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To Live Christ -- the Happiest of New Years Our Year Text for 1951

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." - Phil. 1:21.

IT WAS not just because uncertainty shrouded his future, not because he might be brought any day from his dungeon cell to face sentence of death that the great Apostle uttered these words which have exerted a transforming power in the lives of all Christians to this day. It was not merely "now" that Christ was being "magnified" in his body, but "always." (Phil. 1:20.) That word "always" covers every thought, word, and deed from the day of the vision on the road to Damascus, which, laying hold on Saul of Tarsus, changed his breathing out of threatenings and slaughter into the dispensing of the greatest possible of present blessings. It was not only "all the Praetorian camp" (where he at that moment wore the manacles of Christ) that was his field of endeavor; but "all other places," the whole known world. The fragrance of such a life as his could not be confined to the narrow quarters of a soldiers' camp. In fact, the seeds of his planting had already spread until, scattered throughout that vast expanse, there were other lives sending up the same sweet incense; or, under a similar figure, the fragrance of the same anointing oil. "Now, thanks be to that God, who always leads us forth to triumph with the Anointed One, and who diffuses by us the fragrance of the knowledge of him *in every place*. Because we are a sweet odor of Christ to God." - 2 Cor. 2:14, 15, Diaglott.

From the day of his anointing, the purpose that pervaded the life of the Apostle was the glorifying of Christ, the principle that ruled his life was the favor of Christ, and the Word that governed the life, of Christ in every word and act (John 3:11; 5:19, 30; 7:16; 8:28; 14:10, 24) was the sole rule of his own life. He desired no more, whether living or dying, than to win Christ and to be found in him. He truthfully could say not only, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (surely a glorious past), but, bringing his consecration down to the present, he could say just as truthfully, and with even more fervor, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but vile refuse, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." (Phil. 3:7-10.) In this passage the Apostle has touched on some of the details of the life that is "gain" -- "old things

passed away a mind that looks back upon them not with longing, but, rather, with abhorrence; self-confidence gone; justification by faith depended on; an intimate personal knowledge of Christ' his objective. His was a consuming desire that there might be as a reality in his own life the fulness of the power that reached into the depths of the grave and lifted to the very courts of heaven him who became sin for us; his was even an eagerness to "fill up to the brim those things that are left over of the sufferings of Christ" (literal translation). Pervading all this was a calm and solemn purpose-that this life of gain might culminate as did the life he emulated, a willing sacrifice, holy, acceptable -- death, gain. This is to "know Christ"; this "is Christ" -- "the hope of glory" so transcending that the Apostle could conceive of no adversary so powerful, no conditions so distressing, no pathway so demon-infested but that all would be a mere trifle "if *by any paeans*" he "might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Humility might seem to be lacking in a claim so lofty as "for me to live is Christ." In this, however, Paul is not counting that he has already "attained, either were already perfect." On the contrary, true modesty is the key-note of this statement, as it is of the yet more clear one, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." His would not have been the life of Christ if it had not been the life of pressing on; "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." "For all those of our number who are mature, this must be the point of view." (Moffatt.) "Let us mind the *same* thing."

The world's calendar gives us with the New Year a convenient season to re-examine our spiritual standing, a time to renew our spiritual resolves. No question more searching could be asked of ourselves than "Is it true that for me 'to live is Christ'? Have I in every particular, present and future, determined that to die is gain?" No higher resolve can be ours than that these phrases shall be as true of us from this moment to the end of our course as of the faithful one who wrote them-- a weak one like ourselves. But when he was weak (in self), then was he strong (in the Lord) .

In the first phrase the Apostle doubtless would include: (1) separation for Christ, (2) dedication to Christ, (3) use by Christ, (4) likeness to Christ, and (5) concealment in Christ. Briefly let us examine ourselves in the light of each of these points.

SEPARATION FOR CHRIST

To live Christ can never mean less than the life of complete separation which was his. "In the world, but not of it," every phase of life was contacted by him, but by that contact he was no more contaminated than is the pure ray of sunshine by the foulest corner it enlightens.

Jesus' contacts with the evil elements of the world were neither specially sought nor shunned, though when opportunity offered or need required, he found great joy in serving the meanest sinner, or in a literal leaving behind of all worldly minds and in seeking isolated communion with his Father in nature's most inspiring surroundings. The self-righteous one can neither fully appreciate that fellowship nor avoid the fear of contamination if he were to linger in the presence of the sinner brought directly to him from the discovery of her guilt. Rather than exercise charity, self-righteousness, falling under the temptation to pride and self-laudation, would have brought up all the sins of long ago that a black background might be furnished in which his supposed righteousness might shine.

How often we find that earth's follies have "touched" us, for they intrude into our most sacred moments. Even when we are on our knees before the very throne of God, the trivial things of life and often even the polluting influences of the daily contacts will intrude. Physical separation there may have been, but the "unclean thing" has touched us to our damage because we have

touched it in spirit. The natural mind would be content with a physical separation; but as in our separation from Babylon, so in leaving the world, the purpose is that we "be not partakers *of her sins.*" To continue in any of the sins of Babylon or the world, either actively or mentally, may result in a smug though condemned contentment. Separation for Christ inevitably results in a life of blessing for self and for all we contact who partake of his spirit.

DEDICATION TO CHRIST

Vastly the blessings increase when to the separation is added dedication -- consecration. In the separation the loss for Paul, as for Jesus, was home, friends, reputation, prospects; even life itself daily was laid down. As one of the results of his life of consecration hundreds of homes, however, became his, true and eternal friendships were made, and he won favor with the One whose standards are perfect. In dedicating himself to God and his service, he entered upon the course that leads to all that life can offer, the way to the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" reserved for those who "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

The New Year could bring us nothing of greater worth than that old things should pass away, be shut out of our minds, so that we may fix our mental gaze unwaveringly upon the "things that are eternal in the heavens." The completeness of the dedication can be clearly discerned by the individual himself by the reality of the separation. Cunningly the flesh argues the necessity of "things that the life may be "abundant"; with unbelievable persistence the heart supposedly dedicated to him who is love, clings to the ways of the flesh, even relying on evil speaking, envy, sarcasm, malice, in its boasted "contending earnestly for the faith." Perhaps it is well that practically all Christians can look back with shame to such practices in their own lives, that they may have charity with the brother who, while bearing the sacred vessels of the Lord, brings disgrace upon the vessels and the One whose they are. Dedicated? Yes. A priest? Surely, or at least a ;Levite; but before he was dedicated to the Lord, he was dedicated to self, the world, and the Adversary. The habits formed in those days must be outgrown. In consecration he has said, "I am not my own. Take me. Use me. Transform me until no more For me to live is I, the selfish I, the self seeking I, the envious I, the boastful I." "Not I, *but Christ.*" What a shout of victory there is in these words! The arches of eternity will ring with them. "For me to live is Christ," now, and for eternity.

"Naught of self to mar His glory,
Naught of sin to make it dim,
Just a glorious, glorious shining
That the friends around see Him.

Resurrection joys abounding;
Every morning mercies new;
Every day His conscious presence;
All our life one interview."

