

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXXII January, 1949 No. 1

A Prosperous New Year To All Our Year Text for 1949

"Be filled with all the fulness of God." - Ephesians 3:19.

"Delight thyself ... in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." - Psalm 37:4.

IF FOR 1949, and all the years that remain to us of this earthly pilgrimage, our greatest ambition is to know the Lord, and by that knowledge to be "filled with all his fulness," he will indeed be crowning our years with his goodness. The Apostle had to coin a word, "less than the least," to express how small he felt when he contemplated God. It was because of that humility that he was entrusted with the first clear message of hope for us Gentiles, the mystery hid from ages and generations, that we heathen should be fellow-heirs, fellow-joint-body-members in the Christ, fellow partners of the promise made to Abraham -- the Gospel through which the Church is begotten. - Col. 1:26; Eph. 1:6; 1 Cor. 4:15.

God and all his dealings are a great mystery to the natural mind. But the day we believe is near when "all shall know him, from the *least* unto the greatest." Already, however, some who can think of themselves, like the Apostle, as "less than the least," of the saints are beginning to know him, though only in part, "through a glass darkly." (1 Cor. 13:12.) The Jews of our Lord's day, who thought they knew God, "compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, but, strangely enough, turned in bitter hatred against the early Christians when they offered the Kingdom to these same Gentiles on equal terms with themselves.

Jesus had commissioned his first pupils to "go and make disciples of all nations," but a vision must be sent to Peter before they could understand; and even then, little seems to have been done until he who went about "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against the Christian band was commissioned through a vision to be the Apostle to the Gentiles, thus instructing us as to the difficulty attending the imparting of spiritual truths through human brains, and as to how diligently we must apply *all* our powers, "give *all* diligence," to attain the grace our year's text holds out to us as a possibility. - 2 Pet. 1:5.

It takes an infilling of the spirit of the One who went to the cross for us, to teach us to sing from the heart, "prisons would palaces prove," or with the Apostle, to accept as "suffering with Christ such misfortunes to the flesh as being, thrown into Caesar's prison. Only thus could he think of himself as a "prisoner of the Lord"; not of Caesar or any earthly power. "Sealed with the spirit of the promise" (Eph. 1:13) made to Abraham, he was used to give the Apostle Peter this broader Gospel. If we are as near the end of our way as we believe and hope we are, it should not surprise us if yet more severe tests are put upon the Church to determine "what spirit we are of" -- the spirit that enjoys closing doors of opportunity to service and the door to the heavenly inheritance on others, or the spirit that rejoices to find others who in any degree know the Lord. This is "the spirit of *the* promise." Really believing we are under the Abrahamic Covenant, we should have its spirit, and should have joy in seeing the widely diversified workings of the holy spirit (1 Cor. 12) as it selects and develops from among the Gentiles a little company of those who love the Lord and "love his appearing." - 2 Tim. 4:8.

THE PRAYER OF A SPIRIT FILLED HEART

Few recorded prayers can compare with the one from which our year's text is taken. Paul seems to have endeavored to start it in the verse listed as the first one in that chapter, but a parenthesis of 175 words intervenes before in verse fourteen he repeats the phrase, "for this cause," and thus returns to his prayer. His Father is addressed as the God of universal unity, the one in whom "the whole family in heaven and earth [one family] is named," the God that will in the fulness of time gather together in one all things in Christ. He comes to no human monarch with his meager powers and wealth, but asks for blessings in proportion to the wealth of the illimitable God of the universe. It is not a selfish prayer, nor is it the things of the flesh for which the Apostle longs; but that his brethren "may be strengthened with power through his spirit in the inward man." Only the King of kings can answer this petition. And he can do it in the unbounded measure that will prepare each Christian for the fulfilment of the following petition: "That Christ may dwell [permanently] in your hearts through faith." He is asking for us hearts from which every trace of self has been driven, hearts that are fully devoted to the Lord, hearts with no ambition but that his name may be glorified.

Here the prayer could have stopped and left us all greatly enriched. The Apostle, however, is not so easily satisfied. He prays on: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts to the end that ye" -- after the introduction we have heard need we fear Paul will ask for anything less than the best our Father has for us? -- "that ye being rooted and grounded," so thoroughly established that nothing can move you. And we wonder where the Apostle will ask that we be thus established -- will it be as this text is almost invariably quoted today, "rooted and grounded in the truth"? That might mean, "So establish me in what I believe to be the truth that even if I do happen to have some error mixed with it, nothing will ever be able to change me." This perversion of the text would not be objectionable if we had in mind that there is One who said, "I am the truth." "Rooted and built up *in Him*" is the ideal the same Apostle sets before the "saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse." - Col. 2:7.

Let our ambition for this year be, as was Paul's, that our roots shall go so deep into the "love of Christ" (for this is where he prays they may be) that it will furnish all the nourishment for our life as new creatures. Then it can be truly said of us, "Of His fulness have we all received." (John 1:16.) Associated with that love there is always sufficient humility so that the next petition can safely be answered for us: that ye "may be [exceedingly] strong to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and the length and height and depth." Without divine love "knowledge puffeth up." This thing that he would have us lay hold on sounds like a blue print of the Plan of the Ages; not the many queer ideas the flesh if unrestrained will think up; but "the mind of Christ," "the

spirit of a sound mind," the precious truths regarding that Plan that are *simple enough to be apprehended by "all the saints."* Unity of doctrine he is interested in when it comes to knowing a plan that reaches in length down into eternity far beyond our present vision; whose height will lift us even now to be "seated together with Christ in heavenly places"; with depth sufficient to reach "all that are in their graves"; and broad enough to take in every one for whom the Abrahamic Covenant was planned -- "all the families of the earth."

Let us hope that 1949 will find us "abounding yet more and more in knowledge" (Phil. 1:9), but not for a moment forgetting that it is bestowed only as a step toward the yet higher attainment, love. Let the prayer continue: that we may "know the love of Christ which surpasseth knowledge." (Diaglott.) What a misfortune that some few individuals down through the Age should have been so dazzled by knowledge, represented by the light of the golden lampstand, that they did not see that the veil had been rent for them that they might "enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" to be there "seated with Christ," having "entered into his rest." We who are approaching the end of "the path that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" need especially to be guarded against this danger. - Heb. 4:1, 3; 10:19; Eph. 2:6; Prov. 4:18.

"STILL THERE'S MORE TO FOLLOW"

Knowledge in abundance, and love, even "the love of Christ" has been prayed for; and here the prayer of some might end, and 1949 fail of being all the Lord has made possible. Let our hearts with earnest pleading continue at the throne of *all* grace, "that we may be *filled with all the fulness of God.*" But has not Paul already asked for that in praying for the love of Christ? for "God is love." And do we not say that "love comprises all"? Yes, we say it; but do not mean to be taken literally; for all know that knowledge is not love, justice is not love, power is not love. What we mean is that the only proper exercise of all creature qualities is when they are a manifestation of love.

As the exquisitely tinted rind of the apple binds all its goodness and advertises its luscious qualities, so "love is the bond of perfectness." And what is it that love "binds" together? This, one must know and experience if he is to be filled with all the fulness of God. The Creator knows every ingredient that it takes to make a perfect apple; so, when his processes are not interfered with, in each will be found the salts, the minerals, the vitamins, the seeds, the juice, the pulp, and above all the beautiful skin binding all together-and all brought to perfection by the winds, the storms, the sunshine and the rain. "Above all things, put on love." "Love doth all thy favors crown.

