

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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Remembering Christ

"This do in remembrance of me." - Luke 22:19.

WITH solemn joy, in smaller and larger groups (perhaps alone) we shall gather on the evening of Friday, March 31, to observe -- in obedience to Him who did institute and command it -- the Lord's Supper. The days of the years of our pilgrimage have been many and hard, but again we draw nigh to the hallowed place in our Christian experience, once again to keep the Feast. "This is my body which is broken for you; eat ye all, of it. 'This is my blood which is shed for you; drink ye all, of it.'" How precious the familiar words. Heaven's treasury was exhausted that this table might be set; blessed is he that partaketh thereof. The sufficient emblems a crumb of bread-- a sip of wine: and oh! how we sing!

"This is the hour of banquet and of song;
From this, Thy table, let each shadow flee;
Here let me feast, and feasting still prolong
The brief bright hour of fellowship with Thee."

As regards the Memorial proper, its institution, significance, and its cluster of associated events, both typical and antitypical, we shall not enter into them particularly now. Concerning these glorious truths we have all been well informed. Our meditation will be devotional rather than expository. We would linger instead upon the words of our text:

"This Do in Remembrance of Me."

In remembrance of Thee? O Savior, we will indeed commemorate thy costly redemptive sacrifice. Yea, Lord, we will further remember all thy benefits toward us. For we remember the riches of thy prehuman existence, the glory which was thine with the Father before the world was. Thou, the firstborn of all creation, the beginning of the creation of God, wast by him as one brought up with him, daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. For he possessed thee in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. Thou wast set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. All things were made by thee, and without thee was not anything made that was made. When the foundations of the earth were laid, thou didst hear the morning stars sing together and all the sons of God shout for joy.

Yea, Lord, we do remember that in the fulness of time, thou, in -obedience to thy Father, didst lay aside thy glory, and wast born of a woman -- wast made flesh. Thou, so rich -- becomest poor *for* our sakes! We remember the circumstances of thy birth -- that thou wast laid in a manger because there was no room for thee in the inn! Thou earnest into the world made by thee, but the world knew thee not. Thou didst make thyself of no reputation and didst take upon, thee the form of a servant. Did they not call thee the Carpenter's son -- thou, the architect of the universe? Yea, the foxes had dens, and the birds, nests, but thou hadst no place to lay thy head! Thou camest to thine own, but thine own received thee not. Despised, rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! Of the people there was none with thee. How oft wouldst thou, in thy great love, have gathered them as a hen doth her chicks, but they would not! For thou hadst compassion on the multitude, for they were like sleep without a shepherd. O Savior, we do remember all this and more.

We remember how thou wentest about doing good, and manifesting thy glory. The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised, the multitudes were fed, and to the poor the Gospel was preached. Bartimeus, Jairus, the widow of Nain, Martha, Mary, Lazarus and many others--all did partake of thy wonderful grace. Did ever man speak as thou, didst speak? Did not all bear, witness and wonder at the gracious words which proceeded forth out of thy mouth? Words of spirit and life, words which the Father did give unto thee, wonderful words of life!

We remember Lord, as the last hour drew near, how thou didst steadfastly set thy face to go to Jerusalem. The cup, which the Father had given thee, thou wouldst' drink to the full!

"O holy Lamb of God!
Must Thou to slaughter go?
And on Thy sinless shoulders bear
Our heritage of woe?
Must Thou endure our grief
Our stripes be laid on Thee?
The sins of many must Thou take,
And thus our ransom be?"

The shadows lengthened. With desire thou didst desire to eat the last Passover with them, thy little ones, before thy suffering. Thou, when thy soul was full of sublime purpose, in pained silence didst hear their words of selfish strife, wounding thy spirit. (O Master! forgive us for all the many times since then that we have wounded thee.) Sublime was thy example of humble servitude, as kneeling before each one thou didst wash their feet. Unmindful of thyself, thy solicitude was all for them, whom thou wouldst not leave as orphans. Having loved thine own, thou didst love them to the end. For them, thou didst pray to the Father, and O blessed thought! not only for them but for us also who have believed on thee through their word!

We remember, dear Lord, as the awful hour of thy deepest humiliation arrived, that thou in agony of spirit didst seek the garden spot. O that we could have watched with thee one hour!

"Gethsemane, thine olive grove
A welcome screen for Jesus wove,
To veil his agony!
Oh, when, thou lone and hallowed spot,
Can be by friend or foe forgot,
Thy midnight mystery?"

"Gethsemane, thy name is graved
Deep on the hearts of all the saved,
And cannot be erased;
For, till eternity shall end,
Oh, who in full can comprehend
The scene in thee embraced?

"Draw near, my heart, and gaze anew,
Where Jesus on that night withdrew,
To bear the load for thee;
Come read the love that in him wrought,
Come linger long in tender thought,
In lone Gethsemane."

Dear Lord, we must follow thee in our meditation for we remember thy betrayal. We remember the traitorous kiss, the armed band, the fleeing disciples. To face the powers of darkness thou wast left alone, and yet not alone, for the Father was with thee. But from this hour he did not save thee, for, for this cause camest thou unto this hour. Thou wast bound as a criminal and led before men of evil. Do we remember what followed? O Savior! can we forget thy burden, of suffering and the scenes of indignity and horror? How men smote thee -- mocked thee -- spat *upon* thee -- scourged thee and then -- O shameful ignominy -- condemned thee to be crucified!

"I see my Lord, the pure, the meek, the lowly,
Along the mournful way in sadness tread;
The thorns are on His brow, and He, the holy,
Bearing His cross, to Calvary is led,

"Silent He moveth on, all uncomplaining,
Though wearily His grief and burden press;
And foes-nor shame nor pity now restraining --
With scoff and jeering mock His deep distress.

"'Tis death's dark hour; yet calm Himself resigning,
E'en as a lamb that goeth to be slain,
The wine-press lone He treadeth, unrepining,
And falling blood-drops all His raiment stain."

We remember, precious Lord, though we little understand, the night thou didst pass through when by the grace of God thou didst taste death for every man. Thou hast once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that thou mightest bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. We remember, dear Lord, that we Gentiles in time past were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and, without God in the world. But now in thee, we who were far off are made nigh by thy blood, and through thee we have access by one spirit unto the Father. We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, thou thyself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, an habitation of God through the spirit.