USE BY CHRIST

In the little loom where is being woven daily the intricate pattern of our lives, strange materials are used. In the vaster loom where the eternal purposes of our God for a universe are being worked out, the Master Weaver uses even such as we; and the result will be a tapestry eternally glorifying him. The most insignificant thread in that loom is necessary to the perfection of the pattern. True dedication, therefore, accepts joyfully so trifling a service as the giving of "a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple"; nor hesitates at any God given service -- no service is too large or too small.

Dedication does not wait for commands; but a mere "this is the will of God concerning *you*" is enough. Before he entered upon the life of sacrifice, our "Fileleader" could say, "Thy law is within my heart." No urging was necessary. He needed only to know that "the will of God" for

him was sanctification, setting apart as a holy sacrifice. One who could without reservation say, "For me to live is Christ," one who knew all the joys and all the cost of dedication, one who knew and emulated the tender mercies of the heavenly courts so that he, too, could "rejoice;" as Jesus did, in sufferings for the Church -- this one beseeches, "by the tender compassions of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice" in dedication that places no restrictions on him who sends the fire that consumes the sacrifice. Paul was speaking from the darkest depths of experiences that had resulted from a dedication to the God of "tender compassion. Not fleshly comforts, honors, and prospects had been showered upon him; but, rather, the Father assured him: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" -- bearing "reproaches, . . . greater riches than the treasures of Egypt"; being "defamed"; made the "filth of the world, the offscouring of all things"; scourged; beaten with many stripes; stoned; thrown into prison--these were the lot of one fully dedicated to the God of all compassion -for him to live was Christ. His Christ was the Christ of the Cross.

Though such experiences are not often today the lot of those who are used by Christ, the half hearted will, even in our milder sufferings with Christ, find abundant reason for discouragement and idleness. There was probably some one in Philippi saying, "There are no opportunities for service today"; while others were packing that box to be sent the thousand miles to cheer Paul's prison cell. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." It is easy to interpret this to mean: "Do good *only* to the household of faith, or at least only to those who show some interest in our message"; thus utterly failing of use for Christ in giving to the neighbor next door the cup of cold water he is ready to accept.

LIKENESS TO CHRIST

Without the dedication that made Paul ready for the most insignificant service, there could have been no likeness to Christ. Also, to attain that likeness, the power working in him must be the "surpassing greatness" of power, even that which raised Jesus from the grave. A lesser power could produce some one or even a few points of likeness to Christ, but for the completing of the likeness, for filling "with all the fulness of God" as Jesus was filled, this miracle that must be worked for every individual of the 144,000, the "*exceeding* greatness of His power" was required.

The intimate, personal, daily, hourly, moment by moment walk with Jesus is truly an essential if we would know him so well as ever to become "like Jesus." Living is not a spasmodic thing indulged in a few moments each day -- "For me to live is Christ [uninterruptedly; eternity has begun for me]." God had graciously given Saul a vision of himself and a vision of Jesus, neither vision to fade until he should be changed, utterly changed, and "old things had passed away, *all things* had become new." Each one of us, too, may "see Jesus," "a living, bright reality," throughout 1951 -- if for us also "old things *are* passed away."

Briefly the beloved disciple sums up the beauties of the One we emulate as "full of grace and truth" -- every grace was his in fulness, and all truth that was due was *lived* by him. To desire less is to fail of attaining his image. To attain it is to "be satisfied when I awake in his likeness."

CONCEALMENT IN CHRIST

"To me to live is Christ" and *not* myself. From the moment one is "in Christ" he is more or less concealed in Christ: the concealing work is begun. Outside of Christ we are nothing, but in front of that cipher place the One who "is able," and we live "according to the power that worketh in us." All power in heaven and in earth is his. In him we, rest the blissful, peaceful, joyful rest of

the full assurance that faith alone can give. It is a "little flock" only that have enjoyed it, for it is only a little flock who have lost faith in self that they might have concealment in him. To enjoy it, self-interests must be abandoned, even the old body itself presented a "living sacrifice." Concealed in him, the very will of self is trampled under foot that he may "work in us 'to *will* and to do. His will alone must reign in us.

For concealment in him, the willing of his will is *first*, and of paramount importance. Without that, in everything we *do* there is a shameful revealing of self, instead of a blessed concealing. Unless the consuming desire is self effacement in Christ, shame and confusion await, even though there are truly "great and mighty wprks" of which to *boast* -- *powerful discourses* that glorify the preacher; hundreds of converts, *our* converts instead of God's; bounties outpoured, "to be seen of men"; bodies given to be burned, for personal vindication: all this without Christ, and "I am nothing" again, for I have lost the One that made the cipher something.

TO DIE IS GAIN

Make these, and the many other things that are comprised in the phrase, "For me to live is Christ, ours and we need no one to instruct us that "to die is gain," a gain that words cannot express, but "God hath revealed it unto us by his spirit." (1 Cor. 2:10.) As Jesus alone received the spirit "without measure," he alone could fully know the joys of that gain. If self still lives, it will think of the *losses* rather than the gains, and those things gained it will plan to use for self first and then for others. If Christ live in us, our transcendent joy will be the use to which our new powers may be put now in laying down our lives for the members of his Body, and in the future, as the Seed of Abraham, in blessing "all the families of the earth." Self may dream of the honors it is to enjoy; "dead with him," his honor alone will employ us. If for me to live is Christ, then to the ages of the ages

I will with him be able to say, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." Before the veil is passed, every thought, word, and deed will have been brought under his control. "Casting down reasonings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity *every* thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5; see Diaglott) , what a glorious year 1951 will be; perhaps the very gateway of heaven! Who can compute the gain!

But can we attain a standard so high? "Not I, but Christ." "He is able to do *exceeding* ABUNDANTLY ABOVE *all that we ask or think*, according to the power that worketh in us." Oh that he may freely work-in us this year to "will and to do of his good pleasure," so that each one of us can truly say, "Christ liveth in me."

- P. E. Thonison.

Nearing Home

[Brother Wyndelts has suggested we print the following poem, which we gladly do, feeling it applies well to his years and faithfulness in the service of the Lord. - Ed. Com.]

Father, I would not grow weary
In the way my Master trod,
I will lean upon Thy promise,
Bow beneath Thy chastening rod,
That my faltering steps may stray not;
That Thy will in me be done;
And each passing day thus bear me,
Nearer Home.

Oh, how infinite the blessings
Which Thou hast bestowed on me,
In the Sacrifice Thou gavest
For my soul on Calvary.
Willing untold grief to suffer
For a race condemned to die
Who such love would think to question,
Or deny?

When Life's winding paths have led me
Where were mountains steep to climb,
Strength sufficient Thou'st provided,
Day by day, through shade and shine;
And though death has cruelly taken
All of earth I called my own,
Peace that passeth understanding,
I have known.

Soon my journey will be ended,
Soon my trials will be done;
And the Crown which Thou hast promised,
If I'm faithful; will be won.
Clad in robes of heavenly beauty,
Wrought through Jesus, by Thy grace,
I shall see Thee in the morning,
Face to face.

- M. H. B.

Items of Interest

Relief for Suffering Brethren in Germany

Packages for shipment to Germany should be in strong boxes heavy corrugated boxes are satisfactory or strong cloth bags. Those who wish to make shipments can get full instructions from their local post office regarding packing, weight, and size permitted, and the method of packing out the necessary papers. We shall be glad to supply addresses of friends in need. Some brethren in the States do not live near post offices that are prepared to accept such shipments, or do not have enough on hand to warrant sending a box. If such will forward their packages with a complete list of the contents to Brother B. F. Hollister, 7649 Eastlake Terrace, Chicago 26, Illinois, he will attend to the forwarding.