"The fruit of the spirit [His spirit] is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Joy, peace, longsuffering, etc., without love would be selfishness that for a few dollars could stand all day behind a counter patiently, calmly enduring the most inconsiderate of customers, serving all with a smile. Without love, the bond of perfectness, there will be no fruit. Wherefore, "using *all* diligence, add to your faith fortitude, and to fortitude knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience piety, and to piety brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness *love*. For these things' being in you and *abounding*, they will not permit you to be inactive nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; for he who is not possessed of these things [not a few of them, but all of them] is blind, closing his eyes, having become forgetful of the purification of his old sins. Therefore, brethren, more earnestly endeavor to make your calling and election sure; since by doing these things you will never fall; for thus richly will be furnished to you the entrance into the *aionian* Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." - 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

And to all this all must attain who will ever be in that company which Paul describes as "the fulness of Him that is filling all things in all." (Eph. 1:23, See Diaglott.) Each can honestly say, "This is impossible to me"; but we must not, forget to add, "With God all things are possible." And our prayer is "Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." The fear is not as to whether he is willing and, able to do, but are we willing to let his power work in us. Let our prayer for a year of supreme blessing be that *he* may "work in us *to will* and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13.) Then "unto him [will] be the glory in the Church by Christ Jesus to all the generations of the ages of the ages. *Amen.*"

"Finish, Lord, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Show us all Thy great salvation
Thine shall all the glory be.
Changed from glory into glory,
Till we see Thine own dear face;
Till we cast our crowns before Thee

Lost in wonder, love, and praise."

-P. E. Thomson.

Walking in Newness of Life

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." - 2 Cor. 5:17.

THROUGHOUT THE inspired Word of God mankind as a race are represented as dead in trespasses and sins, dead in Adam, alienated from God through wicked works. Only those who have fled for refuge to the cross of Christ are ever spoken of as having life in God's sight. These have passed from death unto life through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and consecration to him, and according to the above text and many others of a similar kind, those thus passed from death in Adam to life in Christ are now to be considered as living a new life. Of a life so altered in the matter of relationship to God as well as in all other aspects, it can be truly said "all things are become new." Thus in another text we have the same Apostle telling us "that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." - Rom. 6:4.

There is nothing ambiguous about such texts as the above. The natural man, living under the condemnation of death, and following the downward bent of the fallen, fleshly mind, is sensual, inherently sinful, dead. But the one who has turned from sin, and by faith in Christ found peace and forgiveness at the mercy seat of God, has thereby experienced something so far-reaching in its possibilities of relationship to God, to eternal life, and to present resurrection influences, that the contrasts of life and death used by the Apostle in these Scriptures become clear and forceful illustrations of this most important 'teaching of the New Testament. In fact, this form of illustrating the state of those who, are in harmony with God and those who are at enmity with him, is a prominent feature of our Lord Jesus' own teaching.

"Let the dead bury their dead," is his clear conception of those out of relationship with God. Then in contrast, speaking of those who had entered the way of life, he said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." And to this might be added the testimony of the Apostle John, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." - Matt. 8:22; John 3:36; 1 John 5:12.

IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST

It is manifestly important then that we note very closely the language used in our text. We observe that Paul is careful to tell us that it is only to such as are "in Christ, that old things 'have passed away and to whom all things are become new. The words "in Christ" place a very particular emphasis on the fact that much more than a belief in Christ and his sacrifice is necessary to an enjoyment of these "new creature" privileges. It is not "If any man believe in Christ," but "If any man be *in* Christ." This distinction is ever a characteristic of the Word of God. To believe the word of Christ as true, and to have his word abiding in the heart, may be two vastly different reactions of the mind. One may hear his word and affirm faith in it and yet go on building on the shifting sand, being a hearer but not a doer of the word. The word of truth may indeed be received and believed by the simple processes of intellectual powers possessed, but the Scriptural emphasis is always placed on the deeper receptivity and response of the heart affections. "That on the good ground," Jesus said, "are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." - Luke 8:15.

We cannot be surprised, therefore, to find that throughout the entire Bible God puts so much emphasis on the depth of heart soil we display, and on the depth of heart devotion and receptivity we manifest. As he said to Israel of old, so he continues to say to all who profess faith in him, or claim any special relationship to him, "The Lord your God proveth you to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deut. 12:3.) And this is the distinction intended in our text where being "in Christ" is the imperative requirement laid down by the Apostle.

And what does it mean to be "in Christ"? It means that we have found the "new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." (Heb. 10:20.) It means that by the exercise of faith in the atoning work of Christ we have now been "quickened together with him," and henceforth, our "life is hid with Christ in God." This, then, is how believers are united to Christ and can know that they are "in Christ." The two important steps into this relationship are clearly stated by Paul: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." (Rom. 6:8; Col. 3:1.) Thus it is through death that we enter the sphere of new creature life -- through faith in the atonement secured by the death of Jesus, and 'then by virtue of our baptism into death with him, we are raised to "walk in newness of life." As another has well expressed:

"It is in the power of a new life that believers are united to Christ. They were dead in sin, and he, in perfect grace, came down, and, though himself pure and sinless, was 'made sin' -- 'died unto sin' -- put it away--rose triumphant over it, and all pertaining to it, and, in resurrection, became the Head of a new race. Adam was the head of the old creation, which fell with him. Christ, by dying, put himself under the full weight of his people's condition, and having perfectly met all that was against them, rose, victorious over all, and carried them with him into the new creation, of which he is the glorious Head and Centre. Hence, we read, 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.' (1 Cor. 6:17.) 'But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins; hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) , and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' (Eph. 2:4-6.) 'For we are members of his body.' (Eph. 5:30.) 'And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, bath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all, trespasses.' (Col. 2:13.)" Thus we are constituted alive "in Christ.

LIVING AS NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST

In the regeneration processes by which God's new creation class is developed, they are, by an act of pure grace planted in Christ, and thus like the branches in the vine, they are constantly partaking of the sap and strength of Christ the Vine; therefore the life of Christ becomes increasingly manifest in them. The evidences of spiritual life must become sufficiently marked in the daily conduct as to give a real corroboration to a profession of relationship to Christ. This is made clear by the statement of Scripture: "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. . . . Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8:5, 9.) These texts cover two important facts of Christian life. They very clearly point out our privileged and blessed standing in justification by faith, that is, our reckoned righteousness before God because we are now in Christ Jesus, and they also show that because we are thus complete in him, and recipients of the holy spirit in its creative power, the mind and character of Christ should, yes, must characterize our daily life.