We remember that through thy poverty, we who were dead in trespasses and sins, have been made rich. We have received forgiveness of sins, peace, life, sonship, joy, love, the hope of immortality. Thou hast become unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and

deliverance. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with thee; if so be that we suffer with thee, that we may be also glorified together -- to be kings and priests for a thousand years, to bless all the families of earth.

Dear Lord, our cup runneth over; our hearts *o'erflow* with gratitude! Our souls do magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Savior. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Gladly, dear Master, do we gather about thy table to commemorate thee; to bless the *cup*, and to break the bread, the communion of thy blood and thy body. And so will we keep the Feast until that rapturous day when we shall drink the new *cup* with thee in the Kingdom of God. For WE REMEMBER THEE. - *W. J. Siekman.*

Our Sacred Feast

"This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." - 1 Cor. 11:25, 26.

SOUL refreshing and precious truths are contained in these two of the many inspired texts bearing on the "Last Supper." As we review the several accounts of that memorable feast, the meditative spirit is at once carried back over the long intervening centuries and is seated at a table in an upper room, intimately associated with at least eleven men like ourselves, sharing with them in the surprises, the gentle rebukes of love, and is profoundly impressed with the strange actions and the heart stirring words of our Lord and Master. We hear his significant statement, "I have *longed eagerly* to eat this Passover *with you* before I suffer. (*Moffatt.*) Momentous words we *so* yearn to fully comprehend! And what if nearly twenty centuries have passed away since those words were uttered *in* that upper room? Had they been the utterance of any other than Jesus, they would today be little more than a faint echo and be meaningless to present generations; but the words of him who spake as never man may speak can never become any mere projected echo.

We are today far removed from the site of that chosen room; it may not even remain to this time, unless it be that in regard to it we place more faith in traditional claims than is usually wise to do. But we may still be blessedly near to him who there expressed his desire to share a last Passover with his own.

Who that has known in experience how divine love can draw to itself, and whose heart has been made more tender through the condescending grace of God, as Jesus revealed it in that upper room, can be otherwise than affected more and more by pondering, its many exhibitions and by taking to heart the lessons to be learned *in* that hallowed spot. Memory, mind, and will, having caught the meaning of the words, "this do *in remembrance of me*, can never forget that which is so blessed to remember, and to *daily* call to mind, for it was not only an hour of feasting, it was also an hour of never to be forgotten revelations of the heart of Jesus.

Then, too, it was not only a matter of asking us to employ this simple method of keeping his love in remembrance, but there was a further remark. He adds a still further measure to our cup of hope and joy by saying, that this feast is to last *only* "Till the day I drink it new with you in the Kingdom of my Father." This is a promise of another and greater feast. It speaks of a time when this present feasting, which is symbolic in its joy, will give place to a banquet of sublime, celestial grandeur such as our loftiest language could never adequately express. Hence, Jesus is asking us to now join him in a beautiful perpetuation of a feast which, by its very simplicity and

richness in hope, will keep fresh and ever green in our affections the reality of his unchanging love, and enable us to continually share with him the joy of unfading anticipations of the eternal feast to come. *Thus both* Redeemer and redeemed are looking forward to a blissful hour when, amid the acclaim of heaven's hosts, the "Bride and Bridegroom are made one, before the Great White Throne."

"He comes, for O! his yearning heart
No more can bear delay,
To scenes of full unmingled joy
To call his Bride away."

But the Apostle would have us pause *for* a moment to make an examination. Perhaps he remembers something that was all too apparent in that upper room where the farewell feast was first instituted. He would have us keep in mind that underneath every ordinance set forth in the Word, whether it be concerning baptism as a symbol of our becoming dead with Christ, or in the keeping of this feast of remembrance, there are fundamental principles of the greatest possible importance. These principles, or conditions, determine the degree of blessing and profit any participant therein shall receive. The most careful conformity to these conditions, therefore, will bring the heart into a close and precious sense of relationship with the Lord, whereas any neglect or carelessness, lukewarmness, or any unforgiven sin, will be sure to bring condemnation. It is this very vital fact that Paul wants all to keep in mind, and so he points out the dangers, and the consequences of eating and drinking unworthily, improperly, "For he eats condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (1 Cor. 11:29.) As *in* the typical feast there was a strict rule demanding the putting away of all forms of leaven from the abode of the participant, so we must be exercised with the same zeal to obey the divine law of heart purity, "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." - 1 Cor. 5:7, 8.

There are many ways in which one may count the *blood* of Christ our Passover common, or treat it with disrespect. According to the above warning of Paul, *any* unworthy conduct on our part would be counted as making us guilty of doing despite to that sacrificial blood. In the case of the Jewish *Law* the blood was to be sprinkled *on* the door overhead *and* on both its sides, but never was the base *or* step *to* be thus sprinkled, Even the typical blood must not be trampled underfoot of man, how much *more* reprehensible then it would be to put the blood of God's *Lamb* under our feet' in any manner whatsoever. May God give us the deepest spiritual discernment in this matter, lest we sin in so serious a thing. Like all of God's arrangements for our approach to him, this, the greatest of all provisions, must beheld in a true reverence; and above all other things required is that of heart purity and a humbled spirit.

And there must also be uppermost in our thought a very real sense of gratitude as we keep fresh in mind the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf. The full import of the words of Jesus must be pondered: "This do in *remembrance of me.*" And so it must be when we hearken to the words of the Apostle as he relays the words of Jesus to us, "Ye do show the Lord's death till become." This sense of overwhelming gratitude will make possible the attitude of heart in which to properly survey the sacrifice Jesus asks us to remember. It will make the following lines a true expression of what we have been given to see of the greatness of our Lord's work for us, and also fill our souls with the spontaneous responsiveness he looks for in us. How well the poet has expressed our heart's joy:

"According to Thy gracious Word,

In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord,
I will remember Thee.

"Thy body, broken for my sake,
My bread from heaven shall be;
Thy testamental cup I take,
And thus remember Thee.

"When to the cross I turn mine eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God,- my Sacrifice,
I must remember- Thee.

"Remember Thee and all Thy pains,
And all Thy love to me;
Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
I will remember Thee.

"Then of Thy grace I'll know the sum,
And in Thy likeness be,
When Thou hast in Thy Kingdom come
And dost remember me."

Such, indeed, is ever the response of a heart truly mellowed by the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Such is the ardent devotion produced by the proper vision of the costly redemptive work carried out on behalf of sinful men, by the Father and the Son. Underneath all of our responses of heart and mind to this exhibition of divine love, there should never be absent the wondering question, "Would he devote that sacred head, for such a worm as I?" But this, needed vision can be ours only when our eyes have been washed clear by the tears of genuine repentance, and ours only so long as our hearts remain broken by the very greatness 'of his mercy into tender and fervent devotion. It is only then that we may *affirm* with a confidence founded on experience

"Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
I've lost sight of all beside --
So enchained my spirit's vision,
Looking at the Crucified."