Any remittances sent to us for relief of the needy are used for CARE Food packages.

Recently Deceased

Sister Margaret Beating, Zenith, Wash. - (1950).
Sister Mary E. Bennett, Portland, Ore. - (November).
Sister Nina Carstens, West Roxbury, Mass. - (November).
Brother John Czajkowski, Milwaukee, Wis. - (November).
Brother S. A. Simmons, Coshocton, Ohio - (1950).
Sister Mary Stanke, Chicago-Los Angeles - (December).
Sister Emma Whitehouse, Los Angeles, Calif. - (November).

"The Hidden Life"

"Your life is hid with Christ in God." - Col. 3:3,

IN OUR last study on this theme, evidence was I presented to show that Almighty God for ages past, had, of very necessity, been classified and styled "The Unknown God," and that the records of ancient times indicate, unmistakably, that mankind's brightest and acutest minds had always failed to pierce the curtain that surrounds Divinity. Also we said that the otherwise unknown and invisible God had set before certain spiritually illumined minds an image of his own glorious Self, in the person of Christ Jesus, our beloved Lord. These few recapitulatory words will serve as introduction to this present study.

As one of those greatly honored individuals who had been permitted to see some little of the glory of God as it had shone in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6), it was Paul's exceeding joy and infinite delight to make known to such other souls as had been blessed with "ears to hear," that God, of his own volition and intent, had lifted up a tiny corner of the obscuring folds and had caused some little radiance from his own adorable Self to filter through, thus to engross and captivate the enthusiastic affections of all who could gaze thereon.

In words of surpassing beauty and singular descriptiveness Paul gives vent to his own ecstasy of soul in those sublime, incomparable statements of Ephesians 1:3-10. Although so well known to every one of us, and in spite of space being limited, we feel we ought to have some of these thrilling words and thoughts before our minds, in all their force and fulness, ere we proceed with our theme, in order that the burning enthusiasm of Paul may set fire to our own frigid souls and make them all aglow with thankfulness and gratitude to God for this exhibition of his most marvelous grace. "Blessed be the, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," writes this enraptured pen, "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him, in love having foreordained us unto adoption as sons, through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved, in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence . . ." and so on to the end of verse 10. What mind has yet plumbed the heights and depths, the lengths and breadths of these sublime, majestic words? Grace upon grace, favor upon favor pulsates in every thought and word! In a l the sacred literatures of the world there are no thoughts and words the equal of these.

But as we hope, if God wills, to return to these words another day, we pass on from our contemplation of its major themes to the consideration of one of its most pronounced minor chords -- the forgiveness of sins -- yet not exactly at this time as to its *modus operandi* (mode of operation) so much as to its *need*.

In the right adjustment of relationships as between the great Creator and created man, God stands at one pole and man at the other. God has the undoubted right to claim full sovereignty over all the work of his hands, material and intelligent alike. *That* sovereign claim is beyond dispute. But what of him who stands at the other pole-what of the man? Is he prepared to admit and concede the divine claim? Were man merely an automaton, a question of that kind could not and would not arise. If the track had been laid for him before he was made, he would keep the rails to the end of time. There would be no jumping the track and no deviation from the intended course.

From the onset he would have gone, and would still be compelled to go, where, and only where, his Designer and Creator had intended him.

Man has not run true to any previously laid track. He has made and laid his own as he ran. Deliberately, and of set purpose, he has chosen to run his own course, subject only, at all times, to his being misled and duped, in his act of choice, by another master mind, of which he has been mainly ignorant. But deliberately and definitely he has said, "No" to, God, whatever else he may have said to the other mastermind! God has not been in all his thoughts.

Man is a most marvelous complex of qualities and possibilities. Organically he is both fearfully and wonderfully made. Even after long years of intensive study and research, the investigating, biochemist does not know the full workings of man's "physique," still less does he know of the "psychique," the mental side of man. Indeed it is not possible to evaluate the qualities of the whole man by any known laws or processes of chemistry. Magnetic attractions and repulsions, together with interactions of minerals, chemicals, water, air, and gas may occur in him as in the laboratory experiment, but even so, they do not explain "man." We may total up the carbohydrates, the hydrocarbons, the vitamins, the minerals, the ozone, and the oxygen, together with the combinations and trace-elements that there abound, but we have not found the essence of the man. There is always something more—a plus factor of unaccountable complexity.

Most of these things will still be there the moment after death, but beyond all cavil and dispute something has been dissipated and ceased to be. All the mental processes have been stopped. The interactions between body and mind have ceased.

No longer will it be possible for the cooling remains to turn a piece of bread into a symphony, a painting, a poem or other creative master piece. Nor could it change the richest fruit into a tear of sympathy or a word of good cheer to a soul in need. A cooling corpse may remain, but the man is dead, deceased, defunct. The power to will and act is gone; for "life" is at an end.

For want of better terms some call that "plus-factor" the soul, and claim that in the hour and article of death the soul withdraws itself, (or is withdrawn) from its fleshly envelope. Were we to admit even that, it does not explain the "man." The "plus-factor" was not in itself alone the man. Hitherto, the now inert remains were as much a part of "him" as the "plus-factor" itself.

Nor does it solve the problem nor explain "the man" when the Bible Student says that God blew into the nostrils of the recumbent form "the breath of lives" and constituted him thus "a living soul." It describes its origin, it does not explain "him." Our problem is to explain "life" and neither microscope nor stethoscope can help us here. Nor can theology.

But taking Scripture as our cue, we can most surely see that God intended man to be the link between two worlds. Possessed of certain properties in common with the animal plane, he had, in addition to these, the powers to link him with a higher world. Intended as he was to eat, drink, breathe, sleep, and perpetuate himself in common with the beast, he yet had other qualities that gave him touch with moral things -- with principles and values that indwell heaven as well as earth. Ability to think, ponder, meditate and choose-on-principle were inbuilt into his constitution. These properties also were concomitant and essential parts of the man, and helped to make him what he was -- a reflex of the Power that created him.

Even in his fall and degradation this complexity and multiplicity of parts persists. Man, as we know him, and meet him today, is still a most wonderful thing; still possessed, spite of totalitarian States and dictatorships, of properties that are "re-tune-able" and "re-align-able" to divine standards. In nearly all there still is "foundation" on which to build, if but the right Builder can take control.

It is this very wonderfulness and complexity that makes the thing we call "sin" so fundamentally a question of right relationship with God. Is it to be accounted a moral possibility that God can be "sovereign" in this mundane world and yet man be free to concede or not to concede that claim of sovereignty? The divine Creator, through his holy Word, says that it is possible-gloriously possible! And that statement is made by One who cannot lie or make mistakes!

What is this state of sin of which the Apostle speaks and which God, in his wondrous grace, purposes, on some ground, to remit? To make a long story short, it is just the refusal of man to admit the divine claim to Universal Sovereignty. In the first transaction which the Bible labels sin, man was induced (by a scheming mastermind) to say "Yes." where God had said "No." He was persuaded to choose against the wish of God, making thus an open challenge to the sovereign will of God. All the byproducts of sensuality and perverted judgment flow out of this, while death, as the end product of it all, is the consequence, inevitably, of having broken faith with God.

