

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXXV    October, 1952    No. 9

## The Blessedness of Longing

*"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord:  
my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." - Psalm 84:2.*

AMONG the many paradoxical expressions of the Lord's Word, perhaps few are more of this nature than the frequent reminders that to hunger and thirst represents a state of blessedness. This seeming contradiction of thought appears in the repeated promises that those who thirst for God, "shall never thirst" after they drink of the living water he supplies. Yet Christian experience seems to contradict that expectation; for is it not true that a greater and yet greater thirst is created by that wonderful living water? Will not the testimony of all who drink deeply of that water agree that it produces a soul-thirst such as our text clearly teaches? How, then, can it be said that such "shall never thirst"? To be filled with a longing such as this text represents would seem suggestive of a rather unhappy or unsatisfied state of mind and therefore the very reverse of blessedness, yet how many there are who will readily confess that

"Of all the myriad moods of mind  
That through the soul come thronging,  
Which one was e'er so dear, so kind,  
So beautiful, as longing."

In spiritual life, longing is a sign of a healthy state of the soul, whereas satisfaction frequently gives evidence of disease. The very best evidence of heart relationship with the Lord, according to his own Word, is to be found in being possessed of so intense a love for him, that he alone can satisfy the deepest longings of our soul. Thus viewed, our text is not suggestive of a heart painfully unsatisfied, seeking for some unfound source of delight and joy, but of a heart that *has found* a source so completely satisfying that nothing else could possibly supply its need. This thought is contained in several of the Psalms. In the sixty-third we find it expressed in these words, "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land" (v. 1). And again we read, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God"

(Ps. 42:1). In both of these sublime expressions of the heart's longing after God, we are shown that "there is something deeper and more urgent than the intellectual craving for the Infinite, the natural desire and impulse of the human mind to seek a perfect object for its thought. It is something more even than the aspiration of a sinful and self disappointed soul towards moral beauty and sinless holiness. It is the personal longing for intimate communion with the living God. To come into vital contact with God, not as a Remote Thought, but as a Living Person; to feel that he who made the universe is not only the Eternal Wisdom but the Wise God, not only the Infinite Love, but the Loving Father; to be assured by touch of soul that he is an ever present reality, and to perceive the gentle flow of his affection within the channel of the heart-this is the water of everlasting life, the only draught that can truly quench the craving of the spirit. The assurance of immortality alone is not enough. For if we are told that we are to live forever and still be left without God, eternity stretches before us like a boundless desert, a perpetual and desolate orphanage. *It is divine companionship that the spirit needs first of all and most deeply.*"

### **WHAT IS LONGING?**

This, then, is the larger meaning of our Lord's statement, "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). Just so long as such longing continues to be an active factor in the life, just so long will the search after God be continued. As the heart expands through the knowledge of God, so will the capacity to enjoy him also continue to expand. The thirsty yet happy satisfied heart, well knows that "of all the myriad moods of mind" there is nothing "so dear, so kind, so beautiful, as longing" after the living God.

A divine law always operative in God's dealings with his people is given us by the Apostle James (James 4:8): "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." Our hearts must be reaching out with intense desire for the enriching knowledge of God ere he will reveal himself to us. The door to this intimate fellowship stands open to all who desire to enter, and once really entered, it will reveal boundless fields waiting our survey and exploration. There is therefore no condition of heart more to be sought after than this desire to draw nigh to God, since his law or requirement is that we furnish this evidence of a genuine longing for the special blessings he desires to give us. This being true, we must agree that "the highest state is one of hunger and thirst, intense desire for more life, more holiness, more power, closer communion with God, more of the divine likeness in the soul.

"The Gospel promises rest to those who come to Christ. Peace was one of the benedictions the Savior left for his people. Contentment is one of the graces and duties enjoined upon the Christian, but spiritual hunger is not incompatible with either peace or contentment. It is not unrest; it is not anxiety or worry; it is not murmuring discontent: it is a deep longing for more and ever more of all blessings -- calmer rest, sweeter peace, more perfect contentment, with richer heartfulness of Christ, and more and more of all the gifts of the spirit. It is depicted in the Psalms as an intense thirst for God, not the bitter cry of an unforgiven soul for mercy, but the deep, passionate yearning of a loving spirit for closer, fuller, richer, more satisfying communion with God himself. We find it in the life of the greatest of the Apostles, who, wherever we see him, on whatever radiant height, is still pressing on, with unsatisfied longing and quenchless ardor, toward loftier summits and more radiant peaks, crying ever for more intimate knowledge of Christ, and more and more of the fullness of God. The ideal Christian life is one of insatiable thirst, never pausing in any arbor of spiritual content, but ever wooed on by visions of new joys and attainments."

### **ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE**

How wonderful it is that God should leave it to us to determine the measure of happiness we shall enjoy. Though the storehouse of his gifts is full to overflowing, and though opening the windows of heaven to flood us with blessings beyond our capacity to contain does not in any way diminish its supply, yet for all that, the measure we receive will be proportionate to our asking in faith. As in the case of the widow whose supply of oil was replenished by the Prophet just in proportion to the number and size of the vessels she brought to him, so with us, as we come desiring more of God, more of the holy spirit, according to our faith and the intensity of our longing, it shall be given unto us. Longing, therefore, is the very soul of true faith expecting answers to prayer. Certainly we really desire nothing more than we are eager to ask for. There are many who pray for a closer walk with God, and for a more definite experience of his presence, but all such praying is profitless if it does not represent a consuming desire, a longing to enter into such a joy and fellowship. Mere desire will of itself open none of the windows of heaven to us, take us into no greater experiences of the power of Christ in the heart, give us no verification of promises actually fulfilled to us, wherein God has pledged himself to reward our never ceasing desire to know him better. Without effort, prayer is null and void. Inactive daydreaming is not prayer. Only when there is that peculiar combination of experience, earnest longing and consistent effort, illustrated in the various expressions of the Psalmist which we are now considering, does the Lord have any interest in our petitions. Only let our longing be such as will make it possible for us to truthfully say, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God," and there will be no vagueness of conviction about 'the meaning of God's promise to open heaven's windows.

### **BECOMES A TRANSFORMING POWER**

The hunger of heart of which the Bible speaks, must, like every holy aspiration, have its origin in God. This very longing of our heart, therefore, is nothing more nor less than the life of God imparted to us and yearning within us to grow from glory to glory up into the full stature of Christ. Under God's gracious hand this hunger becomes a transforming power, purifying these characters of ours, changing them little by little, and day by day, into the likeness of his own dear Son. In other words, we are "transformed by the renewing of our mind, proving [experiencing] what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Thus Scripture teaches us that, "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he." The heavenly ideal ever kept before the mind, and longed after with intensity of desire, carves it into the soul. What an incentive to great ideals and large expectations! Who would think it sufficient to sit down contented with present attainments of knowledge and grace, or to merely sigh for a greater measure of the more abundant life? Properly understood and acted upon, our every longing after God should at once begin to fill us with an impulse as effective as thirst impels the hart to search for the water brooks. As the poet has very well expressed it,

"I will not waste one breath of life in sighing;  
For other ends has life been given to me --  
Duties and self-devotion, daily dying  
Into a higher, better life with Thee,  
My God, with Thee."

