

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXXII December, 1949 No. 11

Emmanuel - God With Us

"The Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace." - Luke 1:78-79.

THE grace of God in the gift of his Only Begotten Son was the glorious example that caused Christians to adopt the custom of remembering their loved ones by some token of affection at Christmas time. Despite the cheapening and perversion that has come about through commercialism and mere formalism, the thrilling story of that gift when angels sang together in praise to God's glory never grows old, and there is still much that exists of "good will to men" in its yearly observance.

While it is generally admitted that the date of observance corresponds more nearly with the time of begetting, still this does not detract from the blessing of its yearly remembrance, nor diminish the joy experienced in true giving.

May your Directors and Editors take this opportunity of conveying to all our readers their Christian love and greetings and assure you of their best wishes and earnest prayers on your behalf. - Isa. 57:15.

The following article from the pen of our late Pastor will prove a blessing to all who partake of its spirit.

THE GRACE OF GIVING

"In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." - Acts 20:35. R.V.

CHRISTIAN benevolence -- almsgiving -- is the lesson inculcated in today's Study. The general disposition of the fallen nature is to give adherence or support to the strong and to expect weaker ones to rally around and uphold us. This is self-pleasing -- the way of the fallen nature. But the

method of the New Creature in Christ is to be the reverse of this. He is to be on the lookout for the welfare, the interests and the comforts of others, especially of those in his own family and of the weaker members of the Household of Faith. The stronger of the brethren in Christ should take pleasure in helping the weaker and the less able, and so far as possible in bringing all up to the stature of manhood in Christ.

Our Study is addressed to the Corinthian Church, and is on behalf of the Christians in and about Jerusalem. Naturally the question arises, "Why should collections have been then for the Christians in Jerusalem any more than for the Christians at Corinth? There were three reasons why this should be done: (1) A severe famine had prevailed in the vicinity of Jerusalem; (2) Jerusalem was not a commercial city, and therefore money was less plentiful there; (3) Apparently those in and about Jerusalem who received the Gospel were chiefly the poor.

Moreover, from the open persecution of the Truth there we can readily judge that there was also a great deal of quiet opposition to all who sympathized with the Gospel of Christ. As small shop people, they were probably boycotted and as laborers, they were probably rejected as far as possible, except as necessity might demand their services. On the contrary, the cities of Asia Minor, Macedonia and Achaia were prosperous; and as far as we may judge, the class which accepted the Gospel was in many cases the better element. For instance, we recall the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the deputy governor at Paphos; that of Dionysius, one of the professors in the University of Athens; that of Damaris, of the same city that of Justus, of Corinth, and of Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue of that city.

BLINDED BY RELIGIOUS PRIDE

The question naturally arises, Why should the same Gospel attract the well-to-do classes in Asia Minor and Greece and repel the majority outside the poor class in Judea? The answer would seem to be that amongst the Jews, who had been long acquainted with the true God and His gracious promises of Messiah, a religious pride had developed, especially amongst the wealthy and the learned. Moreover, because their religious system was in advance of every other religious system in the world, the learned attributed a like superiority to themselves individually. They "trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others." - Luke 18:9.

This was the secret of Israel's blindness to the Gospel. The religious leaders and theologians were so self-conscious and relied so implicitly upon their interpretations of the Divine promises as centering in themselves, that they could not regard the humble Nazarene and His unlearned followers except as impostors. Later, when the Gospel began to be preached to the Gentiles, the opposition of the Jewish theologians was increased; for it was utterly contrary to every thought of their religious pride that God would accept either the humble Jews or the Gentiles to His favor, and reject themselves, the leading representatives of His Cause and work. - John 7:43-53.

Amongst the Gentiles, however, the case was very different. While the illiterate masses were firmly bound by the superstition of their various religions, those who were of an honest mind amongst the better educated were quick to discern that many features of their own religion were merely superstitions. Probably they had been somewhat attracted to the Jewish religion as being much more reasonable than their own; for we find that the Gentiles readily resorted to the Jewish synagogues. But the Jewish religion would necessarily be unsatisfactory to them since it would appear to be very narrow, limiting the Divine blessings in a special manner to Israelites only -- a people whom the Greeks considered rather inferiors in the arts of that time. But the Gospel, throwing wide open the door to those who desired righteousness -- of every nation people, kindred and tongue -- would naturally commend itself to the class whom we are describing as

being the most reasonable explanation of the Jewish doctrines and their grand eventual outcome, the meaning of which had long been hidden.

THE BENEFITS OF SYSTEMATIC CHARITY

At all events, the saints at Jerusalem were poorer than were the saints at Corinth. Therefore it was appropriate that the Apostle should suggest to the latter the propriety of sending a gift to the former. Living at a time when the conveniences for transferring money were very inferior to the very poorest known today, the various congregations could send their gifts only at the hand of the Apostle when he should go to Jerusalem the following year.

St. Paul's words intimate that the suggestion which he had made to the Corinthian brethren nearly a year before had been well received, and the collections zealously entered upon. For this reason it was superfluous for him to write in this connection any of the particulars respecting the necessity for this collection. But he hints to them that there was a bare possibility that the work zealously begun a year before might not have been patiently carried out; and that after he had boasted somewhat to others of their love and zeal for the Lord, he would regret when he came to them en route to Jerusalem, if it should be found that, after all, they had failed to have their donation ready.

In his previous letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle had suggested methodical charity, saying, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given instructions to the Churches in Galatia, even so do ye. On the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." - 1 Cor. 16:1,2.

It was the Apostle's experience, as it is the experience of all thoughtful people, that systematic charity is better than spasmodic giving. Not only is the result generally larger, but the influence upon the giver is more beneficial for it keeps before the mind an object, a service to be rendered as unto the Lord. With many, almost the only opportunity for serving the Lord's Cause is that of contributing money. Of course, where a consecrated child of God can do so, it is far better that he should give to the saints after the manner of St. Paul and his traveling associates -- giving spiritual gifts and blessings, either by public preaching or by house-to-house visiting -- presenting the Truth either by the printed page or by tongue or both.

But there are those so circumstanced in life through lack of talent or of strength or of opportunity -- hindered by prior mortgages upon their time in the way of family obligations -- that practically their only chance for serving the Lord and manifesting their love for Him is through their gifts to His Cause and to His people. For such to be deprived of the opportunity of exercising themselves in the Lord's service in this manner, either through lack of a case needing their assistance or through lack of instruction respecting this method of Divine service, would be to deprive them of an important opportunity of service and correspondingly to deprive them of the blessings which follow every service rendered to the Lord.

