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God's Table

"In this mountain will Jehovah of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." - Isaiah 25:6.

IT IS written in one of King David's glorious Messianic Psalms:

*"Gracious and compassionate is Yahweh,
Slow to anger and of great lovingkindness . . .
Yahweh is ready to uphold all who are falling,
And to raise all who are laid prostrate,
The eyes of all for thee do wait,
And thou givest them their food in its season.
Thou openest thy hand
And fillest every living thing with gladness." - Psalm 145:8, 14-16, Rotherham.*

It is to be noted that in this passage -the blessing of Jehovah is promised to "every *living* thing," and their necessary food is to be given "*in its season.*" The race of Adam is in a state of rebellion against God, under condemnation, "dead in trespasses and sins," - and the present is not the "season" -- the due time -- for them to be nourished by Jehovah. Of mankind at present it is written: "God heareth not sinners"; "Let the dead bury their dead." These words are not as harsh and final as they may sound to some. The Lord Jesus said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have practiced evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." If they are *then* willing and obedient, mankind's re-awakening will be to a resurrection through righteous and corrective judgments. Of the great Judgment Day of a thousand years Isaiah prophesied: "Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Jehovah, have we waited for thee; . . . With my soul have I desired thee in the night; . . . for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:8, 9, A. S. V.) The judgments of Jehovah have not been prevalent in the earth since the condemnation of Father Adam and the race then in his loins, except to a very limited extent upon those men or nations which have interfered with his

people or been in the way of his over-riding purposes. The Psalmist-Prophet declares: "He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and ordinances unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any [other] nation; and as for his ordinances [judgments] they have not known them." Jesus said: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already [in Father Adam], because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" - the only . "Name under heaven" through which the condemnation can be lifted. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how' shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" - Psalm 147:19, 20; John 3:17, 18; Acts 4:12; Rom. 10:14.

In verses 10-13 of Psalm 145 (Psalm 145:10-13) the Kingdom of Jehovah, which is to be inaugurated by Jesus Christ at his Second Advent, is indicated as the "season" for the general blessing of mankind, with an abundant feast of pure and life-sustaining food, both mental and physical. Then, "They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." (Jer. 31:34.) Food and drink are the requisites of all life except that which is immortal -- deathless. It is clearly stated in the Scriptures that God alone originally possessed immortality, and that he imparted it to his Son,' and through him will bestow it upon the members of the Son's Bride in the First Resurrection. A distinction is made throughout the Scriptures between everlasting (sustained) life, and immortality (inherent life) . Jesus "brought life *and* immortality to light through the Gospel." - 1 Tim. 6:16; John 5:, 6; 4:14; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; 2 Tim. 1:10.

The food eaten by fallen man "in the sweat of his face" under the sentence passed upon Adam (Gen. 3:17-19, 22-24) is imperfect and cannot sustain his life indefinitely; and he further debases his food by his selection and preparation of it, until, as has been said by medical authority, "Man digs his grave with his teeth." If he exploits his brother's labor and "eats bread in the sweat" of his brother's face, he brings upon himself many ills, and often shortens his own life.

The promise of this (the 145th) Psalm and of many other Scriptures is that Jehovah "in [due] season" will make provision for the continued life of all his sentient creatures who remain in or who return to loyal obedience to him, and partake of the food -- mental and physical -- which he supplies.

The Memorial Supper of our Lord, celebrated annually by Bible Students on its anniversary; was instituted by Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed to his death. It is symbolic of what may be regarded as a preliminary course-"that part of a meal served at one time, with its accompaniments" - of the great feast that the Father promises to provide for "all people." Special food is supplied for this course, for specially invited guests. Some may desire to partake who we may think are not of those for whom the Memorial is particularly intended; but they are welcome at the Table, in accordance with the laws of hospitality so emphasized by the Lord in his Word. None may rightfully designate who may partake or who may not, except by the invitation extended in the Lord's own words. It is for each participant to judge his own heart and need. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." - 1 Cor. 11:28. The symbols of the Supper as defined by our Lord and by St. Paul, represent, by the bread, the counsel and example of Jesus-his body broken by three-and-a-half years of arduous sacrificial service; and, by the cup of wine, his death as the Redeemer of all mankind, "to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. 2:6.) He himself said: "The bread of God *is* that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world.... I am the bread of life.... This is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . The words' that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." (John 6:33, 35,

40, 63.) Similarly, of the cup Jesus said: "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many." (Mark 14:24.) Thus, if we would distinguish- between the symbols; the bread represents the life, the cup the death, of the Lord Jesus, which we memorialize "till he come" in power and glory, to bless "all the nations of the earth in accordance with God's oath-bound covenant with Abraham, as expounded by the Apostle Paul. - Gen. 22:18; Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:16, 29.

Some latitude of understanding is permitted by variations in the four accounts of the institution of the Memorial Supper-those of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul. Matthew's and Mark's accounts quote the Lord as saying when he served the cup: "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out *for many*." Luke says he said: "for *you*," and mentions two cups, one served during and one after the Supper. *Paul's* account (1 Cor. 11:23-26) omits any designation-"for many" *or* "for you." His explanation of the significance of the emblems in the preceding chapter (1 Cor. 10:14-17) owing to the breadth of meaning of several of the Greek words he uses, may be taken to indicate either a sharing of the benefits symbolized in the loaf and the cup, or a personal participation in-what- they symbolize -- "a common union of the blood of Christ . . . a common union of the Body of Christ."

Perhaps this variation in the accounts *is intended*, under the direction of the holy spirit, to permit those who realize a mystic unity with their Head, in sacrifice and suffering and in present and future service, to see in the emblems a reminder of this relationship. Certainly such a view tends to add to the solemnity and impressiveness of the celebration. On the other hand, those who feel that this claim would be presumptuous on their part, yet who would "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," need suffer no loss of benefit. Holders of both views recognize the all sufficiency of the sacrifice of their Lord, and their paramount indebtedness to him. "Let each man be fully persuaded in his own mind," and let each respect the others' convictions. "Christ our Passover hath been slain for us." One of the most important lessons of his Memorial celebration, as emphasized by St. Paul (1 Cor. 10:17; 11:19-21, 27-30) is the *unity* of the Body-of those who partake. A lack of heart-unity with other believers vitiates the significance and value of the observance to-the one cherishing a partisan or sectarian attitude. "For yet a little while -- how short! how short! -- the Coming One will be here, and will not tarry!" "Wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." - Heb. 10:27, *Rotherham*; 1 Cor. 5:7, 8.

Cool, in the shrouding shadows of the night,
The table in that Upper Room was laid;
No glittering goblet there, no cloth arrayed
In silvern broideries -- only the white --
Of one poor wheaten loaf to glad the sight,
One cup for all -- Betrayer and Betrayed;
O'er these in deepest thanks the Master prayed,
Unheeding gloom and taunt of vanquished might.
Beloved Christ, so patient in thy pain,
I shrink to own my starv'ling heart of fear
That counts the petty coin of common care
As 'twere some Calvary, or thorn-cut stain!
O, let me breathe that 'faith-charged atmosphere
That made thee conquer even Death's despair.

- *Minnie Ferris Hauenstein.*

--*H. E. Hollister.*

The Crucifixion

The sun shines down On the surging throng
Moving slowly t'ward Olivet;
In their midst walks a "Man"
Righting a wrong.

