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"Clean Every Whit"

A Meditation on John 13:1-17

AMONG THE many lessons this passage contains there are two of outstanding importance which we propose to consider in this "Meditation," and which we trust the Lord, by the power of his holy spirit, will apply to our hearts as we seek to concentrate our attention upon them. These two lessons are:

- (1) The necessity of a daily cleansing on the part of a' consecrated Christian, and
- (2) the gracious example of love, humility, and service which our Lord set, and which it is both our privilege and pleasure, so far as lieth in us, to copy.

First, then, let, us consider the necessity of our daily cleansing. In verse 10 Jesus has said to Peter, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Before we can properly enter into the meaning of these words it is necessary to do three things:

- (1) Secure a better translation.
- (2) Read them in the light of the custom which prevailed in the East, and
- (3) Take note of the special circumstances under which they were uttered.

A BETTER TRANSLATION

Let us first secure a better translation. In our Authorized Version two Greek verbs which have a marked difference of meaning are translated by one and the same English word, the word "wash." One of these verbs means "to bathe," to get into the water; the second verb means "to wash," that is, to apply water to the uncovered parts of the body, as the hands, the head, the feet. To make the sentence exact and clear, therefore, it ought to be rendered,, as in the Revised Version it is rendered, "He that is *bathed* needeth not save to *wash his feet*."

AN EASTERN CUSTOM

But how should a man who has just bathed, just washed all over, need to wash even so much as his feet? A familiar Oriental custom furnishes a reply. In the East it was the custom for guests to take a bath before they went to a banquet. But as on their arrival at the house of their host, their feet, protected only by sandals, might have contracted some defilement from the streets through which they had passed, they found servants, provided with towels and vessels of water, awaiting them, who washed the dust from their feet in order both that they might be saved from discomfort and that the cushions on which they reclined might not be soiled. It was doubtless to this custom that our Lord referred when he said: "He that is bathed need wash only his feet."

THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

"Thus, far, so good. It has not been difficult, by reference to the Revised Version, to secure a better translation and to illustrate it from customs prevailing in the Eastern countries. But now, if we are to enter into the real meaning of the sentence, we must give a more leisurely consideration to the circumstances in which it was uttered. These circumstances, while they are of a very special and impressive interest in themselves, are also, when duly arranged, a striking and instructive commentary on the words before us.

But here at the outset it becomes necessary to make one or two additional corrections to the translation given in our Authorized Version. In that version, in verse 2, we read that "supper being ended" Jesus arose and washed his disciples' feet. Indeed, it is impossible to read the first four verses of the chapter without deriving from them the impression that it was at the *close* of the feast (when such an action would have been quite out of place) that our Lord assumed the duties of the servant and washed the feet of his followers. As, however, in the subsequent verses of the chapter we find the feast is still going on, we might well suspect to find some mistake in the translation of these verses. There is such a mistake. The words translated "and supper being ended," ought to be rendered, as in our Revised Version, "during supper," or, better still, "When supper was being served," or "when supper was about to begin," or, as the Diaglott renders it, "as supper was preparing." And, in verse 4, where we read, "He riseth from supper," we ought to read, "He riseth from the supper," as yet untasted, and to understand, not that he got up from eating -his supper and, still less, that he got up at the close of the supper, but that he rose from the table at which the supper was about to be served, and before the meal as yet had begun.

"HE THAT WOULD BE CHIEF AMONG YOU"

Now if we quietly note these corrections, and if we also bear in mind St. Luke's, report (Luke 22:24) of the dispute that broke out at the supper among the disciples, the dispute as to which of them was, or should be, the greatest, we shall have no difficulty in arranging the details of the scene so as to arrive at their true significance.

The supper took place at evening, of course, and in the upper room, duly furnished for the Passover, which Jesus had sent forward two of his disciples to secure. With the other ten he had walked from Bethany to Jerusalem in the afternoon' of the day. After their hot and dusty walk, their first care would be to take off their sandals and wash their soiled and heated feet. This office was usually performed by the servants of the house, though sometimes a host, in receiving guests of distinction, would himself do them the honor of taking the servant's place. But during the Feast of the Passover, when Jerusalem was crowded with visitors from every land, many of whom had to sleep in the streets or in tents pitched outside the walls, it was impossible to maintain any very

nice observance of the rules of hospitality. Those who were so fortunate as to obtain apartments were expected to wait on themselves. The host had his private friends to see to. The very servants would be too busy to wait on strangers and transients. The laver, or basin, would be there -- the large copper ewer commonly found in Oriental houses -- and the "watering-pots," the large earthenware jars, from which it might be replenished, and the towels with which the feet were to be dried. But all else would be left to the visitor, or to the servants (slaves) he brought with him.