As we find our heart's cry for the living God being answered by his drawing nearer and nearer to us, what results may be expected? Will there be any tangible evidence that life and character do change under the influence of an enlarging revelation of God? Surely so! If in truth it can be said, "A man is known by the company he keeps," and who can dispute it? then if we keep company with God and Jesus, will there not be a manifest evidence of it? Surely there will be. If keeping company with Jesus affected men so manifestly years ago, so that their none too sympathetic

contemporaries were ready to acknowledge that "they had been with Jesus and learned of him," can it be otherwise today? It cannot be. As they were molded by his presence, so we will be.

## **DWELLING WITH THE ROSE**

Very beautifully has this truth been set forth in familiar verse, and who can read it without feeling a strengthening impulse to keep very much closer to him whose garments are "perfumed with myrrh and frankincense:

"In memory's halls there wakes, the while, a legend, quaint and old.  
How once upon a time, one day, a sage picked up, we're told,  
A lump of common clay, so redolent with perfume rare,  
He marveled, and the question wondering asked, 'Whence dost thou bear  
Such fragrance, O, thou lump of clay?' In tones of deep repose  
There came the sweet reply, 'I've been dwelling with the rose.'

" ... From my heart of hearts I cry,  
'Thou lovely Rose of Sharon, may I ever dwell with Thee,  
So closely that the fragrance of Thy love shall cling to me!  
Oh, fill me with the spirit of Thy sweet humility,  
Then all shall see and know, dear Lord, that I have learned of Thee;  
And let mine earthly pilgrimage, until its blessed close,  
Each day and hour bear witness, I've been dwelling with the Rose!"

A daydream, surely! An impractical idealism, likely to vitiate the real business of Christian life! Yes, so some might think. Must we then conclude that the Psalmist in the texts we are considering cannot be regarded as a personification of practical devotion? God's blessed Word answers in numberless ways, No, that cannot be! From a vast multitude who have in all ages known what it means to long after God with heart and flesh like the Psalmist, will come an emphatic, No! it cannot be. Many such bear testimony to having oftentimes fainted for the courts of the Lord, with heart and flesh crying out for the living God, and have gratefully appropriated to themselves the words of the Psalmist so expressive of longings that only God centered hearts *can* know, and heaven-inspired language can express. Oh! "Great is the mystery of godliness!" -- "Christ in you the hope of glory!" The "life of Christ manifest in our mortal bodies." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

What real possibilities lie in these "spirit and life" statements of the Word of God! If our crying after God is an intelligent searching after him, with a clearly defined objective before us, will not the ultimate result be a blessed verification of all the texts quoted above, wrought out in our lives? Surely so! and this alone is the only possible satisfaction to the soul athirst for God.

Brethren, to what we have already attained of these blessed verities, let us follow on by the same rule, until that which is perfect has come, until we see Him face to face, until we awake satisfied forever with his likeness. Praise his name for the assurance of such consummation to all who with thirsty, hungering, longing hearts, perserveringly "follow on to know the Lord."

- J. J. Blackburn

## Waiting Days Are Almost Over

Oh the wideness of His loving grace and goodness,  
Boundless in its scope and grand embrace,  
A plan so wise, so full of heavenly joy and richness,  
Weighed down with cheering promise for our race.

Not vainly in the Word has it been written  
That "God so loved the world" His love had made,  
For though by sin its creatures have been smitten,  
By His great Gift their ransom now is paid.

Long and weary man's sad years of weeping,  
Waiting for a promised rest from sin and pain,  
For that day of glad acclaim and happy greeting,  
When Christ has come, o'er all the earth to reign,

For that hour which brings the earth emancipation,  
How deep the longing cry of rich and poor;  
Now comes the word of cheering consolation,  
Your King! O weary race, is at the door.

But what of those, His own, with souls enthralled  
By loving Bridegroom's promised sure return?  
Who in love and grace, His very own are called!  
Oh, with what fervent love for 'Him they yearn!

They plead, "How long," dear Lord, the waiting time?  
How many weary steps ere we shall end our race?  
Though yet unseen, we love Thee, in a joy sublime,  
Waiting for Thee, hoping soon to see Thy face.

Oh, Thou art sweeter to our hearts each passing year,  
Above ten thousand thousands, the fairest one we love;  
And as we pray, "Come quickly," and believe Thee near,  
We thrill to hear Thy answer, "Quickly I come, my Dove."

Sweet' "border land" wherein we walk and wait today,  
Heark'ning for the word that He for us has come;  
By that blest hope, our hearts hold firmly in the way,  
For old, today! tomorrow! we may hear His call, "Come Home."

- J. J. Blackburn.

*Written just before his passing.*

## **Our Fellowship in Christ**

THE Scotch have a saying that some things are better felt than telt, and perhaps this is especially true of Christian fellowship. Difficult to describe, it is easy to enjoy.

As illustrating this, a story is told of a mother who taught her children that each day they should make it a point to do something for others which would greatly please Jesus. At the end of one day her twelve-year-old daughter reported that her good deed had been to read aloud to a blind lady. The nine-year-old boy had visited a schoolmate who was in bed with a broken leg. When it came the little four-year-old's turn to render her account she could think of nothing. However, in response to prompting, she remembered that across the street there was another little girl her own age whom she had seen sitting on the steps of her house, sobbing bitterly. Not knowing what else to do she had crossed the street, thrown her arm around her and, "Mother, I cried too."

Ah! she could not define fellowship as it is done in the dictionary, and knew nothing about analyzing it; but she knew how to weep with those who weep. And who shall say that she had not learned the very essence of the matter at the tender age of four?

### **BIRDS OF A FEATHER**

Sometimes we hear the expression: "May we have fellowship with thus and so?" Or, "Do you think we ought to have fellowship with so and so?" Such questions indicate that those who ask them do not fully understand what the word fellowship means. Suppose the reply were: "Yes, we may have fellowship with thus and so"; would that reply bring fellowship about, where before there was none? Or suppose the reply were: "No! -- we ought not to have fellowship with so and so"; would that reply hinder, in any way, a fellowship which really existed? You know very well it would not.

Let me give you another illustration of true fellowship, this time from the birds. All of us will recall the proverb: "Birds of a feather flock together." Now we know that this proverb is true. Birds of a feather do not hold a meeting to discuss the matter, and pass resolutions as to whether they shall or shall not, but by nature they actually do flock together.

This is true also of men. A man who is of a generous mind never, under any circumstances, longs after, and seeks out, the company of a miser; a humble-minded man never, by any chance, delights himself in the company of a man who is proud in heart. It just isn't done.

### **ALL ONE BODY WE**

Fellowship never constructs fences. It is true that from time to time, while endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, the Lord's people have found themselves separated by fences which others have constructed. But to these footstep followers of Jesus has been given God's own holy spirit, and those who yield themselves to its sweet influence find themselves possessed of a strange wisdom, a wisdom which knows how to climb over the walls of separation others might build, which knows how to reach through the fences others might construct, and clasp in warm and loving greeting the hand of a brother Christian. Such have been able always truthfully to sing: "We are not divided, all one body we."

## **DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES**

The question is sometimes asked: In what respect does an understanding of doctrine affect fellowship? To this I reply: It all depends on the individuals concerned.