LIBERALITY AN INDEX OF LOVE

We notice, therefore, that the Apostle felt very free to recommend to the Church the grace of giving and even to press upon them the fact that their liberality, in proportion to their ability, would in a large degree be an index of their love for the Lord and for the Gospel. But here we note, in contrast, the fact that the Apostle did not ask alms of these believers when first they received the Lord's grace, lest they should in any degree get the impression that the Gospel was being preached from mercenary motives -- for filthy lucre's sake. Accordingly we find that rather

than mention money the Apostle preached to these very same Corinthians for more than a year without even a suggestion as to remuneration; that rather than be chargeable to any, he labored with his own hands at his trade of tent-making. - 2 Cor. 11:7-9.

Let us also note the change which the full appreciation of the Gospel wrought upon the believers at Corinth. At first they were so negligent of their privilege that seemingly they never even thought of volunteering financial assistance to the Apostle while he was serving them by the labor of his own hands and receiving some assistance from believers in other places. But after the grace of God had entered more fully into their hearts, they began to appreciate the value of the Truth which they had received and to realize that it had brought them priceless blessings of hope, joy, faith and character. Then they had a zeal, a "forwardness," to do something financially in the Lord's service.

And now that the Apostle was absent from them, and after his course had proved to them that he sought not their money but themselves, to do them good, he felt free to draw their attention to the great blessing which would result from liberality in the Lord's Cause in proportion to their ability and love. To impress this matter, he gave them a parable, saying, "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully." This reminds us of the proverb "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is proper, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Prov. 11:24,25.) The evident lesson is that the Lord is pleased to see His people cultivate breadth of heart as well as of mind -- generosity in proportion to their knowledge of Him and of His generosity.

OUR LORD'S ESTIMATE OF OUR GIFTS

The Scriptures nowhere declare that cases of absolute privation amongst the Lord's people are proofs that at some time in their past life, when possessed of means, they failed to use a portion of it in charity, in the Lord's service. But the inspired words above quoted come very close to giving this lesson. At all events, it is profitable that we lay this testimony to heart and that every child of God henceforth shall be earnestly careful that out of the blessings of the Lord coming to us day by day some measure be carefully, prayerfully and lovingly laid aside as seed to be sown in the Lord's service according to the best wisdom and judgment which He will give us.

How many have such carefulness for themselves, either in using every penny as fast as it comes or in being so interested in laying by for the outworking of future plans that they feel that they can spare nothing for charity! How many such can afterward see that they made a great mistake in so doing! When their accumulations suddenly vanish, either through sickness or through accident or bank failure or otherwise, then they have good reason to regret that they sowed no "seed" after the manner described by the Apostle in Verse 6 of today's Study.

Our Lord showed us how He measures our gifts -- that He esteems them not according to the amount given but chiefly according to the spirit which prompts the gift -- when He drew attention to the poor widow who cast two mites into the Temple treasury. (Luke 21:1-4.) From the standpoint of His estimation, that poor widow had cast in a larger sum than had any of the wealthy who had given merely out of their abundance, and not to such an extent that they felt it. How many of the Lord's people would be more "fat" spiritually today, if they would give attention to the exercise of this talent, this opportunity for service, we cannot say. The Lord alone knows. But today's Study makes it incumbent upon us to point out a privilege in this direction which is within the reach of the very poorest of the Lord's people.

A THANK-OFFERING TO THE LORD

Seldom is it necessary to caution people against over-much giving. Yet in some instances such caution is proper; and in some instances in Scripture giving has been restrained. No one should give to the extent of causing privation to those dependent upon him. Nor should any one give to such extent as to bring upon himself financial bankruptcy and cause losses to others. The Apostolic rule for giving we have already quoted. The "laying by on the first day of the week" should be general -- "according as the Lord hath prospered him." The degree of our prosperity should be the measure of our charity. Upon this, as upon every subject, the Scriptures inculcate the spirit of a sound mind.

"The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." Gifts bestowed in any other than a cheerful spirit might just as well not be given; for they will bring no blessing. The Lord does not appreciate such giving. In His estimation it has no "sweet odor." To be appreciated of the Lord, the gift must be a thank-offering, prompted by a realization of our debt of everlasting gratitude to Him from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift. And to such, the Apostle assures us, "God is able to make all grace abound." Whoever gives anything in the Divine service -- time talent, strength, money or influence -- will find himself proportionately abounding in the different graces; for such are in the right attitude of heart to grow in grace.

The Apostle seems to imply that such will have "sufficiency in all things," as well as be able to "abound in every good work." Sufficiency may not mean luxury and every comfort; but "all sufficiency" is gained always where there is "godliness with contentment." In proof that he is inculcating no new theory respecting the Divine care over those who are seeking to scatter to others a portion of the blessings that come to them, whether temporal or spiritual, the Apostle quotes from Psalm 112:9.

In Verse 11, the Apostle speaks of "being enriched in everything." We are not to understand him to mean that all of the Lord's people will be enriched financially. St. Paul himself was an example of the fact that the Lord's people do not become wealthy. He is speaking of the enrichment of the heart. In another place he speaks of himself and his colaborers in the Gospel work, "as poor yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." (2 Cor. 6:10.) These faithful servants of God made many rich in hope, rich in faith rich in love and in all the various concomitant graces which these qualities imply.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the grandest Example of self-denial in the interests of others. He was rich in the possession of the spiritual nature with all its glory and honor. Yet for our sakes He became poor, taking the human nature in order that He might redeem mankind. To this end He surrendered life itself at Calvary, that through His sacrifice we might become rich -- possessed of Divine favor and the riches of Divine grace in Christ -- even joint-heirship with Him who now is our exalted Lord at the right hand of Divine Majesty. But to attain this joint-heirship with Him, we must study to be like Him, to have His Spirit and to share with others whatever He may give us of either temporal or spiritual favors -- either to feed or to clothe others (particularly those of the Household of Faith) temporally or spiritually, as circumstances may dictate.

"Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift!" That Gift is our Savior, our Redeemer. (John 3:16.) In this connection it is impossible for us to tell the riches of Divine grace toward us -- the numberless blessings and mercies which are ours through our Lord. He represents to us the very fulness of every Divine provision for our eternal welfare. As the Apostle elsewhere says, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Deity bodily." (Col. 2:9.) As yet, only the Church can now give thanks to God for His unspeakable Gift. But by and by the whole world of mankind will be in a

condition to recognize that Gift and to render thanks. When, at the close of the Messianic Reign for the restoration of the Adamic race to their original perfection, all wilful sinners shall have been destroyed, then "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God." Then every creature in Heaven, on earth and in the sea shall be heard saying, "Praise, glory, honor, dominion and might be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb forever!" for the Unspeakable Gift. -- *Reprints, p. R5926.*

GOD'S WONDERS PERFORMED IN THE MAJESTY OF SILENCE

We are amazed as we think of the glorious results of that "Unspeakable Gift," and of the simplicity in which it was foretold in that message given by the angels to the humble shepherds on that holy night when the Babe was born in Bethlehem. The light that shined in the darkness was not physical but spiritual; the Day spring from on High had visited mankind, but it shone only in a few faithful hearts. The Gospels, which are always truthful, bear on every page that simplicity, which is the "stamp of honest narrative." "To the unilluminated fancy it would have seemed incredible that the most stupendous event in the world's history should have taken place without convulsions and catastrophes. . . . The inventions of man differ wholly from the dealings of God. In his designs there is no haste, no rest, no weariness, no discontinuity. All things are done by him in the majesty of silence, and they are seen under, a light that shineth quietly in the darkness, 'showing all things in the slow history of their ripening.' 'The unfathomable depths of the divine counsels,' it has been said, 'were moved; the fountains; of the great; deep were broken up; the healing of the, nations was issuing forth; -- but nothing was seen -- on the surface of human society but this slight rippling of the water: the course of human things went on as usual, while each was taken up with little projects of his own.... But the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant. To all who will listen he still speaks. He promised to be with us always even to the end of the age, and we have not found his promise fail. It was but thirty three short years that Jesus lived on earth; it was but for three broken and troubled years that, he preached the Gospel of the Kingdom; but, even until all the ages have been closed and the heavens and earth that now are have passed away, shall every one of his true and faithful children find peace and hope and forgiveness in his name," and that name shall be called Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted,

"God With Us."

- J. T. Read.

The Parable of the Trees

Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; . . . Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. - Jer. 17:5-8.

TREES ARE used many times in the Scriptures to picture nations, peoples, and individuals. To refresh our minds we will note just a few:

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness [people of God], the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." - Isa. 61:3.

"And all the trees of the field [all the people of the world], shall know that the Lord have brought down the high tree [the proud and haughty; nation], have exalted the low tree [the humble nation], have dried up the green tree [the nation of Israel once vigorous], and have made the dry tree to flourish [prophetic of this favor returning to Israel]: I the Lord have spoken and have done it." - Ezek. 17:24.

"For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains [kingdoms] and the hills [smaller nations] shall break forth before -you into singing, and all the trees of the field [people of the world] shall clap their hands." - Isa. 55:12.

"Let the field [the world] be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice." - Psa. 96:12.

Again in Luke 21:29 we have a statement very significant to us today: "And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees." In other words, it is for us to observe what is occurring in Israel today. She is rising -- coming up. "And all the trees." We are, not to stop with Israel, but to look at "all the trees." What is occurring to them -- the Gentile nations? They are going down, their favor is ending.

AN EXAMPLE OF MAN WORSHIP IN ISRAEL

We might multiply many times the Scriptures in which trees are plainly shown to represent nations and people, but for the present these will suffice. You will remember the record of Gideon, of his great victories, and of how the people of Israel made the mistake of ascribing those victories to Gideon instead of to the God of Israel who had used Gideon as his instrument. Thus is given us an example of man worship in Israel. They decided to make Gideon their ruler. The Scriptures tell us what they said, and Gideon's reply:

"Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also; for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you." - Judges 8:22,
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What a truly great man, and servant of God was Gideon! Had he been at all inclined to personal arrogance, headiness, pride, or vain-glory, what an opportunity this would have, been for him. He had planned and achieved an outstanding victory, and the praises of the multitude were ringing in his ears. And now they, come, to make him ruler, to make him the founder of a royal dynasty, to start a line with him, going on to his son, and afterward his son's son, and so on down through successive generations. But Gideon would have nothing to do with it. His reply was sure and certain. It contained no loopholes to give Israel a later chance to draft him. In political life today, there are men who refuse to be candidates for some high office, but in refusing, they have a few mental reservations. And the people respond in the political way. They say: "He, is subject to draft." That is what the politician expects them to do to later draft him as the one indispensable man:

Did you ever hear a speech of rejection? Did you ever hear of a man nominated at a convention for the presidency of the United States make a speech of rejection of that nomination? No, it is always a speech of acceptance. In these days they even have in readiness a swift flying airplane to get them to Convention Hall so that they can give that-speech of acceptance as quickly as possible. But here is a man flushed with recent victory to whom is offered what was then the highest position on the earth -- rulership over God's typical kingdom. He also arose to deliver a speech -- surely one of acceptance! Ah, no, it was a speech of rejection. Surely nothing like it had ever been heard before. He rejects it in favor of another. "And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you, The Lord shall rule over you."

What faithfulness and what loyalty on the part of Gideon! His reason for rejection was that the Lord alone was entitled to the rulership. It was that He had given victory to the forces of Gideon. He knew that of himself he would have gone down in defeat. He was merely an instrument in the hand of God. So Gideon returned to private life, and Israel hearkened to his counsel for the forty years that remained of Gideon's life, and Israel dwelt in peace and quietness and safety.

But the years pass, Gideon is gathered to his fathers, and 'then, the scene quickly changes. Man worship again arises in Israel; but this time there is some one to aid and encourage it. The man to whom it is now offered, while a son of Gideon, is a different character from that of his father. Whereas his father was good and, faithful and wise, this son was evil. He starts out by inducing his brothers to aid him in his ambitions. Then he gathers around him a gang of dissolute men. They murder all but one of his brothers, that there would be none who might in the future oppose him. Abimelech, having gotten rid of all possible rivals, is then proclaimed ruler of Israel. The ninth chapter of Judges gives a detailed account of his career and disgraceful end. At this time, however, it is our purpose to turn to his one brother, Jotham, who escaped with his life.

