only true union." - *Reprints, p. R1168*.

Again, in that same year (1889) he wrote: "We exhort all God's true Church -- the one Church, which includes *all consecrated believers* -- to awake . . . to a recognition of the *right of individual judgment* upon religious questions. Demand Scriptural proofs for all you are asked to believe. . . . And be sure that you believe and confess nothing that you do not *understand* fully and clearly. To subscribe to, or confess, what 'you do not understand, and therefore cannot truly believe, is *solemn lying* in the presence of God . . . Require of all who shall attempt to teach in the name of the Lord, the *exact words* of the Lord or the Apostle which they claim support their teaching. Get the chapter and verse and look the matter up for yourselves, critically, examining the text and context. Weigh and test every item of teaching which you receive as your faith, regardless of how much you esteem the person who presents it. We know that no fellow-mortal is infallible, and that His Word is the only standard by which God wishes us to square and measure and build up our *faith*." - *Reprints, p. R1136*.
- P. L. Read.

Truth's Deeper Values

PART IV

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." - Phil. 3:10.

IN THE brief reference to the twofold influence of denominational history made in the last article, there stands a lesson and a warning for our own day. A too insistent stress upon doctrinal precision on the one side, led to the breaking up of the body of believers into numerous sects, each with its own creed and bias; each with its own sympathies and antipathies. On the other hand, the soothing, healing influence of the poet and the exhorter infused a somewhat counteracting spirit throughout the professing Church and tended to offset, in some small measure, the deadly effects of the theologian and sect-maker.

It would ill become us to let this warning lesson go unheeded. If we would but observe their ways, with their inevitable results of separation and loss of love, we may be spared much heartache and separation in our own ranks. A misguided zeal for the Truth even in ourselves, could lead us to the same results, and place between us barriers which we might not be able to surmount.

To the old theologian, with only heaven and hell in his creed, as the destinations for human souls, a zeal for truth, even though expressed in bitter wrangling, was to him a sure passport to "the better land." Each one felt himself sure of attaining heaven, though he was spending life here below in flaying his dissenting brethren with both tongue and pen. His asperities were 'not endangering his eternal prospects-so he believed-so long as he was valiant for the truth. Hence, to him, all seemed fair in love and war for the advancement of his faith -- his creed.

It can never be thus with us. Our deeper understanding of the Truth, has revealed to us that it is not mere defense of truth which will gain us entry into the presence of the Lord. Only those who by dint of life's experience have been transformed into the image of our Lord can ever entertain the hope of attaining to the glory that awaits. And that glory cannot be attained in a spirit of contentiousness and strife. Like Moses on the mount, we need to dwell aside with God, to have his glory stamped upon our hearts and faces.

It is assumed that every reader of these words is possessed by the hope of attaining to the resurrection "out from" the dead, or of being changed in the twinkling of an eye when the Divine Seeker comes to "find" those who have been conformed to the image of the Lord. To be enjoying the blessedness of being "in Christ" now is no guarantee that we shall be found in him in that supreme hour. To be a member of an ecclesia in the Truth today affords no warranty that we shall be transformed by the renewing of our minds. There is nothing automatic or inevitable in this sequence of things. With us, as with Paul, there is an "if by any means" contingency in the situation which rules out at once, and completely, that "once in grace, always in grace" expectation held by some. There can be no mistake in Paul's expectation. Even though he had had a deeper understanding of the Truth than any man of his time, and had labored to spread that Truth "more than they all," he still knew that a place among the final overcomers was not thereby insured.. Paul's view of his situation does not permit the thought to be entertained that God had foreknown him as one of the "elect" from those distant times before the world began, nor does he ever think or hint that his salvation was thus assured. There can be no question as to the right of these few

words to a place in Paul's way of stating the contingent nature of his hope. No translation or version of this Epistle can escape from or modify the force of these words in the least degree.