The crowd moves on
Like a slithering snake,
Hissing and rearing its ugly head
For one last strike!

The "Man," a *lowly* Nazarene,
Has loved and healed and blessed
For three full years and more -- their sick,
Their blind, their lame, their poor --
And raised their dead.

No laurel wreath He wears
On His fair brow; but thorns
A crown of thorns, plaited by those
For whom He came to die!
Their King is *He!*
This "Man of Sorrows"
They're about to crucify.
How very strange!

A Victor He o'er sin
His flesh almost consumed,
He bows beneath the weight of *His* own cross,
A massive tree felled from the forest He
Created ere He came to earth
To ransom sinful men.

* * * *

What strange travesty is this?
The echoing "Hosannas" scarce
Have died upon the air!
Golgotha frowns on *Holiness* defamed,
Purity derided, *innocence* reviled.
The *Undefiled, Guileless One* staggers on
Midst shrieks and jeers of wicked mob
"Let Him be crucified!" they cry.

* * * *

Nails pierce those gentle, loving hands,
Which so recently had broken bread
To feed the multitudes;
And only yesterday, it seemed,
Had healed disease-restored the blind,
And blessed the little children gathered round His knees.

His feet -- those precious feet
Are bleeding now from cruel nails;
How many weary miles they've trod
O'er dusty roads and blistering sand
To tell of *God's* redeeming grace -- to lift the sinner
From *a* place where selfishness *will* be no more, and --
Love will rule in every man.

His heart is bursting now!
Thrust through and broken --
Wounded to the death by those
He came to save.
"Tis finished!" The agonizing cry
Pierces the gloom -- reaching to
The highest vaults of heaven itself.
'Tis finished! Ah, yes!
For all eternity; the Savior of the world
Dies no more!!

* * * *

Nature rebels!
The glowing sun is veiled in mourning
While on the cruel cross the Savior of the world
Is hung.
A sable curtain falls and drapes the earth
In darkness -- thick darkness
Like a pall,
Emblem of the sin from which the Father
Hides His face.

The jeering mob grows silent now, as
Awesome fear strikes deep within
Their wicked hearts.
They scurry from the desolating scene
As forked lightning crashing through
The darkness -- rends the ancient Temple's
Veil in twain.

The murmuring voices of the Roman soldiers
Gathered 'round
Pay tribute to the silent figure on the cross
In words which through *all* ages will resound
"TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD."

- *Elsie P. Smith.*

Modern Babel

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" - Psalm 8:4.

THE General Assembly of the "United Nations" at Paris, which has just adjourned, presented a perfect example of man's helplessness to rise unaided above the difficulties in which he finds himself involved. There sat these gentlemen, representatives of the victorious survivors of the most devastating war in all history, with twenty centuries of human experience in bloodshed and suffering behind them, to serve as a stern warning of the consequences that may follow the failure of their mission to secure a just and lasting peace. Upon their decisions, in so far as they were aware, depended the lives, property, and future happiness of tens of millions of their fellow creatures, helpless men, women and children in every part of the world. They formed a selected group of statesmen, prize specimens of the intelligentsia of all nations, men specially chosen for this purpose by the governments of their respective countries, presumably because of their outstanding qualities of sagacity and devotion to the common cause of peace. Yet in the face of all this, they have shown themselves to be just as impotent to formulate any wise decisions which would afford reasonable hope for the peace of the world, as would the most benighted of barbarians. Around the conference table Slav facing Anglo-Saxon, East facing West, totalitarianism facing democracy -- the entire assemblage was a pathetic stalemate of frustration.

Never, since the building of Babel, has such an entire failure on the part of one group to understand the viewpoint or to believe in the good intentions of another been so manifest. Never has there existed more distrust and suspicion among peoples whose most vital interests, perhaps whose very lives and those of their children, depend upon their reaching an amicable understanding with each other.

And yet, when viewed from the standpoint of the child of God, instructed in the principles formulated by the Creator to ultimately govern every human relationship, how could the situation be different? How can people whose hearts are seething with distrust of each other be expected to establish anything better than a universal system of aimed and suspicious watchfulness on the part of the powerful and antagonistic powers which at present divide the earth into two camps?

A short time ago a radio program of an educational nature, dealing with the present world-wide feeling of unrest, was being broadcast. The title of the program as announced was approximately as follows: "What causes wars and how may they be prevented?" The four participants in the discussion were scholars of high standing, with letters after their names bearing witness to their attainments.

One of them casually mentioned the fact that on his way to the broadcasting station he had engaged in a conversation with the driver in whose cab he was riding, and had also interviewed, a little earlier, a truck driver who was doing some work for him. Both of these men, said the Professor, seemed to possess intelligence above the average, and gave evidence of taking a great deal of interest in current world affairs, and each of them expressed the same pessimistic view of the present global outlook. Said the taxi driver rather cynically, "Of course we are headed for another world war. Regardless of whether atomic weapons are used or not, in the coming struggle people will still fight, as they always have in the past and probably always will in the future. *You can't change human nature.*" The truckman had earlier given expression to much the same gloomy opinion.

While in the course of the broadcast the Professor, and his colleagues, though analyzing the question more logically and with greater clarity than had the other two, seemingly arrived at the same conclusion regarding the inevitability of wars between nations, and merely confined their discussion to considering methods whereby the disastrous effects of the coming conflict might be minimized and prevented from attaining such world-wide proportions as should end in the destruction of all civilization. One of them contended that while it was doubtless true that human nature could not be changed any more than it was possible for the leopard to change his spots, yet it had been found possible to mitigate the evil effects of man's combativeness. "He said:

"No one can repeal the law of gravitation or induce water to run up hill of its own volition, and not even the cleverest of engineers is able to arrange it so as to cause rain to fall in arid regions where normally there is no rainfall. Nor can he prevent a superabundance abundance of water from at times flooding other areas. But despite this, modern science has been able to devise means of curbing and regulating nature's forces, so that they can be made to serve the interests of the race. A skilled engineer can divert the destructive energies of rivers and floods, and direct their waters into channels through which blessings may flow, by the simple expedient of constructing dams and irrigation ditches that are designed to not only keep flooded rivers within bounds, but also to bring the needed water to barren and arid regions.

"In like manner," he continued, "the quarrelsome propensities and the greedy and selfish impulses of man can be prevented from bringing misery and ruin to the whole community. The problem," he concluded, "created by international, enmities and by the distrust and suspicion that prevails between nations and classes, may be solved just as readily as the engineer is able to transform a barren wilderness into a fertile and blooming Eden, when supplied with the necessary materials, money and labor.

"And so," summarized the Professor, "even though it may be true that the nature of man cannot be altered, yet his destructive proclivities can be held in check by wise statesmanship, and by the conferring upon the statesmen sufficient power and authority to enable them to put into execution the plans they have formulated."

In this somewhat obvious conclusion, the other members of the panel very naturally concurred; but, as one of them rather pertinently pointed out, "The past-history of mankind has furnished rather conclusive evidence that any Utopian plan such as the one mentioned has hitherto been beyond the power of any international tribunal to bring about."

