

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## A Song of Thanksgiving

*"Tell . . . how great things the Lord hath done for thee." - Mark 5:19.*

IT IS through the Psalms chiefly that the saint of God finds utterance for the praise and thanksgiving of a gratitude filled heart. Thus has the Lord wisely provided means of expression for the pent-up emotions within. In this connection, Luther has well said:

"Where do we find a sweeter voice of joy than in the Psalms of thanksgiving and praise? There you look into the heart of all the godly, as into a beautiful garden, as into heaven itself. What delicate, sweet, and lovely flowers are there springing up of all manner of beautiful, joyous thoughts toward God and His goodness! On the other hand, where do you find more profound, mournful, pathetic expressions of sorrow than the plaintive Psalms contain? The Psalter forms a little book for all saints, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find Psalms and sentiments which shall apply to his own case, and be the same to him as if they were for his own sake alone; so expressed as he could not express them himself, nor find nor even wish them better than they are. In the other Books we are taught both by word and by example what we ought to do; this not only teaches, but imparts both the method and the practice with which to fulfill the word, and to copy the example. For we have no power of our own to fulfill the law of God, or to copy Christ; but only to pray and to desire that we may do the one and copy the other, and then, when we have obtained our request, to praise and give thanks. But what else is the Psalter, but prayer to God and praise of God; that is, a book of hymns? Therefore the most blessed spirit of God, the Father of orphans, and the Teacher of infants, seeing that we know not what or how we ought to pray, as the Apostle saith, and desiring to help our infirmities, after the manner of schoolmasters who compose for children letters or short prayers that they may send them to their parents, so prepares for us in this Book both the words and feelings with which we should address our Heavenly Father, and pray concerning those things which in the other Books He had taught us we ought to do and to copy, that so a man may not feel the want of anything

which is of import to his eternal salvation. So great is the loving care and grace of our God toward us, who is blessed forevermore."

With this testimony of Luther's all Christians agree; for regardless from what point of view any church has contemplated the scheme of its doctrine, by whatever name they have thought good to designate themselves, and however opposed to each other in church government or observance of rites, we find them all, by harmonious and universal consent, adopting the Psalter as the outward form by which they express the inward feelings of the Christian life.

From among the many beautiful expressions of praise and thanksgiving we have chosen for consideration the 30th Psalm which perhaps was composed after the Psalmist's recovery from a sickness which had nearly proved fatal. The circumstances which called it forth are no longer clear to us. But what child of the Lord can consider these words of warm gratitude without his heart burning within him at the thought of his own "many benefits" received from the "Giver of every good and perfect gift."

"I will extol Thee, O Lord; for Thou hast lifted me up,  
And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.  
O Lord my God,  
I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.  
O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave:  
Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit." - Ver. 1-3.

Is not this descriptive of our own experience? Do we not remember "the hole of the pit whence we were digged"? We "who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past we walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Eph. 2:1-3.) "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." (Titus 3:3.) And what of our many foes who so frequently triumphed over us; those "works of the flesh," the enemies within the fortress so graphically presented in Galatians 5:19-21? "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death." (Rom. 6:21.) Yea, our feet were almost gone; our steps had well nigh slipped. We looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but found none. - Psa. 73:2; 69:20,

Then "this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." For "He looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death." "But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." For "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to -come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which

giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." - Psa. 34:6; 102:19, 20; Titus 3:4-7; Eph. 2:4-7; 1 Cor. 15:54-57.

"Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His,  
And give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.  
For His anger endureth but a moment; In His favor is life:  
Weeping may endure for a night,  
But joy cometh in the morning." - Ver. 4, 5.

Sing praise ("sweep the strings" or "make music" -Rotherham) unto Jehovah for "praise is comely for the upright." (Psa. 33:1.) Again, "Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely." (Psa. 147:1.) "I waited patiently (suffering, intensely, with earnest longings, an intensity of feeling which amounted to real suffering) for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." - Psa. 40:1-3.

In its highest and truest significance, Praise is the instinctive outburst of adoring worship that rises from a pure spirit at the knowledge and vision of an Infinite, Self-existent, All-Creative, and Sovereignly Ruling God, a God of Holiness, Justice, Goodness, and Truth. It occupies a higher vantage-ground than Thanksgiving, since it represents reverent homage and appreciative adoration for God in Himself, as He is in His eternal, glorious, perfect, and blessed Being, utterly without thought of the good He bestows upon the worshiping, recipient creature. The offering of Praise, therefore, is the one spontaneous act of the true saint, unaffected by promise of good and uninfluenced by expectation of return for service. As thus unmixed with any thought of self, Praise is the highest expression of honor to God, and it brings the purest and loftiest element into the Christian's communion with God. In both Testaments it is characterized as an "offering" or "sacrifice" by which God is glorified. (Psa. 50:14, 23; 107:22; Heb. 13:15.) Joined with the tenderer and sweeter note of Thanksgiving for ineffable and unlimited "goodness and mercy," Praise is the one revealed employment of the sinless, and redeemed hosts in the Heavenly Presence. (Rev. 5:7-14.) "Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Sion." - Psa. 65:1.

The "remembrance of His holiness" means literally "His holy memorial" ("celebrate His holy memorial" - Darby) and refers probably to the passage (Exod. 3:15), "This is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations." God's name is His revelation of Himself, in all His various attributes of love, wisdom, power, holiness, truth, righteousness. God's memorial is that great history of redemption, which was, so to speak, the setting up of a monument to His glory, on which all these attributes were inscribed. The Revised Version brings out the precise thought in translating: "Give thanks to His holy memorial name."

The things of this Psalm are of continual interest. They do not belong to any one time or any one type of experience. Some of the notes in it are suitable to home and family and individuals through all the years of their history. Eminently so is the fifth verse, which tells us of the bitter and the sweet, the dark and the light, which run in various distribution, along human lives. The underlying doctrine is the great fact that "God is love," that love runs through all, rules over all, explains all.