When the disciples of Jesus arrived at the house of the "goodman who had placed an apartment at the disposal of Jesus and his friends, they doubtless found "the large upper room furnished" with all that they required. And probably, though we have no record of the fact, one of them at once removed the Master's sandals and washed the dust from his feet with the cool, fresh water that stood ready to hand. But no one of them, it would seem, would stoop to perform that kindly office for the rest. The old emulation, the old strife, as to which of them should take the highest place, broke out among them again; and there they stood, with dusty feet and with hot, jealous hearts, wrangling as to whose duty it was to play servant to his brethren. The feeling "I am as good as you, and a little better" seems for a moment to have ruled them all. No one of them had yet learned the lesson which Jesus had so often taught, that he is the greatest who does most for the others, and he the true chief who serves most-most efficiently, and most disinterestedly. It was to impress this neglected lesson on them that Jesus, who had already taken his place at the table, rose from the untasted supper, laid aside his flowing outer robe, girt a towel around him, thus appearing among them as one that served, poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

But for his grace *they* might have sat down unwashed and angry, and *we* might never have learned the dignity of service, the glory of humility. *They* surely must have felt humbled and ashamed as they saw him whom they called Master and Lord assuming the menial part and discharging the servant's office which they had refused. And *we*, who also call him Master and Lord, may well learn from this act of humility that the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him; that it is not in standing up for our own rights and insisting on our own claims, and exalting ourselves above our brethren, but in stooping cheerfully to the lowliest duties and the most generous service, that we rise to the highest honors and enjoy a real fellowship with him whose name is above every name.

"IF I WASH THEE NOT--"

Apparently the Apostles were so astonished at our Lord's procedure and so felt the condemnation which his course implied that they knew not what to say, and so silence reigned, until it came Peter's turn. Peter had a peculiar combination of character, part of which was extremely good. He objected to having his feet washed by the Lord, saying, "Lord, dost *thou* wash my feet?" as much as to say, "It is not appropriate, Lord, that One so great as thou, and so holy, should serve a person of my standing, a poor fisherman full of sinful propensities and faults." But our Lord answered that although Peter did not understand the full meaning of the matter, he would explain to him later, when he had finished the washing of all. "Nay," said Peter, "thou shalt never wash my feet," meaning that he would not allow our Lord to stoop so low on his behalf. But in this Peter was again mistaken. Often as he had been taught to see a meaning in Christ's actions that went beyond the action of the moment, and though Christ has just warned him that there was in this action much more than met the eye, the impetuous Apostle cannot wait for light, but speaks from the darkness of his self-will--an instance of blundering haste which might well remind us of the virtue which resides in being "slow to speak." Drawing back his feet from the basin, he emphatically declines to let his Master become his Servant. He wist not what he did, even as he understood not what Jesus had said. And, therefore, Christ speaks to him very solemnly, and in

words of direct spiritual import: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" -- "no portion or share with me," as Weymouth translates the word -- "if, you will not suffer me, as your Host, to wash your feet, you are no guest of mine; no portion, no dish, is set on my table for you; you stand outside my circle, outside my fellowship."

The spiritual significance which Christ had declared his action to possess is partly disclosed in these words. For they cannot be taken literally. It was not literally necessary that Peter's feet should be washed by his Master and Lord in order that Peter should have either his portion on the table or his part in the Kingdom and grace of God. But it was necessary that he should submit his will to the will of Christ, and learn to take a law from his lips. It was necessary that the whole round of his activities, symbolized by the feet, should be cleansed and purified. If we believe in Christ, we also must walk even as he walked; and where shall we get strength to walk aright save from him, and as we follow him who never at any time transgressed his Father's will?

This was the spiritual meaning of Christ's rebuke to Peter. It was not enough that he should once have witnessed a good confession, or that he should still acknowledge Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. Day by day, as often as the dust of the world, or of the worldly, self-willed spirit, gathered upon him, he needed to be cleansed from it, to have his stains and sins washed away.