And where may we better examine ourselves to discover these attitudes, than back again in that faraway upper room? The eleven men assembled there are truly representative of the rest of us, and therefore from them, in their dull-mindedness, illustrating what is often our own, we may, by carefully observing the tenderness of Jesus in seeking to correct their far too limited vision, learn greatly needed lessons.

Joy and sorrow are strangely blended in that same upper room. Compassionate love speaks there by 'both word and action, in rebuke and pity. Along with his words of happiness over the occasion, Jesus must also speak of things sad and regrettable. Side by side with the sublimest of opportunities ever afforded any of his own, there are things present which are like a dark blot o a what might have been a spotless page of their loyal devotion. And over it all, our minds should prayerfully ponder. It is possible for us to find these things of a regrettable character, a true,

picture of our own fickleness, or a much too - real illustration of our own self-seeking and lovelessness. If into that most hallowed room the dark stain of human weakness came; if in the sacred seclusion of that upper room where all that was unworthy and unclean should have been shut out, or shamed into silence, we hear contending voices, not over an eagerness to be the one to wash the Savior's feet, but in clamor over who ought to be considered greatest among them; if in that place apart and alone with Jesus is found the sinister spirit of betrayal in which, with a shamelessness beyond, understanding, a traitor heart asks in unison with the others, "Lord, is it I?" -where, then, are we safe from the baneful presence of inbred sin? Where is there a place so far removed from Satan's influence that nothing defiling can come? -- yes, where indeed, if from this spot selected by Jesus, himself, for so sublime a farewell feast with his own, the inherent weaknesses of our flesh or the malignant forces of evil were not shut out!

Oh the correctness of the Word's analysis of the human heart: "Deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" Surely, not until we are safe within the gates of glory, *where* no stain of sin can ever come, may we cease to say to ourselves in godly fear:

"My soul, be on thy guard;
Ten thousand foes arise;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard:
To draw thee from the prize."

May God grant to us the undimmed spiritual perception so needed, and by which alone we may hope to be kept from the baneful results of a deceitful heart. May we have been so taught of God, and so have received of the love of Jesus that he can now say of us as he said of his *faithful ones* in that room, "He that is washed . . . is clean every whit: and *ye are clean.*" And yet a *greater* cleansing came to these disciples, and so it can come to us. We can know that if those men could return to that upper room in after days, not with contention over any supposed right to highest place, nor with a pre-occupation with self, sufficient to blind them to golden opportunities, there would be indeed the marked evidence of the salutary effects of the loving tenderness of Jesus. Assuredly there would be humble confessions made by all. Each would feel that his own deflection had been the most reprehensible and inexcusable, and all would regret that in an hour of such solemnity they had been so slow to grasp the glorious opportunities of that quickly passing hour. Upon every heart there would have been stamped an indelible reminder of how a perverted vision must inevitably weave into the web and woof of life's record those sad mistakes over which many a tear will fall when grace has refined and mellowed the heart. Such mistakes, though graciously forgiven, must still linger on in memory like shadows across our heavenward path.

We are remembering, then, that Jesus has asked us to make this feast a *special remembrance act*. Manifestly the story of that first Supper is not told us with several repetitions just to make known the sad mistakes of the disciples, but rather to forewarn us of imminent dangers surrounding ourselves, and also to strengthen our hearts when our weaknesses are all too painfully revealed. How we too have need of the same words of comfort spoken to our prototype, Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." We have not acted better than they. Perhaps we shall yet see when all things are fully revealed to us, that ours has been the most perfidious conduct, and the least inexcusable short-sightedness. We should not forget that these men made *their* mistakes of the upper room when "the spirit was not yet given." Subsequent to the anointing of the spirit there are no repetitions by them of these same mistakes, are there? Are we not too often prone to make comparisons between ourselves and them as we think of them -before Pentecost, and then compliment ourselves on being so much better than they? But if making comparisons at all, let it be as between them *prior* to the coming of the spirit on them, and since its coming on us. Their

mistakes were *before* the Spirit was given, while ours have been *after* receiving it. Thus viewed, how manifestly we need the lessons of that upper room.

Let us then recall these vitally important words found in John's record: "Jesus knowing that he came from God, and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." He girded himself to do this menial service for men so concerned over claims for highest place in his Kingdom. Let us not forget here that we are in our meditations now as one among them. We are thus not only seeing their neglects, their need of instruction, and their need of a richer measure of his love, but we are being most mercifully and necessarily humbled also. What, think you, was their first startling recollection, and the first sudden awakening of their consciences? Surely there was a deep inward sense of conviction, a deep sense of shame over their unbecoming conduct, and a rapidly growing wish that they had been more utterly unmindful of self, and more alert to grasp the opportunity to wash the Master's own feet. They had called him Lord and Master, but lips and heart had been out of tune. Peter's reactions to having Jesus wash his feet reveals much of this inward sense of his soul's awakening. This would have been our own inner feeling then, we know, and, alas, even yet it might be often our confessed sense of shame and regret.

Alas indeed! such precious privileges still often come to us on fleeting wings, and ere our dull preoccupied minds are awakened to the heaven-sent opportunity to serve our Master in humility, the golden opportunity passes out of reach, perhaps never to return. Disguised angels come close to us, bringing priceless moments into our daily round of duties, but our eyes are dimmed with earth-born mists, or our hearts have not been sufficiently purified by the cleansing blood to perceive that God comes thus near, and so our *backward* look reveals, when too late, how greatly we too have failed.

Here those words, "Inasmuch as *ye did it not*," have a particularly solemn warning for us. Oh, ye who are even yet contending for the right to recognition above others of God's children, ye who lay claim to greatest faithfulness among his people, will you not pause in your disputing for a moment and gaze on this upper-room scene, while from the lips of him who came from God and is soon to return to God are heard these momentous words, "*This do in remembrance of me*"? Be not concerned over who shall be greatest, but be alert to perceive that he who *would be* greatest, must be *now* in heart and spirit servant of all.