Here is a reason why God is to be praised-because He manifests Himself in love, not in wrath; or if in wrath, but for a moment. Love directs all. Rotherham renders this verse, "For there is a Moment in His anger, a Life-time in His good-pleasure (or favor); in the evening cometh Weeping to lodge, but by the morning 'tis a shout of Triumph (or joy)." The parallelism is carefully preserved

in each member-"anger . . . favor"; "a moment . . . a life-time"; "evening . . . morning"; "weeping . . . joy." Weeping is described under the image of a wayfarer who comes in at evening to lodge for the night. The suddenness and surprise of gladness, on the other hand, in the morning, are beautifully represented by the simple "at dawn, a shout of joy," without a verb. Just as the sun in Eastern lands, without any long prelude of twilight to announce his coming, leaps, as it were, in a moment above the horizon, so does the light of God's love dispel in a moment the long night and darkness of sorrow. From Isaiah we quote a beautiful parallel passage: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." (Isa. 54:7, 8.) And in the greater picture of the Restitution day which the Psalmist's words bring to mind, with what thrilled hearts do we in foretaste picture the glorious revealing, through His Christ, of the great God of the Universe, whose righteous and holy character will then be made manifest to all humanity. In that new "heaven and earth," God's blessings abundantly poured forth upon astonished mankind will result in the wiping away of all tears from their eyes and will more than offset their experience under the terrible Night of Weeping: - Isa. 65:17; Rev. 21:4; Isa. 35:10; Isa. 25:6-9.

"And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.  
Lord, by Thy favor Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong;  
Thou didst hide Thy face; I was troubled. I cried to Thee, O Lord;  
And unto the Lord I made supplication:  
What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?  
Shall the dust praise Thee? shall it declare Thy truth?  
Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be Thou my helper." - Ver. 6-10.

In their times of trial God's people in all ages have been brought to feel their entire dependence on Him. In days of flowing prosperity we have little sense of that dependence. As the Psalmist expresses it here: "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. We are very apt to dream, when things are well with us, that they will always be so, and never otherwise. "Tomorrow shall be as this day." Yet prosperity is more pleasant than profitable to us. Though in show it look like a fair summer, it is indeed a wasting winter, and spendeth all the fruit we have reaped in the harvest of sanctified affliction. For we are never in greater danger than in the sunshine of prosperity. It is rare to receive much of this world, and not as the prodigal to go afar off; 'tis hard to keep close to God in prosperity, when we rave much of this world to live upon and content ourselves with; to live upon God and make Him our content and stay, as if we had no other life nor livelihood but in Him. We are very apt in such a case to let go our hold of God, discustom ourselves to the exercise of faith, abate and estrange our affections from God.

It is more common to pray for strength to endure through times of adversity and suffering than for strength to endure through times of prosperity and gladness. Yet it is these latter times of buoyant self-reliance that are most full of peril. It is not in those perilous ways when every step gives fresh evidence that without our Leader we are lost, that we are most likely to turn away from Him. That supreme peril comes rather when we walk in the open plain, and have forgotten the serpents that lurk among the flowers. For every soul that is harmed by adversity, ten are harmed by prosperity. Yet you will find a hundred persons who pray against that adversity which so often brings men closer to God, where you will find one who prays against that pleasant prosperity which too often lures men away from God and from their own best future.

And how deceiving is that prosperity! When the days run smoothly, "involving happy months, and these as happy years," all seems certain to continue. But a change comes over our life. Ill-health fastens on us death invades our circle; relatives bring us into deep waters; our means of

living fail; we are plunged into a very wilderness of woe. How falsely we judged when we thought that it was by its own inherent stability our mountain stood strong! No; it was solely the result of God's favor, for all our springs are in Him; the moment He hides His face we are most grievously troubled. Sad but salutary experience!

"Thou didst hide Thy face and I was troubled." What soul can be deserted and not be afflicted? All the world does no good without the favor of God. As all the stars, though they shine together, do not dispel the darkness of night; so no creatures can comfort us sufficiently when God hides His face. His absence cannot but be lamented with greatest grief, whose presence the soul prizeth above all earthly joy.

"O! may no earth-born cloud arise  
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes."

How moving is the Psalmist's plea to his God in verses 8 and 9! And yet his prayer for prolonged life was not offered with the view of any earthly possession or enjoyment, but only- with a view to the honor of God. He dreaded death as being an end of praise to God. His plea is, what would my life-blood avail if Thou shouldst send me to the grave? If I may live I shall praise God and witness to His truth before the 'living, and this will avail to the glory and honor of God. But, cut down in death, my lips are dumb thenceforth as to any testimony for God in the land of the living. Essentially the same reasoning appears in Psalm 6:5 and 88:10-12 and Isa. 38:18, 19.

Every better spirit, just in proportion to its thoughtfulness and nobility, is saddened as it compares performance with aspiration and work with aim. There are times when the words of God's most believing children about this fleeting life, and the shortness of our time for doing God's appointed work, run in the mould of the Psalmist's. There was a point of view from which life presented itself to our Lord Himself as a golden day, and death as a cheerless night. "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

As we ponder our own brief span, our "fleeting breath," well may we repeat the poet's words: "What need hath God of this poor clay?"

Thank God for the assurance that we shall not lie silent in the grave, but in the glorious Age of the future we shall show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light-Him whose workmanship we now are, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We therefore, with the Psalmist, ask aright for life when we have in view that we may live and praise Him.

"Lord, be Thou my helper." In every duty, in every conflict, in every trial, in every effort to promote the Lord's cause, in every season of prosperity, in every hour we live, this short prayer is suitable. If the Lord help us, there is no duty which we cannot overcome; there is no difficulty which we cannot surmount.

"Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girdeth me with gladness;  
To the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent.  
O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto Thee for ever." - Ver. 11, 12.

To bless God for mercies is the way to increase them; to bless Him for miseries is the way to remove them. No good lives so long as that which is thankfully improved; and no evil dies so soon as that which is patiently endured. The concluding words of this Psalm raise a responsive chord in our hearts: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." - Isa. 61:10.

"To the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee." This word "glory" is also found in Psalm 16:9 and signifies "tongue," and is so translated in the quotation of this verse found in Acts 2:26. As light is the glory of fire (Exod. 24:17), so speech is the glory, the bright shining of the intellect. "Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee." (Psa. 63:3.) For what have we to do in the world as once and again His creatures, anew created unto good works, but to exercise ourselves in those, and by those to advance His glory? That all may return

to Him from whom all is, as the rivers run back to the sea from whence they came. Of Him and through Him, and therefore for Him are all things. "I will sing of Thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of Thy mercy in the morning; for Thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto Thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defense, and the God of my mercy. I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all Thy marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in Thee: I will sing praise to Thy name, O Thou Most High." - Psa. 59:16, 17; 9:1, 2.

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view, I'm lost  
In wonder, love, and praise.

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

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

-*W. J. Siekman.*

## Glad World

*"We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." - 2 Peter 3:13.*

Glad world, I see you daily in my vision,  
A righteous world; dear land of equity,  
Where greed has given place to love of brother  
And truth lies deep as waters of the sea..  
The lame man leaps, the deaf ears opened, listen,  
The blind behold, the stammerers declaim,  
The very trees are clapping hands in gladness,  
All nature praises Him who once was slain;  
Each man is under his own vine and fig tree,  
The fruit hangs ripe and none to make afraid,  
The yawning grave spreads o'er her shame earth's flowers,  
No more are old or infant in her laid.