Even though society's engineers have possessed the advantages of twentieth century enlightenment, and with the lessons of history all pointing to the desirability of the adoption of some such course, the baffling fact still remains that the human race is as far off as ever from coming to an agreement upon any plan that would benefit mankind as a whole.

Those favored ones, however, who have been given the knowledge of Present Truth, while they are fully as pessimistic as any of the professors in regard to the establishment of a Utopia through human effort, or of grafting such an order upon the political and economic regimes of the present, yet refuse to allow any such fact to disturb their equanimity. Rather, they assert joyfully that, upon the authority of God's own Word a far more enchanting prospect is presented to the eyes of humanity than that afforded by any Utopia of man's imagining. They are privileged to declare in full assurance of faith that the great Creator is about to set up a world government of a kind undreamed of by even the most optimistic of human philosophers, for it is written that "many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: . . . and he shall judge among many people,

and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up 'a sword, against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Micah 4:2, 3.) Obviously statesmanship that could produce results such as this must come from a source that would never occur to the professors to envisage as being operative in world politics, even from Zion itself. Yet the Word affirms positively that "Out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." - Micah 4:2.

"YOU CAN'T CHANGE HUMAN NATURE"

One wonders 'whether this generally accepted-assertion is really as axiomatic as the professors and others are so ready to claim. Has not the nature of our race already experienced a change some time in the past, or is the course being pursued by the people of earth today, and which is admittedly in full accord with their past history, truly characteristic of the human family, as its Creator intended it to be? Is man by original heritage the poor, blind, self-centered creature that inhabits this planet in the twentieth century A. D.? Can this be the being who was once created in the image and likeness of God?

As we study him today, this crowning achievement of the Creator's work seems to be, in general, a weak irrational creature swayed by a hundred conflicting emotions and narrow prejudices, one whose course in life is chiefly motivated by what he imagines are his own interests and preferences, and characterized by a suspicious distrust of the intentions of others. Is this poor fallen being the one-time lord of creation upon whom was bestowed dominion over all the earth?

Scripture and logic alike rebel at the thought; rather, we are driven to the conclusion that man must have already been changed from what he once was, and, granting that this fact is well established, it follows that still another change is possible in the future. It might be urged, as an extenuating factor on man's behalf, that since the Adamic era, no intelligently directed effort has been made by either earthly potentate or human government to change this poor fallen being into something nobler than that which he is today. Biological scholars fatalistically assert that "man is the creature of his environment," meaning by that term his habitual surroundings and the conditions which govern his life. But they, grant that such things as racial heritage and cultural background are factors in the matter of determining what sort of person he proves to be.

The Scriptural explanation of man's present degraded state is to the reasoning mind, far more convincing than that advanced by any professor of sociology. It informs us that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin and so death, [with its concomitants of physical, mental, and moral unsoundness] passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (Rom. 5:12.) This, however, is not the kind of explanation likely to commend itself to the disciples of "Modernism" who much prefer to regard our race as progressing steadily onward and upward to ever greater heights of achievement; though why its increase in moral and ethical stature has lagged so far behind its skill in multiplying ingenious gadgets, they are rather at a loss to explain. Since the "fall" no attempt on a really comprehensive scale has ever been made to change for the better, either man or his environment. That evil being who has wielded his baneful influence on the fortunes of the race, has made very sure that the great masses subject to his frown have remained blinded to their own true interests.

ISRAEL'S CASE

The laws ordained by Jehovah for the government of the relatively unimportant (speaking from an earthly standpoint) nation of Israel, succeeded, despite the failure of that people to observe them perfectly, in providing us with an example of how the human family could (and will) be bettered and blessed when subjected to the wise and benevolent authority of the only true Ruler. But Israel, even at the peak of its national destiny, was but a small segment of earth's millions, and those millions who are still strangers and foreigners to the Commonwealth of Israel have been for many centuries merely a law unto themselves., (Rom. 2:14.) The example shown by the blessed Nazarene and those faithful ones who followed in his steps 'have, thank God, exercised a most potent influence upon the western world; tending to arrest, in some measure, the headlong descent of civilization down the broad road to destruction; but with the advent of the so-called "Age of Rationalism," the "Modernists" have largely discarded the only Book which contains the record of his inspired teaching; and with the Bible went those standards of conduct which formed the basis of those enlightened conceptions of human behavior which, when put into practice even to a very limited extent, have elevated man above the level of the beast.

But what, we may with propriety inquire of the proponents of evolution, has happened to "that inherent genius for surmounting every obstacle and making himself master of every situation," which they have asserted to be man's special endowment? Does the present obvious impotence of the nations to extricate themselves from the impasse into which they have been led by their own jealous rivalries and to restore something like real peace to the earth, lend support to the claim that the race is advancing to the heights of achievement they had predicted for it? "*Homo Sapiens*" -- "the wise one" -- is the term applied to man by biologists to distinguish him from the lower animals. Yet it must be confessed that just now the very apes themselves might be excused for laughing at the pompous designation, when they notice the manner in which "the wise one" is proving his right to the title.

The fact is becoming daily more apparent that were it not for that divine intervention in human affairs that the Scriptures assure us is surely coming, the same "*Homo Sapiens*" would be in grave danger of putting an end to both himself and his planet by the use of a few of those atomic forces he is trifling with. But praise be to the Eternal, Invisible One, whose ways are as much higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth, no such catastrophe will be permitted. His majestic words recorded in Job 38:11 may again be addressed, this time to the raging sea of humanity: "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and 'here shall thy proud waves be stayed.

How plainly manifest it is, that this piteous unfortunate human, torn by his own passions and follies, and exploited by "wicked spirits in the heavenlies" (Eph. 6:12) for their own evil purposes, is far indeed removed from that majestic creature who was once made ruler over all the earth. The natural man, as he stands today, even the most highly developed of his species, is but a pale, weak caricature of his first ancestor, that glorious being made in his Creator's image and likeness.

However mistaken the professors and those of like mind who assert the impossibility of any change in human nature taking place, it must be admitted that their conclusions as to the inevitability of international wars, while the human heart remains in its present unregenerate condition, are only too well founded. One of the greatest lessons that through the ages mankind is being taught is that there can be no true peace between man and his neighbor until the all important, first essential has been fulfilled of restoring peace and at-one-ment between God and his human children. And that blessed condition can be brought about only in the Heavenly Father's own way, namely through the Mediatorial work of the Kingdom of Messiah. Under that

glorious regime we have the assurance that men's hearts will indeed be changed despite the gloomy foreboding of all the professors; for it is written in words primarily addressed to Israel but ultimately to be extended to take in the willing and . obedient of all mankind: "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in. their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer. 31:33.) May the blessed day soon dawn when the Lord's spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh.

- John R. Hughes

Recently Deceased

Mrs. W. Evans, Neath, Glam., S. Wales-(July).
Mr. James Henry, Owen Sound, Ont. - (January).
Mr. M. W. Korytkowski, Forestville, Conn. - (January).
Mrs. Sarah Paton, Staten Island, N. Y. - (December).
Mr. A. Poulas, Washington, D. C. - (January).
Mrs. Hattie Sargent, Chicago, Ill. - (January).

Paul to Philemon

A MODEL LETTER EXAMINED PART I

"Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow worker, and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow- soldier, and to the Church in thy house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." - Philemon 1-4.