And since memory holds sad recollections of our own all too frequent failures in such things, let us remember the tenderness of Jesus, how in that sacred spot he sought in a divine gentleness to correct such things in those men. How thankful we may well be that the story contains much of how Jesus lovingly rebuked and -helped those he "so loved." It means to us a source of encouragement, that he thus patiently dealt with them; and may his patience produce in *us* the same manifest transformation. Precious to Jesus are all those the Father hath given him; albeit, there are still impetuous characters rushing in where angels would fear to tread, self-centered hearts still tainted with inherent selfishness, hasty sons of thunder too ready to destroy rather than save, and a sad overlooking of greater things because the *vision* has not risen above the minor concerns. Who among us will not confess within our own ashamed hearts that such we have frequently been. Then, oh, the blessedness of our "remembrance" of Jesus by which we are assured of *his abiding love for* us notwithstanding all our failures, and with such a picture of our own stumblings we are ready to confess,

"Thus might *I* hide *my* blushing face,
When Thy dear cross appears;

Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
And melt mine eyes to tears.

Then with these upper room lessons forever fixed in heart and mind *we* follow him to the Garden of Gethsemane. He knows how much we want above all other things to be as near as possible to him- in this another secluded and sacred spot, and we can believe that he fully reciprocates our pure desire for this most intimate association with him -- he always does, and so we enter with him. In mind we are of the privileged three who went furthest with him *on* that occasion. And however much we may feel at this distance that we would have done better than they, the evidence is written over our own records far too repeatedly to give us any right, to sit in judgment on them. Their story is ours too. Not once, but alas many times we have been found sleeping amid circumstances' when every faculty of our spiritual (being should have been in lively animation. Times there have been when an over-confidence in our own fidelity has led us into boastful self-praise, or into an assuming of superior attitudes. Certainly we knew of trials to come by which many would prove deficient in qualities we were assured *we* possessed ourselves, and *so* our *spirit* was that of certainty that others would fail, but we would never, no never forsake the Lord, though all others did so. Perhaps, because of some special and much to be appreciated 'knowledge imparted to us relative to a wider *vision* of God's completed redemptive purpose, we have become imbued with a spirit of uncharitableness by which the highest seat at even this sacred remembrance feast was unblushingly claimed as *our* special right. Pitiful revelation! Instead of revealing that such unmerited grace had humbled us into *vying* with each other for the "chief of sinners" rating, it has, revealed *how* easily we can fall into spiritual *pride*. How regrettable it is that such lack of humble gratitude on *our* part *should* attempt to shut away from *this table* such a multitude of those redeemed by the same precious blood. The atmosphere of this feasting upper room is pervaded with the blessed assurance that "at the Cross there's room" for every one. The word, therefore, that rings through all our Savior's doings there, and in the Garden, and on the Cross is the same, "Keep *me* in remembrance" and ever follow me.

What mystery surrounds Gethsemane's dark hour! Its full meaning must, so long as knowing only in part is ours, remain beyond the scope of our comprehension. The words of the familiar hymn are indeed true, "And none of the ransomed ever knew, how dark was the night the Lord passed through." That was a dark shadow through which our Substitute must pass, the depths of which, thank God, we need never experience since he suffered all for us. It is a shadow too impenetrable, for our eyes to pierce, and only he who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" could know all that caused *the* intense agony and bloody sweat we see him enduring there. But it is enough that -we have been able, in grateful love, to understand that such a depth of anguish was, his because he was to be "made sin for us." We 'know his "strong crying and tears" represented a depth of love we cannot fathom, a devotion to the will of "God beyond anything ever shown, and his craving for the wakeful sympathy of his three disciples reveals to our astonished eyes how much he expects us to enter into all his sufferings. Precious claim on our understanding love. How often, oh, how lamentably often, we too must have disappointed him! We have not done better than Peter, James, and John. But God did not forget. He sent his angels of comfort. Those disciples *slept*. Henceforth, *shall you, shall I?* Will we not *remember* him in this, and hereafter be alert to watch with him, and alert to minister comfort to those of his who are now in need of our loving, understanding sympathy? He will count it all *as* done unto himself. May this all have been so impressed upon our minds, yes, in all its possible lessons, that henceforth our active response will be,

"Gethsemane *can* I forget?
Or there Thy conflict see,
Thine agony and bloody sweat,

And not remember Thee?

But there is something more, to the sweetness of this feasting: It is his promise to "come again," to *remember us* as of those to whom' it was said, "Ye do *show* the Lord's 'death *till he come.*" *Till he come for us -- come, for the Bride the Father gave him, the Church he gave his blood to redeem. Certain it is, if our faith has been fully at rest in the reality of the redemption his death secured for us, and in that faith we still abide with a confidence that he who began the good work in us will surely complete it -- then we are in the blessed experience of a lively hope, that blessed hope, a purifying hope and, therefore, we are no strangers to the longing expressed in the following beautiful lines: .*

"A little while; with patience, Lord,
I fain would ask, 'How long?'
For how can I, with such a hope
Of glory and of home,
With such a joy awaiting me,
Not wish the hour were come?
How can I keep the longing back,
And how suppress the groan?"

Now in the little while that yet remains we will "keep the feast." We will continue to bless God for "the blood of the covenant wherewith we are sanctified," and by his help keep under that all sufficient cleansing blood. Ere long the number of God's elect will be complete. In a little time perhaps shorter than we think-we will have proved our devotion to Christ up to the measure he seeks in all his own. Then the toils of the way will be over, the waiting ended, our suffering for his sake finished. Till then, this "remembrance" of him will be treasured and sealed up in our inner heart "*till he come.*" Home is near and each day draws nearer. Therefore in a joy unspeakable and full of glory we wait for "his glorious appearing," and our abundant entrance into his presence, where we shall see his face, and oh!

"Then of Thy grace I'll know the sum,
And in Thy likeness be,
When Thou hast in Thy Kingdom come
And dost remember me."

- J. J. Blackburn.

Interesting Selections

Are Ye Able?

Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. - Matt. 20:22.

Able to suffer without complaining,

To be misunderstood without explaining;

Able to endure without breaking,

To be forsaken without forsaking;

Able to give without receiving,

To be ignored without grieving;

Able to ask without commanding,

To love despite misunderstanding;

Able to turn to the Lord for guarding,

Able to wait for his own rewarding?

- *"Herald of Hope"*

Worldliness

It is all too possible for the believer to be affected by the spirit of the age in which he lives. He can accept its maxims and adjust himself to its intellectual and social fashions. Perhaps, in the last resort, this is the real meaning of worldliness. To be a worldly Christian is to be a Christian who is unduly influenced by the spirit of the times in which he lives.

- *Bible Students Monthly*, Eng.