Perhaps if we bring the situation down to a later day and see this thing as a man who proved faithful to God (under, a thousand tests) saw the obnoxious thing, it may help us to understand in some small degree, what this refusal of his claim means to God.

Perhaps it is safe to say that no part of Paul's writings is more enigmatical than the argument in Romans chapter 7. Here Paul treats of God's Law as adapted to Israel, and of what it meant to an honest man seeking to measure up to its strict requirements. Selecting but one of its many prohibitive commandments, Paul argues out the case on the basis of human acquisitiveness or covetousness in its relationship to the whole communal life of Israel. Every man was permitted "to have" and "to hold" all that rightly and justly belonged to him as a free and lawful citizen in the commonwealth. Each man may rightly have and enjoy his own wife, and home, and servant, and "lot" in Israel. Ought not this to have been enough for any man-for every man? Paul had to confess that it had proved not to be enough. Let the terms of prohibition be respected and endorsed, as they ought by every man, something latent in the man set him at variance with the accepted code. The Law said, "thou shalt not," the "latent something" responded "but thou shalt."

"The 'good' to which I gave approval that did I not; the evil thing from which I made dissent, that I did! For I do not what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.... I can will what is right but I cannot do it Oh! sad confession and bitter lamentation for one who sought, as Paul did, to attain to self-righteousness before God. "I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am!" How vile and abhorrent to this man of God was that latent ingrained thing in his fallen flesh which operated there with all the stringency of law! The only way to understand and comprehend the depth of loathing in Paul's chastened soul is to see this fearful thing through the eyes of his wretchedness and despair. Theology cannot explain it. Theologians have brought trained intellects to bear upon these words of Paul and have sought to elucidate his thought, but apart from knowing it by experience, how can they explain the unexplainable? It is not within the powers of any intellect to explain; it is by experience alone, experience weighted down with wretchedness and despair, that the solution to this latent problem must be sought.

Few men throughout the run of history have lived their lives at the same depths of intensity as did Paul, and consequently few have ever known what he really meant and felt. ". . . sin, working death in me . . . sin dwells within me . . . evil lies close at hand . . . making me captive to the law of sin ... Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Had Mosaic Law been the only thing divinely provided, wretchedness and hopelessness would have been perpetual!

Now if this latent indwelling thing wrought such revulsion and wretchedness in a fallen man like Paul, who shall describe what the dreadful thing means to unsullied Holiness? Where could we find language incisive enough to describe the defiled and defiling blackness of this abhorrent repulsive thing?

It may have been the lot of some who now read these words to see, and grieve over, the trail of unseasonable frost upon the orchard's bloom, or shrink in horror from the cyclone's blast. Where once was beauty, charm and promise fair, only blight, desolation, devastation, and blackened death now remains. It is heart-breaking indeed, to see a whole year's expectations shriveled in a night, or perhaps a whole life's labor lost in a few minutes (or moments) of time.

But these catastrophes, terrible though they are when measured against our life's little scale, are but a mere trifle when set over against this devastation, as seen by God, when sin came into the heart of man, and marred its moral grandeur, blighting its inward beauty by its defiling influence.

Yet, since it has actually happened in this way, we must presume that we are on safe ground in saying that God would not have had it happen otherwise. Better far, we must assume, to have made a man, (a morally responsive individual, balanced in all his parts) with all the possibilities of good or evil choice inwrought into heart and mind, than make a mere manikin or wire worked marionette! Better far to lose his friendship and allegiance for a few thousand years, than have a mere robot's service for eternity!

It would be a stale commonplace to say that God deeply loved the work of his hands, for man was intended to be the earthly reflex of himself, and be to the lower orders all that God himself was to the wide universe; its focus and center, its lord and protector.. Hence man must be grandly built, sin or no sin ensuing; a king, erect, commanding, and good to look upon. And if sin did come in through one fatal choice, what of that? Is its sequence irremediable? Must it last to all eternity? Were divine Wisdom and Foreknowledge outwitted by man's fateful choice? Nay indeed! From before the laying of the earth's foundation pillars, and without conniving at the sin, God foreknew the possibilities of the human creature's fall and made his preparations accordingly.

The same Omniscient Eye that saw far down the corridors of time the appearance of human sin also foresaw the gathering of a select family of sons from the midst of a dying race, and there and then arranged how to deal with its sin. And then, having claimed *that* as a first installment from the earth, a later ingathering of "whosoever will" was planned and purposed by the same Creator God.

To claim that recognition and detestation of "sin" are items of "the hidden things" may seem preposterous, but in reality so it is. True, every human creature on the earth knows and feels its consequences by bitter experience, but none save those whose hearts God himself has touched will admit the basic cause for all their woes. Man ever tends to deny or fight the divine indictment; he finds a score of ways to mitigate or blunt its point. Millions of oriental people call it "Karma" - the carrying over of cause and effect from life to life in the transmigration of souls. Others speak of a "jungle morality," a mere gloss for benightedness and immorality. Still others

speak of "backwardness," -of semi-civilization and semi-culture. Greece styled it "liberty," Rome "courtesan life," and modern times "evolution's slips"! Today men wriggle and squirm and twist in every way rather than agree to the stern impeachment. Only those with "eye salve anointed eyes" (Rev. 3:18) admit the divine classification, and agree that the refusal of God's right to rule the life of man is "sin."

In Tabernacle days sins were accounted as things that could be piled up on the head of an animal and be borne away from the Camp into the wilderness. Like a pollution or infection it was accounted to lie heavily on the assembled Camp when the day of Atonement began, but, betimes, it was confessed and laid on the head of the "dismissal" goat and borne by it into a land not inhabited. Then the Camp was accounted clean even though the same residents dwelt therein. Ceremonially, sin was removed, and the environs of the divine dwelling place were cleaned of its pollutions.

Again, but on a grander scale, "Sin" -- the body of Sin -- is to be removed. The serpent coiled away in the heart of man will be cast out, its infecting virus destroyed, and the heart of man made clean and sweet as a habitation for God. How? Let but the divine influence bring all men to the point where Paul saw, then felt, then loathed his sin, and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands more will cry out, "O -wretched man that I am!" But God be thanked, he has provided a Savior to save men from sin; One who in himself will have abrogated the law of sin and death and ever lives (because his name is Jesus) to save his people from their sins.

Some brighter, better day God will present his claim to "sovereignty" again, and a whole world redeemed, restored, and made free from sin, will choose again, and, will say "Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were [intended] and were created." - Rev. 4:11.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hash blessed us [even *now*] with ... the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of his grace

"Man! great mystery! Who shall say
What need hath God of this poor clay?
Formed by His hand with potent skill --
Mind, matter, soul and stubborn will;
Born now to die, sure destiny, death!
Then where, O where, this fleeting breath?

"Life's unsealed mystery soon shall say
What joy hath God in this poor clay,
Formed by His hand with potent skill
Stamped with His image -- mind and will;
Born not to die -- no, a second birth
Succeeds the sentence 'earth to earth.'"

Sin! the great enigma; the unacknowledged source of man's sorrow and death! Redemption and forgiveness of sin, the glorious solution, but still hidden from the minds of unrepentant man *in* the treasure house of Christ! Man's need is great; God's provision is greater still. Thank God for His abundant Grace!