BY MEANS of the brief moment of a single epistle, divided into only twenty-five short verses, two very lovable characters enter our Christian lives with their transforming fellowship. Portrayed by the vivid pen of the Apostle Paul, "a prisoner of Jesus Christ," they convey valuable lessons in practical Christianity. In its very opening phrase the heart of the reader is appealed to. In five of his preserved epistles the writer calls himself "an apostle"; twice he appears without any designation, and once as "a servant of Jesus Christ"; but now that the heart of Brother Philemon may be prepared for a kindly reception of his proposal, Paul reminds him of his liberty forfeited that the name of his beloved Master may be heralded farther afield.

To some it has seemed strange that an epistle regarding an entirely private matter should have found a place in the sacred archives, especially since it makes no contribution to any creed or theological discussion. It has, however, brought great blessings to those who are able to appreciate it, blessings along most important lines. In it there is a revelation of the power of unselfish love (a thing utterly unknown to most minds of that, and this, day) , uniting on one plane of Christian citizenship two who under the dying order of the old world were at two opposite social poles. One hundred and forty-four thousand examples of such love, scattered over nineteen hundred years, have left the world still calling the basest of selfishness by that sacred name. Genuine love is divine. All counterfeits are crude selfishness.

CHURCH'S PRESENT MISSION NOT SOCIAL REFORM

Light is thrown on the Christian attitude toward social evils, largely ignoring them, correcting only by example. The letter dealing with a single episode in connection with the slavery problem, is a supreme manifestation of refined courtesy, delicate subtleties and tender consideration. A famous Roman letterwriter of a generation later, the younger Pliny, has left us an example of the very best the world can produce in dealing with this same subject. A comparison of his very fine letter with this demonstration of the excellence attained under the inspiration of the spirit of Christ, will be of interest and profit. We quote as translated in the "Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges":

"Your freedman, who so greatly displeased you, as you told me, has come to me, fallen at my feet, and clung to them as if they were your own; he wept much, begged much, was much silent too, and in brief guaranteed to me his penitence. I think him really reformed, for he feels that he has sinned. You are angry, as I know; justly angry, as I also know but clemency wins its highest praise when the reasons for anger are most just. You have loved the man, and I hope you will yet love him again; in the interval [interim] you are only asked to let yourself be brought to forgive. You will be quite free to be angry again if he deserves it; and this will have the more excuse if now you yield. Allow something for his youth, something for his tears, something for your own indulgence [of him]; do not put him to torture, or you may torture yourself too. For tortured you are when you, kindest of men, are angry. I fear I may seem rather to insist than entreat, if I join my prayers to his. But I will join them, the more fully and without reserve as I chide him sharply and severely, adding a stern warning that I could never beg him off again. This far *him*, for I had to frighten him; but I take another tone with *you!* Perhaps I shall entreat again, and win again; so the case is one in which I may properly entreat, and you may properly bestow. Farewell."

The Apostle's letter reveals spontaneous warmth, graceful ingenuity, even some playfulness, and a natural courtesy that rises far above what is usually termed tact -- in all of these outmoding the famous Pliny. One wonders at the talent that could on the same day write both the profound and far-reaching philosophy of the letter to the Colossian brethren and this model of simple grace, kindness, and exquisite tenderness. This accomplishment is comparable to thinking of Michelangelo as envisioning his colossal Moses and a dainty cupid in the same moment of inspiration. The perfection of this letter leaves one with a feeling not merely of inspiration, but that the guiding hand of the One who never errs may be discerned in every pen stroke.

The outline of the letter is too apparent to need dwelling upon, from the greetings of the first verses to the greetings and benediction with which it closes, turning in between to matters of personal interest and graceful compliments to Philemon, that will -- if such manipulations are necessary -- soften his heart for the reception of his proposal. The central figures of this "short, short-story" are Philemon--an elder of the Colossian ecclesia and a slave owner; and Onesimus -- a run away slave who is returning to his master in a new role.

SANCTIFIED REASONING

Jewish hatred by its treachery brought the great Apostle to Caesar's power and imprisonment. In designating himself as "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ," he properly ignores Caesar as a negligible second cause. Any manacles he wore were as if of gold, precious emblems of servitude to his heavenly Bridegroom, ornaments placed on his wrists by his glorified Lord. What to others would have been a disgrace were to him a "grace." (Phil. 1:7.) Like other of the Apostles he rejoices that he *is "counted worthy"* to suffer for Christ's sake. (Acts 5:41.) Sustained by the consciousness that no harm can be done the ambassador of the King of kings, pharisees,

governors, stewards, Caesar himself, are to faith's inspired vision mere pawns on life's checkered board, part of the necessary equipment that all things may work together for good. With assurance he can say, "None of these things move me," for neither they nor anything else can "separate him from God's love."

Commentators are under the impression that Philemon was a man of considerable wealth, because one of the salutations of the letter is to the Church in his house. They seem to have forgotten that there is no evidence of any church edifice until near the end of the second century; and that "where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20. See also Rom. 16:3, 5; Col. 4:15.) Neither would the fact that Philemon was a slaveholder indicate anything as to his social standing, for in a day when slaves vastly outnumbered the free, they were found in most homes.

Another basis on which commentators infer Philemon to have been a wealthy brother is that he was able to help the poor and entertain traveling brethren who came his way. This reasoning is without force in view of the fact that the spirit of Christianity leads to the dividing of a crust with one who is in need, and also that those who travel find their joy in the fellowship thus furnished regardless of the limitations of either household appointments or table fare.

There is no indication as to how long Onesimus had been absent from Philemon's household; but if prior to his leaving, Philemon had received the truth into his heart and began to witness for his Master, it is then doubly interesting to note that instead of chiding him for not having converted Onesimus to his views, the Apostle commends him by calling him "our dear fellow-laborer." Also there is here nothing of the spirit that makes a sharp distinction between laity and clergy, the spirit found in those who in later centuries claimed to sit as the Apostle's successors. Forgetting his special place of honor as an apostle, this humble servant in the harvest field places himself on Philemon's level, demonstrating that indeed "all ye are brethren," all equally acceptable to the Master of the harvest. Between the turning of the sod and the gathering of the wheat into the barn a great variety of tasks are assigned. Each servant faithful to the end is an honored one, some day to hear the welcome, "Well done good and faithful servant." The one who removed the first shovel full of soil for the construction of the Cologne Cathedral performed a task as necessary for the completion of that work as the person who a thousand years later did actually give it the finishing touch. The part which the little known Philemon had in the making of the Bride ready for the wedding day is as certainly a part of "that which every joint supplieth," as the more exalted and better known labors of the beloved Apostle. This latter's flaming torch gave the same brand of light as the tiny taper of Philemon. The difference was in the diameter of the circle over which their illumination extended. Paul was not afflicted with the vulgar tendency of thinking little of the modest service of obscure people. Nor did any brother receive a front seat from his hand because of his gold ring. Whether or not Philemon was a wealthy brother, we may be sure did not make the difference to Paul that it seems to make to some commentators.

Not the amount of his earthly treasure, but his faith's fulness in laying up treasure where thieves do not break through and steal, is what interests such as 'the Apostle. The letter is written that a little more of that treasure may be laid up for Philemon and Onesimus, and for us.