Leaving a Mark

"So few men venture beyond the blazed trail,
'Tis he who has the courage to go past the sign
That cannot in his mission fail.
He will have left at least some mark behind
To guide some other brave exploring soul."

Earnest, Honest, Scriptural Contention

"Exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." - Jude 3.

THIS advice is given because certain men, ungodly, "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ," had crept in among those to whom Jude was writing. We inquire, therefore, is this "bond servant of Jesus Christ" urging his brethren to conduct themselves contrary to the definite instructions of the great Apostle Paul as well as that of the wisest man of the previous dispensation? Surely that cannot be. Paul writes: "The servant of the Lord must not strive." And, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." While Solomon says: "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water [as by the making of an opening in a dam]: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with." "It is an honor for a man to cease from strife; but every fool will be meddling." (2 Tim. 2:24; Phil. 2:3; Prov. 17:14; 20:3.) It is evident from these inspired statements that contention and strife are evils which the Christian must make every provision to avoid. Whatever our interpretation shall be of Jude's exhortation let us make sure that it does not lead us into the error of violating these other plain instructions of the spirit. For our safety note well the intimation in the verse quoted from the letter to the Philippian brethren -- that if any of them discover a contentious spirit developing in themselves they will be wise to suspect that it is because of thinking too well of themselves and not appraising highly enough the virtues of their brethren. To avoid "strife and vainglory" "let each esteem other better than. himself."

No saint will lack opportunities for developing the argumentative, contentious spirit. For the guarding of their hearts against this catastrophe all need a full garrison of the "peace of God," the peace that is characteristic of God, a peace that has not been ruffled though twenty billion sinners have persisted in their disagreement with him for 6,000 years. Only thus, by humility and a God given peace, can one be certain not to be overcome by this most seductive evil. The flesh can very expertly argue itself into believing that it is valiantly "set for the defense of the Gospel," when the truth is that it is merely standing up for its own opinions. Also, "Watch ye, *stand fast in the * faith*, quit you like men, be strong," can be perverted into authority to use the methods of human depravity in defending *our* interpretation of various teachings that have to do with the Gospel. (1 Cor. 16:13.) If we are to "shine as lights in the world," it will be not because of our contentiousness of "the thing believed," becomes very apparent when one thinks of the confusion that must quickly result if every saint is enjoined to devote his consecrated energies to contending with every saint who disagrees with him on some point he thinks was "once for all delivered to the saints." By that process this present phase of the "Kingdom of heaven" will be entirely devoid of the "peace" that is to be one of its hallmarks. The divine definition fits perfectly in this and all passages, but our common parlance has so long used the modern definition, "my belief," it is easy to substitute it for the divine one: "Faith is the *assurance* of things hoped for." - Heb. 11:1, R. V.

* English readers need to have in mind that one of the characteristics of the Greek language is the frequent use of the definite article before the abstract names of virtues and vices, *etc.*, but with the force of the indefinite article in English.

Of course no one would think of putting this thought of "a belief" into such passages as "Though I have the doctrines that would remove mountains," or the "demons have a creed that makes them tremble," or "the belief of Abraham," etc. But there are ten instances, including our text, where some think this meaning of "the thing believed" is the intended one. We must not therefore say it cannot be the meaning in some instances, but to the writer it is unthinkable that any word in any language would be used in its many thousands of appearances with one definite meaning and that there should be ten instances, and only ten, where an entirely different meaning is intended.

According to the note which Professor Wilson gives in the back of the Diaglott he knows of no definition other than that of "belief, trust, confidence." In discussing this verse in Jude, the *Expositors Bible* comments: "Every Christian ... is to 'contend earnestly,' with all the energy and watchfulness of an athlete in the arena, for the preservation of this sacred deposit, lest it be lost or corrupted. And the manner in which this earnest contest is to be maintained is not left doubtful; not with the sword, as Beza rightly remarks, nor with intemperate denunciation or indiscriminate severity, but with the mighty influence of a holy life, built upon the foundation of our 'most holy faith.'" Elsewhere the same publication gives the definition of faith as "being the confidence we have in God." The *Companion Bible* has a note of similar import, defining "faith" as "The living, Divinely implanted principle.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. One whose faith is in God instead of in himself will be able to discuss doctrinal differences with others in full confidence that when God's time has arrived *he* will give them a change of mind," provided they are really wrong. "Deceitful flesh, desperately wicked above all things, can, however, talk one into believing that his motive is to bring the opposing one "to the acknowledging of the truth," when the real purpose is to get him to acknowledge "that I am right." Fighting the good fight *of faith* means doing to the best of our ability what seems to be the will of the Lord for us to do, and then leave him to "direct 'the issue." - 1 Tim. 6:12;, 2 Tim. 2:24, 25; Jer. 17:;9.

FAITH THAT IS NOT DEAD

The testimony of the context indicates that what Jude would guard the brethren against is a lack of trust which might even eventuate in "denying the Lord" (ver. 5), and thus fall like those who left Egypt long ago only to mark the path of their journey with their graves because they "believed not. Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, and "those who make separations" are given as illustrations of the fleshly mindedness to which a lack of faith depraves one; and then in the twentieth verse the safeguard is recommended: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. But faith is not a selfish thing, so Jude's next thought is as to what we can do for the brethren who are "weak in faith "and on some have mercy, who are in doubt, and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

Having said this much it is necessary to confess that if we have faith, confidence in our God, we will also have confidence in the revelation he has provided for us, and while exerting ourselves with all the vigor of an athlete to maintain and develop this trust in him, we will as vigorously strive for the purity of the message that is to be lived by us, and given out by ourselves and our brethren. One who is willing to see the Word of God polluted by being handled with unholy hands, spirit or human, has no great love for that Word. If his love is genuine, he will not change a syllable of it himself or permit any one else of this or any other generation to alter it in any detail. And he would not think of submitting a dogmatic interpretation suggested by his brain as a substitute for the clear cut revelation the holy spirit has not yet seen fit to give.

For ourselves and for all our brethren, and particularly for those who are caving a desperate fight against the fleshly desire to engage the fray with the carnal weapons of sarcasm, etc., let us join our hearts in the doxology with which Jude ends his letter: "Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time and now, and for evermore. Amen.

- P. E. Thomson.

Love's True Basis and Purpose

"We know that we have passed from death unto life." - 1 John 3:14.