To illustrate the nature of this contingency, reference to 'two other passages by Paul, and one by Luke may be made. In Romans 1:10, Paul tells the Roman brethren that his constant prayer was to be able to visit them both for their and his own benefit. Hitherto the visit had been impossible, but now with changed circumstances, his hope had revived, and he was constantly beseeching the Lord to make it possible; but how he would come he had no clear idea. Whether over land or sea he could not say. All he could say was that he was "making request if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you." The visit was contingent upon God's will; he was uncertain how he should arrive even if it were God's will that he should come. Again in Romans 11:14, he speaks of the many ways and methods he found needful to employ to gain the ear of his fellowmen in Israel. There was no rigidity or uniformity in the methods which would be successful in any given case. Many methods had to be tried out in the hope that one amongst them would induce those of his flesh to accept the Gospel of Grace. In Acts 27:12, the voyage of the ship in which Paul was being taken to Rome was fraught with much danger because the port of Lasea was inadequate to winter in, and they had perforce to run the risk of reaching Phenice. Having put to sea again, there was no assurance that the larger port would be safely reached, but they started out in hope, that in one way or another they would make good their arrival there.

Paul had the same sort of expectation regarding the "but from" resurrection from the dead. Many perils and obstructions might rise up in his life; many ways and means may have to be tried before the finale was reached, all along the way the possibility of being wrecked must be calculated on. It is no answer to the implications of these four words to say that God, from eternity, knew that they *would not fail*. The warning by Jesus that branches could be cut out from the Vine -- (not only could, but *would*) if there was no fruit when the Husbandman sought for it, is too positive to be misunderstood. Paul also warns that only those who "continue in the faith" grounded and settled and be not moved away from the "hope of the Gospel," will, at last, be presented "holy and unblameable and unrepovable in his sight." - Col. 1:23.

Warnings such as these would be unnecessary and meaningless if God knew that none (whom he foreknew) *would* fail; but they are both necessary and meaningful if God, and his messengers, all knew that they *could* fail and needed such reminders to key -them up and spur them on. God does not utter meaningless warnings to men.

Paul knew that he must share with the Lord in his sufferings, if he would make sure that resurrection; and in doing so, "so suffer that he might obtain." The sufferings must be borne in the spirit with which Christ Jesus bore his own sufferings. To suffer thus acceptably would require the help and succor which the heavenly Lord could give to his earthly follower; while the flow of this heavenly power into the sufferer's heart was dependent upon the sufferer "knowing him" in such close intimacy and in such degree that he would be ready to live or die for the Master's sake. The path of suffering might be severe or mild, it might be long or short, it might be borne among friends or foes -- it might thus vary in a thousand ways, but be that as it may, it called for endurance to the bitter end-an apprehending of the objective for which he himself had been apprehended of the Lord.

Any means, therefore, which can transform for us today those contingencies and uncertainties into certainties and actualities against "that Day" are the means which we should adopt here and now, both as individuals and as a community. If applying doctrinal tests can insure participation for every one of us in that "out from" resurrection from the dead, by all means let them be

applied. Or if continuance in the over-stressing of doctrinal points can insure this participation, then let doctrine be overstressed. Or again, if public lecture work, or public tract distribution can insure us a part therein, then speed the work by every means we can employ.

But if any other means than those voiced by Paul can assure participation in that supreme event, then surely Paul was over-burdening and jeopardizing himself unnecessarily! Paul could have set up doctrinal tests, or stressed doctrinal points to the greatest extremes, or "worked" his passage home, more than any other man, had these things been essential things. But he did no such thing. Paul knew what the deeper Christian values were, and these he sought with all his heart and mind and soul.

It is these deeper values culled from Paul's experience, which should be set over against the needs of our Fellowship, of our Ecclesias, and of our own personal requirements for these crucial days. Like Paul, we too have reached a "crisis" stage in our experience, and much will depend on how we stand up to it. If we can meet it with the same spiritual resources behind us which Paul had at call, all will be well; if not, then disaster may well overtake us. These days are too serious for any who have walked in the Light of these unfolding days, to propose to go back along the way to erect fences there, and sit down within such "retreat." Present day difficulties should be met patiently and tolerantly, for out of them, if rightly used, further unfoldings may ensue as solutions of those difficulties. The pathway of the "Light" has not ended, yea, nor will it end for us before we come to know as we "have been known." The gleam of illumination has not turned back upon its track -- no more should we -- but is calling all who love the Truth to follow where it leads. The problems which the Truth of thirty years ago left with us are a beckoning hand calling us to move on; a challenge to our faith and zeal and tolerance. We need to let in still more Light and cut out the dead wood of opinion which still blocks its path.