Jotham was the youngest of the sons of Gideon; and it seems that he was the only one to cherish the memory of his father, the only one in the face of danger to stand forth for the altars of his father and the temple of his God. Thus we see Jotham standing on Mt. Gerizim, and with ringing voice he rebukes Israel by means of a parable-one of the most striking parables in God's Word. May we here note an admonition in 2 Tim. 3:16, 17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." All Scripture includes the parable of Jotham also. Otherwise the parable might have been given, but it would never have been recorded. It never would have come down to us. Its application and admonition were not merely for those of the past, nor for those of the future. Note the parable:

PARABLE OF THE TREES

And when they told it to Jotham, he went, and stood in the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign, thou over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor 'God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." - Judges 9:7-15.

In looking for a ruler over them, the trees of the wood turned toward those trees that bore fruit; they turned first to the olive-tree, and we note the answer given by the olive-tree: "Shall I leave my fatness, and go to be promoted over the trees? The fig-tree and the vine when asked, in their turn, give practically the same kind of answer. Their reason for not desiring to rule over the other trees is the same: namely, that their hands are full. Their time is taken up; they have enough to do to serve in the sphere where the Lord has placed them. A true follower of Christ will find that he will have so much to do to keep his own heart and life right, and to fulfill the duties and privileges the Lord has given him, that no time will be left to rule over his fellow-servants. As ecclesias, each ecclesia will have much to do in taking care of its own affairs, precluding any attempt to dictate or regulate the affairs of another ecclesia. When we make spiritual application of this parable to the Church, then we see, in all its beauty and simplicity the real meaning. Then do we see the reason for its recording -- that we might profit from it today.

Who is going to rule over God's people? You will note that the trees that were asked to rule are trees that were serving the people, each one in its own particular sphere, unhindered or ruled over by any other trees. The olive-tree, which refused rulership, provides the oil so highly valued by man everywhere because of its healing, soothing, and medicinal properties, an oil renowned in the Word of God and-renowned among mankind everywhere. What a beautiful picture is it of the holy spirit, of how it operates in the mind and heart of the new creature, illuminating his mind and tenderizing his heart. The child of God who is filled with this oil of the holy spirit is the last one with any desire to lord it over God's heritage. Such a one has meekness and humility-no semblance of pride or arrogance or self importance. Dictators do, not arise, from true humility; that is no part of their make-up. When they rise in either the political or the religious world, we may, rest assured that they are the spawn either of ambitious intolerance or of financial or spiritual depression;

Nest the fig-tree refuses rulership over the other trees. No one in Palestine or in California need to be reminded of what a great and luscious fruit-bearing tree the fig-tree is producing such nourishing, sweet, wholesome fruit -- fruit of such great food value. The fig-tree says: "I am busy bearing sweet fruit and should I forsake my sweetness, the bearing of such good fruit, for the purpose of becoming ruler over the rest of the trees?" What' a great lesson for God's children today! The fig-tree realized that fruit-bearing would cease the day it started lording it over the other trees. It realized the two could not go together, that no matter how sweet the beginning might be, such sweetness would not last in the lording process; it would be replaced by a different spirit. For in the hands of men, whips contain no sweetness; though the bud might have a sweet taste, yet bitter would be-the flower. What a duty and privilege it is for the child of God to

develop the fruits and graces of the spirit! and how lovely are those who have done so and are doing so! Ambition to shine or to rule over, their brethren is not found among such dear ones. And were-such an ambition to arise in the heart of such an one, very soon would all fruit-bearing cease, and very soon that one would lose all that sweetness so pleasing and honoring to the Lord, that sweetness so refreshing to all God's children, a sweetness that even people of the world quickly recognize.

And now the trees turn to the vine. How beautiful and how glorious is the place allotted to the vine in the material world, and still more beautiful and still more glorious in spiritual symbology. Need we dwell **on** the juice of the grape, how it has cheered and comforted the heart of man, bringing nourishment to his body in times, of sickness when other foods were abhorred. And what shall we say of the juice of the grape in its spiritual significance in the life and growth of the new creature from the hour of begettal to the moment of birth, and in the course, of mankind from the day of resurrection to the attainment of restitution?

How precious is the picture brought to us by the juice of the grape, that beautiful picture of the blood of Christ, that great and essential truth of the ransom, from which radiates all the other glorious truths of the Gospel: And what was the reply of the vine to the invitation to exercise lordship over the other trees? "The vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

There was one thing about the trees in their efforts to secure some tree to rule over them: When they started on their quest, they went to the best of the trees. They recognized those qualities that were praiseworthy. They considered that if they could only induce one of that type of trees to take headship, all would go well, not realizing that for any one of those trees to comply with such a request would mean their apostasy from the great work that God had given them to do.

APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE

In the history of the' Church from Pentecost until this very day, there have been those who were not content with the headship of Jesus, but who would reach out for some arm of flesh, and it as a' rule has not been difficult to find those eager to satisfy that demand. In many instances, probably in the most of instances, their motives would be honest and free from wrong intent; they would honestly look around for those whom they felt would be most fitted and the best qualified for such a position. So they find, a brother who seems filled with the holy spirit, like: unto the oil of the olive tree, and they are inclined to believe that one with such a sweet, spirit of love and zeal would be the very one best equipped to exercise rulership in the Church. This particular brother is approached with the request that he assume headship over them but like the olive-tree he says: "Brethren, I am too much engaged in the rich things that honor God to attempt to rule his people. I have enough to do in the work of ruling myself, and in serving where the Lord has placed **me**."

Another brother has given evidence that he has attained to a wonderful growth in the fruits and graces of the spirit, and so it is decided to offer him rulership over the Lord's little ones. They **go to him**, only to find that he also refuses rulership, for he too finds that in the developing of the fruits and graces of the spirit he is fully occupied. He has no time to be a busybody in the affairs of his fellow-servants.