THROUGHOUT our Lord's teachings he made it clear that an understanding of God's purposes is reserved for those who are in harmony of heart with the Father. The Apostle Paul explained this in several ways, and particularly in his second letter to Timothy where he links "rightly divide the word of truth" with "give diligence to present thyself approved unto God." - 2 Tim. 2:15, R. V.

When the Jews marveled at Jesus' teaching, saying, "How knoweth this man learning, having never learned?" Jesus replied, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, . . ." (John 7:16, 17.) From these and many other passages it is clear that the development of Scriptural understanding is dependent on our making ourselves acceptable unto God.

At the outset he requires that we shall demonstrate a sincere faith, for without faith there is no basis for the Lord's "mighty works." (Matt. 13:58.) To understand the deep things of God, however, we need the guidance of the holy spirit, which God grants only to those who have made an acceptable consecration of their lives and wills. Thus we learn of God's purposes not by our own intellectual efforts, but by submitting ourselves to God so that his holy spirit may reveal him and his purposes to us.

This brings us to the crux of all our searching after truth, for the holy spirit is the spirit of divine love, and if we are to retain its sanctifying and enlightening influence, we must allow its loving spirit to permeate our lives.

In the famous 13th chapter of the first letter to the Church at Corinth the Apostle Paul left us in no doubt regarding the pre-eminence of love. "If I have . . . all knowledge," he wrote, "and all faith . . . but have not love, I am nothing." "Follow after love," he added, and then, as a supplementary consideration, "desire spiritual gifts."

Throughout our Lord's earthly ministry he emphasized above all things the overwhelming importance of love. In his first recorded address he exhorted his disciples to love even their enemies, adding that in this way they might become "perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." - Matt. 5:48.

Love, Jesus explained, governs our entire relationship with our Lord and with the Father. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." (John 14:23.) "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love." (John 15:9.) In these closing days of the old dispensation, when real and imagined differences have divided the brethren, are we not in danger of losing sight of the fact that no matter how profound we believe our understanding of God's Word to be, it is "as nothing if we have not love.

It may seem that love for the brethren is easy compared with love for our enemies, but that does not seem to be the thought which our Lord gave to the disciples. We might say with equal truth that it is easier for a mother to love her own child than the child of a stranger, but the strength of mother love is nevertheless known to be much greater. So it is with that higher love for the brethren. If we have the holy spirit within us, we shall find no difficulty in recognizing it in others. Thus shall we know that the divine spirit of love is within us.

The Psalmist wrote, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." (Psa. 133:1.) In the 55th Psalm he shows how real is this love between brethren by describing the pain which is caused when it is withheld. "For it is not an enemy that reproached me, he wrote, "then would I have borne it, but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." - Psa. 55:12-14.

The Master knew that the evidence of the holy spirit of love within us would be shown in love for the brethren, and so during the last Supper with his disciples he said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another *as I have loved you*." (John 13:34.) Later, he added, as if to emphasize the seriousness of this new charge, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.) By this test of love for the brethren, Jesus explained, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples."

The Apostle John, who conveyed to us so wonderfully the Christian doctrine of love, stated that by this test we shall know that we are acceptable to God. "We know that we have passed from death unto life," he wrote, "because we love the brethren." (1 John 3:14.) "There will be difficulties, of course, as Brother Russell showed so clearly in his comments on this passage of Scripture:

"It would indeed be easy to love the brethren and to lay down our lives for them if they were all like our dear Master and Exemplar; (but they are not. The inspired Apostle tells us that among the brethren are not many noble, not many great, not many wise, not many learned, not marry rich. Now then, we may see why the Lord enjoined upon us that we should love one another, and rather implied that it would be a difficult matter to do *so* at all times, to make allowances for the weaknesses of the flesh *and* the imperfections of judgment in one another. *And* this is exactly what the Apostle John declares, *saying*, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life; because we love the brethren.'"

The cultivation of that higher standard of love which is understood in Christ's word's, "love as I have loved you," is vital if the child of God is to make his calling and election sure. Too often it is regarded only as a very desirable quality exercised primarily for the benefit of others, but *this* standard of *conduct* is sometimes reached by those who are not even professing Christians. The Lord requires much more from us: namely, that our love for others *shall* not be an end in itself, but evidence of the development of a loving character. "Now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart." (1 Tim. 1:5.) That is to say, explained Brother Russell, that the object of all instruction and discipline on God's part is to bring us to this character-likeness of himself. Learning to love the brethren is part of our development, and its expression is, therefore, a symptom, not of some merit of our *own*, but of the holy spirit of love within us.

The Scriptures clearly distinguish between the duty love (*Greek-Phileo*), which we are to show to all, and the higher love (Greek-Agape), which Jesus showed to the Father and which he enjoins us to cultivate. The Apostle Peter shows that brotherly kindness *or Phileo* love is a necessary step in our spiritual development, but he put its acquisition at an earlier stage than the higher love which is to crown all our spiritual endeavor. (2 Peter 1:7.) This is the love of which the Apostle Paul said, "suffereth long and is kind . . . envieth not . . . vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with truth; covereth all things [with a mantle of sympathy], believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (1 Cor. 13:18, R. V.) Finally, he

concludes that love is the thing that "never faileth." Its acquisition indicates that the new creature has reached a high standard of character development.

"The fruit of the spirit is love," wrote the Apostle Paul, and using another metaphor, Christ referred to the fruit of the spirit as a "light" -- "Ye are the light of the world." It is the holy spirit within us that provides that light and causes us to shine both in love to the brethren and in doctrinal truth. Our Master knew, nevertheless, that many unconsecrated brethren would obtain a knowledge of true doctrine from those who are living under the influence of the holy spirit, although those who are not growing in Christ may not appreciate the depth of the truths they are taught. Only those who have the Lord's holy spirit, however, can have that rare and precious quality of love by which "all men shall know that ye are my disciples." - John 13:35.

Let us therefore put first things first by continued diligence in our consecration, maintain God's loving holy spirit as ruler of our lives and wills, and let us give evidence of this by the love' we have one to another. On that basis and on that alone will the Lord help us to resolve our differences and maintain the unity of faith. "Beloved, let *us* love one another; for love is of God.; and every one that loveth, is born [R.V. "begotten"] of God and knoweth God. ... If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." - 1 John 4:7, 8, 12.

-L. H. Bunker, Eng.

Our Precious Relationship

Beloved, now are we the sons of God. - 1 John 3:2.

AMONGST THE most wonderful truths made crystal clear to the Lord's people in these latter days, are those relating to the sons of God. Though we have often meditated upon these precious truths, have we ever *fully* realized "what manner of love the Father has bestowed *upon us*, that we should be called the sons of God"?