O happy land where neither sighs nor dying  
Find any place, for joy has come to stay  
And prayers before they're uttered find an answer  
And faces shine, all tears now wiped away.  
My heart runs far ahead and has outreached me,  
I hear the shouts of joy on every shore

They drown earth's present groaning and travailing,  
Thy kingdom, Lord! How could we ask for more!

- *Grace M. Harris.*

## The Golden Rod Given to John

JESUS said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." - John 13:34, 35.

The Apostle Paul in a like admonition says: 'But as touching (brotherly [philadelphia] love, ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love [agape] one another." - 1 Thess. 4:9.

The context of this admonition has to do with our daily walk, the conduct of our lives, particularly in our relation one with another. Paul shows that sanctification includes what we do with these earthen vessels in which we tabernacle, and that we should abstain from unholy lusts of the flesh. For "God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification. Therefore, he that disregards these admonitions, disregards not man, but God who has given us his holy spirit." - 1 Thess. 4:7, 8.

Paul does not state how they had been taught of God; 'but having known the commandments of the Law, and having heard the instructions that came from our Lord, Paul's own ministry and example of untiring devotion and watch care over them, as he led them from the worship of idols to the worship of the living God, had given them a wonderful lesson in brotherly love. He had indeed been an example to the flock.

### MEASURED BY LOVE

John's argument shows that it would 'be difficult to over-estimate the importance of brotherly love. He says: "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, . . . But he that hateth his brother is in darkness." - 1 John 2:10, 11.

In John's use of the word light, he evidently refers to Godlike principle and conduct, rather than to the understanding of doctrine. Though one possessed all 'knowledge, he would still be nothing (darkness) without love. (1 Cor. 13:2.) Then he further says: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, *because we* love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." - 1 John 3:14.

Love for our brethren is therefore the evidence that we see and live; otherwise we abide in darkness and death. John also avers that love for the brethren means that we know God and have been adopted into his family. He says: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God: and every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God." - 1 John 4:7.

Then to further emphasize the great importance of brotherly love, he says, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, 'he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." - 1 John 4:20, 21.

*Love* for our brethren therefore, indicates the measure of our love for God. We should note this carefully and ponder the *vital* significance of John's argument. For to profess to love God, and then not to obey his command to love our brother also, is to show the hypocrisy of our profession, for *if we love God*, we will keep his commandments.



Then too, it matters not how much head knowledge we may possess, or how Biblically sound we may be in our beliefs, if we lack brotherly love, we dwell in darkness, and in separation from God, for God dwells in light. Neither do we know God or partake of life, for love, particularly in its manifestation toward our brethren, is the evidence of knowing God, and of having passed from death unto life.

### **WHO IS MY BROTHER?**

It would be easy to imagine some one, thinking to justify his disapproval of those whose soundness of beliefs he questioned, as saying: Who is my brother? Manifestly, you and I have no authority to pick or choose the ones who will occupy this position, for God does the choosing, and expects us to heed his command to love them. Theoretically, any one who lays claim to God's mercy through Christ, repents of his sins, and in token of conversion turns from sin to the pursuit of righteousness and devotes himself to the doing of God's will, is our brother regardless of his idiosyncrasies or beliefs or infantile conduct.

But the questioner might further argue: Should we not expect some evidence in support of such a claim? Does God expect us to welcome to our fellowship any and all despite their actions and variances in belief? It is here that we, as Christians, need to take care that we follow closely -the Lord's guidance and *do not set up unauthorized standards and tests* of our own conclusions which will cause divisions contrary to the spirit of love, and prove hurtful to all concerned.

Obviously, sooner or later, there will be indications of the genuineness of sonship claims; for if begotten and led of the spirit; there will be manifest a striving toward holiness of life, a desire for fellowship with saints, and an eagerness to understand the Word and will of God, that the daily life may be conformed thereto. Such signs identify a true brother in Christ at all periods of his Christian development.

It is manifest, however, that many who exhibit these signs, do not agree in their conclusions respecting some of the items of truth that have been stressed in these latter days. This has proved to 'be quite a test of brotherly relationship and cooperation; and seemingly is being overruled of God to manifest the degree of our development in brotherly love and the spirit of tolerance. We need to watch well our own hearts, that we do not permit such differences to estrange us from brethren who may prefer association with groups more in harmony with their own doctrinal convictions.

Whereas we hold fully with the *Studies in the Scriptures* in their presentation of the Covenants, the Sin-offering, the Lord's invisible presence, etc., etc., yet we find no evidence in the Word to indicate that a misapprehension of these *operational* doctrines is to be a basis for severance of relationship with Christ. We do find much evidence, however, to show that a failure to have and exercise Godlike love, which is an evidence of a lack of his spirit within, will preclude our acceptance into the glorified Body of Christ.

Some who manifest a true, heart love for the Lord, and are diligently striving to be found ready and watching when their call comes to meet him in the air, are not able to differentiate his secret, unseen presence from that which has obtained down through the Age in accordance with his promise when he said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the Age." To designate such, as scoffers, would do violence to Peter's words (2 Pet. 3:3, 4), for they love the thought of their Lord's coming, and are striving to be found in his image. All Gospel-Age saints have realized the providential leadings of their Lord's presence with them just the same as now-the

only difference being the foretold evidence which we see all about us, relative to the overthrow of this present order in preparation for the incoming Kingdom.

Peter (2 Pet. 1:5-8), like John, places love at the top of the scale in the list of essentials to an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord. He shows faith to be the basis upon which we build, and then progresses upward to *agape* love -- love in its superlative and all-comprehensive degree. This is the principle of love that actuates God, and is not dependent upon being reciprocated or pleased with its object. It is this Greek word *agape* that John uses in all of the texts we have cited, in which he enjoins love for our brethren.

This is a lofty ideal to which we must attain, and it behooves us to take heed that our Adversary does not cause us to make issues of points that have no particular bearing on this ideal. Satan is adept in the misuse of Scripture to turn us aside, as was evidenced 'by his attempt to overreach our Lord in this manner.

Those teachings that pertain to God's operation in bringing to pass his will and purpose, are of course intensely interesting and instructive to us, for, they give us glimpses of Divine wisdom, justice, love and power in a more detailed manner. But so often they are set forth in a way that leaves much to human reasoning ability, which often results in variations of thought; whereas those things pertaining vitally to our Christian warfare in overcoming the world, the flesh, and the Devil, are so plainly and definitely stated, that there is but little if any opportunity to go astray in our, understanding of them.