Peter did not fully take the meaning of our Lord's words, or he would not have uttered his second rash and hasty speech. But he was so profoundly impressed by the solemnity of his Master's tone and manner, so appalled at the mere thought of having no portion with him, no place at his table, no lot in his Kingdom, that he cried out impulsively: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head! Wash all of me that is uncovered, all that is open to the soils and infections of the world!" He had missed the more delicate distinctions of his Master's thought; but his heart was in the right place; he would do and suffer anything rather than -permit the links which bound him to Christ to be severed. And, therefore, Jesus expresses his thought still more clearly in the words: "He that is bathed-he that has once been plunged in the laver of regeneration, he that has become a new creature-needeth not save to wash his feet"; but this is a daily necessity with him. His feet, soiled by contact with the world's dusty paths, must be cleansed if he is to be clean every whit.

THE DAILY WASHING OF THE ONCE-BATHED

When men first truly believe in Christ, when they sincerely accept the revelation of God's redeeming love made in and through Christ, they are bathed, they are regenerated, they are created anew, they become new men in him, new creatures in Christ Jesus. While Christ had not as yet laid down his life in death, yet he was about to do so, and in consequence of his contemplated sacrifice they were already accepted as his disciples; their faith in him and in his Father was already reckoned to them for righteousness, and as soon as he had completed his sacrifice and ascended to the Father's right hand, the holy spirit would be poured out upon them, testifying fully that the Father had accepted his sacrifice on their behalf. Even now they had a standing with God. Jesus had come forth from the Father with the glad word or message of the salvation planned. And they had listened eagerly, and had earnestly embraced that message. So true was this that Jesus was able to say to them, "Now," or as Weymouth translates, "Already are ye clean [or cleansed] through the word [or teaching] I have given you." - John 15:3.

They had been with our Lord, under the influence of his spirit of love, meekness, gentleness, patience, humility for three years and been greatly blessed by the washing of water by the Word he had unfolded to them. But as they would continue their journey along the narrow way, they would find themselves contracting fresh pollution; they would be made painfully aware that the

old nature was only reckoned dead, and would require a life-long warfare to keep it under; they would experience temptation from such contacts as they would make with the world's maxims and laws, or by being brought into collision with evil which would find its way even into the Church; and hence, though bathed, they would need to go again and again to the Fountain in which they were first cleansed, the inexhaustible Fountain of divine mercy and grace.

This, then, is the first lesson suggested by the words "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet." We sin *after* we have believed. We take fresh soils and stains *after* we have been renewed in the spirit of our minds. We need a daily cleansing, though not a daily regeneration. We have the treasure of a new life in an earthen vessel. And this new life, begotten of God the Father by the incorruptible seed of the Word, may be checked, lowered, thwarted by the evil and selfish passions in which our flesh still asserts its existence and power; it may be stunted by the cares and pleasures of the world in which we live; by the frets and anxieties that spring from the toil by which we gain our daily bread; by an undue attention to our personal interests or to the things of this present world; by the evil tempers stirred in us by the contradiction of sinners or even by the contradiction of saints. Daily, therefore, we need to be washed from these ugly and defiling stains. It is not enough that we were *once* quickened and enlightened; that once we tasted of the heavenly gift and felt the powers of the Age to come. Day by day we need to seek the presence of our Lord, who, with basin and towel, stands ever ready to refresh us, cleansing away our travel-stains that we may have our part with him.

"I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE"

If we have learned what it means to go day by day to the Master for the refreshing "feet-washing" that he stands ever ready to minister to us, it will not be difficult for us to grasp and put into practice the second lesson to be noted. It is summed up in verse 15: "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you."

When the Lord had first approached Peter, who had in astonishment inquired, "Lord, dost *thou* wash my feet?" our Lord had replied, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." The thought is not that he would be given to know in the "hereafter," but that as soon as our Lord had finished washing the other disciples' feet, he would make all plain. Thus we read, verse 12: "After he had washed their feet and had taken his garments and was set down again, he said unto them: Know ye what I have done to you? [or] Understand ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you."

Here we have the entire lesson explained. He had rendered them a service which they had held to be too mean and lowly for them to render to each other. He had taught them, and through them he has taught us, that it is by loving and serving one another that we copy his example, draw near to him, and grow like to him.