It is not to be expected that the world of mankind would understand this relationship, since it is only spiritually discerned, and as the Scriptures declare, "The world knoweth us not as it knew him riot," yet surely it is expected that the professed "followers of God as dear children" should understand their relationship to the One whom our Lord told his disciples was "his Father and their Father, his God and their God." Not only should they be fully aware of that blessed relationship, but they should also be instructed and guided by their God and Father. "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons- of .God." - Rom. 8:14.

This relationship to God as sons was little if at all understood before our Lord came in the flesh, though as the Apostle writes, "The law was a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ." Yet when "he came to his own, and his own received him not . . . as many as received him, to them gave he power [privilege] to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his Name." (John 1:11, 12.) That this blessed privilege was also passed to the Gentiles, we are 'assured by the Apostle, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ. Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." - Gal. 3:26-29; 4:6, 7.

Though we are told "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the, spirit is spirit" (John 3:6) do we not realize that our relationship to God is none the less real because of the spirit? Surely it a fleshly relationship, lasting 60 or 70 years, is real to us, should not a relationship of the spirit, which can last an eternity, mean much more to us?

There are those dear friends who, in mistaken humility, seem very hesitant in taking to themselves these very personal promises, thus failing to make them fully their own. But, beloved of God, is it not true that the principle of "according to your faith," clearly established by the Master at his first advent, is applicable here also? And should not this fact help us to realize that the extent to which we enter into the privileges of this blessed sonship is left with us? In other words, is it not true that to the extent that we are led by the spirit of God, we are the sons of God? and that "the spirit ;beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God," only to the extent that we, by faith, accept that witness, through the written Word of God? - See Rom. 8:14-17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

What an inestimable honor and privilege our Father has conferred upon us that we should be exalted to such a wonderful relationship as sons of the Most High God! Of course there are many other beautiful truths that refer to our corporate Christian relationship as "The Church of Christ," "The Bride of Christ," and "The Christ, Head and Body." A wonderful theme indeed, but one. which it is not our purpose to deal with at this time. But, is it not true that this "common union of the Body of Christ," is valid only when based upon our personal relationship to Christ and to the brethren -- and that also through faith unfeigned. Let us not, therefore, permit the wily Adversary

to beguile us, in mock humility, to weaken our faith in God's precious Word; for all of God's promises "are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Let us constantly review these exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be made partakers of the divine nature." "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively [living] hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled,, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God *through faith* unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." - 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:3-5.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but *we know* that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. - 1 John 3:2.

-H. J. Barlow.

Acceptable Service

In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.- Isa. 30:15.

"The great Fisher of men worked quietly as fishers usually do, and, as Isaiah said, riot crying nor lifting up his voice in the streets, yet he was doing his Father's work every minute. We need not become anxious when our sincerest work makes no great noise and has no immediate effect.

Recently Deceased

Mr. Frederick F. Bloss, St. Louis, Mo. - (January).
Mr. John Daniels, St. Louis Mo. - (January).
Mrs. Mary E. Dufreftey, Baltimore, Md. - (February).
Mr. Morton Edgar, Glasgow, Scot. - (February).
Mr. Wm. H. Garman, Pittsburgh, Pa. - (December).
Mrs. Caroline Jameton, St. Louis, Mo. - (February).
Mr. Ernest L. Moore, Beaver Falls, Pa. - (January).
Mrs. Marie D. Siefker, St. Louis, Mo. - (January).
Mr. H. Spain, Swanscombe, Kent, Eng. - (January).

The Question Box

Question:

What is the meaning of St. Peter's statement that "No :prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." - 2 Peter 1:20?

Answer:

Strange as it may seem, this text is usually misunderstood to mean that any one presenting an exposition of Scripture different from that generally held by the Bible study group with which he associates must evidently be in error. His exposition, being at variance with that of the Class (or its leaders), is quite obviously a "private" interpretation. As such it must be rejected.

Such reasoning, of course, is quite wrong, but also, alas, quite common.

The right of private judgment -- private interpretation -- is claimed by all good Protestants. Unfortunately though, it is claimed by them as though it were their *exclusive* possession. Few of them ever, think of exercising the right for themselves, but too many deny it to their brethren. An exposition of Scripture comes their way which clashes with their preconceived ideas -- clashes with the ideas of their group. It is, therefore, unwelcome, and so, instead of investigating, and, if the circumstances warrant, embracing the new teaching, they reject it, rebuke the expositor, and refer to St. Peter's words in support of their position.

Let us turn to the text itself and seek to understand it in the light of its context.

In verses 16, 17, and 18, St. Peter had been speaking of our Lord's Transfiguration, and had insisted that he had been an eye-witness on that occasion, and had himself heard the voice from heaven which said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Nevertheless, sure as he was of these things which he had both seen and heard, there was something even "more sure." It was, he tells us, "The Word of Prophecy."

In a previous Question Box ("Herald," November 1949, page 159) we have been cautioned against a common misconception. Too often we conceive of "prophecy" as though it meant only "prediction." The "Word of Prophecy" is a term that includes all the moral teaching of the Bible, as well as its predictive utterances. Indeed the expression points rather to the moral than to the predictive element. And this body of moral teaching, broken only occasionally by predictions --the whole Bible indeed, insofar as it was known to him, the Apostle Peter affirms to be a safer guide to, faith than even that message from heaven which they who were eye-witnesses of the Transfiguration had made known. No doubt, as they stood on the Mount of Transfiguration and witnessed the honor and glory which Jesus received from the Father, the Apostles understood that the Son of Man was indeed the Son of God, but the very voice which pronounced him God's beloved Son bade them "*hear him.*" (Matt. 17:5.) The Transfiguration was a wonderful thing for them to have witnessed; indeed it was a miracle. And all, of our Lord's miracles are full of tender and wise instruction. Yet should we have learned their true meaning save for the words he spake?

Miracles are "wonders" that arrest our attention; but when our attention has been arrested, we still need to have it engaged and instructed. What the Apostles needed, what we all need, indeed, is not to see an occasional miracle, dazzling in its splendor, but a little light on the dark and troubled path we have to tread, a lamp that will burn steadfastly and helpfully over the work we have to do. Stars are more sublime, meteors more superb and dazzling, but the lamp shining in a dark place is infinitely closer to our practical needs. Plain rules of life that commend themselves to our conscience, in obedience to which we rise above "the world, the flesh, and the devil," and become better, happier mien-these, with some bright hope in the future to attract and draw us on, to assure us that if we do

God's will, we shall enter into God's rest -- these rules and this hope are worth far more to us in the conduct of our daily life than all the signs and wonders ever wrought. *These* are as the lamp by which we can walk and work; miracles are but as the distant stars or occasional flashing comets. And this lamp of rules for daily conduct is given us in the Word of Prophecy.