The great reward is given to those who overcome those who prove faithful in keeping the *conduct* of their lives in full accord with their covenant of sacrifice, and with the admonitions laid down in the Word. In doing this, we become holy as He is holy, and we learn to know him, whom to know is, life eternal.

### **LOVE APPROPRIATE TO ITS OBJECT**

Divine love always operates in accord with wisdom and justice, and in a manner appropriate to its object; therefore our love should also conform to this same rule. It would not -do at all for us to love God with the same manifestations of love that we exhibit toward our enemies. Love for God consists primarily, in keeping his commandments; in rendering the honor and praise that will hallow his name; in showing our appreciation for his goodness by the worship and adoration we manifest in imitation of that goodness. But such manifestations would be wholly inappropriate if exercised toward any being other than God or Christ.

Love for mankind, and also for our brethren, will be shown by manifestations of kindness, compassion, sympathy, mercy, forgiveness, pity, and other like graces. But obviously, such manifestations would be wholly out of place, in the exercise of love for God. He does not need our compassion, mercy, pity, or forgiveness, but he does look upon the exercise of these graces toward our brethren as being love unto himself. The one predetermined and indispensable qualification necessary to an abundant entrance with our Lord into his Kingdom, is that we be conformed to his character-likeness. Such excellence can be attained only through complete trust, obedience and faithfulness in the doing of God's will.

In the process of being drawn (John 6:44) and invited to dedicate ourselves to the doing of the Father's will, there must have existed a measure of honesty and humility in our hearts, for God does not deal with those void of these qualities. Nevertheless, the unholy things of the old man possessed us, and our affections were centered more or less, on the things of this world-the things

pleasing to the flesh. Therefore we had to be emptied of the things of self-will and sin; we needed to be cleansed of the unrighteousness inherited from our forefathers, which we had increased by our own mode of life prior to conversion. Theoretically, this was done when we dedicated ourselves to the doing of God's will, and were begotten of his spirit. But in actuality, it takes time for the holy spirit to be shed abroad in our hearts, and for the fleshly traits to be eradicated and replaced by the graces of the spirit.

It should greatly encourage us if, more and more, we are able to appreciate the length, breadth, height, and depth of God's glorious character, and sense within ourselves a growing desire and determination to acquire and manifest his holiness in our lives. It is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts that enlarges our hearts, that broadens our minds, and enables us to rid ourselves of the narrow, mean, petty things that once possessed us. And it is possession of God's spirit, operative through the Word of Truth, that causes the growth we can see taking place in his children.

Paul says: "All Scripture, divinely inspired, is indeed profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for that discipline which is in righteousness; so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly fitted for every good work." - 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

If, therefore, we are making good use of our opportunity, we are sure to grow, provided the object of our study is the knowing of God's will concerning us, and we have a sincere desire to become like him. If we are not growing, either we do not partake with the right motive in mind, or else we fail to digest and assimilate the lessons that are given there for us. Proper study will no doubt make us aware of the great disparity that exists between us and God; but this should encourage rather than discourage us, for it is an indication that we are growing in appreciation of God.

Satan is constantly recalling to our minds the sins and failures of our past, and using discouragement to rob us of our faith in God's promise of forgiveness through Christ. Consequently, we need to daily remember that "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from *all* unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9.) This promise, if believed and acted upon, will leave Satan no opportunity to attack us through our past sins; for if God has forgiven and cleansed, there is no higher authority, and we need never condemn ourselves, but may press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Whether or not we triumph in the race that is set before us, will depend upon the condition of the heart, which must be sound (pure) to endure the tests that will be put upon it. The heart's condition will be revealed by the way we strive to conform our lives to the will of God; and the index to the heart is the mouth -- that is, the various means by which we express our thoughts. For Jesus says: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." -Matt. 12:24.

### **AS I HAVE LOVED YOU**

Early in his ministry, Jesus cited love as being the evidence of Godlikeness, saying: "Ye have heard that it was said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven." (John 5:44, 45.) When love to this degree obtains, all mankind will be truly blessed and happy. But is a love of one's enemies sufficient to guarantee us the privilege of becoming a member of the glorified Body of Christ?

We must not forget that in perfecting this little flock, God is fashioning a new creation which he intends shall occupy his own plane of existence -- "Far above angels, principalities, powers, and every name that is named." (Eph. 1:21.) And as all of creation is expected to reflect the divine glory in proportion to its scale of being, is it not evident that God will require of this class a greater measure of his likeness than is possible to any lesser form of creation? Paul prays that we may be "filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3:19.) Consequently, we may expect to be subjected to experiences and tests more crucial in character (not necessarily in physical suffering) than will be the tests applied to mankind, or to any order of beings less than the divine.

In harmony with this thought, Jesus, toward the close of his ministry, gives us what he calls *a new commandment*: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34.) But the commandment to love one another had been given many times before this; so why call it new? What is there about this command that makes it different? Clearly, it is the higher standard it sets in the requirement of the additional clause: "Even *as I have loved you.*"

This is a love that goes beyond the doing of good to one's enemies, for it requires the sacrifice of self in the service of others, especially of the brethren, and so constitutes a more crucial test of likeness to the heavenly Father. In fact, it is so unmistakable, that in the next verse Jesus says: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have this [measure of] love one to another." The exercise of Christlike love for our brethren is an advanced test of our worthiness to receive the reward of the overcomer.

When first we come into association with the Lord's people, we are apt to feel that loving them is just a matter of course; for possessing the spirit' of sonship, and having like thoughts and hopes, we find them very congenial. But sooner or later the individual traits, likes and dislikes, will begin to manifest themselves, and we will find that some are not as angelic as we had thought they were. Their natural dispositions and ways of doing things, will tend to irritate and antagonize us; and their conclusions with regard to certain teachings of the Word, will make the Class studies difficult.

If our love is to become like God's love, we will have to overcome our natural feelings: not only to the extent of doing good unto all, but even to the extent of sacrificing our preferences and conveniences, our time and strength when there is opportunity to render service. You will recall that Jesus said: "If ye love them only which love you, what reward can you expect?" Even the unregenerate do this. - Matt. 5:46, *Diaglott.*

Love, in the way that God exercises it, and in the way in which he expects us to exercise it, is not dependent upon being pleased with its object; nor of appreciating and approving what its object says and does. God does not expect us to approve our enemies, but he does expect us to love them, even though they should be brethren from whom we would expect loving consideration.

It must be evident to all that Godlike love goes far beyond the scope of natural affection; or of that degree of appreciation and liking that most people would define as love. And since divine love constitutes the standard to which we must attain, it follows that all who hope to be of the divine nature, must be tested along this line, in order to demonstrate their fitness to be associated with God and all who will be like him.