I find in myself and in others a natural disposition to give attention to doctrine rather than to conduct, whereas, what attention we give to doctrine should ever be with a view to a closer walk with God. There is in this a great danger. One may hold the most accurate views regarding the fundamentals of Christian doctrine, may be able to state them in the most precise formulas, may be thoroughly instructed in dispensational and prophetic truth, and may know familiarly the teaching embodied in the types, and yet be barren of fruit. There may be little life where there is much light.

Brethren, let us thank God that our faith is not in a creed, not in a statement of belief, but in a Person, our blessed Lord Jesus, whose personality embraces every grace, in loyalty to whom we can all find fellowship and unity, yea, and if it did but know it, a distracted world could find its life.

If Jesus stood in our midst today so that we could see him with the eyes of flesh, I venture the assertion that he would identify himself with none of us; but with what gladness-nay, in what a delirium of delight, would we identify ourselves with him!

## **TOGETHER**

One more little story: A few years ago three of us stood on a station platform waiting until the train, in which another friend was to take a journey, pulled out. As we stood there, the train conductor came along. He was one of those kindly, genial-faced men, who had grown gray in the service of the public. As he walked down the platform near to where we stood, the engineer of the train, also one whose face showed his kindly character, walking a little faster, caught up with him. Said the engineer to the conductor: "Are you going with me today, or am I going with you?" The smiling face of the conductor remains with me still, as I remember his reply: "Let's go," said he, "*together.*"

- P. L. Read



## The Letter to the Colossians

*"Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience: wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things; but now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth: lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man." - Col. 3:5-10. A. R. V.*

THE PORTION of this epistle that pertains to the building of Christian character, opens with these verses, showing how to clear the ground that the new building may be erected. Just as a conquering king invading a country must, as the first act of his reign, destroy the power previously established, just so the Christian's first endeavor must be, in cooperation with his powerful Ally, to obliterate the last vestige of enemy-power within his being. To war against the world and the Adversary while the will of the flesh still persists, would be like a general going forth to battle against his country's enemies when there is rebellion in his army's camp. Therefore Paul deals with this enemy first. That course is the wise one also from another standpoint: one can become so engrossed with the absolutely essential battle against the world and the Adversary, particularly the former, as to entirely forget the necessity of vanquishing self. Then, too, unless self-will is first attacked, one's battle against the world and the Adversary is almost certain to degenerate into an effort to reform the world. For that task we will not be ready until God has stamped His approval upon us by investing us with the power and the wisdom of the divine nature.

These verses are connected with the preceding discussion by the word "therefore," referring back to two reasons given for the destruction of the fleshly will: because "ye died" with Christ, and because ye "were raised together with Him." The hard, practical facts that the Apostle is setting forth are thus built on the foundation of mystical truths that to the world would be no basis of argument, but to the Apostle and all those who have the mind of the Lord, are more convincing than any human reasoning that could be adduced.

To slay habits that have grown to hardened manhood through many years of nurturing requires a blade of keenest edge. This the Apostle has supplied. In fact, something serious has happened to dull the edge of these doctrines if they are not effective in killing our human desires. Truth held in self love has lost all power for this work. A consuming desire for the approval of our fellow-men may drive us to the *curbing* of some of the most manifest of our fallen desires, but only divine grace can nerve our hand to the striking of the blow that will make the work of destruction complete.

Of wisdom the Wise Man says, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Prov. 3:17); and the new creature by faith recognizes the truth of this description: but to the old creature the paths of true religion, the "wisdom that cometh down from above" (James 3:17), are steep, and climbing there is never easy. The upper air is bracing and exhilarating to the new creature, but trying to the old, accustomed as he is to the lower levels only. The self that is denied finds no joy in the *experience*. On the *other* hand, one wholly devoted to God finds no true satisfaction until the denial of self is as real and complete as the Apostle's forceful figure of death makes it. He knows that the genuine holiness on which his heart is set can never be attained as long as the will of the flesh is permitted exercise in any detail of life. It is the love of Jesus Christ and the power of His Spirit that dwells within that urges on to victory in this unending fight against the flesh in its daily strife to regain rulership in our lives. Only implicit trust in our Captain and His assurance of ultimate victory can give the courage to stand our ground day by

*day* in the very center of the raging battle. Though a thousand fall at our side and ten thousand at our right hand, there is no reason for quailing, no reason for cowardly shrinking in the presence of the foe, for the form of our beloved Captain (Rotherham: "Princely Leader" - Heb. 2:10) is always visible *in* the very forefront of the *fray*.

## THE GRIM CATALOGUE OF THE CONDEMNED

"The Apostle stands like a jailer at the prison door with the fatal roll in his hand, and reads out the names of the evil doers for whom the tumbrel waits to carry them to the guillotine. It is an ugly list but we need plain speaking that there may be no mistake *as* to the identity of the culprits. He enumerates evils which honeycombed society with rottenness then, and are rampant now. The series recounts various forms of evil love, and is so arranged as that it starts with the coarse, gross act, and goes on to more subtle and inward forms. It goes up the stream, as it were, to the fountain head, passing inward from deed to desire"; "fornication," all immoral sexual relations, then "all uncleanness," embracing every manifestation in word or look or deed of the impure spirit. Then follow the sources of the evil deeds, "passion," and "evil desire." They include all forms of hungry appetites and desires after "the things that are upon the earth." No lesser condemnation could be passed on these criminals, for they are the murderers of our race, "dead in trespasses and sins." The "wages of sin [in us or in the world] is death."

The placing of "covetousness" in such close connection with the grosser forms of sensuality is deeply significant. It has the same root, and is therefore closely allied with these-it is but another form of selfish desire going out to "the -things which are on the earth." (Exod. 20:17; Psa. 10:3; Prov. 28:16; Jer. 6:13; Ezek. 33:31; Hab. 2:9; Luke 12:15; Eph. 5:3; 1 Tim. 3:3; Heb. 13:5.) So ingrained is selfishness in the animal nature that it is incomprehensible to it that self can be actually dead in the new creature. Therefore the carnally-minded gossip may not realize that the evil passions yet living in his own nature may be dead in the one whom his unholy imaginations condemn.

Some translators, and they are justified by the Greek Lexicons, make the phrase which follows "covetousness," a reason for its condemnation to death. They read "inasmuch as," or "for it is idolatry." It is an even more debased form of idol worship than that practised by the heathen since it means the depriving of others in order that our selfish desires may be gratified. Though unacclaimed among men, it numbers among its votaries more worshipers than all other religious combined.

The act of cutting off the fleshly members can never be pleasant except to the one who has learned the hideousness of sin and the beauties of true holiness. We can never hope for a full revelation of the latter in this life, nor can our imperfect minds ever realize how hideous sin in its mildest forms must appear to the eternally pure minds of our Heavenly Father and our Heavenly Bridegroom. But we can increase our appreciation of the things that are lovely by "thinking on these things," and as these things daily gleam before our eyes with added luster, blacker will appear every sinful tendency, every trace of the old self and its ways. No longer will we make excuses for them, but rather will join with our worst enemy in the inventing of terms of reproach to heap upon them, knowing well that the condoning of our offenses only delays the day of the death of the earthward members. It is not enough to say, "That is my weakness," unless we can also say, "His strength manifests its perfection in my weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9.) Let us not say, "That is my way," but rather, "That was my way."