In this new life, according to yet another text, there is a renewing or transforming work at once begun, for so we read: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom. 12:2.) This requires, therefore, that in this new creature life, new hopes, new visions, new purposes, new habits of thought, and an entirely new point of concentration will now control such a consecrated individual. And what will that point of concentration be? Surely it will be in perfect harmony with God's purpose for us, which is, that we should be conformed to the image of his beloved Son. Then it must follow that henceforth only that which definitely contributes to the development of Christ in the heart, and only that which is conducive to increasing spirituality, will interest and occupy the truly grateful believer. Under no other condition of mind and heart would it be true testimony to claim that old things had indeed passed out of the life. Then along with those new hopes, desires, etc., will come a greatly changed attitude of mind toward things in general such as trials, environments, and our contacts with seemingly adverse circumstances. Of this condition the words of the hymn may be taken as a true expression:

"How happy and blessed the hours
Since Jesus I always can see!
Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers,
Have all gained new sweetness to me;
E'en when the great sun shines but dim,
And fields strive in vain to look gay,
While I am so happy in Him,
December's as pleasant as May."

Among the many physical defects to which men and women are heir, there is what is known as colorblindness. In the spiritual life there is an alarming possibility of a moral color-blindness. Was it not some such moral color-blindness against which Jesus uttered his words so full of deep significance: "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness." (Luke 11:34.) Certain it is, no one is living or can live the new life in Christ until the divine oculist has trained the moral eyesight to see the fine distinctions by which God discovers the single eye. In the character of God there are righteous standards, firm and absolute, without, shadow of turning; therefore the newness of life set before the follower of Christ, and the strong and admirable life, is the life that is keen to respond to this vision of God's character. In the life of Jesus on earth there ere many admirable qualities of character displayed, but pre-eminent place is given to his hatred of sin and his love of righteousness. Thus it is written of him: "Thou hast loved

righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." (Heb. 1:8.) Living as new creatures in Christ requires this same uncompromising love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity.

BY THE SPIRIT LET US WALK

The reader of Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Church must be struck with the seeming contradiction, in several of his statements. In chapter 1:4, 5, we read: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ: that in everything, ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge." Then while he is yet practically in the introduction of the letter, he is hiding them because of "contentions" among them, factional disputes, some saying "I am of Paul"; others, "I am of Apollos and others, "I am of Cephas." Then in chapter 3, verse 1, he writes, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." What a paradox these statements appear to be! But herein lies the lesson for us. Paul certainly recognizes these brethren as being new creatures in Christ, for he addresses them as saints. But while he gives them a standing as saints or new creatures in Christ, he very plainly tells them they are failing to live as becometh such. The Apostle can thank God that they are "enriched in all utterance, and in all knowledge," but he must, nevertheless, lament the inconsistency of their conduct. What pained the heart of Paul was that while they were enriched in knowledge, they had not entered into the truth in real spiritual power, in such a way as to really possess it and be possessed by it. He had wanted them to get hold not only of the letter but also of the spirit of the knowledge by which they had been enriched. He wanted them to understand that only the spiritually minded really possess the truth, and that if they would live as new creatures in Christ, the holy, spirit must have free course in their lives in order to elevate them into the higher realms of maturity. He labored to show them that being conversant with the letter did not in itself indicate real spirituality.

Commenting on this very matter an able writer has well said: "Spiritual knowledge is not deep thought, but living contact, entering into and being united to the truth as it is in Jesus; a spiritual reality, a substantial existence. 'The spirit teacheth, combining spiritual things with spiritual'; into a spiritual mind it works spiritual truth. It is not the power of intellect, it is not even the earnest desire to know the truth [though this must be present], that fits, a man for the spirit's teaching; it is a life yielded to it in waiting dependence and full obedience to be made spiritual, that receives the spiritual wisdom and understanding. In the mind these two elements, the moral and the cognitive, are united; only as the former has precedence and sway, can the latter apprehend what God has spoken.

"It is easy to understand how a carnal or fleshly life with its walk, and the fleshly mind with its knowledge, act and react on each other. As far as we are giving way to the flesh, we are incapable, of receiving spiritual insight into truth. We may 'know all mysteries, and have all knowledge,' without love, the love which the spirit works in the inner life; it is only a knowledge that puffeth up, it profiteth nothing. *The carnal life makes the knowledge carnal.* And this knowledge again, being thus held in the fleshly mind, strengthens the religion of the flesh, of self-trust and self-effort; the truth so received has no power to renew and make free. No wonder that there is so much Bible teaching and Bible knowledge, with so little of real, spiritual result in a life of holiness. Would God that his word might sound through his Church: 'Whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal?' Unless we be living spiritual lives, full of humility, and love, and self sacrifice, spiritual truth, the truth of God, cannot profit us."

Surely if we thus "live by the spirit" and "walk by the spirit," in faith and obedience, we may rest assured that the holy spirit will do its complete, transforming work in us. We can rest in the faith that the spirit will impart sufficient strength to live as becometh new creatures in Christ, working in us to will and to do all that is pleasing in -the sight of God. It is the rich possession of the holy spirit that makes and marks the spiritual man.

OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY

In thinking of the "old things" which the Apostle tells us are to pass out of, the new creature life, we realize there are many. We may think of the gross sins and weaknesses spoken of as "the works of the flesh and the devil," but for the present it will be helpful to examine another line of old things which must pass away through the operations of the Word and spirit of God in our hearts now, or pass away in the fire which shall burn eventually, utterly consuming, all that is "wood, hay, and stubble." The life of the Christian is represented in Scriptures under the metaphor of a building. This illustration suggests the idea of a slow, continuous process, a laying of stone on stone until the structure is complete. Into this structure we are told may be built "gold, silver, precious stones, or "wood, hay, stubble." Sooner or later the material with which we have built will be subjected to the test of fire, "the day shall declare it." This symbol of fire is but the Bible way of stating that a searching, revealing, testing, and destructive judgment will one day come upon all that is not of the gold, silver, and precious stones character. Whatever will abide in this test will be *of* permanent quality -- it shall not pass away; but all that is not of this enduring quality will be utterly destroyed in that day of the revealing fire. The Lord will judge his people. He is judging them now. Christ is now coming in to judge, and when he comes into a life to judge it, light comes in with him, and that light is pouring in upon the actions and inner life of all who are before his judgment seat. This is the solemn word of Scripture: "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. . . . He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit said) unto the Churches." - Rev. 2:23, 29.

What then are our works -- how have we built? Have we been building on Christ, in him, and for him? Have we built for his searching eye so faithfully that we shall not be ashamed before him? Have the old things passed away under the power of the holy spirit's daily effective work in the heart through the passing years, or will they still remain to pass away in the fire which shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

How evident it is that in this revealing fire one class of service, of teaching, and one kind of life, will be brightened and beautified and glorified; *and* another class of such things will be destroyed and burned up. The gold and silver and, costly stones will be glorified and heightened in beauty by being brought into this contact with the hand and heat of the Refiner and his furnace, while the other will be proved to be so mixed with the old things as to merit destruction. And what will the day declare for each of us? How many surprises will there be both among the workers whose building will abide the fire, and also among . those whose works must perish in the flame! Well may we each ask ourselves, how much of my life work will be wiped out of existence, crushed into nonentity, and made as if it had never been at all? Whatever in our conduct has been acceptable to God, we are assured will last. It will last in the mind of our heavenly Father, and it will last in glorious results to ourselves, because it will be in accord with the perfect will of God, which is the first great permanent reality in the universe. Because he abides for ever, so will that in us which has glorified him abide forever, May we then, be more and more able to affirm with the Apostle, "old things *are* passed away."