- T. Holmes, Eng.

The Source of Our Life and Strength and Joy

"To all the saints in Christ Jesus." - Phil. 1:1.

PAUL WAS pre-eminently the Apostle of "the mystery" -- that mystic union of Christ, the Head, and the Church, his spiritual Body. His letters abound in direct and implied references to the oneness of the Christ, a unity which Paul described as the "mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations but now hath it been manifested to his saints." - Col. 1:26, 27, R. V.

Our Lord, during his earthly ministry, had also explained this oneness in words recorded in that treasured passage in the fifteenth chapter of John's Gospel, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Paul had never heard these precious truths from the lips of our Lord when on earth, but the deep significance of "the mystery" gripped his imagination, his understanding, and his heart. He never tired of writing and speaking about it to those newly converted Christians whom he addressed as "the saints and faithful brethren *in Christ*." - Col. 1:2.

The Authorized Version gives sufficient of the Apostle's thoughts and reasoning to enable all who are "*in Christ Jesus*" to gain a glimpse at least of this profoundly important doctrine, and although *much of the true meaning and beauty has been lost* by the translators of the Authorized Version, these have been uncovered in the Revised Version of later date.

THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Paul described our relationship to Christ in several ways. The first of these is summed up in the phrase "*Through Jesus Christ our Lord*." In the letter to the brethren at Rome, Paul showed that being justified by faith we have "peace with God," but he added that we have this peace "*through Jesus Christ*," who provided the basis for our justification, "*through whom also*," he continued, "we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." (Rom. 5:1, 2.) In the second letter to the Church at Corinth he wrote, "God reconciled us to himself *through Christ*." "God was in Christ," he explained, "reconciling the world unto himself . . ." and, because we are called to *be* part of the Christ, he "placed in (us (margin R. V.) the word of reconciliation." The Authorized Version reads that "God . . . reconciled us to himself *by Christ* . . . and hath given us" (not "placed in us" as in the R. V. margin) "the *ministry of reconciliation*." The truth is not lost entirely in the Authorized Version but the revision brings out clearly the otherwise hidden point of the unity of Christ and his saints. There are other passages where these fundamental thoughts are not clear in the Authorized Version., for example, in the original Greek Paul did not say that we obtain our salvation "*by*" our Lord Jesus Christ, *as* in the Authorized Version, but "*through*" him. (1 Thess. 5:9, R. V.) Our heavenly adoption into God's family was not as "children *by* Jesus Christ" but "as sons *through* Jesus Christ." (Eph. 1:5, R. V.) In other words, we were not adopted by Christ but by God *through Christ*. Again, the righteousness of God is evidenced to us "*through* [our] faith in *Jesus -Christ*" (Roil. 3:22), *not "by faith of Jesus Christ"* as the Authorized Version gives it. ". . . the fruits of righteousness . are *through* [not *by*]: Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1: 11) , that is to say they are the fruits not of Christ's faith, as the Authorized Version. suggests, but of our own.

This aspect of Christian doctrine was a living reality to the Apostle. He not only gave thanks to God "*through Jesus Christ*" (Rom. 1:8), and recognized that he received his apostleship "*through*

Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead" (Gal. 1:1, R. V.), but he gave us a lesson in reverence when he offered praise "to the only wise God *through Jesus Christ*," that is through him *who*, provided for us the way unto life. - Rom. 16:27.

BEING IN JESUS CHRIST

The Apostle introduced another aspect of our relationship to the Lord in the thought that we are *in* him. Jesus illustrated this for us not only in the symbol of the Vine, but also in that of the Wedding. Garment. The original meaning of the word translated "garment" was "anything to put on." Paul put this thought into the words "As many of you as were baptized *into* Christ have *put on* Christ. (Gal. 3:27.) "There is therefore now no condemnation," he wrote, "to them which are *in* Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1.) In other words we are justified, made right, covered by the "garment" of Christ's righteousness, and thus protected from the condemnation which fell upon all men in Eden. Earlier in the Epistle (Rom. 6:23) he had written that famous passage "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life" not "*through* Jesus Christ," as in the Authorized Version, but "*in* Christ Jesus our Lord." Paul then develops this thought by showing that he owed everything to the new life which he obtained *in* Christ Jesus. It was *through* Jesus Christ that this life became possible, but it was *in* his Lord that he found the life itself. Nevertheless in his varied descriptions of this intimate relationship, he keeps us reminded that all these blessings come from the Heavenly Father. It is, he explained, "the high calling of *God in* Christ Jesus" and "He that stablisheth us with you *into* [margin] Christ and anointed us *is God*, who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the spirit in our hearts. (2 Cor. 1:21, R. V.) "Being confident of this very thing, that he which began a good work in you will perfect it [or as the Diaglott version reads "will continue to complete it"] until the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:6; R. V.) We can see that the Apostle's confidence in his standing with God was based on the knowledge that he was *in* Christ Jesus. In Romans 15:17 he expressed it in the following words, "Now *in* Christ Jesus I can be proud of my work for God." - Moffatt.

Being *in* Christ Jesus was not only Paul's source of life but also his joy and strength. It is obvious from his writings that he was conscious that his enjoyment of his heavenly Father's blessings was only possible because he was *in* Christ Jesus. Without the covering of the merit of Christ's righteousness, Paul knew only too well that God could do nothing for him during this Age and so, having found this life-giving covering *in* Christ Jesus, he had great cause for rejoicing in him. "I rejoice in the Lord greatly," he wrote, and added in joyful confidence, "I can do all things *in* him that strengtheneth me." - Phil. 4:10, 13, R. V.

Being *in* Christ Jesus was such an entirely new life to the Apostle that from the abundance of his heart he gave us that beautiful and dramatic thought, "if any man is *in* Christ, he is a new creature." In the margin of the Revised Version there is an alternative rendering which makes Paul's thought even more striking: "If any man is *in* Christ, it reads, "there is a new creation." (2 Cor. 5:17.) Paul was not describing merely a simple moral development. To be *in* Christ, he showed, is nothing less than a complete change of nature, and so he constantly emphasized that if we are to obtain this new nature, this new life *in* Christ Jesus, the old nature must first be put to death sacrificially after the pattern set by Christ himself. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1, R. V. margin.) "I have been crucified with Christ, he wrote to the Galatians, "and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me, and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is *in* the Son of God . . ." (Gal. 2:20, R. V. margin.) Once again the Authorized Version misses the full force of the Apostle's reasoning when it translates the last phrase, "I live by the faith *of* the Son of God," for Paul was clearly explaining that the life of faith which he enjoyed was his life *in* Christ.

This important feature of doctrine contains also the most precious assurance. Having emphasized that the saints *in* Christ had "died," Paul wrote "and your life" (that is the new life), "is hid *with Christ* in God." (Col. 3:3) The manifestation of this new life is not, however, to be hid in any other sense; others are to see the effect of this great change and our Heavenly Father looks for evidence of the working of his spirit in us as we follow in the footsteps of our Lord. In the sixth chapter of Romans the Apostle, having explained that our baptism *into* Christ was in reality baptism into his death, added ". . . that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk" (now) "in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4, R. V.) In this new walk we have an active part to play, not only in developing the graces of the new creature, but also in crushing every remnant of rebellion by the old nature. We are to "mortify the deeds of the body." (Rom. 8:13.) In Paul's life this was no mere theory. "I bruise my body," he told the brethren at Corinth, "and bring it into bondage" and, showing the gravity of this personal responsibility, he added, "lest by any means after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." (1 Cor. 9:27.) In this exhortation the Apostle demonstrates very forcibly that although in one sense the flesh is already "dead," the dying human nature engenders within itself those forces which war against the new nature. So Paul exhorts us to fight to make sure that the destruction of our old nature is complete.