Then these well-meaning but mistaken ones, like the trees of the wood, continue their, quest, and they find a brother who might be pictured by the vine of the parable. He delights in holding up the ransom sacrifice before the people, in standing firm on the fundamental truths, So they say, Here is the very one to rule over us. What a wonderful grasp he has of the Scriptures! He is the very

one we want. So they rush to this brother with the, request that he rule over them. Again they meet with refusal, for in addition to being strong in the fundamental truths of the Bible, he has the spirit of the Lord in large measure. He is also doing his utmost to cultivate the fruits and graces of the spirit. This brother is well balanced. In his refusal he probably quotes to them the words of Paul: "I have planted and Apollos watered, but God giveth the increase." He may have quoted many more. Thus they find no uncertain sound in his refusal. He does not encourage their tendency toward man worship. He plainly tells them that his time is completely filled with doing good unto all men especially unto those of the household Of faith, and with making his own calling and election sure. He will probably tell them that he that ruleth over his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city.

And what is the picture in the parable of the one to whom they now go? Chapter 9:14, 15: "Then said all the trees unto the bramble. Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow, and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." The bramble is elected to be ruler over the trees. This is a fitting picture of, an ambitious man or organization of men. How often in- the history of the Church of the Gospel Age has some self seeking man or set of men arisen to. a position of lordship over God's heritage! Some man or set of men fittingly pictured by the bramble, has seized what a truly consecrated man or set of men would not think of aspiring to, a position that rightfully belongs to our Lord alone. Men who in their own lives have been devoid of the spirit of Christ, devoid of loyalty to Christ, devoid of brotherhood with other followers of Christ, and instead of shedding forth spiritual pollen to assist others in their spiritual growth, have brought about man or organization worship, corruption, apostasy, and finally spiritual disaster. Such is the inevitable result of the rule of man among the people of God.

PUTTING TRUST IN A SHADOW

Now here at last in the case of the bramble we have a speech of acceptance. May we note a certain part of his speech. "If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow." Here is something very important and worthy of note. There is a frankness and candor in this that one very rarely hears anywhere, and more rarely in the acceptance speech of a bramble type of man. The, bramble tells the trees that if they wish him to be king over them, they, must put their trust in his shadow, let him make all the arrangements. At least the trees are told in advance what it is that they are going, to have to put their trust in -- "*a shadow.*" Was ever such a thing heard of before? Would to God that all through the history of the Gospel Age the antitypes of this (bramble had been as frank in telling their prospective religious subjects what they could expect to place their trust in. Had they been, in some cases at least, the people of God would have been saved from many bitter trials and disappointments, from many bitter illusions and still more bitter disillusiones.

Thus in the rulership of man among the people of God many are putting their trust in a Shadow. Instead of continuing to sit in the sunshine of heavenly favor, and approval, in the shadow of the One who sent his Son into the world -- to dispel the shadows of error and man worship, they are sitting in the shadow of heavenly disapproval. It may be that the man or set of men usurping rulership and lordship are very full of a head knowledge of the Word of God, using-it as a means to point to their importance, yet lacking in that love that should be the motivating influence of every child of God, lacking that most important accomplishment necessary in the life of every true child of God -- the development of those fruits and graces, of the spirit without which no man shall see God, and lacking which, he is totally unfitted for any service acceptable to God.

May we note Isaiah 30:1-3: "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel but not of me, and that cover with a covering but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin. That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh and to trust in the shadow of Egypt. Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. Here Isaiah records how God's people turned from the worship of God, the only one entitled to their worship, refusing to counsel with him, and instead put their trust in a shadow, and that shadow, the shadow of Egypt. The Psalmist compares the life of the wicked to a shadow. When, anything or any one comes between us and the sun, a shadow is formed; then instead of being in the sunshine, we are in the shadow. Let us as consecrated children of God permit no object, no idol, no **man, or** set of men, to, come between us and God, consequently, placing us in some shadow. Let us turn aside from everything that would come between us and the sunshine of God's love, between us and that liberty that belongs to the sons of God, between us and the sweet smile of God's favor and approval; for he is the Judge and renders final decision. He alone is worthy of all worship and praise.

RULE OR RUIN

Another thing to be noted in the acceptance speech of the bramble is a further statement of great frankness and candor; for not alone does he tell them that they must put their trust in his shadow, but also that if they fail to do this, he will put fire to the trees-in other words, he will rule or ruin.

Why is it that such a spirit has been accepted from time to time among the Lord's people throughout the Gospel Age? It is because a spirit of worldliness has come in. They have permitted themselves to be lulled to sleep, content to leave everything to their leaders, letting them think and decide for them. Thus ecclesiasticism has crept in. They have forgotten that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

This parable of Jotham's had a complete literal fulfillment, in a short time, but we will, not go into it here, although it makes extremely interesting reading. It is a history of strife, treachery, and bloodshed, ending with the death of Abimelech. It was not recorded and was not brought down to us merely that we should have a knowledge of a period in ancient history. We can get all this from very able secular historians.

What a contrast to his brothers, was the course of Jotham. He did not join in any of this conflict or strife. He came out from it, and Jotham fled to a place by the name of Beer, This Beer was a well. He dwelt by the well and he drank from this well -- a beautiful picture of the true child of God who flees from all striving for authority, taking refuge in the Word of God which to him is his sole authority. It is to him a well of salvation. Dwelling there he drinks from that Fountain.

"HOLDING THE HEAD"

There would be no purpose in this parable being handed down to us at this time in the Church's *history if* all danger was in the past. It behooves all of us to be watchful and prayerful. If that condition should overtake us again, it will be because we have not been alert, for Satan will see to it that some bramble will always be at hand. Jesus is our Head and all we are brethren. We will recognize his headship by doing his will, by avoiding the shadow of human usurpers, by remembering that dictation is not fellowship, nor is it cooperation. Let us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Jesus our one and only

Head hath made us free. Let no "shadow" ever come between us and our one true Head, -and let us recognize that all such shadows are but the spirit of the bramble.

If there is anything abhorrent to God, it is the spirit of human rule, when found among his people. And why is this **so**? Why is it that God's people should be so jealous of any human intrusion into a place of authority and rulership among them? Simply because in every case it is displacing the authority of Christ Jesus the Head. It is as though the hand or the foot of the human body were to serve notice to the head that from henceforth it will take the governing position over the rest of the body. For any man or organization of men to do this, to take rule and control among God's people, is a complete usurping of the position of Christ.

In conclusion let us read the words of the Apostle Paul: "Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels [or of messengers, human leaders], intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the Body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." (Col. 2:18, 19.) What a beautiful statement, not of some organization, but of an organism. Even as the human body is an organism, so in the glorious Body of Christ. May we love, and cherish that Body of which Jesus is the Head, and all we are members.