### **PUT OFF THE OLD MAN**

It will be in tests of this nature that Satan will surely seek to take advantage of our fleshly weaknesses, tempting us to turn from spiritual warfare to the use of carnal weapons. Regardless of how much we strive to keep our natural tendencies under control, they still abide in our fleshly minds, and unless

constantly watched and forcibly suppressed, they will rise to the surface to defile us, and to beget roots of bitterness that others may become defiled.

It was the Apostle's realization of this danger that caused him to refer to the "old man as a garment that must be put off. If you had a garment which you knew was infected with dangerous germs of disease, would you harbor it-would you bring it into your home and wear it? Certainly not. You would either destroy it, or else subject, it to a cleansing process that would eradicate the foul germs.

To foster the unholy things of the flesh is far more foolish than to harbor disease germs, for in so doing, we endanger the life of the new creature -- we threaten our eternal existence. Loving a brother as Jesus loved us, requires that we consider his interests ahead of our own. And so whatever we say and do must be motivated with this thought in mind.

Although we have received the spirit of a sound mind, still our faculties of reason, knowledge, and judgment are very imperfect; as Paul puts it, "Now we see through a glass dimly" (1 Cor. 13:12), and so are very apt to err. Therefore, if we understand the spirit of the Word and the commandments of the Lord aright, it is far better to err in being too tolerant-too kindly, than to err on the side of intolerance and faultfinding.

This does not mean that we may compromise with truth or with conscience when right and wrong are clearly marked, or even when we think that they are. But we are apt to misconstrue our own concepts as being principle, and so become dogmatic and unsympathetic toward others. The Lord's people should realize that they are imperfect, and so should exercise meekness, gentleness, and patience toward those who differ with them.

To "grow strong in the Lord and in the power of his might" means growth in the exercise of the graces of the spirit, for it is these graces that constitute the power of his might. It requires much more power to be kindly than to be rude; to be meek rather than assertive; to be patient rather than impatient, as we are disposed to become. God has not planned our education with the thought, of giving us something easy to do, but sends things that will test our loyalty to him and to the principles which his Word inculcates. Our fitness to receive the reward of the overcomer must be proved, and that largely by the way we exercise love for our brethren in manifesting the graces of the spirit.

### **BROTHERLY KINDNESS**

The exercise of love toward our brethren! Does it not seem strange that both Paul and John should pass by all other relationships and mention only the brethren in this connection? Why is it? Why do we need to be told especially to love the brethren? One would naturally think that this would be easy as compared to love for our enemies, but it is not. Experience has shown that love for, the brethren (and this means all the brethren, not just those that suit us) as exhibited by Jesus, is one of the most difficult things required of us; for God has not chosen people that are congenial to one another according to the flesh. We doubtless would have chosen the friendly -- the by-nature happy dispositioned folks -- but God did not do so.

God is gathering jewels, living' stones that will stand up under the shaping and polishing that is necessary to make them, shine in the setting that has been prepared for them. Diamonds, as originally found in the clay and gravel pits, are unattractive. The chances are that we would toss them aside, and select stones pleasing to the eye because of shape or color. The intrinsic value of the diamond is wrought through tremendous heat and pressure; but its beauty is due to the skill of the lapidary who cuts and polishes it to reflect the colors of light.

Likewise, the Lord's jewels may be found in queer and unexpected places and be very unattractive from the outward appearance; but' if he sees in them a quality that he can use, and inducts them into

the Body of Christ, you and I will have to trust his judgment and learn to love and treat them as brothers in God's family. No doubt their natural bumps and disfigurements, coming in contact with our imperfections, will, irritate, offend and hurt; and there will be times when much of the oil of the holy spirit will be needed. But let us reflect that if we ourselves were without bumps and imperfections, their bumps would cause us no irritation.

The statement of John that "We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren," leaves no room for any qualifying proviso that would weaken its forcefulness and significance; we, must love and cherish all the brethren, whether they please us or not, for all are of one body, one spirit, and one is your Master, even Christ all ye are brethren.

We cannot help appreciating some more than others: even Jesus manifested a preference for Peter, James, and John in that he often made them his special companions. It is more than likely that it, was traits of character that formed the basis for this preference, and their subsequent activities and prominence in his service verified the perceptions of Jesus. Our perceptions are not so keen, and we are apt to appeal to one another largely because of our natural traits; whereas, the thing that should really gauge our appreciation of a brother, is the measure of the Lord's spirit that he manifests. This will eventually be the determining factor with each one of us.

The kind of love we are to manifest for one another, while not devoid of sentiment or feeling, is primarily a principle of action, the same as it is with God. Such love is not to be confused with natural affection. Natural affection and conjugal love are necessary and good in so far as they go, but they are limited in scope, and tend to be evanescent. Agape love is a principle that is not evanescent or limited in scope, for it is not dependent upon another's attractiveness or acts, but will operate wherever there is need.

It is this principle that must constitute the basis of our love for the brethren, if that love is to endure the tests put upon it. But additionally, being of one family, members one of another, there should be developed within us a tender-hearted affection for each other. We must follow Paul's admonition to the brethren at Rome: "Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another." - Rom. 12:9, 10, A. S. V.

For this to be true and operate toward all the brethren, there must be a large measure of the Lord's spirit in our hearts, for naturally we, find it difficult to refrain from judging and estimating one another by what we see in the flesh. It should rejoice us to know that we have right within our own hands, so to speak, the means of keeping ourselves in the love of God, for love of the brethren, according to John, is the measure by which we are judged. If we can say we love all the brethren, and say it truly, we can be sure that we have the Lord's approval. It is a positive evidence that we have passed from death unto life; that we are abiding in the light; that we know God and love him.

In the 11th chapter of Revelation, it is recorded that John was given a golden rod, and was told to measure the Temple, the Altar and those that worship therein.

Whether or not we rightly interpret this symbol, we do know that the Church is the Temple of God, and that we, as individuals in this Temple, are being measured by the *rule of divine love*. The first Epistle of John, chapters three and four particularly, is indisputable evidence that John was obedient and faithful in the use of this rod. Here we are given -to know whether we are of the right dimensions to occupy a place in the Temple, and are truly in harmony with the will of God concerning us.

"Beloved! we should love each other; because love is from God; and every one who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God. He who does not love, does not know God; because God is love." - 1 John 4:7, 8, *Diaglott*  
- J. T. Read.