Being *in* Christ Jesus was also explained by the Apostle in another series of word pictures, in the first of which the consecrated followers of the Lord are likened to members of his Body. In the twelfth chapter of the first letter to the Corinthians he used this metaphor to explain how unity in Christ's Body permits of great variety in the personal qualities and abilities of its members. "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the Body as it pleased him. "God tempered the Body together .. Now ye are the Body of Christ and members each in his part." (1 Cor. 12:24, 27 margin.) "One Body, and one spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling." (Eph. 4:4.) The thought that we, with all the imperfections that are associated with us, are part of the Body of Christ is sometimes difficult to comprehend. Even as new creatures we drag around with us "this body of death," and although "with the mind [we] serve the law of God ... with the flesh," we serve "the law of sin." (Rom. 7:24, 25, R. V.) In this life our weak flesh has to do service on behalf of the new creature, so Paul explains that we are to use our new wills "as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Rom. 6:13.) Our first responsibility, he shows, is to 'keep our justified human nature under control. In the parable of the Vine, Jesus explained that under the influence of our human inclinations our new nature may also develop unfruitful growth. Our Lord told us that "every 'branch that beareth fruit" God prunes so "that it may bear more fruit." He will cut away the weak unfruitful growth, but he performs this work in us only because we are already united to the Vine. In other words, if we are to have God working in us to perfect us, we must first be *in* Christ Jesus. God will continue this work in us so long as we show signs of fruitage, but if we prefer to be drawn away from the sun and air and allow our old human inclinations to draw us down into the unhealthy shade where the branches bear no fruit, then he will .cut us off from the Vine, and we shall be out of the Body of Christ. Paul understood this so clearly that he told us over and over again that our chief responsibility was to suppress those natural inclinations which would draw us away from Christ.

Using another metaphor he explained that we are stones built up upon the foundation laid by the Apostles and Prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the corner stone. United *in* him, every part of the building, closely joined together, will grow into a Temple consecrated by its union with the Lord and, through union *in* him you also are being built up together, to be a dwelling place for God through the spirit. (Eph. 2:20, see Twentieth Century Version.) In this picture we can envisage as with Solomon's temple (the type of the 'Christ in glory) that each stone has to have its imperfections chiseled and polished away before being fitted into place. So we too are being

prepared as "living stones," Just as the typical temple was dedicated for use before it was completed, so it would appear that most of the Temple "stones" are now united with the "Head" and the antitypical Temple nearing completion is now in service, preparing for the great work of blessing all mankind. Paul expressed an associated thought in the words, "God being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together *with* Christ and raised us up with him and made *us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*" - Eph. 2:4-6 R. V., margin -- see also Col. 3:1.

Probably the most beautiful picture of our relationship to Christ is that of the Bride and Bridegroom. Paul, who regarded his spiritual life chiefly as a war against the flesh, had little to say on the bridal relationship, but to him it was pre-eminently the symbol of purity. "I espoused you to one husband," he wrote to the Church at Corinth "that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ." (2 Cor. 11:2, R. V.) In his first letter he had rebuked them in the words, "Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? .. Know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? . . . but he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." - 1 Cor. 6:15, 17, R. V.

CHRIST IN US

With this thought we pass to the last of Paul's studies of our relationship to Christ. He showed that our life *in* Christ is dependent on our having the spirit of Christ in us, for that spirit is our source of life. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ," he wrote, "he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9) or, in other words, only that which possesses the spirit of "life" can exist in the "living" Body of Christ. Paul gloried in the knowledge that "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20), and in his first letter to the brethren at Corinth he affirmed that "we have the mind of Christ." Paul also showed that if we are to have the privilege of Christ dwelling in us, we must expect to attract to ourselves the same sort of criticism and undergo the same ostracism and humiliation which fell upon him. He reminded us that we have consecrated to a life of sacrifice, during which we must expect to suffer without fighting back. Paul also identifies this aspect of his new life with that of his Lord, and described his own experience as "always bearing about in the body the dying [literal, the putting to death] of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10, R. V.) or, in other words, just as our Master, who was without sin, sacrificed his whole life, so must we do likewise, and by cutting out all else, make room for our Lord to dwell in us.

With similar thought Paul described himself as "a bond-servant of Jesus Christ." The bond-slaves of Paul's time had the brand-mark of their owner. In the same way Paul looked on the scars of the ill treatment he had received as "the marks of Jesus" in his body. (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 6:17.) Paul regarded it as a great privilege to be his bond-servant and he invites each one of us to "suffer hardship with me ... as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3) and gave us as a guide the simple standard, "If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a bondservant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10.) He obviously did not regard it merely as a duty, but as a great privilege. He lived in the spirit of Christ's consecration, "I delight to do thy will, O God," and did not believe in suffering with a heavy heart. The Apostle also set us an inspiring example in his attitude to his bond service. To Paul, affliction was evidence that the Father thought him worthy to share in full the life of Christ, and thus it was a cause for rejoicing. In the letter to the "saints *in* Christ Jesus at Philippi" he emphasized this privilege that "it hath been *granted* in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer in his behalf." (Phil. 1:29.) "Yea, he wrote to the youthful Timothy, "all that will live godly *in* Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12.) Perhaps this rejoicing demonstrates above all else the spiritual vitality of the Apostle. When in company with Silas he had suffered physical ill treatment, been thrown into jail and deprived of all outward source of comfort, he did not react with heaviness of heart, but "sang praises unto God. "I rejoice

in my sufferings for your sake," he wrote to the Colossian brethren," and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake." (Col. 1:24; R. V.) There was also a challenging note in his attitude to adversity.

He posed the question as to whether these afflictions shall prove so trying as to "separate us from the love of Christ?" "No," he replied, not "tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword . . . in all these things," he triumphantly concludes, "we are *more than conquerors* through him that loved us." - Rom. 8:35, 37, R. V.

If we would emulate the great Apostle let us first follow his example and make sure that the working out of our consecration keeps us living *in* Christ Jesus. This is the only source, not only of our new life, but also of our strength, our joy and our confidence. Paul sums it up for us in a very few words in the eighth chapter of Romans, ". . ."ye are . . . *in the spirit*, if so be that the spirit of God dwelleth in you.... If any man have not the *spirit of* Christ he is none of his.... If by *the spirit* ye mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live. For as many as are *led by the spirit* of God these are sons of God . . . heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him." - Rom. 8:9, 13, 14, 17, R. V.

- L. H. BUNKER

"Have Faith in God"

(Continued from last issue)

"And Jesus, answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God." - Mark 11:22.