"I love Thy Church, O God,
Her walls before: me stand;
Dear as the apple of thins eye,
Engraven on Thine, hand.

"For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
For her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and care shall end.

"Beyond my highest joy,
I prize her heavenly ways;
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise."

The trees were speaking in the days of Jotham; the trees have been speaking throughout the Gospel Age; and those trees are speaking today!

- *H. V. Warren.*

Never Alone

"Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." - John 16:32.

It need *not* be said that to carry our conviction into action, is a costly sacrifice. It may make necessary, renunciations which leave one to feel a strange sense both of deprivation and loneliness. But he who will fly, as an eagle does, into the higher levels where cloudless day abides, and live in the sunshine of God, must, be content to live a comparatively lonely life.

No bird is so solitary as the eagle. Eagles never fly in flocks; one, or at the most two, ever being seen together at once. But the life that is lived unto God, however it forfeits human companionships, knows *divine fellowship*.

God seeks eagle men. No man ever comes into a realization of the best things of God, who does not upon the Godward side of his life, learn to walk alone with God. We find Abraham alone in Horeb upon the heights, but Lot, dwelling in Sodom. Moses, skilled in all the wisdom of Egypt, must go forty years into the desert alone with God. Paul, who was filled with Greek learning and had also sat at the feet of Gamaliel, must go into Arabia and learn the desert life with God. Let God isolate us. I do not mean the isolation of a monastery: In this isolating experience he develops an independence of faith and life so that the soul needs no longer the constant help, prayer, faith, or attention of his neighbor. Such assistance and inspiration from other members are necessary and have their places in the Christian's development, but there comes a time when they act as a direct hindrance to the individual's faith and welfare. God knows how, to change the circumstances in order to give us an isolating experience. We yield to God and he takes us through something, and when it is all over those about us, who are no less loved than before, are no longer depended upon. We realize that he has wrought, some things in us, and that the, wings of our souls have learned to beat the upper air.

We must dare to be alone. Jacob must be left alone if the angel of God- is to whisper in his ear the mystic name of Shiloh; Daniel must be left alone if he is to see celestial visions; John must be banished to Patmos if he is deeply to take and firmly to keep the "Print of Heaven."

"He trod the winepress alone." Are we prepared for a "Splendid isolation" rather than fail Him?

"Burden bearers are we, all,
Great and small.
Burden sharers be ye all,
Great and small!
Where another shares the load,
Two draw nearer God.
Yet there are burdens we can share with none
Save God;
And paths remote where we must walk alone
With God;
For lonely burden and for path apart --
Thank God!
If these but serve to bring the burdened heart
To God."

- *Anonymous.*

Acceptable Sacrifices

Part II

"Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." - Eph. 5:25.

IN the uncertainty which obscures every old and sacred locality, we may see and accept with profound gratitude an indication that a watchful Providence has interposed to save the Lord's people from idolatry. Among these sacred localities are the burying places of God's faithful ones of ancient time-that of Abraham, "father of the faithful"; that of Joseph, whose rejection by his brethren foreshadowed our Lord's rejection at His first coming; of Moses, type of the real Lawgiver; of Joshua, whose triumph in leading Israel into the promised land foretold the greater deliverance and triumph; of David, type of our great Shepherd-King. These burying places have been so obscured by time that centuries of searching have failed to find them. Neither has archeology located anything associated with the life and passion of our Savior-things on which a profane worship would surely seize. There are places it, Palestine where it is known our Lord was "wont to go," as for instance, He frequently discoursed on Solomon's Porch; He resorted to the Mount of Olives, to the Garden of Gethsemane, hallowed by many moments of sacred communion with his Father, and the scene of His great agony; and the most sacred of all places, Golgotha, where His blood was shed. The general locality of many of these is known, but nothing definite as to the exact spot, where the idolator could attach his worship. True devotion can stand only under the open sky and say, "There my Master ascended and there shall my affections be set."

Purposes of God Hidden from the World

Contrast, as well as our limited knowledge will permit, the human and the spirit natures of the One whom "mighty angels bowed before"; 'compare the exalted position and glory from which the Logos had come, with the humble dwelling place and position among men of the man Christ Jesus, who came to earth to be despised and rejected of men. Visit now for a moment the tabernacle---behold the indescribable beauties of its two golden chambers, and meditate on Him who prayed that He might be glorified with the glory that He had with the Father before the world began. Then step outside-see the unsightly exterior and think on Him who came unto His own who received Him not, because to them He had no beauty nor comeliness that they should desire Him! And let us remember that hidden beneath this unsightliness are pictures of the purposes of God.

The tabernacle had four coverings: first and outermost was the covering of seals' skins; second, rams' skins dyed red; third, goats' hair; and fourth and innermost, the curtain of white linen.

"It has been a matter of surprise to some that the glory and beauty of the tabernacle-its golden walls, its golden and beautifully engraved furniture, and its veils of curious work-were so completely covered and hidden from view of the people; even the sunlight from without being excluded its only light being the lamp in the holy and the Shekinah Glory in the most holy. But this is perfectly in keeping with the lessons we have received from its services. As God covered the type and hid its beauty under curtains and rough, unsightly skins, so the glories and beauties of, spiritual things are seen only by those who enter the consecrated condition-the 'Royal Priesthood.' These enter a hidden but glorious state which the world and all outside fail to appreciate. Their glorious hopes- and also their standing as new creatures are hidden from their fellow men."

As it was only by becoming the man Christ Jesus that He could bring about atonement, so only by becoming a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" could He become the "merciful and faithful High Priest." Joshua must pass through the Red Sea and all the wilderness experiences with the children of Israel before he could become their leader in the triumphal entry into the promised land. The Greater than Joshua must participate in all the sufferings of the footstep followers if He would "bring many sons to glory." (Heb. 2:10.) In the economy of God's great Plan, without doubt these typical ones, too, learned obedience by the things which they suffered; they, too, were prepared for their ultimate perfection through sufferings. They were faithful until death, as by faith they saw the promised Deliverer and were glad; but now, not only the types and prophecies, but also the realities are ours. We know that He **hath borne** our griefs and carried our sorrows; and that the chastisement of our peace **was** upon Him. We all like sheep had gone astray, but the Lord **laid** upon Him the iniquity of us all.