## "A Peculiar People, Zealous of Good Works" - Part II

Titus 2:14

LET us now for a little while touch on some of the things which demonstrate that the zeal of which Paul writes and speaks, is a *living, potent force* in our daily lives, and that we are, by God's grace, in the power of his spirit, moving onward and upward, *being "changed* into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." In our thoughts we are not detracting in any measure from the great essential -- Faith. Nor are we submitting that works alone are sufficient, but our purpose is to show that any Christian zeal worthy of the name must necessarily be a zeal in which the divine will and purpose *is being effective* in the things so vital to our fondest hopes. In our gardens we watch the developments from the leaf, the flower, and the fruit. Slowly but surely the process goes on. According to the favorable or unfavorable conditions prevailing, the flowers finally produce fruit, or, through lack of the necessary essentials, are non-productive. Just so with the Christian. Given scope, the spirit will produce in the lives of believers *"fruits unto righteousness."* And just as we watch for fruitage in our gardens, even so is fruitage looked for in us. All that is essential to the fulness of which Paul speaks so emphatically in Ephesians. 3, is at our disposal, and *none need fail* to obtain and retain that fulness.

For what should we look as a manifestation of the works referred to in Paul's and Peter's words? Granted that Christ has control, his presence cannot be hidden, for the love which his spirit promotes will be manifested in a desire to work as he worked for the blessing and uplifting of all humanity. It will lead to a greater, a more enduring love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all mankind, and especially to the household of faith. If "we follow in his steps," we who are made partakers of his grace, will, to the best of our opportunity and ability, seek to share with others that of which we ourselves have received, the grace of the Father and the Son, and its accompanying peace, rest, and hope. All such will endeavor in every possible way to make the world better for their stay in it. This spirit is the sure outgrowth of those who are zealous of good works. For if we are clothed with Christ's righteousness and are filled with the joy of his indwelling spirit, we shall not be able to hold our peace. Having tasted and seen that the Lord is good, we shall have something to tell. We shall seek to present to others *the attractions of Christ, his saving grace,* and the, as yet, unseen realities of the world to come. There will be an intensity of desire to follow more closely in Jesus' steps, an earnest longing that those around us may behold "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." It has been said that "those who thus become participants in labors of love, are brought nearest to their Creator." In this ministry, we are made co-workers with the Father and the Son, and thereby share in the joy and blessing therein.

If we work as Christ designs that we shall, we shall realize the need of a deeper experience and a greater understanding of his will concerning us. *Only by a constant, careful meditation on the Word of God watchfulness and prayer-are* those things made possible. As one exercises these blessed privileges, one will get a clearer spiritual perception, a steady, growing faith and an increased measure of *"effectual"* prayer. Let us not fail to avail ourselves of the immeasurable potency of a *prayer-filled life. Such was Christ's,* and such was that of his Apostles. *A living faith, a faith which "worketh by love"* -- *such a faith must bear fruit.* Strength comes by exercise; activity is the very condition of life; and one has well said that "those who endeavor to maintain Christian life by passively accepting the blessings that come through the means of grace, and doing nothing for Christ, are simply trying to live by eating without working." As in the natural law, so it is in the spiritual: there is degeneration and decay.

The Apostle says, "Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." If we are true followers of Christ, we shall carry our religion into everything that is done and thereby reveal to others his spirit. It is the thought of some that talents are given only to a favored class, to the exclusion of others, who, of course, are not called upon to share in 'the toils or the rewards. But in the parable it is not so represented. When the Master of the house called his servants, "*he gave to every man his work.*" With a loving spirit we may perform life's humblest duties "as to the Lord." If the love of God is in the heart, it assuredly *will be seen in the life.*

We are not to wait for great opportunities or abilities before we co-operate with God in the work that he is doing. We need not be unduly concerned as to what others think of us. If our daily lives are testimonies to the purity and sincerity of our faith, our efforts will not be wholly lost. The humblest and poorest of the disciples of Jesus can be a blessing to others. They may not realize that they are doing any special good, but by their unconscious influence they may start waves of blessing that will widen and deepen, and the blessed results may not be known until the day of final reward. They do not feel that they are doing anything great. They are not required to weary themselves about success. They have only to go forward quietly, *doing faithfully* the work that God's providence assigns, and their lives will not be in vain. For, apart from the good done to others, *their own souls will* 'be growing more and more into the likeness of Christ. As workers together with God in this life, they are thus being fitted for the higher work, and the unshadowed joys of the life to come.

Many things are involved in the Christian life, and in our brief space of time, we may only touch lightly on some of the things which are the most important. For to "*follow in his steps,*" to say, and to live, with Paul: "This one thing I do" -- this entails; oh, so much more than we had imagined when, heeding the call, we turned Godward. But by God's grace, his faithfulness, his love, his patience, long-suffering; and mercy -- these things have been revealed to us *as necessary acquirements and possessions* as in an ungodly and unbelieving world we "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling."

To be faithful in all things, to be patient at all times, to be loving, kind, and gracious, forgiving, and enduring, in other words, to live the life held forth by Paul -- in 1 Corinthians 13, the life in which love is all supreme -- this, dear brethren, is, as Paul puts it, the *all in all* of the Christian faith. This is signified by our Lord and his Apostles. *It is all-embracive.* And so, rather than dwell on the individual elements which go to make up in our lives the full works of righteousness, let us consider this all-inclusive element of "love. First, then, we would say that we rejoice in saying that "We love him, *because he first loved us.*" And surely, as our understanding of his love, and also the love of our dear Lord and, Savior, is made clearer to us, are we not impelled to say:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, *my all.*"

Yes. And as we look into the pages of Holy Writ, we find there all that is essential to the working out of the things of the spirit. There may be other helps along that line, but even so, it is written "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet," and "order thy steps in thy Word, and the Master says, "Man 'shall not live by bread alone, but by -every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of 'God." If "love is the fulfilling of the law," it must be our never-ceasing effort to imbibe this, God's greatest attribute. And would to God that Paul's unequalled exposition" of love was engrafted into the hearts and minds of all believers; for if it were, the uncertain light which is so



prevalent today would be replaced with a far more bright and forceful ray in a world of darkness and near chaos.

We recall *the* words of Jesus (Matt. 19:17): "*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*" Paul enlarges on this precept when he says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law!" And is not the whole law condensed in the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus said, "On these two commandments hang *all the Law and the Prophets.*" (Matt. 22:36-40.) The Apostles had no doubt regarding this great factor as it applies to the salvation of men and women, both during the Gospel Age and in "the restitution of all things."