THERE IS a Scripture in the Old Testament that has a very important bearing on our subject. It is found in Habakkuk 2:4. While all Scripture is important, profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, yet some portions seem to come to us with special emphasis. This Scripture is one of them. It speaks of a life of faith. It reads: "The just shall live by his faith." In Romans 1:17, in Galatians 3:11, and in Hebrews 10:38 the Apostle quotes this text. The fact that God has caused this statement to be written in his Word no less than four times should cause us to give it very special heed. Let us read it again: "The just shall live by his faith." In further explanation the Apostle gives his testimony. (Gal. 2:20.) "I am crucified," says he, "with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of 'the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'"

PROGRESSIVE FAITH

In the Epistle to the Romans where the Apostle first uses this statement that the just shall live by faith, the context clearly contains the thought of progression-progressive faith. He had been speaking of the Gospel of Christ, and now explains that he is not ashamed of it, "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Here we have brought to our attention, as we shall immediately consider, the thought of progressive faith, and also that other point which we have just noted, namely that faith is based on knowledge.

The beginning of faith in God is a conviction that God is. How do we become convinced that God is? How do we reach this conclusion? By knowledge. We behold the heavens declaring his glory, the firmament showing his handiwork. We note how fearfully and wonderfully made we

ourselves are, and on this knowledge we by faith reach forward into something that is not knowledge but faith; we believe that God is. Those who take this elementary step of faith are rewarded. How? By increased knowledge. Something of the righteous character of God is brought to their attention; something of his love. On the additional knowledge they take another step of faith, and soon after find their faith further rewarded by yet more knowledge of God. Some take these steps of faith hesitatingly. Some are very courageous. Some make little or no progress in either faith or knowledge. Some go forward. Those who on the greater knowledge of God's plans exercise yet more faith, receive still further knowledge, and thus as the Apostle says, "The righteousness of God [his righteous character, his glorious plans and purpose] is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Thus it has been with us; has it not? We became convinced of the existence of God, but our faith did not stay there. We went on. We continued to learn of this great One, not only that he is, but that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. And with diligence we sought him (not so diligently perhaps as we might have done; the Lord knoweth our frame). We learned of his-provision in the sacrifice of his only begotten Son, our Lord and Redeemer, and our faith grasped this wondrous favor. Thus we were saved by our faith.

FIGHT OF FAITH

Having shown us that the whole Christian life is to be a life of faith, the faith and confidence in God ever growing deeper and more sure, more implicit, the Apostle next mentions some of the phases of this life. It will mean conflict. "Fight," says he, "the good fight of faith," and as the close of his life drew near, he assured us that he himself had done so. "I have fought a good fight of faith. I have kept the faith." In enumerating the equipment necessary for life's battles he tells us above all, to take the shield of faith, which is able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. "This," says the Apostle John, "is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." As we come to engage in life's battles, fresh supplies of dynamite will be needed. Occasional explosions may be necessary at some point along the battle front as we war against sin and pride and selfishness firmly entrenched in our flesh, and as we struggle against the spirit of the world and resist our wily Adversary Especially important will it be to maintain a vital connection with the great Dynamo, that to us may be transmitted the energy of the holy spirit of God, which will give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

WALK OF FAITH

In the Second Corinthian letter the Apostle reminds us that our walk must be by faith. We must not plan to live a life of faith and then expect to do our walking 'by sight. From time to time we shall meet with difficult conditions, 'with perplexing circumstances, with a fork in the road, and it will not always be given us to see which is the preferable procedure for us to follow-which turn in the road to take. Of course if one way is sinful and the other is holy; if one follows the spirit of the world and the other the gentle, holy spirit of the Lord, the problem will present no difficulty. With our hearts in tune with the Master, we shall unhesitatingly choose the right. But sometimes matters are not quite so simple. Even the great Apostle Paul knew what it was to be in perplexities. (2 Cor. 4:8.) It will not be strange then if sometimes we find ourselves in circumstances where it is not always so easy to determine the better way. Such experiences may be ours in our -individual Christian walk; they may be ours, too, in our Church matters. We know of no Scripture which assures us that we shall always, on every occasion, and at all times, know exactly the right thing to do in every personal problem that may arise; and as for Church matters, well, *there is a very famous church that came to a different conclusion, eventually substituting its own decisions for the Word of God itself, with what grievous results we are all aware.*

THE MEEK WILL HE GUIDE

But what should be our course when the way does not seem clear before us? Well, to begin with, there are some very precious promises written in his Word. He has said, "The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way." If we meet the conditions, we may claim this promise for ourselves. What are the conditions? Humility, meekness. "The meek will he guide, the meek will he teach." We must first empty ourselves of anything that is of an opposite spirit. This may be, indeed how often has it proved to be, ninety per cent of our difficulty. Almost unconsciously perhaps we may have developed a pride of opinion which must be displaced by the humble, teachable spirit, ere we can claim this promise, that is to say, claim it with the assurance that it will be fulfilled in our experience. Ofttimes we shall find that only one road remains as we rise from our knees before God, ready to be shown, ready to be instructed.

There is no promise, however, that this will always be the case. Sometimes both roads will still stretch out before us, and each seems equally right. What then? Then it is, dear friends, that we must, walk by faith. Using the best judgment that we have, believing that he will guide us so that we choose aright, we must step forward on the road we have selected, not hesitatingly, not tremblingly, not fearful lest all sorts of untoward things may happen to us, but confidently, assured that he will guard us from harm. And when we have taken the step, perhaps gone a little distance down the road, we shall see. Most times 'we shall see that this is indeed the right and proper road for us to take. Sometimes we shall -see that the other would have been wiser. Sometimes it may be necessary for us to retrace our steps. What then? Has God failed to guide us? No. He wanted us to have that experience. The necessity for retracing our steps, the necessity for admitting that we were wrong in our decision will develop that spirit of humility so necessary to Christ's followers. Or it may be that it will be unnecessary for us to retrace our steps. The road, after winding a little way will be found to turn back into the other path, and while we may have lost a little time, the Lord will have given us experiences on the path we took, not to be gotten in any other way. Let us then as the wise man admonishes, "Trust in the Lord with all our heart, and lean not unto our own understanding." *In all our ways let us acknowledge him, and he shall direct our path.* - *Prov.* 3:5, 6.

St. Paul speaks of a full assurance of faith, and suggests this to us, not as an attainment which we may hope for at the close of our pilgrimage, but as that which may be ours all along the way. "Let us," says he, "draw near with full assurance of faith," and we *know* of what little avail our prayers will be unless they do come from believing hearts.

YOUR FAITH WHEN TRIED

St. Peter, too, tells us to expect that our faith will be tested, and that we must not be taken by surprise, if trying experiences should come to us. He tells us (1 Pet. 1:7), "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Now it is not that the trial of our faith is precious; that is not the thought he is seeking to convey to our minds. The trial of our faith seems anything but precious at times. Nor is *Our* faith before it is tried more precious than gold. It may not then be as precious as lead. No, it is your faith *when tried*, your weak and trembling faith, that is tested here, and tempered there, and that comes up and out of each new experience undaunted, strengthened, ready for the next test, that will at last, having been tried and proved, be pronounced by the great Refiner more precious than the gold that perisheth.

Let us not fear these tests. We have One standing at God's right hand, praying for us that our faith fail not. He will see that no test or trial or experience shall come to us greater than we are able to bear, and we shall prove in our experience as the hymn writer has suggested that:

"Darkest night will always come before the dawning Silver linings shine on God's side of the cloud; All your journey he has promised to be with you, Naught has come to you but what his love allowed.