Happy indeed are they who really know that they are "walking in newness of life." To know that there has been a complete separation from the pursuits and attractions of the flesh, and a new

point of concentration permanently fixed in the life, the new creature life, is to know the blessed testimony of the spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and heirs of eternal life with Christ our Lord. And so, possessed as we can be by new hopes, new visions, new aspirations, a new life in Christ, how comforting are the assurances of the Scriptures which teach us that God really gives us this high and perfect standing through faith in the sacrifice of Christ.

BEHOLD ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW

No doubt the poorest building on the foundation Rock, will have something in it that will remain after the fire of trial has done its work because it is on that Rock. But it is for us as true believers to cherish the noblest hopes and objectives. There is nothing new in seeking to be but "a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord." It is proper enough, to say with David that I would "rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, than to dwell in the, tents of wickedness," but it is much more proper for new creatures in Christ to conform their aspirations and expectations to the revealed will-of God. And those who gain this true outlook will ever be seeking for higher and higher attainments in Christian character. Such will be heard always singing,

"I want to scale the utmost height,
And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray till heaven I've found,
'Lord, lead me on to higher ground.'

So let us build on the foundation other than which no man can lay. Build on it gold and silver and precious stones, the things which are eternally new true thoughts and holy deeds, loving, pure, unselfish, Christ-like and permanent materials. Let us give all diligence to add to our faith whatsoever things are lovely, ennobling, things which never grow old nor pass away, because they originate in God, who is from everlasting to everlasting, ever new and unchanging. Then we shall not be "saved so as by fire," but by grace divine an entrance shall be ministered unto us "abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

- *J. J. Blackburn.*

Joined to Another

"Wherefore; my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." - Romans 7:4.

IN THE Scriptures there are quite a number of relationships associating the faithful Church with her Lord. They are drawn from several varied spheres of life, and in consequence they set before our minds varied phases and degrees of intimacy and confidence. That of the Shepherd and his sheep is quite easy to recall (John 10:1-16) , as is also that of the Vine and its branches. (John 15:1-8.) Then there is that of the Teacher and his pupils (Matt. 11:29, 30), also that of the Captain and his company. (Heb. 2:10.) In addition, we may cite that of the figure of a man, with its head and body members, as well as that of the High Priest, with his associate under-priests. Each of these relationships has its own special lessons to teach.

In our text we have brought before our minds the relationship of a husband and a wife -- a relationship of the very closest and most intimate kind. The language of the very few verses leading up to it may seem to be rather obscure at some points, but there is no such obscurity about the words, "Ye should be joined to Another, even to him who was raised from the dead."

The precise meaning of the words, "joined to" must be gathered from the context immediately preceding; and it is from this that the conclusion must be derived that the "joining to is precisely that of the marriage bond. In verse 3, the words, "joined to" cannot represent any other relationship than that of husband and wife bound together in matrimony, and since that is part of the introductory argument, the same two words must be allowed exactly the same shade of meaning when they are repeated again in our text.

"THE LAW OF THE HUSBAND"

In the course of his argument Paul has been using as an illustration, the application, of a certain law which he calls, "The law of the husband." (Ver. 2.) By the terms of that law a "woman that hath a husband is bound ... to that husband while he liveth." This is because she and he have made an agreement in the presence of the law's representatives, in order to have that agreement rest on a lawful basis. But if the husband dies, the woman is automatically set free, both from the agreement and from that portion of the law that validated the agreement. She may still be subject to other statutes of the law for other purposes, but the husband's death releases her from the obligations and duties towards him, imposed upon her by that specific feature of the law.

If, however, she decided to desert her husband and began to consort with another man while her husband was still alive, "she shall be called an adulteress," says Paul-and so would say the law! In that case, the question could be appealed to the Court of law, and its verdict taken. But if her husband dies, her obligations toward him are at an end, the "law of the husband" becomes null and void, and so far as she is concerned it is "dead."

If at this time she is invited to become the wife of another man, she is not to be called an adulteress, even though she is becoming "joined to" another man. Instead, she passes once more under the law of the husband, though joined to the other man. That "law of the husband" is alive again, and lays its claims and obligations upon her a second time on behalf of the other man. The argument of Paul does not allow anything in the nature of promiscuous association with the

second man; after the first one's death. To escape the charge which the moral standards of the law could lay against such an act, she must become "joined to" the second man, exactly as she had formerly been "joined to" the first. Thus to be "joined to" another man must of necessity mean that she has taken matrimonial vows a second time, and that "she" and "he" stand related to each other as wife and husband.

PRESENT PRIVILEGE OF THE SAINTS

Seeing, therefore, that the force of the words, "joined to" in verse 3 means the establishment of the marriage bond, it must also have that same force and meaning allowed to it in our text. In that case the text could read; "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law [exactly as the woman was by the death of her first husband] through the body of Christ that ye should be married to another -to him who was raised from the dead." Weymouth translates it, "that ye should be wedded to another.... " There can be no question as to what the "joined to" relationship really is.

The question might now be raised, "*When* are we to be married to him who was raised from the dead"? Some one might say, "Surely it cannot be before our resurrection days, when, being changed, we shall be like him and see him face to face!" But the context will not allow of that post-dating of our union with the Lord. It indicates most clearly that we must be joined to him here and now, in these present days, and under these present earthly conditions. To take away all uncertainty and equivocation on the point, Paul goes on to show that this marriage tie should result in "fruit" -- that is to say, there should be such "issue" as is rightly regarded as the fruit of the marriage tie. There should be -- as it were -- children of the marriage brought forth as fruit unto God. And seeing that the "fruit" which Paul specifically mentions pertains only to our present life -- as we shall see -- there can be no dubiety about the fact that the spiritually-minded saint of God is married to the Lord here and now, at this present time.

Perhaps at this point thoughts about the Marriage of the Lamb in the Revelation symbolisms will come to mind, as rebutting evidence. As every attentive student knows, that event is still a future happening, and does not in any way pertain to these present days. But that is a picture all on its own, with its own special setting and environment, and should not be intermixed with Paul's argument in our text. We must keep these marriage relationships separate and distinct, each in its own place and Age, and each will have its own special lessons to teach.

Another one might say, "But is not the Church spoken of by Paul as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2), over whose virginity he was exercised by a godly jealousy?" Is it not the case that the virgin Church is only as yet *espoused* to Christ, and awaits with ardent expectation the hour when she will be his Bride, when raised up from the dead?

Again, in answering (and allowing the assumption that what Paul said to the Corinthians was intended by him to apply to the whole Church throughout the Age) it must be said that this also is a picture peculiar to itself, and like the Revelation picture has lessons all its own to teach. In any case, it is the whole Church, *en bloc*, that will constitute the Bride of Christ, while in our text it is each individual; as an individual, who already, while in this present world, is as a Bride to Christ. Surely there is room in our thoughts, just as there is room in the Holy Word, for both these pictures to lie side by side-the one being true of these present days, the other of the better times to come when we shall look on his blessed face!