To do this thing, it is imperative that we begin with our own hearts. Vessels for the Master's use must be "meet" -- they must be warm and clean and in attunement with himself. To begin with, we must, like Paul, desire exceedingly to "Know Him." Other things will follow as a consequence to this. It is the man who has looked deep into the eyes of his king who makes the best ambassador; in that look he has come to know the worth of both his Master and his duty. Paul had looked Jesus in the face, by a penetrating faith, many, many times; but a past experience was, for him, not enough. Such a "look" must take place every day, and if needs be, many times a day. In this conscious vision of the Lord lay Paul's mighty strength against all the errors and vain imaginations of his day. Ever and always he was conscious that his Lord was "standing by" (Acts 23:11; 2 Tim. 4:17), that he was a sharer in all suffering (Acts 9:45), that he was "strength" when Paul was weak. - 2 Cor. 12:9, 10.

It is in this conscious "look" that our own assault upon our problems should begin. We too, must devote ourselves more earnestly to the "one thing" -- we too, need to live again in the warmth of our "first love." Time was when first love was fresh and strong -- a living fire of love for him. If we cease to feed the fires, our love grows cold. The fervent heat of former days passes away because we lose our touch with him. Our quest for some clearer understanding *about* him if allowed to supersede our grip on him and his relation to us, will result in our losing the warmth of heart and soul that would make our problems malleable and soluble.

The first thing needed in our lives is a resurgence of "first love" -- first a love for him, and in the warmth engendered by that love reach out the hand, each to each, over all the fences and barriers which little souls have built to keep some in, to keep others out. That might bring humiliation to some; it might knock little pedestals away, but it would be good experience for each and all.

With that deepened sense of the Lord's presence dwelling in our hearts, every member of the class would take that deep awareness with him to the "meeting-place." With that Unseen Presence in the "midst," a warmer atmosphere would prevail. The spiritual temperature of the gathering would rise to more comfort -- giving heights -- and real help and encouragement for troubled souls would ensue. No more would brethren go to "argue out the point" -- nor would any suffering soul need to go empty thence away -- more sad at heart than when they came! Every speaker would speak (or chairman would preside) as though beneath his loving Eye; every word charged with a becoming sense of deep urgency and sacred seriousness. The hearer would hear the word of exhortation as from the Lord himself-as though it were *he* that had spoken words of life-of comfort or reproof as the case may be. No longer would the brother of superior intellectuality seek to show off how much he knows, nor would any particular "bee in the bonnet" be allowed to buzz around. Differences and difficulties of every size, would melt away as snow in summer heat. The cutting tongue, the acid word would be conspicuous by its absence; for none would dare to hurt or wrangle in the august Presence of the Lord.

Is it true to fact and experience that this intense possession of the Lord could solve the problems of today? Indeed it could! as surely as it did in the Upper Room-it is the only solvent of our problems that we have at call today.

But, in our attainment of the "art" of "knowing him" there might be differences of experience among us. All are not constituted or made alike. There are some with Martha's serving hands, there are some with Mary's introspective minds, and perchance a few with Paul's legalistic understanding, but all would find a place to help and serve. Meditation and contemplation would find its sphere alongside the willing hands that served the cups or tidied up the room. The "intellectual" would soon find that those brethren of simpler mind and faith did not, of necessity, require for their soul's welfare those deeper intricate solutions of the abstract side of doctrine which he requires for himself. Too long we have assumed that every child of God needs the same degree of indoctrination; and that saint-hood, in the sight of God, can be mass-produced. Our intellectual brother may need those solutions as the substructure of his own faith and satisfaction in the truth, but he may need to learn that all brethren's minds do not move on the same mental plane. Profiting himself by this discovery, he will not tend to pose his problems, or broadcast his solutions from the platform or the rostrum in the open sessions of his church, and will thus spare himself the mortification of speaking over the heads of his audience, and his brethren the pain of departing the meeting unfed and uncomforted. Better far five words spoken down to the level of the average understanding of the congregation, on some simple theme to touch the heart, than ten thousand in what, after all, would be an unknown tongue. Better far a few live coals to fire the heart, than heaps of fuel to fill the brain. God has not called upon his people to become walking encyclopedias of abstruse information along many lines, but to hold and treasure truths concerning Christ crucified, exalted, and returning to bless the world, together with the sweetly comforting assurance that Christ Jesus is the Shepherd of the Flock. Doctrine, of course, there must be, in due measure, in the discourse, but it should be like the stake, hidden from view by the rose-tree's blooms and foliage there as the support, not as the main object to be seen. Experience will show again and yet again that the fervent rehearsal of Shepherd Care will do much more to melt down the problems of our day than all the flash of wit or tongue has ever done or can ever do. To illustrate:

At a great festival a noted elocutionist was engaged. After rendering several moving stories, he closed by reciting the Twenty-third Psalm. There followed great applause. As this died down the elocutionist caught a glimpse of an old frail-looking minister in the audience. He invited the old saint to recite the Psalm. As the quivering voice faded away in the words, "and I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever," there was not a dry eye in the whole assembly. Tense with emotion,

the elocutionist said, "Thank you, sir, I could not recite the Psalm like that. I know the Psalm, you know the Shepherd too."

It is just "that" that makes all the difference to the ministry of the Word. We have all heard, in our time, smooth-tongued speakers explain the "chart," or the Plan, but when trouble came they fell away and walked no more with us. Such men had never looked the Lord full in the face, nor had they felt the warm caress of his tender Hand. Will any reader need to ask if this deeper knowledge of the Lord by its ministers is of any importance to the Church?

It is a solemn responsibility which rests upon the teachers, the Elders in the Church, for these, more than any other members of the Fellowship have been, in the main, responsible for our present apathetic state of heart. Lacking the grand Vision of the Lord himself, they, have too long been satisfied to discuss abstract truth, rather than "The Living Truth." If we have the least desire to see our problems solved, ought we not to turn inwards to the Lord more and more, to consider him and his loving oversight in our lives -- with all that that means -- and seek to prove, in practice, the truth of the assertion herein made, that in "knowing him" (in Paul's own way), we have the solvent -- the one and only solvent -- for our present problems and differences.

When the warming flames, of love have raised the temperature both in our individual hearts and in the gatherings of the ecclesias with which we meet, the claims of wider service outside our Fellowship will present themselves and would find us ready to respond. The Lord has other sheep outside our Fellowship, who, like ourselves, need reminding from time to time of the Lord's tender Shepherd care. It has been a great mistake, on our part, to think that every saint must, of necessity, be a member of our Fellowship. Daily experience will soon reveal to us, if we have sympathetic hearts, that there are still considerable numbers of Christian men and women who love the Lord sincerely and with all their hearts. They may not accept our wider syllabus of doctrinal truth, but they do appreciate the Redemption Sacrifice of Jesus as much as we do. They do expect some future blessing at his hands, but for this present time, they are lonely souls.

The social gospel of these changing days has little comfort for them. They are left by the ordained ministry untended and unfed. They look up to him whom we address as "Father" and call him their Father too. They accept him whom we accept as Savior, and call him their Savior too. They turn with hope to that Holy Book which we take as the Guide-book of our lives, and take it for their Guidebook too. There may be some considerable differences in the "externalities" of their faith and ours, but in the essential "internalities" of their trust in him, they are at one with us. They were redeemed by the same precious blood, they have been "made nigh" by the same Sacrifice, and stand in the same relationship to God as we. By every test of faith they prove themselves to be children of the same Father, servants of the same God, and hence are brethren with us, of the Higher Family. Having this attitude of faith and trust in God and in his Son, these outside brethren, though unknown to us, are in full line with the call of this Gospel Age. Today they are hungry souls and need a few crumbs of comfort at our hands.