"Have faith in God. The sun will shine,
Though dark the clouds may be today;
His heart has planned your path and mine,
Have faith in God, have faith alway."

- P. L. Read.

The Question Box

In Second Peter, chapter 2, verse 1, we read: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

Questions:

Would denial of "the Lord that bought them" mean a denial of the ransom?

What are some of the heresies that constitute a denial of the ransom?

Before attempting an answer, we consult Webster and find that only one of the meanings he gives could apply to Peter's use of the word heresies, namely "Rejection of, or erroneous belief in regard to some fundamental religious doctrine of truth." His definitions have to do mostly with teachings contrary to the accepted beliefs of some church organization.

It is manifest from Scripture teaching that denial of the *Ransom* would be a denial of the Lord that bought us. Peter's use of the word "bought," would lead us to understand that this was his primary thought. But there is also the thought that we may deny Christ by our manner of life-by claiming to be Christ's followers when our lives show no evidence of restraint in resisting the evil practices and lusts by which we are surrounded. This additional thought is revealed in verse 2 (Diaglott Translation), where he says that "many will follow their impurities [lit., impure practices]; on account of whom the way of truth will be reviled."

DEGREES OF CULPABILITY

There are varying degrees of culpability on the part of those who deny the ransom. Those who introduce error for the purpose of drawing away disciples after themselves, will of course merit and receive severe punishment-Peter says, "Bringing swift destruction on themselves." If the denial of Christ is due to blindness, ignorance, or lack of faith on the part of one who has never known by experience God's mercy through Christ, his only punishment or loss will be the lack of blessings that attend the Christian way of life until the time of the opening of all blind eyes and the unstopping of all deaf ears.

But if such a denial of the Lord comes from one who was "once enlightened, and had tasted the heavenly 'Gift, and become partaker of the holy spirit, having tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the coming Age," it would mean eternal destruction; for having fallen away, it is impossible to renew such an one to reformation, and in their contempt they recrucify the Son of God. - Heb. 6:4-6.

There would also be a difference in accountability between a so-called Christian 'who flatly denied the necessity for a ransom, and one who unwittingly nullified its importance by subscribing to teachings that would more or less destroy or limit its significance.

As has been very clearly pointed out in *Studies in the Scriptures*, the touchstone by which we may test nearly all teachings that are presented to us as truth, is their attitude toward Jesus Christ and his ransom sacrifice.

TEACHINGS THAT NULLIFY THE RANSOM

If a teaching represents Jesus as being other than a perfect man at the time he offered himself unto God in full consecration to do the divine will, it nullifies the ransom; for "he gave himself an *antilutron* [corresponding price]." (1 Tim. 2:6.) The denial of our Lord's virgin birth in the claim that he was just a child of Adam, rather than a seed direct from God nullifies the ransom. A corresponding price must needs be a perfect man, not one tainted by sin.

If it is claimed that he was God incarnate and only seemed to die, it is a nullification of the ransom. If the efficacy of his blood to atone for the forfeited life of Adam and (through Adam) all of mankind is denied, such a denial would nullify the ransom. If a teaching denies that as a man Jesus was the perfect counterpart of Adam, and in dying for Adam sacrificed his own right to life on the human plane, it nullifies the ransom. A denial that Christ bought the race of mankind (including Adam) and that he intends in his own time and way to release each and every one from the condemnation received through Adam that all may be given a full, fair opportunity for salvation, is a denial of the ransom. "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." (Heb. 2:9.) A denial of the actuality of death in which the being ceases to exist, is a denial of the necessity for a ransom. The doctrines of the trinity, eternal torment, and the immortality of the soul, all serve to nullify the ransom.

These are some of the well known teachings that are calculated to mislead the Lord's people with regard to the basic fundamental of our salvation. No doubt many of the true saints of the past have believed some of these errors, not realizing that they were subversive of the true facts; but believing -fully that Christ died for them, and having hearts that were sincere in their loyalty to God, they were enabled by his grace and spirit to make their calling and election sure.

We should be truly thankful for the light that has been given us in the harvest time of this Age, in which the philosophy of the atonement, and the ransom that makes atonement possible, has been clearly revealed. Without this light, we also might be led astray by some one of the no-ransom theories that have deceived many thousands of well-intentioned people. May God help us to hold fast and not repudiate his grace through Christ.

- J. T. Read.

Encouraging Messages

Dear Brethren:

I don't remember seeing a renewal subscription blank, but I think there was a notice some time back on a wrapper of the "Herald" relative to "subscription expired," so I have no excuse to offer for the delay. Will try to have these things attended to in advance in future, so there will be no need of watching for "notice." *

The special article, "The Mind of Christ, has my attention, and we want to thank you (we've already thanked our Heavenly Father) for serving us such "nourishing food." May "His favor" be continually with you.

Yours in the King's Service,
E. C. H. -- Calif.

* A good resolve which, if carried out by all our subscribers, would save our office much time. Ed. Com.

Dear Brethren:

Enclosed please find amount for renewal of the "Herald."

My wife enjoys reading the "Herald." She recently sent some copies (those with the articles on the new archaeological discoveries of old manuscripts) to Brother and Sister -----.

They read them and wrote back they had enjoyed them so much they were subscribing to the "Herald." I hope the magazine will be a blessing to them as it is to us.

Yours in Him,
S. M. P. -- Kans.

Dear Brothers:

2 Cor. 9:8.

With the above words of the Apostle Paul I greet you in Christ, who loved us and gave his life for us.

I feel I must greet you once again and tie closer the bond of love. Again and again we hear that you point to the unity of the spirit, and that you endeavor to foster the fruits of the spirit and to give them the first place -- to be found in Christ as branches of the vine. Can there be anything more precious than this? This was the greatest desire of our Lord and Master in his prayer -- the oneness of those that were given to him by the Father. With what fervency and earnestness did he pray! He foresaw the trials which soon would come, and how all his disciples would be scattered. . . . We know that our Father from above sees and understands the weaknesses of his children, and knows how to judge much: better than we do. . . .

We all should endeavor to come to the unity of the knowledge of God and of the Son of God, but this is quite another thing from the knowledge of all God's purposes. To know him, as Philippians 3:10 shows, is the most important thing. And in this knowledge all faithful ones will be as much in harmony as in love . . . We are so glad, dear brethren, that you too give these things the first place, and though we cannot well read English and understand the "Herald," we see it in the

headings that you give emphasis to them. Therefore we feel in close sympathy with you. Some there are who make certain knowledge a touchstone for the brotherhood -- which knowledge is not the important truth. This has caused painful tears. . . .

Dear brothers, go on with us to make the chief point of your considerations the striving for the attainment of the likeness of Jesus Christ! Together with you we will hold in: sight this one objective.

When can we expect a visit of a brother from the Pastoral' Bible Institute? We look forward to it, for we would like to experience the oneness of the spirit in a personal discussion.

And now, dear brothers, do I long to thank you with all my heart for an Elberfelder Bible which at Easter I received at Kirehlegern as a gift from you. It will be of good service to me. Please give my cordial thanks to the sender when you will have an occasion to do so. I shall always use this Bible and have it before my eyes as a constant sign of brotherly love.

The Lord be with you and complete the work of his grace in you and in all of us. In true love and unity,

Your brother in Christ,
O. S. - Germany.