The washing of one another's feet, we may readily see, applies to any and every humble service of life, any and every kindness, though specially to those services and kindnesses which would be along the lines of spiritual assistance and comfort. How many blessed opportunities we have for comforting, strengthening, consoling one another, and assisting one another in some of the humblest affairs of life, and in respect to some of the unpleasant duties, experiences, and trials of life. As the Apostle, in Galatians 5:13, expresses it, we are to serve one another by love. No service we render is to be formal, but all motivated by love. Any service done or attempted to be done in love, with the desire to do good to one of the Lord's people, we may be sure has our

Lord's approval and blessing. Let us lose no opportunities of this kind; let us remember the Master's example; let us, like our Master, not merely assume humility or pretend it, but actually have that humility which will permit us to do kindness and service to all with whom we come in touch, especially those of the household of faith.

That the lesson had its designed effect on the Apostles we can scarcely doubt as we trace the record of their lives and see how with much self-denial they served the Body of Christ, of which they were fellow members, following the example of their Head, who was chief Servant of all. And we, too, are determined, are we not, that the lesson shall not be wasted on us. We, too, can improve the various opportunities that come to us of serving the members of our Body -- the Body of the Christ followers -- in matters temporal as well as spiritual. We can be on the alert, and when we see sadness or discouragement, be prompt to lend a helping hand to lift our brother's burdens or our sister's sorrows, and we, can let them see, by deeds as well as by words, our anxiety to serve them--figuratively speaking, to wash their feet.

THE "WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD"

There is yet one other way in which we may follow our Lord's example in washing one another's feet; and that way is suggested in Ephesians 5:26. There the Apostle speaks of Christ as loving the Church and giving himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it through the washing of water by the Word, or, as the Diaglott renders the passage:, "So that, having purified her in the bath of water, he might sanctify her by the Word; that he might place the Church by his own side, glorious, having, no spot or blemish, or any such thing, but that she might be holy and blameless."

This purifying of the Church in the bath of water (living water, of course, not literal water, the water of regeneration, as it is described in Titus 3:5) and its sanctification (its dedication, its setting apart to the service of God by means of the Word, both its letter and spirit), have been in progress all down through the Gospel Age, and it is in progress still. Are we having a part in this glorious work? Of course, it will be only a very small part, at most, but if we are on the alert, opportunities will from time to time present themselves, which we may seize, in which to pass on to others something of the refreshment which we ourselves have derived from the comforting message of pardon, peace, and love which has been brought to us in the Gospel.

RIGHT MOTIVES ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESSFUL FEET-WASHING

In all of our service for and on behalf of others it is important that we be animated by right motives. When the Lord stood ready to wash the disciples' feet, it was not to call attention to the dirty condition of their feet, but to bring them refreshment from their travel stains -- to gently wash them away. Thus must it be with any service we may think to render others in relation to their spiritual progress. As Brother Russell has so well observed in the Manna comment for May 23rd:

'Ye also ought to wash one another's feet.' This would signify that the members of Christ's Body should have a mutual watch-care over one another's welfare; to keep each other clean, holy, pure, and to assist one another in overcoming the trials and besetments of this present evil world, arising from the three sources of temptation, 'the world, the flesh, and the devil.'" And then he goes on to observe: "Only as we cultivate the various graces of the spirit--meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly-kindness, love can we hope to be specially helpful to others in putting on these adornments of character and purities of life, and to get rid of defilements of the world and the flesh."

"He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet."
"I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you."
"If ye know, these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

"Clean every whit?
Thou saidst it, Lord.
Shall one suspicion lurk?
Thine surely is a faithful Word;
And thine a finished work."

- *P. L. Read (From Herald, June 1948)*

Heroism

It takes great strength to train
To modern service your ancestral brain;
To lift the weight of the unnumbered years
Of dead men's habits, methods and ideas;
To hold that back with one hand, and support
With the other the weak steps of new resolve!
It takes great strength to bring your life up square
With your accepted thought, and hold it there,
Resisting the inertia that drags back
From new attempts to the old habit's track.
It *is so* easy to drift back -- to sink --
So hard to live abreast of what you think!