Let us read Paul's analysis of love. (1 Cor. 13.) He had just spoken of spiritual gifts: faith, wisdom, knowledge, healing, and other, gifts; he had referred to the oneness of the various body members, the needs which each member, supplied by virtue of that

oneness; then he speaks plainly, saying, "*Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular.*" Paul, seeing the disunity of the Church at Corinth, looks for and prays for *a united Church*, in which love shall straighten out its hindrances to a unity of purpose that would not only be a blessing to all concerned but also a guiding beacon to those yet in darkness. We note that then, even as now, the "zeal toward good works" is often minimized by the spirit of the world, selfishness, and pride. And so Paul seems to say, While these spiritual gifts are desirable, and, in a measure, profitable, there is a gift, 'a possession, that all might have; andd', 'to the end that all might have it, "I show unto you a more excellent way," the rule for fulfilling all precepts, *the new commandment by which all the old commandments can be kept*

#### CHRIST'S ONE SECRET OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

He goes on to contrast love with things highly esteemed of men: "fluency of speech," "prophecy," "wisdom," "knowledge," and even "faith." He speaks of charitable deeds and suffering, and as he dwells on these things, he passes them through the test tube of love and finds that *because of the wrong motive, they are valueless*, as he says, "*It profiteth me nothing.*" Then, in about four verses, we get an amazing analysis of this supreme thing, "love." Time will permit us to say but little on this unequalled exposition of love.

He shows that love is made up chiefly of nine or ten ingredients or parts, namely, "patience," "kindness," "generosity," "humility," "courtesy," "unselfishness," "good temper," "guilelessness," and "sincerity." We note that all these things, relate to life *here and now*. The possessor of love is patient, calm, ready to do his part as opportunity offers, but meantime wearing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. "Love suffers long, is kind": accepts with a tranquil spirit, uncomplaining, and serene, the leadings of providence, trusting where it cannot trace and resting in God's promise, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: I will help thee; I will strengthen thee; for I am thy God." And yes, 'dove is kind,' even to the point of rendering good for evil, a helping hand and a smile in spite of scorn or unkindness. Yes, "love is kind."

"Love envieth not": it does not envy the success of others when its own efforts meet with failure; rather does it give thanks because of that success. It can share, as it were, in all things by which another is blest. Love is humble: it waives self-satisfaction; it seeks to do its duties quietly and without ostentation; it neither seeks nor asks honor of men but rejoices in such services as its God appoints and supervises. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." Next, "love doth not behave itself unseemly." Love is always courteous, polite, and considerate of others. Only where love is, shall we find the real gentleman and gentlewoman.

"Love seeketh not her own." Note those words, "seeketh not her own." Unselfishness to its limit is suggested here. Let us note its implications, for it strikes deep. To "withstand provocation, and to think no evil" is perhaps one of the hardest tasks that beset us in our zeal unto good works. To smile and make no retort when the tongue of slander or calumny speaks against us, to kiss the hand of the one who lifts it against -us-this takes faith; yes, it takes love in its finest setting. "Love rejoiceth not in iniquity." When a wrong or sinful action has occurred, love will not be hasty to condemn; rather will it realize the words of the poet:

"Could we judge all deeds by motives,  
See the good and bad within,  
Often we would love the sinner,  
All the while we loathe the sin;  
Could we know the powers working,  
To o'erthrow integrity,  
We would judge each other's errors  
With more patient charity."

Love imputes no motives, sees the bright side, and puts the *best possible construction* on every action. Yes, love is sincere and hesitates to pass judgment unless bound to do so. To "bear all things," to "believe and endure and hope all things," is perhaps the acme of Christlikeness and must be *our goal, our aim, our purpose*. In a few words, it is "the Christlike nature in its fullest development."

This can be built up only by ceaseless, *daily practice*. Christ's life was one of *practice of love, obedience, and self-abnegation*. What is ours? Let us not find reason for complaint in the way of life allotted to us. Many, perhaps, are the trials and testings: all to one end, that being so developed and polished, we too shall be made perfect by things hard to bear or to understand. In faith we can go on, in trust and confidence, knowing that "He who holds the helm, the course must know." Faith, confidence, obedience, and prayer-these things will enable us, "a peculiar people, zealous of good works," to finally attain to the eternal rest and perfect peace of the life beyond.

We pray, "Lord, increase our faith. Give to us a clearer vision of that which we look for, pray for, and yearn for. "Give to us, in love and infinite grace, the spirit and power to love thee and thy dear Son as we ought, and so, to love our fellow man, seeking always to glorify and magnify thee in our lives, and acknowledging at all times the unspeakable love of the Father and the Son."

Paul sums up his analysis of love in but few words: "Love *never* faileth." Yes, and he goes on and couples "faith, hope, and love" together, and says, "these three; but the greatest of these is love." Professor Drummond puts the matter plainly when he says, "The whole is greater than the part." For while faith may finally be lost in sight, and hope in fruition, love shall endure throughout eternity, for God is love. Therefore, beloved, let us hold things in their relative proportion and covet or seek that everlasting gift, the love of God. As yet, we know but little of the heights and depths of divine love. However, we know sufficient to cause us to reverently give thanks for all which that love has bestowed upon us in innumerable ways. Let us consider what those ways have been and give thanks accordingly. Let us seek by all prescribed means, to obtain the "love that excelleth," the love of God as it is imparted in the hearts of men and women who seek to live the life that counts, the life that is "hid in Christ."

That the dear Lord may give to us his promised rest now, is our prayer as we sing or say,

"Lord, lead me to a faith like this,  
Through trial though it be;  
For O! the rest of faith is bliss,  
The bliss of rest in Thee."

Finally, all that Christ was to his disciples, he desires to be to us today, for in his last prayer *he* said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them *also* which shall believe on me through their word." He prayed for us *that we might be one with him*, even as he is one with the Father. What a union is this! And so, with Christ dwelling in our hearts, he will work in and through us "both to will and to do of 'his good pleasure.'" We shall work as he worked; we shall manifest the same spirit. And thus, loving him and abiding in him, we shall "grow up into him *in all things*, which is the head, even Christ." - 1 John 3:1-3.

- *W. Wainwright.*

## The Question Box

*"I have said, 'Ye are gods ... but ye shall die like men.'" - Psalm 82:6, 7.*

### *Question:*

Will you please review Psalm 82, with special reference to Psa. 82:6-7. In your discussion will you please say if the "gods" in Psa. 82:6 are the same as those mentioned in Psa. 82:1. Then, too, I was told recently that the Hebrew word which, in Psa. 82:8, is translated "God" (singular), would better be translated "gods" (plural), and that in both Psa. 82:6 and 8 the reference is to the Church. Your comments on this point also would be appreciated.

### *Answer:*

To my understanding the word "gods" in verse 1 refers to the judges of Israel. The Hebrew word *elohim* here translated "gods" has this meaning elsewhere. See, for example, Exodus 21:6; Ex. 22:8, 9, 28.