"Made in the Likeness of Men"

The unsightly covering of the tabernacle referred to above was of the skin of a marine animal. Taken from the sea it thus speaks to us of One who would leave His own element and come to earth. But beneath the "seal skins" (R: V.) hidden from every eye were rams' skins dyed **red**. How easy it is now to read the story in this concealed covering; but Abel came from his sacrifice perhaps wondering at its acceptableness. No doubt Abraham spent many hours pondering on the strange commission that sent him to Mount Moriah, and on the lamb that was substituted there. Abraham knew nothing of the tabernacle or its pictures or that it was to grow into a marvelous temple that tradition says was erected on this very spot. The symbols of this temple carrying us beyond this time of imperfection needed no longer the rams' skins dyed red, nor the covering of goats' hair that during all the years of the wilderness journey lay concealed under the rams' skins, for the temple was typical of the time when we shall know even as also we are known. - See also Jeremiah 33:3, margin.

The curtain of goats' hair was not exposed even to the priests; for the one on which they looked was of white linen. It was the white and the gold alone that the priests beheld. But covering this curtain of goats' hair were the rams' skins dyed red, thus declaring that it is only by the application of His blood that imperfect ones such as those represented by the goat, could have a place in that tabernacle picture. To all within that tabernacle naught was to be seen above except the pure white, seeming to say, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh," but after the spirit; to all without, there was but the unsightliness that fitly represented the appearance to them of the One whom they rejected. It was not the death of the animal whose skin formed this outer covering that was intended to convey the lesson, however; for of all the many sacrifices performed in this story of the tabernacle year after year, not one animal from the sea was presented on the altar. It would seem, therefore, merely to represent One who would leave His original estate, His Father's house, to serve here -- the One in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Significance of Rams' Skins Dyed Red

If we were to depend upon the tabernacle picture to teach us of the mystery of sin atonement, in these curtains we would see portrayed unmistakably that the merit lies not in Jesus' having left heaven, but in the one sacrifice, pictured in the one covering dyed red. When we turn to the literal statements of the inspired writers, no doubtful method of interpretation need be used to see that salvation for all mankind is in the shed blood of the Lamb, and in it alone. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." "None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, for the redemption of their soul is precious

Heb. "Yawkawr," valuable]." The reason, as every child of Adam should know, is that "there is none righteous, no not one." The most conscientious effort to attain a life of holiness will not constitute one a savior. For this reason, it would seem, the linen curtain and the covering of goats' hair were not dyed red; but note that they were under the covering of the one that was. Thus, the tabernacle seems to tell us of those who secure a place in that picture not because of merit within themselves, 'but because of their acceptance of the covering provided through the merit of the One who "poured out His soul unto death," "a ransom for all."

Realizing that a teaching of a type can be held with assurance only if the lesson to which the type seeing to point is set forth in the plain statements of God's Word, we turn with interest to our Bibles to see if there are such Scriptures teaching that some provision has been made for members of the human race, giving them a standing whereby they may be represented in so holy a structure as the tabernacle. While we find that "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive," the sacred Word seems to be strangely silent as to any plea having been made as yet in heaven for Adam or his race. Instead, we do find statements that very pointedly pass by the general family and single out -a special class. It is of this class the Apostle John is speaking when he says, "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1.) Again, the writer to the Hebrews says, "Who being the brightness of His [the Father's] glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1:3.) "But now in Christ Jesus **ye** that once were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:13.) And again: "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9:24.) "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world." (Gal. 1:4.) So distinct is this class from the world in general in the divine purpose as regards the application of the ransom price that the Apostle can speak as though, for the time being, Jesus died for the Church alone, saying, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." (Eph. 5:25.) Again: "For **ye** are bought with a price." (1 Cor. 6:20.) But noting this fact must by no means be allowed to becloud the plain teaching of the Scriptures that He and He alone gave Himself a ransom for all. This giving of Himself was spoken of as a work already completed 1,900 years ago, and it was divine inspiration that spoke thus. Nothing ever has been nor ever, can be added to that ransom price for it was a "corresponding price." "In the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ there is an infinite fulness, which meets every necessity of man."

While recognizing then that He has as yet appeared in heaven only on our behalf, we rejoice "in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until 'now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit." (Rom. 8:21-23, R. V.) "Ye know that **ye** were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last **times for you.**" (1 Pet. 1:19, 20.) The marginal reading of 1 Peter 2:9 makes the passage "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people," thus distinguishing us from the great mass of mankind as yet unpurchased, though the full price is already provided. Evidently, "Christ bath **loved us**, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." (Eph. 5:2.) "His own self bare **our** sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. 2:24.) "By the which will **we** are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb. 10:10.) "He hath been **made sin for us.**" - 2 Cor. 5:21.

A Priesthood to Offer up Sacrifices

It would be impossible to suppose that the Scriptures could so consistently pass by the world without mention in connection with the present benefits of Jesus' sacrifice without intending to teach some point by the omission. We would therefore with deep reverence for the precious Word of God turn to it for the reason. Our first suggestion is found in the assurance of Romans 12:1, that the Church may present an acceptable sacrifice. It is no less an authority than the Lord Himself that invites us to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him. (Matt. 16:24.) And with still clearer import, the Apostle Paul says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.) And by inspiration Peter reiterates the thought, "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual [Sinaitic Ms. omits] sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 2:5.) Plainly, though we were once of those who were without God and without hope in the world, our privilege is stated by the Apostle Paul, saying, "The grace is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 15:15, 16.) It is unbelievable that our loving heavenly Father could invite us to bring a sacrifice which He has said is acceptable and then upon receiving it, find there is no place for it in His Plan.

Since it is acceptable something will surely be done with it. In the context immediately following the last citation from Peter, the faith that takes Jesus as our Head is given as the keynote of this mystery of our having been made acceptable in the Beloved. Oh! how wonderful the outcome must -be to be "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved"! - Eph. 1:6.

"The sacrifice of praise" must invariably be the present fruit of our lips (Heb. 13:15); but can be but an infinitesimal portion of the sacrifice of the "body" of those who are to be "to the praise of his glory."