## **GOD'S WRATH, MANIFESTING LOVE**

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14:12.) Because they think it is inconsistent with His love, many students of the Word refuse to hear anything of the wrath of God. Paul shuns not to declare the whole counsel of God, and therefore he declares that, "on account of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6, see Diaglott), or as the Authorized and Revised Versions have it, "for which things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience." In every one of these selfish propensities there is, by His pre-arrangement, the seed of destruction. Any of them uncurbed will lead to the utter oblivion reserved for all who are wedded to unrighteousness; for every form of selfishness is a crime against the God of love, and a disgrace in those who bear His name, and so must be condemned of Him. - James 1:15.

The two thoughts of love and wrath are not incompatible. True love, associated with power and wisdom, could not eternally permit a sinner to continue in his downward path of misery. Love must spare him the misery of complete degradation. There is this distinction between the divine and the human wrath, that God's always operates because of love for all the inhabitants of the universe, and even, for the one against whom His wrath moves; whereas the human is too often a mere manifestation of malice toward another. Paul can truthfully speak of God's love toward us when we were "children of wrath." (Eph. 2:3, 4.) A God who could countenance evil and permit its continuance eternally, under any condition, would not be a God of holiness any more than we can be holy if we countenance and condone sin in our mortal bodies. God is angry "with the wicked every day," (Psa. 7:11) and "with the perverse He will show Himself froward." (2 Sam. 22:27.) And unbelievable though it may be to our human senses, there will be froward ones even in the Millennial Kingdom, "the land of uprightness." When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth and the inhabitants will be learning righteousness, even then. "Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal wrongfully, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord" (Isa. 26:9, 10, R.V.); or as Young's Literal Translation renders it: "In a land of straightforwardness he dealeth perversely and seeth not the excellency of Jehovah."

## **"THE WRATH OF GOD COMETH"**

The "majestic present tense" may be accepted as expressing both the recompense already manifest in the depravity of the creature given over to sin, and also the inevitable "utter destruction," as Thayer defines it. Accurately Zophar the Naamathite states the principle by which retributive justice works in this life: "His bones are full of his youth, but it shall lie down with him in the dust. Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, though he spare it, and will not let it go, but keep it still within his mouth; yet his food in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him." (Job 20:11-14.) During the many centuries in which God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath "fitted to destruction," His wrath thus has been just as much in the present tense as it will be in the day of their destruction. Then, too, the absolute certainty the "word that goeth forth out of His mouth shall not return unto Him void" is expressed in the present tense which He uses of future events.

Since the slaying proposed in this passage can be accomplished by no blade with a dull-edge, it must be done by "the truth as it is in Jesus." (Eph. 4:21.) Not only will perverted truth fail to give the blessing for which truth was divinely purposed, but if willfully "added to" or "taken from" will undoubtedly bring great injury. This seems to be the teaching of Romans 1:18, A.R.V.: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,

who hinder the truth in unrighteousness." Every Christian whose motive in holding to the Word is as pure as the Apostle's, can make as effective use as he of Spirit-revealed truth in slaying the tendencies of the old creature and in building up the new into the likeness of Him who is Truth.

### **THE SPIRIT-GUIDED LIFE**

Appreciating the important mission of divinely given truth, every sincere student will not only make certain that he is "established in the truth" (2 Pet. 1:12), but will be eager to most earnestly scrutinize everything that is offered to him as truth with the dual endeavor of never becoming established in any error and of never failing to apprehend, as promptly as possible, all truth that comes within the range of his spiritual vision. Nor need this carefulness result in, an ungodly fear lest in his searching he should be led into some error, for he has the promise Jesus left with us that if he has the guidance of the Spirit it will lead "into all truth." On the other hand, to devote one's time to what he realizes is error would demonstrate an ignorance of his need of sanctification and a lack of love for truth.

### **DEATH, A FORCEFUL FIGURE**

The milder meaning which common usage has attached to the word "mortify,"- doubtless in the minds of most readers nullifies the effectiveness of the King James and the English Revision. So far as we have noted, all other translations, evidently having in mind this difficulty, have substituted synonymous but more effective expressions such as "make dead," "put to death," "slay," "destroy," "kill." It will not be safe to be less drastic than these expressions indicate. A dead member ceases to function, and no sincere Christian can countenance less than this for any of these criminal tendencies. Jesus tells us the only effective method of dealing with each of them: "Pluck it out, and *cast it from thee.*" (Matt. 5:29, 30.) Accurately the word "mortify" describes -the sentence pronounced by God upon our earthward habits, the sentence in which we must concur not only with our will, but also with all our power and our inventive genius, discovering every possible way in which we can cooperate in the work of carrying out the divine sentence.

Note that the Apostle Paul's theology and our Lord's recognize our "members which are upon the earth" as sin-cursed, God-condemned. They do not have the thought of taking the old creature and working with the few faint evidences of righteousness that may be found in it, and developing them until they have reached perfection and then calling it a "new creature"; but their proposition is a clean-cut one: slay the old, and secure life for the new from the only Source of life. Paul's exhortation in this passage is to first put off the old with its characteristics, and not until then does he instruct regarding "putting on."

Christ Jesus is made unto us "all things" in this work. Neither the death nor the life can be completed outside of the "truth which is in Christ Jesus." We would not, however, belittle the commendable efforts of moral men to attain the highest standard within their reach, even though under present conditions it must be far below the perfection which is the goal of the new creature-"without spot or wrinkle or blemish or any such thing."

While the "bringing into subjection" of a Christian's body must undoubtedly bring results apparent to all discerning beholders, the eye of the flesh will never be able to fully comprehend the beauty of this "new creature in Christ Jesus." (1 Cor. 2:15, margin; 1:21; John 1:10; 1 John 3:1.) Only our Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Bridegroom, and, others in proportion as they have their mind, can discover all the intricacies of the character-likeness that is being worked out in them. How can one walk in and appreciate the light who is bound with the chains of darkness?

How can one be freed from blindness while still under the blinding influence of Satan and self seeking? And how can we hope with bare and unaided hand to tear out the members that are the very idols of the old life? To the Christian, "Repent and be baptized," means to "possess [the control over] your members which are upon the earth" and "rise to newness of life with Him." To have a good "victory garden" we must plant seed. Watering the weeds will only assist their growth. They must be plucked out and cast far enough away so, that they will not again take root there.

There is no more lamentable evidence of self-seeking than the using of truth for personal ends: such as, to glorify the flesh by argument, to sow discord among brethren, or to build up an earthly organization. If the fact that we differ with other students of the Word is of more importance to us than the sanctifying power of the truths in which we are established, then we are just another cult, holding the truth, but in selfishness. Truth is not given us just that our heads may differ or that we may work in a different part of the Harvest field, but that "Thou mightest create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." - Psa. 51:10; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10.

### **"SINS IN WHICH YE ALSO WALKED"**

Being reminded of a sin-infested past is not an occasion for discouragement, but for rejoicing in the blood shed for us. Being reminded of the cleansing power of the blood is not that we might continue in sin, but that we might take courage in struggling against it. Being reminded therefore of the sins "in which ye also walked beforetime, when ye lived in them," should be helpful for any Christian, encouraging him to thankfulness and to faithfulness. But all the benefit of retrospection is lost unless there is no faith in self and implicit faith in the power of the blood. There must be also every evidence that we are giving "all diligence" to walk in the footsteps of the Master. All should know well that they can be "acceptable sacrifices" only as His righteousness is ours through justification and His will ours through education. This will mean (1) a deep, heartfelt contrition for sins, past and present; (2) a complete turning away from them in our wills; (3) a daily battle against them -- a relentless battle fought in the strength which He supplies and with which every power of our being cooperates; and (4) the humility that can never fail to result in one who personally knows God, and therefore has learned to hate iniquity as our Lord hated it.