These judges were as gods to the rest of the nation. They were not to be worshiped as God, but they were to act in his stead. They represented him. Insofar as they discharged the duties of their office faithfully, their decrees were as the decrees of God. This principle should be true of all judges everywhere, but it was especially true in the theocratic state of Israel. The office was sacred, no matter how far short of faithful performance of its duties the incumbents fell.

Expositors, generally, are agreed that the "gods" in verse 6 are the same as the "gods" in verse 1.\* Thus understood, the Psalm bears the descriptive title given it by Rotherham in his *"Studies in the Psalms"* as "The Judgment of Unjust Judges." Moulton, in his *"Modern Reader's Bible"* gives the caption: "God in judgment on the gods." The Westminster Study Edition of the Bible supplies the title: "God Condemns Unrighteous Judges."

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\* Brother Russell at one time shared this view. However, he then believed that in both verses 1 and 6 the reference was not to unjust judges but to the Church (Reprints R338, R421, R1410). Later, he came to agree with the generally accepted view of the scholars that in verse 1 the reference is not to the Church but to unjust judges; however, he did not abandon his belief that verse 6 applied to the Church. - S.S. Vol. V, pages E68, E69.

Psa. 82:1 is attributed, generally, to the Psalmist, Asaph, as is also Psa. 82:8, while the intervening verses, Psa. 82:2-7 inclusive, are understood to apply, in their entirety, to the unjust judges of Psa. 82:1.

In this generally held viewpoint, Psa. 82:6-7 are understood to be the concluding words of God's judgment of the judges, and may be paraphrased thus: "Gods though I myself have styled you, you are, nevertheless, but mortal men. As mortal men ye shall die; yea, as princes whom I have overthrown in their rebellion, ye shall ignominiously fall."

In Psa. 82:8 the Psalmist, having listened to this righteous judgment of God on these unjust judges, calls on God to arise, and put an end to the perversion of justice, by himself judging not Israel only, but all nations.

To my understanding, there is nothing in our Lord's reference to this Psalm, in John 10:34-38, which conflicts with the interpretation given foregoing. He there appeals to Psa. 82:6 of our Psalm in his argument with the Jews, when they charged him with blasphemy "because he being a man, made himself God" (John 10:33). The point of his argument seems clear: "If earthly judges are Scripturally termed 'gods' -- and in Psalm 82:6 they are -- how can you justly charge me with blasphemy for saying that I am God's son? Moreover, this title of 'gods' was given to those *to whom* the word of God *came* (consecrating them to their office, and requiring them to conform their judicial decisions to that word). In my case, I am not one *to whom* that word *came*, but the one *who was himself* consecrated and *sent*."

In the interpretation of the Psalm presented foregoing, its *primary* reference has been shown to be to the unjust judges of Israel who lived in the days of the Psalmist Asaph; men who, though placed by God in exalted stations would, nevertheless, die as other mortals, and who would first suffer ignominious ruin for their unrighteous course.

But this primary reference by no means exhausts the teaching of the Psalm. It *is* a fact, which no scholar would dispute, that many of the Old Testament Scriptures are Messianic in character. This is particularly true of the Psalms. Examples may be seen in whole Psalms such as Psalms 2, 16, 22, 45, 46, 72, and 110; also in selected passages from other Psalms such as Psalm 31:5 (Luke 23:26); Psalm 34:20 (John 19:36); and Psalm 41:9 (John 13:18). Such a Messianic application is hinted at by Rotherham in his comment on Psa. 82:8 of our Psalm. I quote:

"We seem to be carried forward on the wave of a Messianic flood as we read in the concluding couplet: As if to say, *Oh arise, Elohim, oh judge the earth* -- thyself, in a clearer and nearer Divine Manifestation than at present; no longer permitting Justice to be perverted as now; and do this the rather that *all nations* are thine by right; thine by the claim of thy birth as earth's King, into the full possession of which wilt thou be pleased soon to enter."

And here we are brought back - rather we are brought forward - to Brother Russell's illuminating exposition, as condensed in the footnote to S.S. Vol. V, page E69. I quote it here in full, except for the reference to Psa. 82:6-7:

"This entire Psalm (82) seems to refer to our Lord Jesus as the divinely appointed Deliverer and Judge of Christendom, now, in the time of his *parousia* To him we apply the words, 'God [*elohim*, Christ appointed by the Father to judge the world now] standeth in the assemblage of the mighty [amongst the financial, political, and ecclesiastical princes]; he judgeth among [these] *gods* [*elohim* - mighty ones].' He is represented first as reproving these princes and calling for

equity, but 'They heed not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness [respecting what will be the result of their policy]: all the foundations of the earth [the social world] are out of the course'; is his decision: it is useless to attempt to patch present institutions; they must all be 'dissolved,' that the new heavens and new earth-the new social world-may come instead. Then . . . -- when all the 'elect' Church by dying shall have passed beyond the veil - then Christ will be called upon, 'Arise, O God [*elohim*], judge the earth for thou hast inherited all nations.' It will be to establish his Kingdom that he will let loose the judgments which in 'a great time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation,' shall abase the proud and exalt the humble and usher in the 'times of restitution' long promised by all the holy prophets. - Acts 3:19-23."

One question remains: "Would the word translated 'God' in Psa. 82:8 be better translated 'gods'?"

The answer to this question may be traced in S.S. Vol. V, pages E66-E69. There Brother Russell discusses the word *elohim* at some length. On page 66 he correctly states that "like our English word 'sheep' *elohim* is used either in the singular or plural as occasion may require."

What does the occasion require in Psalm 82:8? I reply: The noun *elohim* must here be translated in the singular (God) for the reason that it is the subject of three verbs, "arise," "judge" and "inherit," *all of which are in the singular*. The fact that the verb forms are in the singular rules out as ungrammatical any interpretation which gives *elohim* in this verse the plural meaning which it does in fact have in verses 1 and 6.

To utilize Brother Russell's "sheep" illustration: If told that the sheep *was being sheared*, we would understand that the reference was to only one animal; whereas, if told that the sheep *were being sheared*, we would understand that the reference was to more than one animal.

- P. L. Read

## Recently Deceased

Sister E. M. Cooper, Los Angeles, Calif. - (August).  
Sister Hannah Challener, Burnaby, B. C. - (September).  
Sister Alta L. Durrell, Elsinor, Calif. - (September).  
Sister Elizabeth Lyles, Houston, Texas - (September).  
Sister Sophia Saalfrank, Searsdale, N. Y. - (August).  
Brother Edward Szybynsky, Flushing, N. Y. - (October).  
Brother A. E. Thorogood, Sahta Rosa, Calif. - (October 1953).  
Sister J. D. Wiens, Long Beach, Calif. - (August).