And here we come to the point of the question with which this discussion began. This wonderful "lamp," which shines so helpfully on the activities of our everyday lives, does so *because it has been lit and is fed by God himself*. Not one single statement in it is the private thought -- the best opinion or counsel -- of the Prophet uttering it. Those Ancient Worthies were no doubt capable of reaching sound conclusions as to the various problems of human life and conduct. Trained in the principles of truth and righteousness they might well be supposed to be able and willing to give wise and wholesome counsel. But the Word of Prophecy did not come that way, says St. Peter. It "came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy spirit."

No prophecy of Scripture is a private interpretation of the Prophet. That is to say, the Word of Prophecy is not a mere logical deduction from the facts of life and nature, by the Prophet uttering it; nor is it a mere guess at things to come, based on a knowledge of what has taken place in the past. A Prophet was not simply a man who, after studying a multitude of various facts, discovered the law which was common to them all, or inferred a maxim on which men would do well to act. Nor was he simply a man who, having studied the ethical forces which were at work in his age, arrived at a probable conjecture as to the results that would flow from them and give its form and pressure to the succeeding age. There was something higher than human wisdom in his utterances, something safer than the forecasts of human reason; for prophecy did not come from the will of man, but holy men, borne along by the holy spirit as the ship is borne before the wind, spake the words that were given them by God. Their prophecies -- their forthtellings -- were not their private interpretations of the moral facts and enigmas of human life; they were the authoritative interpretations of God, himself. There is a Divine Wisdom, therefore an infallible wisdom; -- there is a Divine Power, an Almighty Power in the inspired Word, even when it is most human and imperfect in outward form. And it is this Divine Wisdom and Power which make that Word a sure and certain guide to our feet. The lamp itself may be only an earthen vessel, unskillfully molded, by the hand of man; but else treasured splendor of the light, and the oil that feeds the light, are the gift of God.

The foregoing, we think, is the truth which St Peter is emphasizing. However, two other related truths should not be overlooked:

(1) The meaning of a Scripture cannot be clearly discerned except by such as are guided by the selfsame spirit as that which inspired the Prophet. - 1 Cor. 2:14.

(2) Since *all* Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable (2 Tim. 3:16), it follows that any interpretation given to a single passage of Scripture, which conflicts with the general tenor of Scripture, cannot be the true interpretation.

In closing we submit a few translations of the Greek word translated in our Authorized Version "interpretation." According to the Diaglott a prophecy "is not of its own solution." Rotherham translates: "No prophecy of Scripture becometh self-solving." As J. Rawson Lumby says, it is not of its own "untying." There are hard knots in 'the utterances which God puts in the mouths of his Prophets, which they themselves had not the power of untying. The same word appears in Mark 4:34, in reference to our Lord -only in his case the power to "untie" was possessed. We quote: "When they were alone he expounded [literally, untied] all things 'to his disciples."

- P. L. Read.

Why There is Diversity Among God's People

"Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" - 1 Cor. 4:7.

WHILE IT is true that all men are born with inalienable rights and privileges, yet no man is born without sin. The Scriptures very properly declare that the race in-Adam was sold under sin six thousand years ago. In this sense, therefore, we were not born *free*, but slaves of sin. Neither are we born *equal*. No two persons are exactly alike in opportunity, talent and ability. We differ from one another. God did not create some better and some worse-some more richly endowed and some less richly endowed. We are to take the Bible statement of the origin of humanity, and understand that God made Adam *perfect*. All the imperfections which encumber the human race are the results of the dying process. Sin has made us all to differ, then, from the original image and likeness, of God. Satan brought about this difference through Mother Eve.

In our text, however, the Apostle Paul **has in** mind a new creation in Jesus Christ -- a new order -- amongst whose members there is a difference. Some in the Church have many talents, others, few talents; some have special talents, others have ordinary talents. But Satan is not charged with having given the greater or lesser talents to these. The Apostle says that it is God who has set the various members in the, Body as it has pleased him; and that both this setting or apportioning, of the different members of the Body and the bringing forth of the different degrees of fruitage are manifestations of God's: grace in our hearts. Thus we are made to differ from each other.

CAUSE OF DIVERSITY OF ATTAINMENTS

The matter of growth in the holy spirit is one that is dependent in large measure upon each one's zeal to :know, to do, the will of God. We are put into the school of Christ to learn of him. Some learn more rapidly, others less rapidly. In proportion as they learn, they have greater opportunities and blessings. All are granted a measure of the holy spirit -- all granted some blessing. Those who are anxious to know the will of the Lord and to study it grow the more rapidly, and thus have more of the holy spirit. These are *zealous* to do *the Lord's* will. Their progress is not attributable wholly to themselves, but especially to the favor of God.

The Apostle goes on to say, Ye are God's workmanship; "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." We could not do this work ourselves. The power that is working in us is of God. He is preparing a glorious Temple. He has provided who shall be the chief corner-stone of this Temple, and who shall be the members of the Temple class. We could not choose the" place for ourselves. But in God's providence we each responded to 'the call to be a living stone. The stones were first cut out of the dark quarry, and now they are being shaped and prepared for places in the glorious building.

DIVERSITY OF ANOTHER KIND

The great Master workman is, doing a work upon us. He is chiseling and fashioning us. He is making us what we are. Consequently there is to be no boasting. There is a certain amount of personality connected with each one, however, and if there is too much cross-grain in the stone it will be abandoned. As the Apostle Peter exhorts, we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time. The same Apostle also reminds us that :we :should look up to God and give him praise for all that we have and are. - 1 Pet. 5:6; 4:11.

We are colaborers with God. We give God the praise that he has made us to differ from our former selves, that he is making us thus to differ more every day, and that he will continue the good work as the, days go by and as we seek to do his will. What have we of ourselves? *Nothing!* *We* were wholly dead through Father Adam's disobedience; we were born in this condition, having no right to everlasting life. But God has a Plan which is world-wide in its scheme of blessing. He has proffered the blessings of the highest feature of this Plan to us, and invited us to come to him in advance of the world. And this we receive through his *grace*. - *Reprints*, page R5284.