BRINGING FORTH "FRUIT UNTO GOD"

The underlying foundation of our present marriage union with our Lord is that of the tribe or clan, in which situation a husband and wife not only bring forth children for themselves, but at the same time for the clan. Every child added to a family is also an addition to the clan, and when the safety and well-being of the whole community hinge upon the numbers being sufficient to feed and protect them all, every new-born child added to the community is brought forth as fruit for the clan, as well as for its family. In like manner the fruit of which Paul speaks, is not only fruit for ourselves, but also "fruit for God." It is as though God was the patriarchal chief-the Grand Sheik-of the holy clan, and that therefore every item of "fruit" brought forth for Christ and ourselves, is fruit brought forth for God.

What then is this fruit, which, by our union with Christ is brought forth for Ourselves and God? To answer this the context must be consulted. Paul's line of argument begins with Chapter 6, verse 1, in the question, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" To emphasize his own brief answer, "God forbid," Paul then adduces three pointed illustrations drawn from daily experience, of general occurrence, and easy to be understood. The first illustration is that of a dead man, who, because he is dead, can no longer be enticed by sin. No allurements and no artifices presented by sin can have even the slightest effect on the corpse, for there is nothing left with which it can respond. The footstep follower of Christ has been united with his Lord in death, united in the likeness of his death; hence being dead -- dead to sin -- there is (or should be) -- nothing left to respond to the enticements of sin. But though the Christian should count himself as dead to sin, he should contrariwise count himself as alive to God as having also shared in resurrection with Christ.. This is a case, of course, of counting things that be not as though they were; for though; Christ Jesus has actually, passed through death to endless life, we have not. We are still dwelling in the realm of sin, yet, because we are so closely linked with him, his victory is the pledge and token of our own. Hence, though still dwelling in the realm of sin, sin is not *to reign* in our mortal body, that we should *obey* its commands. It is not to have *dominion* over us, *but* to be ignored because, by covenant relationship with him, we are dead to this terrestrial world and alive to celestial things.

Paul's next point is that of the slave's relationship to his owner and lord; more particularly that of a man fallen on evil times, who hired himself until the year of jubilee, to a master for the price of his food and home. Hence the argument turns on the "presentation" (see R. V.) of themselves either to sin or to God. "Know ye not that to whom ye present yourselves as bond-slaves unto obedience [to obey as slaves obey] his bond-slaves ye are . . ." Having presented themselves as bond-slaves to God, it is he whom they should serve and obey-for in their presentation they had surrendered away their own right to choose. Hence they could not render service to sin, for that would be like a slave disregarding his master's command in order to serve another man who had no rightful claim upon his services.

Paul's third point is that of our text-the marriage compact with Christ. Here the same theme carries through. It is still the question, "Shall we continue in sin" that is under review. We still have "God" and "death before us as the reigning Chiefs, requiring obedience from their bondslaves. Hence we read (chap. 7:5) : "For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions . . . wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." When married to sin, we had brought forth our fruit unto death for sin was to us as a husband, while "death" was as the "chief of the clan." Our "fruits," therefore, were the works of unrighteousness, uncleanness, and iniquity. (Chap. 6:19.) These wicked works were as children to the unhappy marital relationship.

Now, wedded to Christ, the fruits we bring forth to God are works done in righteousness which tend to sanctification and purity. (Chap. 6:19-22.) - These are as children born from our present relationship to Christ Jesus our Lord, as fruit unto God.

It is to be noted that Paul does not set Satan over in contrast against God as the tribal chief. Satan may be the permitted prince of this present evil world, but it was not he who made man subject to the reign (and to the law) of sin and death. This side of the subject is related to that deeper, darker section in chapter 8:20, 21, where Paul tells us that creation (the human creation) was made subject to vanity, not of its own will, but by God, who had subjected it, and has left it in this subjection for the time now present, though with hope attached thereto, for by his ordering, the creation itself shall yet be delivered from its bondage of corruption and be given the full liberty which God extends to his children everywhere. Even in this groaning state, a law operates-the law of sin and death-which was imposed by God and not by Satan. God is still working all things after the counsel of his own will, without regard to the present antagonism of the Archrebel against his authority.

RESULT OF SECRET CONTACT WITH OUR BELOVED

What then does this matrimonial relationship with him who was raised from the dead mean to us in these present days? Obviously we cannot bring forth fruit unto God without him. By the same token we cannot bring forth works of righteousness, leading on to holiness and sanctification without the vitalizing influence of his Personality in our lives. As no woman could bring forth off-spring solely as the result of self-desire, or self-concentration, so can no Christian bring forth this fruit unto God as the result of self-desire or self-concentration. Christ Jesus our Lord is the first essential to such fruitage, and only as, and when, he and we come together in close, intimate, hallowed communion can the fruitage result. And this communion is not merely. that which takes place when we gather together with others in his Name. It is in the more private life-in the secret chamber, with the doors shut about us, that this deeper communion must take place. We must leave the throb and stir of our common work-a-day world, and go aside with him, not once, nor twice, but many times a day, if the full enjoyment of our relationship to him is to be realized. What then does this array of obvious facts of the spiritual life mean to us? Have we ever stopped to try to realize what this secret contact with our Beloved can mean to us in peace, in contentment, in rest of soul? Is not the woman who knows she holds the love of her wedded mate among the happiest creatures this world can know? Can she not tell her hopes and fears, and find counsel and comfort for her hours of need? In Christ this can be multiplied by infinity and enjoyed without stint or limitation.

Well, that is our side of things -- do we ever think of his? Do we ever stop to wonder what such communion means to him? Do we ever think that he is also expecting something from us? Have we ever thought that the long nights Jesus spent in prayer, when here on earth brought pleasure *only* to himself, and *none* to the listening Ear above the skies? If there were pleasure for the Father up there in his Heavenly Home, as the sinless lips poured out their petitions here on earth - and there surely was -- is it unthinkable that the risen One finds no delight or joy in our constant approach to him? Is not the fervent love of our warm and tender hearts an object of keen desire by him, exalted though he is? Is he in this matrimonial relationship only to give, and not also to receive? Even in the shepherd life -- so the travelers say-the sheep will sometimes go and lay their heads against the shepherd's knee, evincing such affection for their keeper as their lower nature can command! Is there no appreciation awakened in the shepherd's heart by this act of animal affection for himself? If it be so in that rural scene, shall it not be more greatly so in the Heavenly Fold?

Have we ever thought how much we might pain, the Beloved of our soul by our coldness and indifference to his claims? We may become far too busy with our hands to have time for him in other ways and so, though loving him in all sincerity, be denying him the joy in us he has every right to expect.

OUR SERVICE OR OUR DEVOTION-WHICH?

Perhaps at this point it may be permissible to touch upon a problem vital to our right relationship to him. And in so doing we may be pardoned if we presume to ask the nature of that response, which he, as the Bridegroom of our hearts has every right to expect from us. Can we say it is his desire that we set *our work for him* as the prime objective of our Christian life? We stress the point that the work there spoken of is "work for him," not for ourselves. Again we ask, Is it our "work" that he most desires, or is there something else -- a "something else" which is represented in that exclusive deep relationship which a good man longs for from the only woman in the world whose life is linked up with his own? Does such a man merely want her in his household as a drudge? or does he seek that deeper, sweeter fellowship which constitutes the joys and sanctities of wedded life? Would it give him any satisfaction if he found her taking up the position of a drudge in the household all the time? Is that illustration setting our relationship to Christ on too low a plane, or in a too human form? Indeed it is not, for there is nothing on this whole wide earth that can equal the pure human relationship of two hearts linked together by wedded love.