If, perchance, we can attain to that degree of tolerance to accept and welcome to our circle again all who claim to be of the "Ransom for all" Fellowship, we may then be prepared to take the further step to admit to our friendship some of these other sheep for whom Jesus performs his Shepherd duties, and seek to lend a hand to meet their needs. Some one in past days did that same thing for us--some one brought a cup of gladness to our own thirsting lips. Shall we not continue with the same good work? Some approaching day -- if we "remain" and they both they and we will need each other's help to "stand fast" in the Christian Faith! There will be no Bible Student Christians, Wesleyan Christians, Baptist Christians or other "ism" Christians then the "stress" of these times will make all one -- all will have to stand as loyal servants of the Lord regardless of

past associations. Such a state of things will constitute a searching test of understanding and faithfulness for all-but the principle involved, though searching and severe, is simple enough. Indeed it is not too much to say that we are confronted by that searching principle today, and may win or lose that test, incipiently, here and now. That great principle is that of "brotherly love" -- and may be expressed in a simple formula -- "the Creed" or "the Child," which?

Do I accept into my heart, into the circle of my love, another soul simply because he agrees with my creed, or because he is a child of God? Should he fail to subscribe to the external features of my creed, shall I dare to withhold from him the standing as a Child? Am I the judge to determine whom. God shall accept as his Child? What I do today towards those who are but an arm's length away may determine largely what I shall do another day towards those who are a field's length away! This is a matter for solemn thought. It cannot be avoided or evaded in any way. It is worth our sitting down, to count the cost, for perhaps it may yet transpire that with what measure we mete out our toleration and help, in that same measure it will be meted out to us from the Higher Source.

Today we have to judge between the claims of the Creed and the claims of the Child! It is this that makes our present situation really serious. It is not a mere matter of agreeing on the questions of the Covenants, the Sin-Offering and the Parousia; the implications go far deeper than that. The vital issue is "The Creed" or "The Child" - and behind that is the question of God's prerogative to accept whom he wills into his Family. God has always used his Truth to win the affections of his Child -- Truth is the "means" -- the Child is the "end" -- which is the greater of the two? It speaks no disparagement of the Truth to state the matter thus, but, it enhances the honor of the Child, and of the Father too!

We have reached a point where we must make a choice. The attempt to exalt the Creed above the Child is a challenge to our understanding of the relative values of the Truth. If we choose the Creed we shall exclude the Child from our Fellowship -- we shall brand our brethren with heresy. We shall deliberately have formed ourselves into a sect, and said to the Advancing Light: "Here we rest; we have determined not to proceed further." If we choose "The Child" and reveal ourselves as willing to receive all whom God has received, then together he and we can go forward with the "Light" into those deeper things where Love's transformations are completed. In these deeper relationships "true unity" is a distinct possibility -- that "One-ness" for which Jesus prayed is within our grasp.

Let us recapitulate. The present problems of our Fellowship are, in the main, due to an over insistence, in past days, on doctrine. This over insistence has divided us, bringing strife and contention in its wake. It has left us in the same sad predicament as the older sections of the Christian Church. So long as we propose to continue with this over insistence, approach towards re-union is as impossible for us as for those older Churches. Yet God has in every scattered section of our community-as well as in the older Churches-those whom he can and does receive as sons and daughters in his Family, upon whom he bestows his love and care. For doctrine's sake we have excluded from our friendship all whose ties are with the older Communities -- we are now face to face with the possibility of excluding many more from our friendship, our own Fellowship. We have noted Paul's own comparison between doctrine and companionship in Christ. With all the most advanced doctrine of his day Paul longed for something more. To him, to "know his Lord" was the sure prelude to his attainment to the "out from" resurrection of the dead -- to his being "found" in Christ when that event occurred.

We have assumed that every reader of these lines is passionately possessed of that same hope, and is ready to surrender every personal advantage of every sort "if by any [or all these] means

his attainment to that resurrection is made more sure. As with Paul, so it must be with us. Knowledge "about" his Lord was not enough to enable Paul to attain his goal-it will not be enough for us! Paul's deepest need was ever "to know" his Lord, for the Savior and Helper that he was. That is also our deepest need.

The daily realization of that deepest need by every member of our Brotherhood would not only make attainment of our "hope" more sure; it would bring the right solution to the problem of the "Greed" versus the "Child" in our present circumstances; it would make Ecclesia gatherings the warm and helpful occasions they ought to be; it would make us ready comforters to any child of God in need, at any time, in any place.

To "know him" therefore, with Paul's exemplary desire, is the one sure solvent for the problems and dissensions of our day, the one sure bond -to make us "*one*", and the most efficient guarantee that we shall attain our hope. Truly to "know him" brings, within our reach those deeper values of the Truth, which, transforming us, will insure eternal friendship between my Lord and me-between your Lord and you.