An excellent test as to our hatred for sin and our love for our brethren is to note whether we have plausible and nice sounding explanations of our own "slips," and harsh ones for others'; or whether we are able to speak charitably regarding others, while violently hating our own imperfections. How frequently we will use- words and phrases regarding our own faults that sound almost like terms of affection, as compared with what we have to say about the faults of others. Let us make sure the matter is reversed and the mild sounding phrases saved for others than ourselves.

True thankfulness for the strong and loving Hands which have brought us from the filthy mire of the pit of sin cannot but result in rejoicing that the "power of salvation" is for all, and will even eventually call from the grave every one that sin has condemned, that all may have a full opportunity to "seek the Lord." (Acts 15:17; Gal. 3:8, 14.) If the spirit of this promise (Eph. 1:13, Diaglott) fills our hearts, we will never be tempted to dethrone our Heavenly Father and take His place as Judge of either our brethren or the world. Every trace of imperfection discovered will be only an occasion for greater rejoicing in the deliverance that lies ahead. That spirit alone will effectually crowd out all criticism and condemnation.

The root of no sin of the past life has taken deeper hold than that one of judging others. There are few of us who, if we could but see ourselves, would not discover this sin prevalent in some thoughts and perhaps even in some words of every day. Though so ingrained in our being as to be committed unconsciously, there is no excuse for our not using every endeavor to eradicate it and every other sin; for the wheat will not grow to its golden maturity in a field choked with thistles.

### **"YOU ALSO"**

The phrase "you also" appears in the fourth, the seventh, and the eighth verses, but each time apparently with a different application. In the fourth verse it associates the believer with Christ; in the seventh it associates him with the entire heathen world; but in the eighth it seems to be reminding him that there are other faithful and sympathetic brethren associated with him in the desperate struggle against the inherited and cultivated imperfections of the flesh, such as "anger, wrath, malice, railing, and shameful speaking. This is another reminder than they have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light (Col. 1:13); that whereas at one time they walked in conformity with the ways of the world, they should now conform themselves to the rules of the new association. It is not sufficient, however, to limit their attainments to conforming with the example of the poorest Christian they know or of the best. All must keep their eyes fixed on the perfect Pattern, the beauties of whose holiness will so entrance them that no amount of failure will deter from daily struggling for a little closer approach to His likeness. These two things therefore are essential in the life of every Christian: a clearer vision of the divine perfections, and a deeper contrition for sins past and present.

### **"PUT OFF THEREFORE"**

In the eighth verse the Apostle substitutes for the figure of slaying another of which he also makes frequent use throughout his letters-that of "putting off" as one would lay aside clothing. This "stripping off" of various forms of *wicked hatred* is as complete as the previously mentioned slaying of different types of *wicked love*. It is not unfitting that the first should have been dispensed with by the more passionate figure of slaying, and the chill malignity of this new list dealt with finally and by the more deliberate "putting off."

The virulent poison of hatred-like jealousy, "cruel as the grave,"-is in this last list: "anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking." In fact jealousy is often easily traceable as the root of these evils. Who then, discovering them in his garden, could hesitate to grub deep until the last desecrating fiber has been removed? No Christian life can flourish to full maturity while they are permitted even a feeble existence.

The Apostle proceeds (verses 5 and 8) in opposite directions in describing the two streams of vice. In the first he began with action, and then went up the stream to its source of evil desire; in the second, beginning with the source in evil thought, he proceeds down stream to shameful communications. Our Master informed us that the real pollution is not that of physical dirt, but of mental filth such as these.  
- Matt. 15:18-20.

The "anger" which opens the list is of course not the righteous kind, but selfish, fleshly. "Wrath," the second in the list, is anger boiling over, uncontrolled. The mere control of it is not however satisfactory. It also must be stripped off. Who would think of venturing before the throne of God with either of these in his heart? The putting-off process is necessary if we are to enter into the "fulness of joy" which should be ours every moment of every day, and will be if spent in His presence. The dove, not the eagle, is the divine symbol of the Holy Spirit.

"Malice" is anger that is planning action in accordance with its wickedness. Even slight satisfaction in the misfortunes of others should therefore be recognized and repelled as at least a faint trace of this wicked perversity.

Instead of the "blasphemy" of the Authorized Version, Alexander McLaren accepts the rendering of the Revised, "railing," as better. He says: "The word means, 'speech that injures,' and such speech may be directed either against God, which is blasphemy in the usual sense of the word, or against man. The hate blossoms into hurtful speech. The heated metal of anger is forged into poisoned arrows of the tongue."

"Then follows 'shameful speaking out of your mouth,' which is probably to be understood not so much of obscenities, which would more properly belong to the former catalogue, as of foul-mouthed abuse of the hated persons, that copiousness of vituperation and those volcanic explosions of mud, which are so natural to the angry Eastern."

An exhortation against lying completes the Apostle's list, and it is in the proper relation, for a failure to love others as we love ourselves must usually be the explanation of this fault. The injunction is to "Lie not one to another" -- a course that is obligatory since we are "members one of another." If my brother's interests are my interests, I must of necessity deal honestly with him.

It is not asking too much, as the association of the Apostle's ideas *here* indicates, to expect the Christian to give equal consideration to purity of word, with purity of life and conduct, however much more difficult the process may be. The writer once sat under the instruction of a teacher whose English was a model of purity. Her friends testified that her ability was the result of three years of painful, painstaking consideration of every word she spoke. She thought the goal worthy the effort. We might doubt the wisdom of her inflicting that three years on her friends, but no one will doubt the wisdom of equal or greater care in the weighing of our words that we speak nothing harmful to others or dishonoring to our glorious Head. - "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear." - Eph. 4:29, R. V.

The principles stated in these verses are so elementary and obvious as to cause one to wonder why the Apostle has taken time to state them. His reason most probably is because we are prone to forget, and because we need to be assured that through grace the victory can be won. Though the victory be not manifest to all, if the striving is in heavenly strength and with faith in the covering of Christ's righteousness, the result will be acceptable to the One who is able to judge, and with authority.

"O sacred union with the Perfect Mind!  
Transcendant bliss, which Thou alone canst give!  
How blest are they this pearl of grace who find,  
And, dead to earth, have learned in Thee to live!

"Thus, in Thine arms of love, O God, I lie;  
Lost, and forever lost, to all but Thee!  
My happy soul, since it hath learned to die,  
Hath found new life in Thine infinity.

"O go, and learn this lesson of the Cross,  
And tread the way which saints and prophets trod,  
Who, counting life, and self, and all things loss,  
Have found, in inward death, the life of God."

- P. E. Thomson.

## The Question Box

*Question:*

What is the present mission of the Church?

*Answer:*

The Church, to which our question relates, I understand to be the one true Church described in the New Testament.