It takes great strength to live where you belong,
When other people think that you are wrong;
People you love, and who love you, and whose
Approval is a pleasure you would choose.
To bear this pressure, and succeed at length
In living your belief -- well, it takes strength --
Courage, too. But what does courage mean
Save strength to help you face a pain foreseen;
Courage to undertake this life-long strain

Of setting yourself against your grandsire's brain:
Dangerous risk of walking alone and free,
Out of the easy paths that used to be;
And the fierce pain of hurting those we love,
When love meets truth, and truth must ride above!
But the best courage man has ever shown,
Is daring to cut loose, and think alone.
Dark are the unlit chambers of dear space,
Where light shines back from no reflecting face.
Our sun's wide glare, our heaven's shining blue,
We owe to fog and dust they fumble through;
And our rich wisdom that we treasure so,

Shines from a thousand things that we don't know.
But *to think new* -- it takes a courage grim
As led Columbus over the world's rim.
To think -- it costs some courage -- and to go --
Try it -- it taxes every power you know.

It takes great love to stir a human heart
To live beyond the others, and apart;
A love that is not shallow, is not small;
Is not for one or two, but for them all.
Love that can wound love for its higher need;
Love that can leave love, though the heart may bleed;
Love that can lose love, family and friend,
Yet steadfastly live, loving to the end.
A love that asks no answer, that can live,
Moved by one burning, deathless force -- *to give!*
Love, strength and *courage*, courage, strength and love --
The heroes of all time are built thereof.

- C. P. S. Gilman

Half Hour Meditations on Romans

No. 20

"God . . . commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness." -- Acts 17:30, 31

WHILE all would admit the general principle stated in the verse we have last considered (Rom. 2:2), namely that the judgment of God is according to truth (or without partiality) against them (whosoever *they* are) who commit evil, yet St. Paul knew that there were men who secretly cherished a hope of escape from punishment. While the context shows that he has in mind the Jew, yet his argument "applies to any, whether Jews or Gentiles, who while continuing in sin hope to escape because of the special kindness of God.

To show the worthlessness of this hope Paul brings it out and looks at it in the light of day. By a pointed question he ruthlessly tears the darling thought from the thinkers breast, and exposes it in its naked absurdity to the view of all."

As another has paraphrased Rom. 2:3: *Now is this your calculation, O man, you who judge those who practice such things, and do them yourself, that you will escape Gods judgment?*

Do you surmise that some by way of privilege and indulgence will be kept open for you? Or in the words of yet another: "How can any man, who is guilty of the same wickedness, which he judges will exclude others from mercy, be so foolish as to reckon that whatever becomes of them, he shall escape the judgment of an infinitely holy and righteous God?" Surely a false calculation, this. Yet it apparently is the explanation of the sense of security which the Jew felt and maintained. Not, be it noted, that he would stand *acquitted* at Gods tribunal, but that on account of his unique position he would escape the just *punishment* his sins merited! But "perhaps this false calculation proceeds from a moral fact hidden in the depths of the heart? St. Paul drags it to light in what follows."

The Riches of His Goodness

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering not knowing that the godness of God leadeth thee to repentance? - Rom. 2:4.

"Is there something even worse than an illusion; is there contempt? The case then would be more than foolish, it would be impious" -- such seems to be the Apostles meaning. "The riches of goodness, of which the Apostle speaks, embrace all Gods benefits to Israel in the past: that special election, those consecutive revelations, that constant care, finally, the sending of the Messiah, all that constituted the privileged position which Israel had enjoyed for so many centuries."

"The conduct of Jehovah towards his ancient people had also, through their entire history, been marked, in an astonishing degree, by forbearance and long suffering. Remember, and forget not, said Moses to the Israelites when they were about to enter on the land of promise, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord (Deut. 9:7). And such, ever after, was their character, with few material or long continued changes to the

better. "

"From that time forward, their history presents a humbling and affecting scene of ingratitude and rebellion on their part, and of patience and unmerited kindness on the part of God. Amidst all their multiplied provocations, he continued to warn, to threaten, to expostulate; sending to them, for these ends, all His servants, the prophets, with messages of faithful reproof and of compassionate entreaty, rising up early and sending them; still staying the arm of vengeance, and in wrath remembering mercy. He corrected them, indeed at times, when repeated expostulation was in vain; but always waited to be gracious; readily forgave their iniquity, and turned from the fierceness of his anger. It was of the Lords mercies that they were not consumed.

"Further: the very period at which Paul now wrote was itself an interval of singular forbearance. They had despised, rejected, and crucified the Prince of Life; and they still continued to shut their eyes to the clearest light, and to harden their hearts against him.

He had fulfilled filled his declaration made to them when he was upon earth: Behold I send you prophets and wise men and scribes; and his message by these ambassadors was a message of grace and of pardon- -and they had sadly verified his prediction -- some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city (Matt. 23:34)."