The two, Apphia and Archippus, the latter of whom the battle-worn warrior labels as a "fellow soldier" (though quite possibly he was little more than a raw recruit), are generally supposed to be the wife and son of Philemon. Paul's Christian attitude, contrasting with that of the world in general, is shown not only in his acceptance of the young soldier as a "fellow soldier," but equally by his being able to call Apphia "our sister." The great gulf that the custom of that day had set between various races, the sexes, and the divergent planes of society, had for him been effectually

filled by the social upheaval that resulted from the death of Christ. The literal earthquake of that day was the precursor of a vastly more effective one that was to shake the social order of earth.

The thought is not even suggested by Paul that the Church at Colosse might not accept Philemon. He introduces this returned- slave to them as "one of yourselves." Two thousand years have passed without completing the work of educating all who call themselves Christians in the lesson of Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." There has been a greater modification of the *world's* standards than one would have anticipated; as well, as, in some instances, less modification in the Christian home than one has a right to expect.

MODEL GREETINGS

Paul finds no reason to alter the form of his accustomed greetings: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." To take anything from that greeting would be to deprive Philemon of that which is his due as a Christian brother. It is so all comprehensive that nothing can be added to it. "Grace" includes salvation from its initial to its final step; and in his well wishing it is accompanied by "peace," as it must always be in every life where there is the grace of God. "The Kingdom of God ... is righteousness and peace and joy in the holy spirit." (Rom. 14:17.) Eternity can offer no more.

Grace is, undeserved favor, unselfishly bestowed, no ulterior motive marring the process; and when God is the giver, it is unrequited, so far as man is concerned, for who has anything to give in return? Should there have been some few Christians through the Age who have "done all that was commanded them," even these would still be "unprofitable servants," having nothing more to claim than that they have done "that which was their duty to do." - Luke 17:10.

There are interesting suggestions in the literal meanings of the two words: grace, "what causes leaping for joy"; and peace, "what brings into unity." Unity cannot long continue where peace does not reign in the individual hearts, and therefore in the affairs of the congregation; but how easy unity and peace are made where the hearts of the individuals are entirely set on receiving in full measure "the grace of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ." The very thought does indeed cause every responsive heart to "leap with joy."

The Apostle in this salutation combines the salutations of East and West. Grace is a salutation borrowed from the peoples of the West, and peace is the Eastern salutation, frequently found on the lips of our Master, and very practically useful on the trips of travelers where the lanes of commerce were often infested with bandits.

Grace is love in action to those in some respect below the well-wisher. Wishing grace to another, places upon one the obligation of cooperating to secure it. From his fulness, we have all received, grace upon grace (John 1:16); and the evidence of our worthiness to have received this grace is shown by the faithfulness with which we both pray and act, that the peace others enjoy may never be disturbed but, rather, increased by our association. The grace of forgiveness when exercised by God gives peace with God. With forgiveness already granted, the grace of "strength sufficient for every time of need" gives the peace of God, the peace and joy of knowing his will and the peace and joy of full resignation to it. Each in its fulness a l with permanency can be experienced only "in his presence." The genuineness of our being "seated together in heavenly places with him" is therefore indicated by the quality of the peace manifested and diffused by us "in every place."

It is not the circumstances of the various individuals that determine the nature of their peace, but their faithfulness in casting all their burdens on the Lord, their finding full repose in him, and thus experiencing the Sabbath rest that is the heritage of every true saint. In their fellowshiping, however much natures differ, the discords can all be resolved into perfect harmony by God's grace. The mountain torrent and the pasture rill both find their end in an unruffled crystal pool, there to reflect the beauties of God's character as revealed in his handiwork.

"PEACE, SWEET PEACE, THE GIFT OF GOD'S LOVE"

It is the favored lot of every child of the God of all comfort to carry grace and peace with him for the blessing of all he contacts. When therefore a brother finds discord marring all his associations, he should well consider whether he has found it or brought it. Most assuredly it should surprise him if he is not able to carry enough of the spirit of the Master into his associations so that peace will often result. His presence should bring the presence of the Master and some measure of his spirit into every assembly.

Recent storms off the eastern coast of America are reported to have threatened the health of some communities because of stirring up wrecks that lay on the ocean bed, wrecks that were sent there by recent warfare. A quiet sea would have left them there to be forgotten. Oil on troubled waters is a most effective agency for the important matter of keeping a dead past buried. Diligent guard should be kept "lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby *many be defiled.*" (Heb. 12:15.) "Let the peace of God garrison your hearts." - Col. 3:15.

The elements of discord are found in every fallen human heart, both because of evil tendencies and the certainty of imperfect performance. If then the salutation of peace is to be successful on our lips, there must be a guard set by filling the heart with the holy spirit in overflowing measure; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Fill the heart with the treasures of wisdom from above, one of the primary characteristics of which is peace, and we will be found, ambassadors of peace.

There are exceptions. *"If Possible*, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, t will repay, says the Lord. No, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink, for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head *Do not be overcome by evil*, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:19, 20.) One can at least always make sure that his spirit is contrary to the spirit of the flesh, manifested in contention and strife; but must recognize that even these are sometimes actually an evidence of an over-zeal in our brethren for some point that is very precious to the contentious one, who in *his eagerness to bless others* is going beyond his rights by trying to force his views upon them. The salutation of "peace" might only stir him up a little more, but a better example of it in our words and conduct may inspire him to stretch every nerve in an endeavor to attain a filling of it in his own heart. Such a display might convince him that there is still something of the "grace of God" to be secured, and that it is more important than un-lived truth.

PEACE, FELLOWSHIP'S GUARDIAN

Apparently Greeks and Jews and barbarians and Cythians, bond and free, were having their difficulties getting along peacefully in Colosse, though all were there by God's choosing and all were "holy and beloved." What they--needed was "tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, forgiving one another ... even as Christ forgave

them"; but above all they must "put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." Even there they must not stop; but, must "let the peace of God rule in their hearts [the very thing] to which they had been called -- in *a unified body*; and be thankful." (Col. 3:11-15.) Of course any one will be thankful to have the peace of God ruling in his heart and home.

Anxiety is a malady for which some cure must be found, for there is danger not only of the disease spreading into every avenue of an individual's life, but it is contagious, and others may be condemned to many hours of suffering and even the losing of the eternal joys offered them "at his right hand." "Have *no anxiety about anything*, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep [guard] your heart and mind in Christ Jesus." - Phil. 4:6, 7. See also Gal. 5:22; Rom. 14:17; Isa. 26:3; Psalm 119:165.

"Like a river glorious is God's perfect peace,
Over all victorious in its glad increase.
Perfect; yet it floweth *fuller* every day;
Perfect; yet it groweth *deeper* all the way.
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are truly blest,
Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

"Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,
Neverfoe can follow, never traitor stand;
Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care,
Not a blast of hurry toucheth spirit there.
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are truly blest,
Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.

"Every joy or trial cometh from above,
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of love.
We may trust Him solely, all for us to do;
They who trust Him wholly, find Him wholly true.
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are truly blest,
Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest."

- P. E. Thomson.

The Question Box

Matthew 25:1-13

Question

Why is the Bride not mentioned in the Parable of the Ten Virgins? - Matt. 25:1-13.