It is there spoken of as the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23); as one Church composed of many members (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 10:17); as the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15); as the Church for whom Christ gave himself (Eph. 5:25-27) that same Church whom St. Paul exhorted the elders to feed (Acts 20:28); the Church which our Lord' Jesus declared he himself would build upon the Rock Confession of Faith expressed by St. Peter, that Jesus was none other than the Christ, the long-looked-for Messiah, the Anointed of God. - Matt. 16:18.

### THE CHURCH'S TWOFOLD MISSION

The mission of this one true Church, throughout the Gospel Age has been two-fold, namely:

- (1) To grow in grace; and
- (2) To bear witness.

The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that the first duty of the Church is, as St. Peter puts it in 2 Pet. 3:18, to grow in grace or, to quote from St. Paul, to become conformed to the image of God's Son. (Rom. 8:29.). As Paul elsewhere tells us, we become thus transformed by the renewing of our mind. (Rom. 12:2.) We, who have put off the old man with his deeds (Col. 3:9, 10), find that though our outward man perish, yet the inward is renewed day by day. (2 Cor. 4:16.) Christ in us, that is to say, the Christ-spirit or the Christ-mind in us is, as the Apostle says, the hope of glory. - Col. 1:27.

In addition to growing in grace, the Church is to be a light bearer, bearing witness to God, and to Christ, and to the Gospel.

While it is true that throughout the New Testament the Apostles stress, above all things, the supreme importance of holiness, at all costs, in the common, everyday life, they nevertheless take it for granted that this spirit will not be allowed to degenerate into a mere amiability, which makes itself pleasant to every one, and forgets the solemn fact that the consecrated ones are servants of a Master whom the world knows not, the messengers of a King against whom it is in revolt.

The truth and beauty of a life possessed by Christ is to be the basis of the Christian's witnessing activities. But the witness is to be articulate, not merely implied; he is to hold out the *Word* of Life; he is to seize occasion to give a reason of the hope that is in him, although always remembering to do so in meekness and fear. In conduct he is to be kind and gracious, letting his light shine that men might see his good *works*. But he is not only *thus* to shine; he is also to speak.



Furthermore, growing in grace, and bearing witness, are not to be understood as two missions, but as two phases, two inseparable phases, of one mission. We are to witness by our lives and by our words.

It is doubtless true that from the time of our first meeting with and being conquered by Christ, our life is one long laboring together with God, in the work of preparing oneself for the glorious ministries of the next Age. But it would be false, not true, if this were stated as opposed to, or independent of, another aspect of truth, namely, that the work of thus preparing oneself is so interwoven with the ministry of the Word of Life to others, as to make either impossible without the other. In our discussion of them we may, if we wish, distinguish the two ideas, just as a medical student may distinguish the system of nerves in our bodies from the system of arteries. But he will do this only in his studies, or at a post-mortem examination. We must not forget that in a living being not one system or the other, but both nervous and arterial systems are always present, and in a living Christian the principle which enables him to personally grow more and more like Christ is never found apart from that principle of life which causes him to lose himself in the ministry of others.

### **HAVE THE FEET-MEMBERS A SPECIAL MISSION?**

It is next inquired: Have the last members of the Church in the flesh, those we have been accustomed to call the feet-members of the Body of Christ, any different mission from that of their brethren who lived in prior periods of the Gospel Age? To this I reply: Yes -- they do have.

In making this statement I have no intention to speak dogmatically. Such remarks as I may offer are my own conclusions, I desire to do so in a spirit of a learner, not that of a master; and while presenting my own conclusions, I desire to do so in a spirit of loving consideration of the views of others who may differ with me, and whose fellowship I would cultivate rather than mar.

To me, however, it does seem as though the mission of the feet-members differs, in some important respects, from that of their brethren of former days. Of course, insofar as growing in grace is concerned, there is no difference. Moreover the witness, in many respects, is the same; it is still concerning God, and Jesus, and the Gospel of the Kingdom. But the music of that message contains a new note, a note of tremendous importance. It has to do with time. In the words of the Lord through the Prophet Ezekiel. (Eze. 12:22, 23) "I will, make to cease that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel saying, 'The days are prolonged and every vision faileth.' They shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel." Instead, "Son of man, say unto them: 'The days are at hand and the effect of every vision.'"

Yes, as John, in the Revelation is instructed to write: "The time is at hand." - Rev. 20:10.

It is the privilege of the feet-members to add this new note to their song, a note which could not have been included in the message of the brethren of former days.

Beautiful indeed; upon the mountains, are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion: "Thy God reigneth!" (Isa. 52:7.) "Lift up your heads; for your deliverance draweth nigh." - Luke 21:28.

This difference in mission has been likened by some, not improperly, I think, to the difference between sowing and reaping. However, at this point may I sound a note of warning? While no one today will question that, we have come to the end of the Age, differing views are held by

loyal, consecrated brethren, as to just exactly where we are on the stream of time; just how far into this "end of the Age" period we have come. Some believe the harvest which our Lord himself said would be at the end of the Age (Matt. 13:29) is already in the past; others think that it is still in progress; still others believe that it has not yet commenced. As of today, my own studies have led me to the conclusion that the harvest is measurably in the past, although not yet ended.

### **HAS THE LORD RETURNED?**

Associated with these differing views as to the harvest are questions as to the Second Presence of our Lord, whom the Scriptures tell us is to be the Chief Reaper in the Gospel Age Harvest (Matt. 13:30, 41) as he unquestionably was in the harvest of the Jewish Age. (Matt. 3:12.) Consistently with the thought that the harvest is nearly ended, my own view has been that our Lord's Second Presence is an accomplished fact; that for some years he has been invisibly present. If, while granting, those of the- opposite viewpoint fullest liberty of thought and expression, I myself maintain a similar right and duty, it is not because I love them less, On the contrary, I regard them very highly, though differing in the conclusions they have reached. Brethren of both schools of thought, without question, gladly confess the same Lord, and it certainly becomes ups all, while rejoicing in the light we have, to wait for greater light, assured that, in what one school would speak of as the foregleams of his approaching advent, but which I myself, think would be better referred to as the shining of his presence, contradictory views will more and more vanish, till, in our final gathering unto him, the watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. - Isa. 52:8.

### **THE CLOSING OF THE DOOR**

The fact that the general mission of the whole Church throughout the Gospel Age is supplemented, in the case of the feet-members, by this special message as to the time feature; that we are living in the end of the Age, that the Kingdom is nigh, even at the door (Matt. 24:33), has brought much heart-searching; and questions have been raised as to the possibility of ascertaining the date of the closing of the door of opportunity to enter the Narrow way. On pages C207, C208 of *Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. III*, Brother Russell suggested "three ways in which the closing of this door might be indicated: first, by a definite Bible statement of the exact date; second, by such a reversal of public sentiment with reference to the truth, that fidelity and zeal in its service would no longer meet with opposition, and when suffering with Christ for the truth's sake (Rom. 8:17) would be no longer possible; or third, by such a condition of affairs obtaining in the world that all opportunity for such service would be effectually obstructed, thus leaving no opportunities for candidates to enter into the work and to develop and prove their love and faithfulness by their activity and endurance."

Concerning these three ways he goes on to offer this illuminating comment: "Though we are definitely informed that the door will be shut sometime within this harvest period or end of the Age, the Bible does not give the exact date; and, although after the great time of trouble there will be a grand reversal of public sentiment in favor of truth and justice, we have no intimation whatever that such a condition of affairs will obtain until after the harvest period is fully ended. But we have a clear intimation that *the door will be shut* in the manner last named; for, before the Millennial day breaks, we are forewarned of a dark night wherein no man can labor - 'The morning cometh, and also the night.'" - Isa. 21:12.