If then, there is that "something else" on the higher plane, which is he the more likely to look for and expect in us -- just the mere service of our hands (our tongues and pens), or the warm fusing of our hearts with his in sweet and hallowing communion? There can be not the slightest doubt on that point! He could command the ravens and the winds to do him service if the need arose; even the very stones would cry out if no other voice were at hand, but from none of these could come that deeper satisfaction which a Heart of Love, could expect and appreciate. Only from loving responsive hearts, linked up in tender matrimonial relationship with himself could come that flow of spiritual affection which could satisfy!

But now, having laid due emphasis on that, let us ask ourselves, Does this affectionate wife and loving help meet ever lose sight of the "service" side of things? Does she never think of all the "work" that must be done to keep the home clean and sweet? Indeed she does; it claims a great deal of her time and strength! But there is something much more than the "slave's" response in the service which she gives--something deeper, sweeter, and infinitely more satisfying.

So also in the Christian life. The heart that has grown warm toward the Lord, will bring hands and feet that are swift to serve at any moment, in any way.

If then, at any time, for any cause, we have been led to think that "witnessing" or "Kingdom Work," or any other form of service for him is to be accounted as the prime objective of our Christian life, let us think again. The prime essential of our lives is the bringing forth of fruit unto God, and to accomplish that, the close intimacy of the Lord with our inmost souls is imperative.

Fruit unto God will require at least two things -- it will require shape and, form, it will require flavor and mellowness. It will require external shape and form-shape in which the service reveals itself. It will require inward mellowness -- flavor by which it commends itself. And this can come to be only when he whom our souls desire, dwells with us and we with him in love-linked fellowship. Given this, the fruitage in righteousness that tends more surely 'to' holiness and sanctification in very deed and truth, is sure to come. Will it take the form of handing out a tract, or proclaiming Kingdom benefits to our suffering world? Perhaps; though not essentially so. It

can be any form of testifying to the Grace of God, even though it be by patient endurance only on some secluded bed of sickness.

What then should be our attitude to our Lord in our present wedded relationship to him? Will you try to call to mind loving hands industriously engaged in irksome work, yet saying all the while, "It is for him"? Or picture to your mind the loving thought that scrapes the pocket to find the last cent for some little gift, saying the while, "It is for her!" Here is the gist and germ of the whole thing -- the inner tie -- and the outer act -- in other words, "faith [confidence] working by love." That is the right relationship between heart and hand. It makes Mary (with her better part) and Martha one!

It is just that fervent thoughtfulness and intense desire, transplanted to the higher life, sublimated and enriched by the holy spirit's influence upon our spiritual affections that we need to feel and experience, both in what we give to this marriage tie, and in what we receive therefrom. If these are there, all other things will follow in due course, and as a consequence. We shall never hesitate or forbear to work and labor for the dear Object of our love, but neither shall we make the sad mistake of thinking more of the "work" than of him, or of forgetting that the all-essential thing is not what we can do for him, but what he can do for us. For' after all, it is he, and he alone, as the husband in our marriage bond, who can induce and ' provoke in us-in those quieter moments which we spend aside with him-all those impulses and determinations which result in "fruit for God."

- *T. Holmes, Eng.*

The Holy Tryst

"Martha was cumbered" with anxious care,
For the Master had come to dine that day,
And she did so long for all things most fair
To serve to her Guest in a royal way.
The silver to polish! The platters to fill!
Yet Mary sat listening, devout and still.

"O Master, my sister hath left me alone;
And carest Thou not? Now bid her, I pray,
That she come and lift the cakes from the stone
Before they are sodden. It is now mid-day,
And I, too, have longed to sit at Thy feet --
To hear Thy words that are holy and meet."

And the Master saw in Martha's deep eyes
A hungering soul; and the sisters bore
Each to the other, His divine surprise.
Had they never *known* each other before?
But the Master knew that the veil between
Hid only an unspoken love, unseen,

And tenderly lifted and drew it aside
While the table stood waiting, all silver white,
For the viands prepared in love and pride;
But pride gave way before love's clearer light
As the Master spoke peace to Martha's vain heart,
And she too, made the choice of "that good part."

"But one thing is needful, Martha, to bring --
A few ripe figs with a morsel of bread;
A cup of water from the hillside spring --
This is the banquet I wish you to spread.
For I am the Water of Life this day,
And I am the Life-giving Bread alway."

And, the three sat down to the simple fare --
To eat of the Manna of Life, and drink
The wine of the Kingdom to come; and there
The Master communed, for He came to think
Of the heavenly things held in memory,
And a holy tryst kept in Bethany.

- *Nellie Florence Jolly.*

Signs of the Master's Presence

"What will be the sign of thy presence, and of the consummation of the Age?" - Matt. 24:3, - Diaglott.

IN THE two previous installments of this series, earnest effort has been made to present our convictions in a Christian spirit, with due consideration of others who may view matters differently. We have made it clear, we trust, that so far as we are concerned, differences in viewpoint on the various phases and features of our Lord's Second Advent have not been, nor, please God, will they be, permitted to mar the sweet fellowship in Christ which should always obtain between the members of the one Body -- the Church.

Furthermore, we hope it has been made clear, that we stand ready at all times, to reconsider our views on this, as on all other matters of faith, and we shall most certainly abandon our present views should others come to our attention which, on examination, appear to us to be better supported by the Scriptures and by sound judgment. Grateful as we are for the light now shining, we nevertheless recognize with the Apostle that we see but dimly, as through an opaque glass, compared with the vision which will be ours ere long (1 Cor. 13:12); that if we imagine we already possess any true knowledge, on this as on any other subject, we have as yet attained to no knowledge of the kind to which we ought to have attained (1 Cor. 8:2, Weymouth and Moffatt); and that at present, at the very most, we are but learning bit by bit, whereas then -- in only a very little while ("how short! how short!" - Heb. 10:37, *Rotherham*), we shall understand as all along we have been understood by him. - 1 Cor. 13:12, *Moffatt*.

In our own studies we have found it helpful to group the "signs and groanings promised to precede a second birth," under five main captions, which may first be stated and then discussed, as follows:

1. Gentile Times
2. Ecclesiastical Heavens
3. Israel
4. General Social Conditions
5. Chronology

1. GENTILE TIMES

No one that is at all acquainted with the pages of history, and with the Book of Daniel, will question the statement that the broad outline of Gentile history, twice forecast by Daniel twenty-five hundred years ago (chapters 2 and 7), has had a remarkable fulfillment in the succession, order, and events of the four great empires, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Nor will such question the statement that the last of these four has been the greatest of them, as Daniel foretold.

Rome, however, at the time Daniel wrote, was, according to the historian, "a mere cluster of huts." Its existence was unnoticed and unknown beyond the limited regions of its neighbors in Italy. Yet Daniel, writing under the inspiration of God, of the One who calls things which be not as though they were (Rom. 4:17), sees this cluster of huts made over into a mighty empire, the mightiest of them all -- and tells us what he sees.

Now if this were the only "sign" we had, if no other line of evidence were available, if this grand outline of fulfilled prophecy were all -- if Scripture contained nothing else to guide us but this one broad outline of Gentile Times, would we not even then have real grounds for strong convictions that we are living in the very end of the Age?