Answer:

There are some who believe that the Bride is mentioned. According to one noted expositor the scene of the parable does not refer to the coming of the Bridegroom to receive his Bride, but to his return to his home with his Bride. Others similarly hold. Indeed some of the later translations supplement the text "to meet the Bridegroom and the Bride." In Cranmer's Bible the translation is "to mete the brydgrome (and the bryde)." The supplement, however, is wanting in the oldest manuscripts, -and is rejected by the great body of authorities. It was doubtless an early note in explanation (based on what we think was a misconception) of the scene. Had the Bride been mentioned, considerable interest would have been shown in her; the parable would have required modification in a number of important respects. The virgins would have gone to meet her and the lesson of the parable would have been a different one. Looking beyond the parable to the great reality represented, we have little difficulty in understanding it to picture Christ's return to the earth for his Bride, and the condition of the five wise virgins,, to teach the proper heart attitude of the prospective members of the Bride class, as they make haste to welcome him.

In the conviction then that the Bride is not mentioned, we return to the question: "Why is she not mentioned in this parable?" Two reasons suggest themselves:

- (1) At the time our Lord spoke his parables the truth that the Gospel-Age Church was to be related to him as a bride to a husband had not been revealed.
- (2) Even if the relationship of the Church to Christ as Bride to Husband had been taught and had become well understood, it would have detracted from the Master's main lesson in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, to have mentioned her there.

Without doubt the Bridegroom of 'this parable represents our Lord. He is also the King's Son for whom, in the parable of the Marriage Feast (Matt. 22:2), the King (Jehovah himself) has prepared a nuptial feast at his house. But neither in that parable nor in this one is the Bride mentioned -- apparently for identical reasons.

As a matter of fact, nowhere in the Synoptic Gospels, that is to say, in the Gospels by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is the Bride of Christ mentioned. And even in the Gospel by John the Bride mentioned by the Baptist in John 3:28, 29 was the Jewish Church or nation, not the Gospel-Age Church. The figure of the Bridegroom had been used in the Old Testament of Jehovah and his relationship to Israel. When Christ came, he came as the Father's representative, to claim this Jewish Church for his own. "And his own," we read, "received him not." - John 1:11.

This, indeed, was the first significance of our Lord's parable of the bride-chamber, although doubtless there was a deeper meaning in it (a reference to the Gospel-Age Church) which neither the disciples of the Pharisees nor the disciples of the Baptist could grasp. (Matt. 9:14, 15.) *

* For a fuller discussion of this parable and the two related to it, see "Herald" Dec. 1946, pages 183-187.

But in the days of our Lord's flesh there was no spirit-begotten Church to whom he could be betrothed. Not until after he had given his life for her sake; not until he had been raised from the dead by the Father's power; not until he had ascended on high, there, at the Father's right hand, to appear in his presence on her behalf; not until the waiting followers of Jesus received the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost, was there even the nucleus of a Church to whom, as a spirit-being, he could be betrothed. Then indeed, it was on the day of Pentecost when the holy spirit was given, that our heavenly Bridegroom' betrothed the Gospel Church to himself in love.

To the question as to why the Bride is not mentioned in the Parable of the Ten Virgins our first answer, then, must be that it would have anticipated a truth not expounded until after our Lord's ascension. That it *was* taught afterwards, of course, there is abundant testimony. - Eph. 5:25, 27; Rev. 19:7; 21:2; 22:17.

We come now to our second reason as to why no mention is made of the Bride. The outstanding lesson of the parable would have been obscured. What is that outstanding lesson? Surely it is the lesson of readiness; of being always in a condition of training; of thoroughness in the preparation of our hearts and lives. If we are not ready now, we should lose no time in getting ready; if we are now ready, we must so order our lives as to remain in a constant state of readiness. This is the condition which did characterize the five wise virgins and which is to characterize the prospective members of Christ's Bride.

One other point is worthy of notice: While the lesson of readiness was of value to the disciples who heard this parable fall from the Master's lips, and while it has doubtless served to strengthen others of the household of faith during the centuries which have since unrolled, it comes with special force and has its full significance to those of the consecrated who are looking for the Bridegroom when, in the Father's Plan the time for that glorious event becomes due. For it is "then" (Matt. 25:1) -- in the time of our Lord's Parousia, in the great decisive day when the Lord reckons with his servants (Matt. 24:45-51), that this parable has its *prophetic* application. "Then" the "Kingdom of heaven" *is not merely to be compared with* the conduct of the ten virgins, but *it shall become like* those virgins. - See also Matt. 6:8; Matt. 7:26; Matt. 13:24; Matt. 18:23 and Matt. 22:2.

In "Scripture Studies," Vol. III, pages C91, C94, Brother Russell suggests a possible relationship which this parable may have to the Miller movement, a suggestion which, apparently, he took from Brother Paton. (See *Reprints*, - R38-R41.) So far as we are aware he held these views to the end of his life. However, he did not do so dogmatically. With him they were only his and others "conclusions," which might or might not prove true. Speaking of those who shared these views with him he wrote: "Whether all of their conclusions may be accepted or not, they are at least worthy of consideration, inasmuch as they furnish a new interpretation of some Scriptures not previously understood. *Whether they have the times and seasons properly divided is another matter, upon which each individual Christian should use his own judgment.*" - *Reprints*, R5523.

Elsewhere he wrote: "The oil, or the spirit of consecration, and its attendant light cannot be communicated from one virgin to another. Each for himself must be filled, with the spirit; each must get his own supply of this oil (the Truth, and its spirit of consecration and holiness); and the cost is considerable in the way of self-denial and misrepresentation and fiery trial." (S. S. Vol. III, page C91.) And again: "The fruits and graces of the holy spirit cannot be had for the asking; they must be bought in the market of experience--they are of gradual growth, and cost painstaking care of words and thoughts and doings. It is because these fruits of the spirit are so difficult of attainment and cost such a price of self-sacrifice and sacrifice of worldly interests -- that they are valuable in the Lord's sight." (*Reprints*, R3868.) And again: "Experience in the great time. of

trouble will be the market in which the foolish virgins will purchase their oil." - S. S. Vol. III, page C94.

"Our lamps are trimmed and burning,
On robes are white and clean,
We've tarried for the Bridegroom,
And now we'll enter in,
We know we've nothing worthy
That we can call our own --
The light, the all, the robes we wear,
Are all from Him alone.

"We see the marriage splendor,
Within the open door;
We know that those who enter
Are blest forevermore;
We see the King, more lovely
Than all the sons of men;
We haste because that door, once shut
Will never ope again."

- P. L Read.

Diligence

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." - Prov. 4:23.

Those of us who are striving to attain victory in the race set before us, realize the winning of a race means effort-enthusiastic effort, diligent effort prompted by deep-rooted heart convictions. Thus our diligence is to be exercised within ourselves if we would be used by the Lord in helping others. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23.) In this text Solomon uses the Hebrew word *mishmar* which refers to a guard, a deposit, a usage, an example, watch, prison, ward. Cook translates this: "Above all keeping, keep thine heart." Rotherham and Leeser translate it, "Above all that must be guarded, keep thine heart."