## **"COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE"**

Two questions recently received which I will briefly consider, are typical of the thinking of many of the friends:

(1) Is it possible that any of the "little flock" could today make their calling and election sure, while continuing their membership in the various church systems, such as Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, etc.?

My reply has been that this is a question which it is not for me to answer. Even at this late date there are doubtless still some consecrated children of God within these systems. In all the church associations of Christendom today there are doubtless some dear people whose hearts are very much in advance of their heads, and who, up to the light they possess, are seeking to do the will of God. This question, then, is a matter for the individual's own conscience. As the Apostle exhorts: "Let every man be persuaded in his own mind." (Rom. 14:5.) It would be a violation of my conscience for me to hold membership in any of the church systems, but I would not presume to judge others. To his own Master each must stand or fall. In due time the Lord will render a decision in every case and his judgment will be unerring. He would have us, I think, very lenient in our attitude towards any with Whom we come in touch, who, though continuing membership in a church system, manifest a Christian spirit, and who are disposed to fellowship with us to any extent. As systems, all denominations have been cast off, I think; the individuals within the systems, however, are considered apart from the denomination concerned, and only the Lord can read the heart. A great deal will depend, in each case, upon the degree of light possessed. We ourselves, have been highly favored; it is for us to be on guard; lest the spirit of sectarianism creep upon us unawares. My counsel to all continues to be that they stand free, not only from church systems, but from all parties, sects, and creeds of men—from all "confessions of faith." As for others, if in the Lord's providence it seems best to him to permit some to complete their calling and election without leaving Babylon, or without entirely abandoning all creeds of men, or confessions of faith, that would be my will -for *them*. Generally, however, I would expect, at this late hour in the Gospel Age, that not many who, failing to perceive Babylon's true condition, or for other "reasons, remain in her, will be amongst those who one day will hear the Master's "Well done."

## **HAS THE DOOR CLOSED YET?**

(2) The other question reads: Did the door of opportunity to be of the 144,000 close in 1914? If not, has it closed since that date or is it still open?

*Answer:* It is my conviction that the door in question is still open, and that it will not close until the last member has passed beyond the veil. Just when that date will be, I do not know.

If the door closed in 1914 or at any other time in the past, one of two other things must also be true, namely:

1. At the time the door closed, the last member had successfully completed his earthly career and gone beyond the veil, or
2. A certain number, still in the flesh and having yet to complete their earthly trial, had nevertheless developed such maturity of Christian character that failure under any further testing would, for them, be impossible.

Let us consider, *very* briefly, these two implications. In the first place, the proposition that we have the means for determining the date for the glorification of the Church, was set forth by Brother Russell in *Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. II*, pages B76, B77. I quote:

"In this chapter we present the Bible evidence proving that the full end of the Times of the Gentiles, i.e., the full end of their lease of dominion, will be reached in A.D. 1914; ... And be it observed, that if this is shown to be a fact firmly established by the Scriptures, it will prove: . . . that some time before the end of A.D. 1914 the last member of the divinely recognized Church of Christ, the 'royal priesthood,' the 'Body of Christ,' will be glorified with the Head."

In considering this proposition it is of the highest importance that we remember that the conviction that the consummation of the Age has been reached, rests, upon several different, independent "signs," whereas the inference that 1914 would see the glorification of the Church was deduced solely from the parallels drawn between the Jewish and Gospel Ages. That these two Ages do correspond in many respects, there can be no question; but that some of the parallels drawn between them, especially their time features, were strained and forced, seems equally clear, and in respect to their harvests, as may be seen by reference to Reprints Vol. 7, page R5950, before he left us Brother Russell recognized this mistake. Under the caption "Our mistake respecting the harvest," he wrote: Our thought was purely an inference, and now [September 1916] we see that it was an unjustified one."

It is my thought that had our dear Pastor continued with us, he would have given the subject the thorough re-examination it deserves and that, in the light of the events which have since transpired, his keen spiritual mind would have seen the necessity of discarding still more of the "parallels" than those features to which, in the article cited, he referred. However, his brief remarks are quite sufficient for our purpose. They not only admit mistake, but what is of still greater value, they explain the nature of the mistake. It was not merely that we had been mistaken in the year in which the Church was to be glorified. Had that been the extent of our mistake, he would, presumably, have been able, by a more accurate calculation, to tell us how many years we were in error, and just what the correct date would be. No! our mistake was of a different character -- not merely an error in arithmetic. It lay in supposing that the date of the Church's glorification could be ascertained at all, by the "parallels" method. His actual words are: "We should not have looked for parallelisms between the starting of the Gospel Church and its experiences, and the starting in this harvest time of the heavenly Church and its experiences. These are no part to the parallel."

Again, he said: "We imagined that the harvest work of gathering the Church would be accomplished before the end of the Gentile Times; but nothing in, the Bible so said. Our thought was purely an inference and now we see that it was an unjustified one." Yet again, he wrote: "The harvesting of the Jewish Age, gathering 'Israelites indeed' into the Gospel Church, did not close with A.D. 70, but progressed in various parts of the world thereafter. Quite a good many Jews, doubtless, profiting by their terrible experience, were all the better prepared to be gathered into the Gospel Garner after the destruction of their national polity. Similarly, we may expect that quite a good many [Christians] will yet be gathered to the heavenly Garner, and we know of no time-limit here."

I know of no time limit here, either. With Brother Russell I am quite satisfied that it was a mistake to try to arrive at such a "time-limit" from the parallels, and no other satisfactory method has occurred to me, or been brought to my attention. That the day will eventually arrive when the last member of the Church will have been faithful unto death, I am, of course, assured. And I have confidence, too, in his promise, that to those who are thus faithful, he will give a crown of

life. In this confidence, and in the assurance that he is making all things work together for good to us who love him, and that he will under no circumstances permit us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, I rest. - Rev. 2:10; Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 10:13.

Foregoing I have endeavored to show:

1. That insofar as the glorification of the Church is concerned, not only is the date, 1914, erroneous, but that the true date is not to be ascertained from the parallels of the Jewish and Gospel Ages.
2. That up to the present time no other method satisfactory to me of determining the date of this event has occurred to me, or to any Christians of my acquaintance.
3. That the absence of a revelation on this matter does not give me any occasion for unrest, but leaves me content, rejoicing in the continued privilege of ministering the glorious Gospel (a message angels fain would sing) to all who have ears to hear, and while seeking to assist others, to endeavor, by his grace to make my own calling and election sure.

I come now to the second implication in this question, namely, that the door of opportunity could have closed before the last member of the Church had completed his trial, on the supposition that some had developed such maturity of Christian character that, after a certain date, failure under any further testing would, for them, be impossible?