It will gender in our hearts that confidence to, say, when life sinks to its close "I know *him* (*R.V.*) whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." - 2 Tim. 1:12.

Not what, but *Whom I* do believe!
That, in my darkest hour of need,
Hath comfort that no mortal creed
To mortal man may give.
Not what, but *Whom!*

For Christ is more than all the creeds,
And His full life of gentle deeds
Shall all the creeds outlive.
Not what I do believe, but *Whom!*
Who walks beside me in the gloom?
Who shares the burden wearisome?
Who all the dim way doth illumine?
And bids me look beyond the tomb
The larger life to live?
Not what I do believe, but *Whom!*
Not What, but *Whom!* - *John Oxenham.*

- *T. Holmes, Eng.*

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren in the Lord:

Greetings and brotherly love in the name of our Savior Jesus.

I am finally mailing you my subscription-one dollar for the "Herald." I did not know before that it is a simple thing to buy dollars in Switzerland in order to pay you.

It is with great appreciation that I read again your good periodical. The spirit of love and tolerance appeals to us. I have just finished reading the excellent article, "Signs of the Master's Presence," with which I feel in conformity, especially so with regard to the spirit of tolerance with those holding a different view, whom we should not hastily conclude to be incompetent to teach us anything. (October issue, p. 134.) I fully support your views with regard to the Lord's presence, and would not agree to a principle which ultimately could limit the freedom of teaching and free investigation within the Church.

I hope you received the last issue of "*Die Brennende Lampe*," containing the translation of Christian Liberty based on Principle" from the issue of July "Herald."

With sincere wishes for your efforts, I remain,
Yours in the blessed hope,
W. H. -- Switz.

Dear Brethren:

I have read your "Herald of Christ's Kingdom," which I enjoyed very much. It is comforting and edifying to me in this condition in which we are living here -- a great comfort in this crucible. It helps, while our outward man is perishing and our inward man is being renewed from day to day, particularly the first article, "Christian Fellowship."

I was twenty-eight years in England and had a men's clothing business, which I left to go into the colporteur work a few years before the first World War-a blessed time it was. After having been a prisoner of war on the Isle of Man for three and one-half years, I was sent to Germany against my will. I was then in the service here in Dresden. Our class [I. B. S. A.] numbered about one thousand. I did not go with those who left the truth and made a regular Babylon of the class, and as a result I suffered under my fellow-elders. I did translating and was interpreter. Then in 1933 came Hitler and the Nazis, and from then on we suffered awfully. Five times my home was ransacked-twice I was taken before law courts, also was in custody. Twice the Gestapo (demons) fettered me to send me to camp. A few days before the bombing terror on the night of February 13th, my wife's and my birthday -- she 68 and I 75 -- fire came down from the sky. We fled as we were, and lost all we had. Now we live in one room with strangers, but the crucible goes on-starvation. We are given 5 ounces of fat a month, 10 ounces lean meat a month, 10 ounces of bread a day. People are despairing, and hope for the atom bomb to finish all.

Well our heavenly Father knows and overrules all. He watches our progress in endurance, in patience, in humility, in fortitude, and in *love*, the chief of all. (1 Pet. 1:22; John 15:12, 13; 1 Cor. 13; Col. 3:12-14; Rom. 5:3-5; 8:17; 1 Thess. 3:3.) What a privilege! The Lord has led us in a wonderful way. I pity the poor world, who suffer without our faith and hope.

Now, dear brethren, would you send me the "Herald of Christ's Kingdom"? My prayer for you is that the Lord would guard and keep you and give you strength against the evil powers rampant even among saints. In the bonds of love in Christ, I remain,
Your brother by His grace,
Germany.

Dear Brethren:
Greetings in the name of our dear Redeemer and Lord!

I would like to acknowledge receipt of the three Heralds recently sent to me, which I have enjoyed reading very much. The article in the June issue by Brother Blackburn brought back to me very pleasant memories. I always liked Brother Blackburn very much and enjoyed many seasons of sweet fellowship with him. He was a very spiritual brother.