Let no one suppose that the Apostles are giving the thought that the Church, of herself, is a sacrifice for the cancellation of the penalty against the sinner. That her sacrifice is acceptable, we have found there is no reason to doubt; but it must be just as evident that she is not acceptable because of any inherent merit. Unequivocally it is stated that the "one sacrifice for sins which Jesus offered, foreshadowed by the Passover lamb, is continuously or eternally efficacious in His great purpose "to put away sins by the sacrifice of Himself." (Heb 10:10-12; 9:26; 1 Pet. 3:18.) Any sacrifices acceptable since the offering of that fully corresponding price, which is sufficient for the cancellation of the debt which Father Adam incurred by his sin, and sufficient also to meet all the indebtedness his children have inherited from him, must be for some other purpose than the securing of that corresponding price.

Two important difficulties are yet to be considered in connection with the study of this subject: First, conceding that our sacrifices are acceptable, what have we to present? and second, to what end has the great judge agreed to accept our sacrifices? Regarding the first question, acknowledging our undone condition, we recognize that in justification there lies the secret of our acceptableness; yet it is not justification that is presented to the Lord, but our bodies (Rom. 12:1), which are justified: The beautiful symbol the Master uses, the taking up our cross to follow Him even to our Calvary, we have already noticed in Matthew 16:24. But to sacrifice a body is to lay down its life. What life have we to lay down? The answer is found in connection with that of the next question, and forever allays all fears that our "acceptable sacrifice" might rob our beloved Lord of some of His glory. Instead, we find that only by acknowledging our acceptableness can

we appropriately praise His glorious grace. This question must be left for consideration in a later issue.

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

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

- *P. E. Thomson.*

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren in the Lord:

The grace and peace of God be with you through our Lord Jesus Christ, and remain with you in your blessed work in the vineyard of our Lord. It gives me great pleasure to write you and to thank all the dear brethren and sisters in America for all the help they have given to the poor followers of Christ in Germany. The love of Christ knows no, separation between nations, which is ex-pressed in your work, in helping others. Psalm 133 speaks of this unity in the one Master. The Lord has promised rich blessings, even eternal life. May all these blessings be yours, dear brothers and sisters. We are all striving to fight the good fight of faith and we need the whole armor. - Eph. 6:13.19. May our Lord always be at your side, is my prayer.

Your brother, in the Lord,
H. H. -- Germany.

Dear Brethren:

I am sending in a few addresses for three months' subscriptions.... If you ever have any request from them, I would like to hear about it.... I could make use of a few more tracts on different subjects. There are wonderful opportunities for tract distribution-on the street, in the stores, on the train and trolley buses. You meet men and women and start up a conversation with them. They soon drift to talking world conditions. There is our opportunity. Sometimes I attend a Pentecost or Salvation Army testimony- meeting-a meeting that is terribly neglected among Bible Students in this part of the Vineyard. I generally give a brief testimony, and after the meeting some come around to ask questions. It is then the tracts come in very handy to pass along.

Praying the Lord's blessing on your service to Him, *and* asking that you pray for me, I remain,

Your brother in "the One Hope," "waiting for the Manifestation, and Appearing" of our Lord,
J. A. T. -- N. S.

Dear Friends

About two weeks ago I received a pamphlet from the Institute about Jesus and the Resurrection which helped me *very* much, as I have very recently become a Christian. You offer a book called ""The Divine Plan of the Ages,"" which I would like you to send me; also one each of your tracts. I gave the pamphlet I had to a neighbor. If I may have another, I should appreciate it. I believe there was also a booklet, but I do not remember the name of it. I shall greatly appreciate whatever you have to offer, since there are many things I wish to understand more thoroughly.

Besides the price of the book, I am enclosing a small donation. This is a great work you are doing. Best wishes for your continued success.
Mrs. E. S. B. -- Pa.

Dear Brethren:
Greetings and Christian love.

It is with much pleasure that we in Northern Ireland write to thank you for making possible the visit to Britain of Brother Paul Thomson. His presence among us has been a source of joy and happiness. Some of the friends renewed their acquaintance with him, others met him for the first time; but to all his fellowship was mature and strengthening. The essentials of truth do not change, and if on some of the finer points, some differ, these different viewpoints, as Brother Thomson stressed, are quickly surmounted by those sufficiently developed to be thus exercised and are bound together by an even closer tie than that of doctrine, by the one spirit common to all sincerely and truly consecrated to God. One thing is clear to all, that we are living very, very near the final end of the present system of things. The time of this final end is alone known to the Lord, but sufficient is known to us by the signs of the times to make, us "lift up our heads and rejoice" and after we have done all we can do to put our own house in order, to be alert and alive to our privileges to witness to these signs to those outside and to proclaim the incoming Kingdom.

We in Ireland, dear brethren, wish you the fullest joy and happiness in your service to Him and to His cause, and that you may have the needed strength to continue your ministry. "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, having; all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

With sincere Christian love, we are,
Your brethren by Grace,
Belfast Ecclesia.

His Last Lesson

A tribute by Sister Minna Edgar in memory of her brother, Dr. John Edgar.

How glorious is, this day for me:
Heaven's joys begin, earth's sorrows end!
Weep" not, beloved, but rejoice,
For to my Father I ascend.
My God, yea, our God calleth me
To my eternal home above
With tender kiss and fond farewell
I leave you sheltered by His love.

While yet my failing pulses beat,
A lesson I would fain impart,
That oft, by love recalled, "Will speak
As God's own whisper to your heart.
Seek not to spare my feeble strength,
But let me, though with falt'ring breath,
The counsel of my soul express
Ere silent close my lips in death.

Beloved friends, each day, renew
Your covenant of sacrifice;
And all day long your vows fulfill
In strength that grace alone supplies.
Deem present time a precious boon,
The race to run, the prize secure;
Who daily does the will of God
Will find at length his crown made sure.

Unnumbered blessings hidden lie
Within the precincts of a day,
And possibilities untold
Attend the consecrated way;
Obedient hearts with rapture, find
Their paths traced clear in Love's design,
And prove God daily loadeth them
With varied benefits benign.

Then closer bind your sacrifice
Upon the altar Christ provides,
Whose merit sanctifies the gift,
And, sin's defiling blemish hides.
In faith and prayer yield every day
Your offering pure to God anew
Shrink not from toil, reproach, and pain;
For oh, your days of earth are few.

The altar fire burns clear and strong
When constant faith upon it blows;
And flames of zeal your life consume
While hope with heavenly fervor glows.
But 'tis when love's red embers shine
With ruddy gleam of furnace heat
That then your sacrifice ascends
To God, a savor rich and sweet.