To this I reply: I do not deny that, in his inscrutable wisdom, the Almighty may be able, years before the end of the race-course is reached, to foresee the final outcome in the case of one or other of the prospective members of the Church. I do not know that he can (I speak as a man - Rom. 3:5), nor, in speaking of one who calleth things which be not as though they were, would I be so foolish as to say that he cannot. With God all things are possible (save the denial of himself and his attributes). However, nowhere in the Scriptures, so far as I can recall, is the thought advanced that any, in this life would attain a state in which failure would thereafter be impossible. On the contrary the Scriptures are most explicit in their warnings. "Be thou faithful unto death," is the Master's own exhortation, "and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.) "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 3:11.) The implication is clear that if we do not hold fast, another will take our crown. If we are faithful for the greater part of the journey, and then become unfaithful, a crown of life will not be given us. But if the crown now held in reservation for us is not to become ours because of unfaithfulness, it must be awarded to another. But before such other could receive it, he, in turn, must be faithful-unto death. In order to thus be proved, he must enter the door of opportunity to run for the great prize. Therefore that door must be ajar. Thus must it remain, so long as a single member remains in the flesh.

When at last the door is shut, a company who, we have reason to believe, correspond to the "foolish virgins" of our Lord's parable (Matt. 25:1, 2), will be fully informed on the subject. *They* will announce the fact to all who then have ears to hear. They will do so in these words: "Let us give glory unto him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." - Rev. 19:7.

That time has not yet come, but soon it will be here. Meantime, as the poet has said in the hymn we sometimes sing:

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

One final question has been raised:

What is the sequence of events to be expected in connection with the Second Advent of our Lord?  
Give Scriptural support for your answer.

*Answer:*

As these events unfold I shall be able to speak with greater certainty than would become me today. However, I think I can find the answer in the last five chapters of the Book of Revelation.

Beginning with Rev. 18, and continuing to the end of the Book (Rev. 22) I find a series of 12 distinct visions narrated in orderly sequence. They commence with the times in which we now live, and cover the entire period up to the full establishment of the Kingdom of God. The events thus symbolized are:

1. The fall of Babylon. - Rev. 18.

This, in my judgment, has been in process for some years.

2. The first resurrection, that is to say, the resurrection of the Church, symbolized as the marriage of the Lamb. - Rev. 19:6-9.

This, too, I think, has been in process for years. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth."

3. The glorious epiphany of Christ with his Church. - Rev. 19:11.

Note: The Church, in my understanding, is to share, in her Lord's epiphany.

4. The final Armageddon conflict and victory. - Rev. 19:17, 21.

Note: Still future

5. The binding of Satan. - Rev. 20:1-3.

6. The Millennial reign of Christ and his Church. - Rev. 20:4-6.

7. The loosing of Satan for a little season, at the end of the Millennium. - Rev. 20:7, 8.

8. The Post-millennial apostasy, and the judgment on it. - Rev. 20:9.

9. The destruction of Satan. - Rev. 20:10.

10. The judgment of the dead, small and great. - Rev. 20:12, 13.

11. The destruction of the last enemy, death, with all that the word destruction implies.- Rev. 20:14.

12. The eternal Kingdom of God. - Rev. 21; Rev. 22:5.

- P. L. Read.

## Encouraging Messages

Dear Sirs:

I have read your book, "The Divine Plan of the Ages," which I received through *The Jews in the News*. I think it is very enlightening, and would like the current *prices* on the following: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," "Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah," "The Emphatic Diaglott," and a list of any other literature you have.

Sincerely yours,  
M. M. -- Mich.

Dear Brethren:

Enclosed find check for \$5.00, which please set aside for ten Revelation Vol. I, by Brother Streeter. *I will* send addresses to which they may be sent later.

I have just finished re-reading both Volumes, and I wish every consecrated child could read them. I regret *that* the second Volume is exhausted, except for lending. Perhaps I was not prepared to appreciate these when I first read them, over twenty years ago, but I have certainly appreciated this reading of them.

I can say the same for the book, "Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah" although I have read and referred to it more often.

Praying the Lord's blessing on our efforts to serve,  
Yours in Hope,  
J. W. -- Texas.

## Silent Workers

All the greatest work of this world goes on noiselessly. Only little workers clatter. God, both in nature and in grace, works silently. The angels go about noiselessly on their blessed ministries. So the best work any of us do is what we do without noise. . . The best part of any good man's life is his influence -- that strange, impalpable something which goes out evermore from his character like fragrance from a flower, like light from a star; and influence works always in silence, without words.

- *Anonymous*.

## **"HAVE FAITH IN GOD"**

*"Lord, increase our faith." - Luke 17:5*

The same principle holds good with reference to all of our affairs, no matter what. The lesson of faith to those who have become the Lord's consecrated people is not merely faith in doctrines and theories, nor indeed, chiefly this faith. The chief feature of faith is confidence in God; that what he has promised he is able and willing to fulfill. This faith grasps not only the things to come, but also the things present; this faith rejoices not only in the glory that shall be revealed but rejoices also in the sufferings and trials and difficulties and all the rich experiences which an all-wise Father sees best to permit. Let us therefore, as the Apostle exhorts, rejoice evermore, "in everything giving thanks." - 1 Thess. 5:18, Eph 5:20.

The best illustrations of this true faith, this continuous confidence in God is found, as we should expect in our dear Redeemer's experiences and their narrative. Realizing that he was in the world for the purpose of serving the divine plan, he realized also continually the supervision of divine wisdom in respect to all his affairs: consequently he not only went to the Father frequently in prayer, and went to the Word of the Lord for guidance, but every experience through which he passed, and all the opposition with which he met, he recognized as being under the divine supervision. He knew that he was fully consecrated to the Father, and seeking not his own will but the will of him that sent him; he knew consequently that the Father's providential care was superintending all the affairs of his life.

This is forcibly illustrated in his answer to Pilate when the latter said to him, "Knowest thou not that I have power either to deliver thee or to put thee to death?" Jesus answered, "Thou couldst have no power except it were given thee of my Father." Again he said, with respect to the cup of suffering and ignominy "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" Indeed, it was sufficient for him in any and every matter to realize that the Father was controlling: this thought gave him courage to do, to suffer and to bear.

And similar confidence in divine Providence is necessary to all who would come off conquerors through him who loved us and died for us. If we can feel sure that we have fully surrendered ourselves to God according to his call, we may also feel sure that all things are working for our good: we may realize in every emergency of life that the Father has prepared the cup, and will sustain and bless us while we drink it: our Lord Jesus, the Father's representative, oversees our trials and ignominy and suffering; he permits the cup to be prepared for us by blinded servants of Satan. This knowledge should not only enable us to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods (anything that we deemed precious, trade, influence, good name etc.), but should enable us also to entreat with kindness and gentleness, and with a spirit of forgiveness those who prepare and administer the cup of our sufferings. But none can have this confidence of faith -- none should have it -- except one certain, particular class; and it is not a large class as compared to the world, but a "little flock" -- those who have believed in the precious blood unto justification, and who have as members of the body of Christ, consecrated themselves unreservedly to walk in their Redeemer's footsteps to suffer with him, and to be finally glorified together with him.



## Recently Deceased

- Sr. Clara Bell, Saratoga, Calif. - (July)
- Sr. Estella C. Farrell, Philadelphia, Pa. - (June)
- Sr. Mary Garman, Chicago, Ill. - (August)
- Sr. Mary T. Macallister, Philadelphia, Pa. - (July)
- Sr. Hattie L. Means, Iola, Kans. - (June)
- Sr. Amelia Frances Waldeck, St. Louis, Mo. - (August)
- Br. Paul E. Tiege, Wausau, Wis. (August)