"The riches of Divine goodness and forbearance and long suffering now, above all other periods, so signally displayed towards them, ought to have led them to repentance. Filled with shame and remorse, and covered with confusion of face, on account of their past ingratitude and perverseness of heart, they should have returned unto the Lord from whom they had revolted adopting the words of penitence and humiliation, which the prophet long ago dictated to them: Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render as bullocks the offering of our lips (Hos. 14:2, R. V.).

Such ought always to have been the effect of Divine patience. But, instead of this, generally speaking, what had it been of old and what was it now? Because sentence against an evil work was not speedily executed, their hearts were fully set in them to do evil (Eccl. 8:11).

"They *despised* the riches of goodness and for bearance and long suffering of God, not *knowing not considering, acting as if they were ignorant*, that the goodness of God leadeth all who are partakers of it to repentance; that this is its proper tendency, and ought to be its invariable effect. All this was calculated in a fearful degree to augment their guilt.

Their misimprovement and contempt of the special and distinguishing kindness of God to them gave a peculiar enormity to their wickedness, above that of any heathen nation on the earth. This is, in very alarming terms, represented to them, and through them to us, in Rom. 2:5."

A Treasure (?) of Wrath

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. -- Rom. 2:5

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel" (Eze. 33:22)?

Such was the language of the long suffering and forbearance of God toward his chosen people. But instead of listening to his voice, trembling at the warning and embracing the merciful invitation, thus improving the space given them for repentance, they employed it in accumulating the load of their guilt and of the Divine displeasure; treasuring up for themselves wrath; filling up the measure of their iniquity."

"There is an evident correlation between the phrase *riches of goodness* and the Greek word [translated] *to treasure up*. The latter word, as well as the dative (of favor!) *for thyself*, have certainly a tinge of irony. What an enriching is that! Wrath is here denounced on the Jews as it had been on the Gentiles (Rom. 1:18).

The two passages are parallel; there is only this difference between them: among the Gentiles the thunderbolt has already fallen, while the storm is still gathering for the Jews. The time when it will burst on them is called *the day of wrath*. In this phrase two ideas are combined: the great national catastrophe which had been predicted by John the Baptist and by Jesus and the final judgment of the guilty taken individually at the last day."

[NOTE:In reference to the national catastrophe, the Baptist had said: "Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt. 3:10); and our Lord had said: "From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation" (Luke 11:51).]

It is to be noted ere we leave this verse, that in referring to the day of wrath as a day of *revelation* of the righteous judgment of God, the Apostle thereby indicates that righteous judgment, or wrath, was still veiled so far as the Jews were concerned, in contrast to the wrath on the Gentiles which we have seen was already revealed (Rom. 1:18), but that then, in the day of wrath, it would be revealed in relation to the Jews also. "In the special favors conferred on the Jews, and continued in their possession, notwithstanding their many and aggravated sins, there was an appearance of want of equity in the Divine administration. And, indeed, the personal prosperity of the wicked presents, in every instance, a similar appearance and has sometimes proved a temptation to the true . . . [worshippers] of God to doubt and question a superintending providence." [" Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Mal 3:15).]

"There has appeared to them a mysterious strangeness in this part of the Divine administration, which they have at times felt in a painful degree their incompetence to explain. They have been tempted, with tears of wondering solicitude to exclaim: How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High (Psa. 73:11)? But that day shall reveal His righteousness The Apostle enlarges on this important truth in the following verses, from the sixth to the sixteenth inclusive, applying it to the situation and character of both Jews and Gentiles."

"Whatsoever a Man Soweth, That Shall He Also Reap"

Who will render to every man according to his deeds. -- Rom. 2:6

These words, the truth of which would be admitted by all, are intended to prove the point St. Paul has just made; namely, that the judgment of the great Day will be righteous. While in this life the justice of Gods judgment does not always appear, in that day it will be revealed to all. His words, which would appeal to the moral sense of all, would come with added force to the Jew, for they are a direct quotation from the Psalms (Psa. 62:12), and moreover reflect the sense of many other

passages in the Old Testament scriptures.

"The word [translated] *deeds* is sometimes applied to external conduct [only]. But it is plain that this is not its meaning here. It denotes everything connected with conduct, including the acts of the mind, the motives, the principles, as well as the mere external act. Our word *character* more aptly expresses it than any single word."