The outflowing of heart promptings may be likened to the flow of water from a spring. It is our desire to keep this overflow pure, healthful, refreshing. The springs of the East, like their water wells, were jealously guarded. A stone was frequently rolled across the entrance and the opening closed. A closed spring was called a sealed spring and thus became a type of all that must be most diligently guarded. The inner thoughts, the thoughts of the heart, are thus like a spring of water which must be kept pure to be effectively used by our Lord. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth." (Col. 3:5.) "For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." - Gal. 5:24.

But keeping the heart implies more than physical action. It means the putting on the mind or will of Christ in our faithful performance of the will of the Father. The human will has a natural tendency downward. The mind of Christ lifts us to the better things we seek. The Scriptures admonish us that this human tendency must be mortified, deadened, killed. In proportion as we heed the teachings of our Lord, we grow nearer to God and his likeness. We become more meek, more gentle, ever increasing in the fruits of the holy spirit and in the character-likeness of Jesus our Messiah and Example. As we apply the teachings of divine love we find our efforts assailed by weakness of the flesh and natural human desires which would thwart our holy and pure efforts, intentions, and ambitions. Mental and spiritual vigilance, diligent, continuous effort is required if success is to be attained. The sooner we comprehend this great truth, the sooner we overcome our self-satisfied complacency, the better it will be for us. Complacency is entirely too common in these last days.

Perhaps this is because we wrestle not against flesh and blood alone, but against the devil himself. (Eph. 6:11, 12.) "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. 5:8.) Therefore, "When thou goest with thine adversary before the magistrate-give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him." (Luke 15:58.) Satan is the accuser of the brethren. (Rev. 12:10.) This expression, "give diligence," is exceedingly old. It is not a Latinism, but is found in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri of the second century before Christ. It means to work hard, to do your best. Rotherham translates this text, "Take pains to get a release from him." We know, this can be done through the grace given us by our Lord.

Manifestly the Lord's people will occupy different places in the Body of Christ. We differ in opportunity, in ability, in understanding. But whether we are a Thomas, a Peter, a Paul, or a John, in our ministry to others we are urged to exercise simplicity, diligence, cheerfulness. (Rom. 12:8.) The sixth to the tenth verses of the twelfth chapter of Romans are well worth our study in this connection. Even translators differ in their understanding of the Greek. Rotherham says, "He that

ruleth with diligence," while the Syriac reads, "The presider [or the one standing at the head] with dexterity."

The word used for diligent in the Greek is *ergasia*. The same word is used in 2 Cor. 8:7 and is translated by Bullinger: "In all diligence or in all carefulness." Rotherham gives us, "in all earnestness," but the Diaglott is still different: "But as you abound in everything, in faith, and in the Word, and in knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that you abound in this free gift also" - the gift of our all to the service of our God. All brothers and sisters in Christ are designated as leaders in some capacity. We are glad to observe so many of them are keeping their lamps trimmed and burning. (Matt. 25.) Let us not bury our talent.

In Hebrews the Apostle Paul had been speaking to the Church as a whole, but in Heb. 6:11 he urges each one individually to diligently seek the full assurance of faith and hope that they should inherit the promises. The Syriac reads: "And we desire, that each one of you may show this same activity, for the completion of your hope." The warning is that after accepting Jesus as our Messiah, if we go back to the Mosaic Law and Judaism, we will cut ourselves off (Gal. 5:4), as there is no more Messiah to be looked for. By rejecting our Lord we put him to open shame; thus Paul's warning remains as a solemn admonition to all who profess to believe.

"Provide in your faith, honesty, virtue, purity." (2 Pet. 1:5.) *If* you have God's gifts, prove you have them by using them. "Yea, and for this reason," God began his good work in us. We must build on, "contributing all diligence." It is only a little we can do at best. It is only by diligent culture, Christian graces can grow. It is in this diligence we make our offering, while God works in us to both will and do 'his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13.) Thus it is that God's gift of faith must be evidenced by our fruits of faith. Energy, diligence must be exhibited in the life of the consecrated. When this has the support of understanding we know we are 'not of the sleepy virgin class because our talents are wisely used. "In your faith exercise virtue and in your virtue knowledge."

"Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence" because, by the constant possession and increase of God's graces we become more fruitful. Our increase in diligent zeal may be attributed to our intelligent use of the graces God has already given. As we increase in knowledge and apply our hearts to God's beneficent plans and purposes, we will be able to produce greater fruitage. Our calling and election must be made sure. If we neglect the conditions we will lose the prize. The Diaglott rendering of 2 Pet. 1:10 is, "More earnestly endeavor to make your calling and election sure," while the Syriac reads, "be exceedingly diligent." Christians may *stumble*, but Peter desires to keep them from *falling*.

Again we have the admonition by the Apostle Jude, who was a half-uncle of our Lord and a full brother of Salome the mother of James and John. Dr. Cook translates Jude 3, "Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you and exhort you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." In this case the word diligence is used to translate the Greek word *spoude*, meaning dispatch, eagerness, earnestness, carefulness, diligence, instant, haste. Diligence here indicates that the writer's chief care was to warn the Church against false teachers. The Diaglott gives it, "making all haste," while the Syriac says, "I take all pains to write."

To earnestly contend for the faith conveys the thought of enthusiastic diligence. Stress should be laid on our sincerity, our honesty in being instant in service, both in season and out of season to us. We are to serve those needing us, not only when it is convenient, but also at times when it puts us to a lot of trouble. At all times we are to defend the truth diligently and earnestly as given us by the Scriptures. Our contending is to be *for* the faith and not *about* the faith. The implication is that those who are

contentious will never attain the highcalling because of their wrong activity. Their attitude indicates a conceited and selfish condition of heart. They think more of their own opinion than they do of the warnings of the Word of God. The diligent, earnest contention which our Father will approve is prompted by a desire to have whatever the Scriptures teach, irrespective of preconceived ideas of personal preference. In all of our activities for the truth we should diligently manifest the fruits of the holy spirit of Christ-gentleness, brotherly kindness, spiritual understanding, godly love and affection for those who are struggling to master self and progress in the narrow way of righteousness.

Again we have the urge to prompt, intense effort in 2 Tim. 4:9. Paul was nearing the end of his earthly ministry. He needed the prompt assistance of Timothy. He wrote, "Do thy diligence to come unto me." How strange we should ever put off for some more convenient time, any service we can render to any of the Lord's people in assisting the efficiency of their ministry. The Concordant translation of this text reads, "Endeavor to :come to me quickly." The Syriac gives us, "Exert thyself to come quickly." The Diaglott reads, "Do thy best to come to me soon."

All of this means constructive action, prompt action with the object of bringing praise to our God and a blessing to his people. The service of some is motivated by fear. With some it is superstition.

The zeal of some is more or less ephemeral, while others are deceptive in presenting false teachings. The true servant of the Most High serves because of heart conviction and because of devout, loving loyalty. He serves in the sincere hope that he may be pleasing to his Lord irrespective of reward. That there is a reward is beyond question, but we do not love him because of reward. We love him because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19.) We realize our Lord's work began first in ourselves, and he will finish that work.