Plainly -- so plainly that he who runs may read (Hab. 2:2) -- it was forecast in these Daniel prophecies that during the long centuries intervening, until He should come whose right it is (Ezek. 21:27), four great empires would hold sway in the affairs of men, four empires governed by Gentile rulers, and that the fourth should, in its final stage, give place to the Kingdom of God. Do we not find ourselves living, at the close of the fourth world empire? Surely so, and not only at its close, but at the close of its last form, the Papacy, unless we greatly err. What then, are we to look for next? What indeed, but the Kingdom for which so long we have prayed.

2. ECCLESIASTICAL HEAVENS

One of the signs for which the disciples were to be on the watch, as indicating the nearness of his return, is stated by our Lord in Luke 21:26, as follows: "The powers of heaven shall be shaken." What do these words mean and, furthermore, has this sign been seen yet?

We answer: In our view the main reference is to the symbolic heavens -- the ecclesiastical heavens -- the powers of spiritual control, to which also St. Peter referred. (2 Pet. 3:12, 13.) * Has the shaking taken place? We think so -- we think the shaking has been in progress for years and will continue until only those things which cannot be shaken remain. (Heb. 12:26-29.) Let us compare Scripture with Scripture and prophecy with history and see if these things be so.

*For an interesting discussion of a possible literal fulfillment see **Scripture Studies**, Vol. IV, pages 583-590.

We turn first to the Book of Revelation, that wonderful prophecy sent and signified (told in signs and symbols) by our risen Lord, some sixty years after his ascension. Its theme, as we understand it, while largely future from the date John received the vision, was not a revelation of remote events in which the Church, from the days of the Apostles until now, has had no practical interest, but of events which, nineteen hundred years ago, were, as to the *commencement* of their fulfillment, near at hand. It was, of "things which must shortly come to pass." The *commencement* of their fulfillment was *then, in* the first century of the Gospel Age. The time was then "at hand." - Rev. 1:1; 1:3; 22:6.

In this Book two of the Bible's seven key prophecies are given. One of the two is that of the Seven Candlesticks. (Chap. 1.) The other is given in chapter 17, and is the interpretation of the Woman, Babylon the Great, and of the seven-headed, ten-horned Beast that carried her.

The Candlesticks are interpreted by our Lord himself and declared to be the seven Churches. (Rev. 1:20.) Doubtless the vision was intended to show the wise and loving watch-care which he himself would exercise over the one true Church throughout the seven successive periods of its history, from the days of the Apostles until now.

Contrasted with the history of the true Church is the history of the false. In the seventeenth and following chapters both are doubly symbolized, as women and as cities. The Harlot City is arrayed in purple and scarlet color, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls; while the Bride, the New Jerusalem, is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints, and has the glory of God. The one is the associate of the Beast, the other of the Lamb.

The one is drunken with the blood of saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; the other consists of saints and includes many of the martyrs. The one 'is punished with temporal and eternal judgments; the other is rewarded with everlasting honor and felicity.

THE POWER OF ANTICHRIST SHAKEN

Daniel, centuries before, in his vision of Gentile dominion symbolized by four wild beasts, had drawn attention to a little horn on the head of the fourth beast—a horn before whom three of the previous ten horns were plucked up by the roots; a horn, moreover, which had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things (Dan. 7:8); a power, apparently, which should arise from within the very Church itself, and while retaining the name of Christ, become a mighty anti-Christian system and, succeeding the Pagan Caesars, rule over all the nations of the world. This apostate church system, which from the Book of Revelation we note is destined to be destroyed at the end of the Age (Rev. 18:8), when the marriage of the true Church is consummated (Rev. 19:7), is shown by Daniel also to meet its destruction then. (Dan. 7:11, 26.) St. Paul likewise joins in this prediction. - 2 Thess. 2:9, 10.

Turning to the pages of history, what do we find? The very thing predicted *has occurred*. Gross corruption, worldly ambition, and carnal strife did rapidly develop in the Church after Christianity was embraced by Constantine. A ruling ecclesiastical system did arise at Rome on the fall of the old Roman Empire in the fifth and sixth centuries. This system, the great Papal dynasty, corrupted the Gospel, opposed the truth and wore out the saints, as had been predicted. (Dan. 7:25.) At long last came the Reformation, liberating many members of the true Church. (Incidentally, millions of others, including great numbers of the irreligious element of mankind, at that time began to throw off the Roman yoke.) This departure from Rome has continued since then, and in recent times has been accelerated. How little power and influence does this system possess in Europe today, compared with its former might! The power of this part of the Ecclesiastical Heavens has been shaken indeed.

As we ponder these things, the question must naturally arise: What next? If the great apostasy has thus arisen, as was predicted, and if, after reaching the zenith of its power, it has been on the decline since the Reformation, what is the next thing in order? According to Our understanding of the matter there is but one more thing to occur. The apostasy of this false religious system has run its course. Its complete destruction is due. According to the prediction in Daniel, "They shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it *unto the end*," From St. Paul we learn that the Lord Jesus will paralyze the Lawless one "with the forthshining of his presence." (2 Thess. 2:9,10, *Rotherham*.) Effects are produced only by causes. They do not "just happen." We can see the paralyzing effect. Our conviction is strong that the cause which produced it was none other than the one predicted -- the forthshining of our Lord's presence. What other cause would have been adequate? Could anything less than the "spirit of his mouth" and the "forthshining of his presence" have done it?

MOTHER OF HARLOTS

Moreover, if we turn from Papacy, the Antichrist, to the Church over which Antichrist ruled so long, we reach the same conclusions. That Church, to our understanding, is represented in the Book of Revelation as a Woman riding the Beast (Rev. 17); that is to say, an ecclesiastical system is identified with the state power of Rome, influencing and guiding the tenfold commonwealth of nations on the one hand and, from another point of view, being upheld by it. (Rev. 17:12-14, 17.) But in "the time of the end" the ten kingdoms rebel against their would be guide, throw off her yoke, hate, her, spoil her, and consume her. - Rev. 17:16.

Again we turn to history to learn from its pages what, if any part, of this prediction has been fulfilled. Here we find that the kingdoms of Europe that arose on the fall of the old Roman Empire, voluntarily lent their support and gave their allegiance to the Church of Rome for about a thousand years -- a false millennium, if you please. But history also records how, as the result of her gross corruptions these self-same kingdoms came to loathe, despise, and reject her teachings, her government, and her guidance; how, for the past more than four hundred years they have thrown off her control, denied her claims for support and forsaken her company. Reviewing carefully the history of Roman Catholicism, as foretold by inspired writers, we inquire: "What next?" The answer comes again, as clearly as before -- only her final fall under divine judgment; that final fall of Babylon which immediately precedes the marriage of the Lamb. - Rev. 18:8; 19:7.

DAUGHTERS OF THE MOTHER

Foregoing we have identified the "Mother of Harlots" as the Roman Catholic Church in its various aspects. Most Protestant commentators do likewise. However, they fail to see, what to us is all too apparent, that this symbol includes also the Protestant Church systems *and all who partake of the sectarian spirit*. In this connection the following comment from the pen of Brother Russell is most instructive:

"Names were formerly given as expressions of character or work. . . . The name Babylon, applied by the Spirit to the Church of Rome expresses her character, for Babylon means mixture -- confusion. (See Lev. 18:23.) This union of the Woman (church) with the Beast (empire) constitutes the spiritual harlotry of which she is guilty.