Some have difficulty in reconciling the "rendering to every man according to his *deeds*" with the doctrine of "justification by *faith*." Rightly understood, however, the passage is seen to be not inconsistent with the main theme of the Epistle. The Apostle will be ready enough to expound "his" Gospel of a "faith righteousness" in due time. Mean while, and in order that it may be expounded all the better in its proper place, he endeavors to show the Jew, as he has already shown the Gentile, his great need of it. Without a "righteousness by faith" where will his Jewish reader be in the great Day? in the day when God will render to every man according to his works? This is the question he is seeking to press upon the conscience of his hearer.

Incorruptible Glory and Honor

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God." -- Rom. 2:7- 11

Realizing that "immortality" is an attribute of the Divine nature only, to which only the church of the Gospel Age has been called, some have been led to suppose that, for reasons not apparent, the Apostle in the above words makes reference to the high calling of the Church. These seekers after "glory and honor and immortality" according to this interpretation must be the Church. Apart from the word "immortality," however, there is nothing in the context to lead any one to suppose that the Apostle is referring to the Church and its reward.

The difficulty disappears when we learn that the word translated immortality is *aphtharsia*, and means incorruptibility, not immortality. The Greek for immortality is *athanasia*. It appears only three times in the New Testament and is found in I Corinthians 15:53, 54 and in I Timothy 6:16. It signifies deathlessness and is properly translated immortality. In each of the three places in which it occurs, *athanasia* refers to sentient being, whereas this is not always the case with *aphtharsia*.

Athanasia not only refers only to sentient beings, but in each instance refers to the life principle by which their organisms are animated.

Aphtharsia, on the contrary, in those instances in which it is applied to sentient being does not refer to the life principle but to either their organisms or characters. For example, in Rom. 1:23, the Apostle may be referring to the fact that the organism or body of Jehovah is incapable of decay; or he may be referring (and it is our thought that he is referring) to the fact that the moral worth (the character) of Jehovah is of such excellent quality as to be impossible to corrupt. In any case the Apostle is not referring to God's deathlessness; had he desired to do so, he would have used the word *athanasia*.

Aphtharsia while sometimes referring to sentient beings does not always do so but in several

instances refers to inanimate things, such as the Christians crown (I Cor. 9:25), his inheritance (I Peter 1:4), the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit (I Peter 3:4), the quality of love possessed by believers still in the flesh (Eph 6:24), etc. It is possible, gloriously possible, for believers here and now to love our Lord Jesus (yes, and each other too) with incorruptness, but all can see that the word *immortality* would be quite out of place in this connection.

The Church to be Both Incorruptible and Immortal

In one celebrated passage the Apostle uses both words: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption *aphtharsia* and this mortal must put on immortality *athanasia* . So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption *aphtharsia*, and this mortal shall have put on immortality *athanasia*, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:53,54).

If the word *incorruption* meant precisely the same as the word *immortality*, the Apostle would be multiplying words to no purpose. On the contrary we understand him to be distinguishing between them. It is as though he were to say: "When this organism, which is capable of decay, gives place to one that is not, and when this life principle, which is one that is sustained, gives place to one that is inherent, then shall be brought to pass, . . ." etc.

Let Us by Patient Continuance in Well Doing Seek a Character Incorruptible

With these distinctions in mind, and giving consideration also to the context, we are led to the following conclusions with regard to Rom. 2:7:

(1) The word immortality in the *Authorized Version* is more properly translated "incorruptibility."
-- *Diaglott*.

(2) Since *aphtharsia* and not *athanasia* is the word used the Apostle cannot be referring to the *life principle* which animates the organisms of Divine beings.

(3) While *aphtharsia* never refers to a life principle inherent or sustained, but sometimes refers to the organism of a living being, it does not always do even this but in several instances refers to inanimate things. One eminent expositor suggests that the context in which this verse appears seems to require that the word be regarded as an adjective employed to qualify the nouns "glory and honor," making the phrase read "incorruptible glory and honor."

As a paraphrase, this suggestion seems not unreasonable, although the fact that the noun (incorruptibility) and not the adjective (incorruptible) is used it is not in its favor as a literal translation.

However, the essential thought would not be very different if, as we have seen is permissible, we regard the incorruptibility sought by patient continuance in well doing to be an incorruptibility of character. It is certainly true that some men seek glory and honor from each other (John 5:44).