Thus we follow our Lord's example in extending help to others. One of our most precious privileges in diligent helpfulness is that of extending a helping hand to those of like precious faith in their efforts to be diligent in service. Faith, fortitude, and knowledge prepare God's people to have patience with every effort put forth by others, irrespective of how weak they may be. Diligent patience is required in dealing with the poor, blinded world. Diligent, tactful patience is required in helping "babes in Christ," in the task of encouraging the slow and the stupid, the excitable and the blundering, the over-confident and the skeptical. The worldly-minded and many of the Lord's consecrated are lacking in faith, fortitude and spiritual knowledge. They fall ready prey to unrest, fatigue and the wrong interpretation of the plain statements of Scripture.

All of this leads us back again to our own personal need. Let us, be diligent in our devout. services. Let us be diligent, constant, in controlling the use of our loving, reverent service for our Father. Let us be diligent in bringing our all into cheerful, loving conformity to his will -- diligent fervency of spirit. Let us remember facts. No race, no battle will ever be won without diligent, enthusiastic effort. It costs something and the child of God must pay the price. If there is no cross there will be no crown. Piety and goodness spring from appreciative, grateful hearts who spontaneously delight in meditation upon God's precepts and promises. In secret communion with our God we offer our prayers and our praise for every opportunity to serve him, to help our brethren, to let the light of our spiritual understanding shine forth in a world of perplexity and doubt.

At best we are but dust. When we have done all we can. do, we find the only value in our effort is that supplied by our Lord. We do not dare trust our own righteousness. By faith we fold about us the ample robe of Christ's righteousness and, with constant diligence, work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that holiness in service without which no man shall see the Lord. (Heb. 12:14.) Let, us be diligent.

- C. G. Reynolds.

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren:

I have been going through dark waters, and probably far too much occupied in looking at the waves, as was Peter, to keep in mind the "like afflictions that are being accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." (1 Peter 5:9.) One of the special mercies of God our Father is that we have but one day at a time to live, and if we could only take him at his word, and literally "take no, thought for the morrow," how happy we would be! This thought reminds me of a poem written by one of the Lord's own, which I learned over forty years ago. I will try to recite it, by memory; so it may not be quite verbatim:

This world is a scene of sin and strife,
And its trials I must share;
But mine is a sweet and happy life,
With a Father's love and care.

I only need to be clothed and fed,
And my wants are but few and small;
And the Lord who loveth me hath said,
My Father knows them all.

Let others barn and storehouse build,
And about tomorrow weep;
Each hungry raven's mouth is filled,
Though they neither sow nor reap.

And never a care need cloud my brow,
Nor a tear mine eye bedim;
For ray Father's care is o'er me now,
And my. needs are known to Him.

Though long be my absent Master's stay,
And far be my heavenly home,
I am called to live from day to day,
In the hope that He shall come.

With artless ease this grace to show,
Mid worry and strife and din,
Who hath taught me how the lilies grow
Though they neither toil nor spin.

Thus simply, O Lord, would I trust in Thee,
Till the days of trust are o'er;
One word from Thy lips is more to me
Than a miser's hoarded store.

And when Thou art pleased my faith to try,
And when weakness fain would yield,
O tell me again of the raven's cry,
And the lilies of the field.

- *William Blaine.*

If we only could remember the good things; but alas, oftentimes we find ourselves remembering Egypt and its onions, leeks, and garlic, and forgetting that good, land wherein are the grapes of Eschol and every other pleasant fruit. Then we have to look up into his face and say with Isaiah of old, "O Lord why hast Thou made us to err from Thy ways?" (Isa. 63:17.) But then, alas! we refuse to believe that the great Alchemist can bring good out of evil. "Where sin abounds," there "grace much more abounds," and thus is he glorified. Well, we will soon be over there, so let the language of our hearts be, "I'm getting ready to move."

From your wandering brother,

Dear Brethren:

I am very pleased indeed to receive your card of January 11. How happy you made me in granting a subscription to the "Herald." Its regular visits will surely be a spiritual blessing to our little family. I have seen but one copy of your journal, but it was just enough to give me the conviction that the "Herald" is really standing on the foundation of the Word of God only. No kind of extraordinary claims of any organization, only the Truth, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And that is what I like so very much. Thank you for the subscription. You may be sure you are supplying our greatest need by sending the "Herald," and any printed matter on the Word of 'God. Reading the Bible we forget our physical hunger.

You kindly ask about our circumstances. Well, I hardly dare to write you anything about our needs, for I am ashamed to 'give my writing the character of begging. The material side of life is a catastrophic one over here. Taking your inquiry as the Lord's providence, I shall give you a vivid picture of our circumstances.

May I introduce myself first. I am 29 years of age, married, and an art-painter and commercial artist by profession. My knowledge of languages I received at school, and by experience during my prison time in the British camps. You may ask how it is that a Bible Student was a soldier. Let me tell you. But you mustnot forget that I live in Germany. When Hitler became "Reichskanzler" I was a youth of 13. I was brought up in a Christian and peace-loving family, but a very great part of our education was taken over by the state. Even in school we learned marching and shouting "Heil Hitler." We had to be Teutons and not believe in a so called Jewish religion. So I grow up, and when 17 I intended to study art, but the Nazi state told me, No studies without having two years of military service first. As I desired to become an artist, and knowing the state very intolerant, I had to serve my two years. In September, 1939, when I was glad to return, the terrible war broke out. I had to remain in uniform. I was fortunate never to come into the front line, and never to be in the situation to take arms against my brethren of other nations. In the occupied countries I saw the misery and distress caused by the war, and I was fully aware of the crime of war. Therefore in 1944 I was no longer silent. I was sentenced by a military court, and was surely to be shot, and was saved only by deserting my prison, together with my guardian. Under many terrible dangers I managed to get into a British prison, after three, weeks.

I am most thankful to the Lord for the following two years behind barbed wire. There I got in touch with real Christians in general, with Bible Students, and I found the Lord himself. I can assure you that it was the beginning of my happiness.

Being released in 1946 I returned to my ruined hometown in the famous Ruhr district. But the Lord gave me sufficient of his power to stand all hardness of life. I married in 1947, and we, my

wife, little son of 7 months, and my mother of 68, are living in a flat of three rooms. One of these rooms is serving as bedroom for my mother, a living room, and my studio. Our circumstances in the way of food and clothes are the worst you can imagine. We are all wearing the shoes we had before the war. My only suit is one I had when a youth of 16. The prices are so terribly high that we can hardly buy our scarcerationed food, not to speak of clothes. The food situation was even worse before the currency reform. We then had scarcely any potatoes. The bread was made of maize only. We felt like poultry -- always hungry. Now we have sufficient bread and potatoes, at least. But of all other foods we are badly in need. We have seen no pork since 1939, no lard, bacon, cocoa, tea, chocolate. These things we hardly remember. We are allowed one cubic inch of fat per month. . . . Since the currency reform there is -a lack of money everywhere; therefore my clients are very slow in giving orders for any work. This causes a very small income for our family.

So I would be very glad if you could help us in any way-any kind of food. . . . Dear brethren, please do not think us impudent or obtrusive. I am really ashamed to write you such a letter; but this is the truth regarding our condition.

The most important thing you can do for us is to pray for a better future and for peace. We shall also pray for you. Looking forward to your reply with pleasant anticipation, and with our best wishes and warm Christian love,

Your brother by His grace,
K. G. S. -- Germany.