"But the name (Babylon) applies to her entire family; her daughters inherit both her nature and name, for she is a 'mother of harlots' and her works they do."

Elsewhere he wrote: "All fallen sects, from which the inward spirit of vital religion has departed (or is departing) bear upon their foreheads the likeness or semblance of the 'Mother of Harlots' and of all abominations."

Have the powers of the Protestant part of the ecclesiastical heavens been shaken? To us it seems so. In the Reformation days the central theme was the Gospel -- faith in the redemption accomplished by our Lord. With little or no understanding of the philosophy underlying it, the faithful few nevertheless trusted for salvation in the ransom sacrifice of Christ--they realized their need of a Savior, of one who would save them from sin and death, not merely their need of a teacher or noble example. In our time, however, the day of Protestantism decline, not only has the Gospel sunlight become largely darkened, and the moon (the Mosaic foreshadowings of the Gospel) become turned into blood (the typical sacrifices of Israel being considered a form of barbarism); not only have the true stars (the Apostles) withdrawn their shining (their teachings being no longer held as authoritative), but the man ordained luminaries of the present ecclesiastical heavens have been shaken from the spiritual leadership formerly claimed, to the level of earthly moralists. (Matt. 24:29; Isa. 13:1-10; Joel 2:10.) They have not repudiated the blasphemous doctrines of "hell," "non-elect infants," etc., but they are no longer able to preach them if they would, for their congregations today are, for the most part, too enlightened to listen to such monstrous absurdities. The necessity is thus laid upon them to find another Gospel (?). However, they are without knowledge of God's true Plan for the future of our race. Consequently they turn to the Gospel (?) of "good works," "moral uplift," anti-slum endeavors, Christian citizenship movements, etc. We have no quarrel with such attempts to ameliorate the condition of

our race. Quite to the contrary. We have every sympathy with them and, in compliance with the Apostolic admonition to do good unto all men as we have opportunity (Gal. 6:10), are pleased to cooperate with them in all reasonable ways, as we are able. But such Gospels (?) have hope for this life only. They are poor substitutes for, the "everlasting Gospel" of "life everlasting" to be enjoyed by the faithful in "the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." (Rev. 14:6; 1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Pet. 1:11.) Indeed, if offered as "substitutes," they are harmful; *thus* offered they are anti-Christian. By descending thus to this lower level of teaching, do not these Protestant luminaries themselves furnish the evidence that they have been shaken from their former exalted position as "stars" in the ecclesiastical heaven? And if so, are we not right in recognizing this as one of the signs predicted?

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE?

Before closing this, the third installment in the series, there is a most important observation we should not fail to make. While, in the foregoing paragraphs, we have interpreted the "Mother of Harlots" symbol as finding its fulfillment in the Catholic and Protestant Ecclesiastical systems, we are not to be understood as speaking anything whatever against godly Christians within these systems, now or throughout their history. Even at this late date there are doubtless still some consecrated children of God, in their midst. Our remarks have to do solely with the church systems themselves, not with the individuals of which they are composed. In all the various church associations of Christendom today there are doubtless some dear people whose hearts are very much in advance of their heads, and who, up to the light they possess are seeking to do the will of God. Some have raised the question: Is it possible that any of the "little flock could today make their "calling and election" sure, while continuing their membership in the various church systems, such as Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, etc.? Our reply has been that this is a question which it is not for us to answer. It is a matter for the individual's own conscience. As the Apostle exhorts: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." (Rom. 14:5.) It would be a violation of our own conscience for us to hold membership in any of the church systems, but we would not presume to judge others. To his own Master each must stand or fall. In due time the Lord will render a decision in every case and his judgment will be unerring. He would have us, we think, very lenient in our attitude towards any with whom we may come in touch, who, though continuing membership in a church system, manifest a Christian spirit, and who are disposed to fellowship with us to any extent. As systems, all denominations have been cast off, we think; the individuals within the systems, however, are considered apart from the denomination concerned, and only the Lord can read the heart. A great deal will depend, in each case, upon the degree of light possessed. We, ourselves, have been highly favored; *it is for us to be on guard lest the spirit of sectarianism creep upon us unawares*. We counsel all to stand free, not only from church systems, but from all parties, sects, and creeds, of men -- from "confessions of faith," as Brother Russell once put it. As for others, if in the Lord's providence it seems best to him to permit some to complete their calling and election without leaving Babylon, or without entirely abandoning all creeds of men or confessions of faith, that would be our will for them. Generally, however, we would expect, at this late hour in the Gospel Age, that not many who, failing to perceive Babylon's true condition, or for other reasons, remain in her, will be amongst those who one day will hear the Master's "Well done."

- P. L. Read.

(To be continued)

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren:

I regret very much I was unable to attend the Buffalo Convention. I know you must have had a good time. I am always mindful of the conventions I have attended with you and realize the blessings I received as a result of attending, in fellowship with the dear people of the Lord who are endeavoring to please the Lord and worship him in spirit and in truth. It was a wonderfully uplifting influence in my life when I discovered there were some who believed as I did and who were : still holding to the truth as it came to us by the Lord's providence many years ago. The joy that was mine I cannot easily describe in words. I shall never forget the sweetness of my first meeting with you in the city of Detroit when I listened for the -first time for many years to a discourse on a Bible topic. It was like meeting an old friend that had been thought dead. The prodigal son returned, you will say. Surely I was the prodigal returning to my first love and receiving the banquet. I feel that I am in the family circle again, and have made up my mind to walk the strait and narrow way in the footsteps of the Master, come what may.

The last "Herald" was superb. I read it over and over. . . . I wish you the richest blessings from heaven, and appreciate the good things I have received as a result of your efforts in the Lord's work. "We must work the works of Him while it is called day." This is an inner compulsion, but not forced slavery to a system or creed.

Your brother in Christ,
E. B. -- Ont.

Dear Brethren in Christ:

We greet you with Psalm 90:1, 2. With great thankfulness in our hearts we received your food package this week. The joy was great. Tears ran down the cheeks of the children. They had never known such wonderful things. Our little boy will be four years old soon, and then I shall make him a birthday cake, and in our thankfulness we shall remember the givers who sent it to us through the grace of God. How wonderful it is when the hopes of men are fulfilled! And how much more wonderful it will be when we shall see our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, on whom we rest our hope from day to day! The Lord takes care of His own. He alone can find ways and means. We believe we are living inn the time of the end, and we want to prepare ourselves to enter his presence -- praying and serving.

Times are hard here. We are only a few Germans at this place, and have no means of existence. We are looked upon as strangers. One more request we have -- maybe some of the brethren in America have children who could supply us with some clothes that they no longer wear -- shoes or an overcoat for myself. I am 65 years old and would be glad to have something warm for the winter. We would be thankful for any worn clothing. If possible please remember us. It would be a real Christmas present for us. May God's blessing be upon you for all you do.

Thanking you again, I leave with you Psalm 96:1, 2.
Your brother,
F. R. -- Poland.