The article on "Mirrors" by Brother J. T. Read was beautiful, very inspiring and uplifting. The Lord is certainly using his talents to his praise and glory. His article on "The Resurrection" was also grand. "Clean Every Whit" by Brother P. L. Read was exceptionally good. I was glad to learn of the better translation. It made the lesson very impressive. I wish all the friends would read, and take to heart, the article on "Christian Liberty Based on Principle" with selections from our dear Pastor's writings. It might help to reunite many of the friends again in real Christian fellowship. It would seem, however, that this is not to be.

The first article by Brother S. D. Bennett on "Holding the Profession of Our Faith" is filled with good things, and I am anxiously waiting for its continuation. I would like to suggest, however, for your kind consideration the reading of the 23rd verse as given in our Revised Version: "Let us hold fast the *confession* of our *hope* that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised." The Diaglott, Moffatt's translation, Weymouth, Twentieth Century, give the word "hope" instead of "faith." In fact, the Common Version is the only one that says to "hold fast the profession of *our faith*."

It would seem to me that the true rendering of this verse should contain the word "hope." The writer has been speaking about faith in the previous verse, and he speaks about love in the subsequent one; and here, in the middle, he speaks about the centre of the trinity (if we might call it that) faith, hope, and love.

In the former verse his exhortation has been, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance [Diaglott, conviction] of faith"; in the subsequent verse his exhortation is, "Let us provoke one another to love and good works"; and here in the middle, "Let us hold fast the profession of our *hope* without wavering." And all three in the Christian aspect, "faith, hope, and love" are built and based upon this assurance that we have access to God whenever we like by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, and that whenever we come there we have a "High-priest over the house of God" within the veil, interceding for us. Praise his name! "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . let us hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering; for he is faithful that promised."

Sister joins in sending Christian love.
Your brother by His grace,
H. H. E. -- R. I.

Dear Brethren:
Sincere Greetings in the Lord:

I was pleased indeed to receive your letter of the 22nd ult., and to learn that "The High Calling" was thought to be helpful and interesting to the friends.

In order to facilitate the circulation among the Directors I am enclosing three further copies for your use which I trust will be acceptable.

Perhaps I should say that this small effort has been the result of some happy and profitable Bible studies on this subject by a small- group of brethren over here. Having been so richly blessed we desired to share this blessing with others and to make, it possible for every brother or sister to have, a copy for himself in, order to assist his own meditations. Surely there can be no subject of greater interest and concern to the Lord's people than this "High Calling" with which we have been called; and soon that door will be forever shut.

"We haste, because that door once shut
Will never ope again."

Now, dear brethren, I wish to take this opportunity to express to you the great blessing which in recent months both Sister and myself have received from the articles in the "Herald." They have indeed helped us to "lift up our heads" during a time of testing. Doubtless all the Lord's people are at this time passing through "peculiar" trials. To us they have brought some pain and disappointments, but we are able to testify that our Father is nearer and dearer to us than ever before. I am sure that that is what he is wanting from us all, that we should find in him alone our All-sufficiency.

How glad we are that Father is dealing with each of us as individuals; He cares for me as He cares for you. Just as no proper earthly parent will care for his children in the mass, but deals with each child according to its special weaknesses, etc., so our Father knows that there is no one else just like me and deals with me in the way which will best fit me for his grand designs. How glad, I am for this; he is my Father!

I have felt that I would like to share with others some of the blessings received through the "Herald" and in a limited way have been able to do so; but I have wondered whether I might receive a duplicate "Herald" to pass on to others who I trust would be sufficiently, blessed to become regular subscribers. I will just leave the matter with you, to do as you think best.

Your brother in Christ,
E. A. -- Eng.

To the dear young brethren in the United States and Canada:

We send you our fraternal greetings in Christ our Savior, desiring that you should remember our kinship in the faith. We wish you every blessing as you press on along the Christian way which leads unto life, praying that by being rightly exercised, all your experiences may bear a rich fruitage in your lives. We commend unto you 1 Peter 1:22; 1 Timothy 4:12. We have not been privileged to meet in the physical body, but we love you no less for that, and long for the day when we shall all meet to behold our beloved Father, and our Master, and all our brethren everywhere.

May God bless you all,
Your brethren in the Heavenly Family,
The young Bible students in the British Isles.