Such glory and honor is capable of and soon experiences decay. Other men, by patient continuance in well doing, may be said to seek the glory and honor that is incorruptible, incapable of decay; or, if the other view be taken, they may be said to seek glory and honor and a third thing, namely, a crystallized character incapable of corruption. Surely such a character will be the possession of all, on whatever plane of existence, who are counted worthy of eternal life.

Ultimately, if they persist in such seeking, they will either in this life or the next meet with the Gospel and receive the grace necessary to embrace it. By embracing the gracious provisions of the Gospel, they will secure the glory and honor they sought (or, if we take the other view, they will secure the glory and honor and the incorruptible character they sought). They will also receive eternal life. It is true that some of these (the faithful overcomers of the Gospel Age, the Little Flock, the Church) will receive eternal life on the highest plane of existence, namely, the Divine plane. Such will, indeed, be possessors of immortality. This, however, is our opinion, is entirely outside the scope of the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Romans.

Works of Faith to be Rewarded

The thought then of the Apostle enunciated in verse six seems to be established. The principle of Gods judgment is clear and simple. He will render to every man his due by no fictitious standard (such as birth or status) but strictly *according to what he has done*. To those who by a steady persistence in a life work of good strive for the deathless glories of the Messianic Kingdom, he will give that for which they strive, namely eternal life. But to those mutinous spirits who are disloyal to the right and loyal only to unrighteousness, for such there is in store anger and fury, galling, nay crushing, pain: for every human being they are in store, who carries out to the end his course of evil, whether he be Jew or whether he be Gentile -- the Jew again having precedence. On the other hand the communicated glory of the Divine Presence, the approval of God, and the bliss of reconciliation with him await the man who labors on at that which is good -- be he Jew or Gentile; here too, the Jew having precedence, but only precedence; for God regards no distinctions of race.

-- P. L. Read

Mirrors

*"We thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks forever:
we will show forth thy praise to all generations." - Psalm 79:13.*

WE ALL know what mirrors are, for we use them every day to reflect our image. But how many of us realize to what extent we ourselves are mirrors, receiving and reflecting either God's glory or the negative of that glory.

The Psalm from which the above verse is quoted is mostly a lament over the condition of natural Israel in subjection to her foes, and a prayer of supplication by its author that God would glorify his own name in bringing about a deliverance, and punishment upon those who defied him in their treatment of Israel. If this prayer is answered, the promise is given that they, the people of God, will render due thanks and show forth God's praise forever. This Psalm had its direct application to natural Israel, but antitypically no doubt to spiritual Israel. "We will show forth Thy praise to all generations," or in other words, the Psalmist here declares that God's people will mirror his glory.

THE MAJESTY ON HIGH

Apparently there was a time when God was alone. Such a state is beyond our comprehension, but we must come to this conclusion if we accept the Bible statement that Jesus in his prehuman state was "the beginning of the creation of God."

If there was a beginning to creation, and if Jesus was that beginning, instead of being a third part of a Trinity as some say, then God must have been alone-nothing but God-no opportunity or possibility for the exercise of his attributes of wisdom, justice, love, and power-nothing but himself-nothing to reflect his glory. How wholly inadequate our minds are to grasp or fathom God and eternity!

Certain philosophers claim that what we call time came into existence with the creation of the material universe, and that the past, present, and future are all in the present with God. All that has occurred in the past and all that will occur in the future is before him now. The findings of science and certain Scriptures seem to support this view. For example, Acts 15:18 declares that "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." In Romans 4:17 it is written: "I have made thee [Abraham] a father of many nations, like unto him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were." At the time this statement was made to Abraham, as we view things, he was not the father of many nations, but in God's sight the thing was accomplished.

An illustration that has been given to show how things past and future to us, are in the present with God, is that of two men, one walking along a country road, and the other flying high overhead. To the man walking along the road the farm-house a mile back and the stream and foot-bridge just beyond the next hill are things of the past and future in his sight and experience, but to the man high overhead they are open to view and are in the present. This is a crude illustration, but gives some idea of how things or events which are in the past and future, so far as our experience goes, may stand revealed in the sight of God.

THE AORIST TENSE

In this connection it is of interest to note the use of the aorist tense in the New Testament Greek. Scholars tell us that this tense has no equivalent in the English language, for it seems to combine past, present, future, and perfect.

The translator of the Interlinear New Testament says: "This tense [aorist] of the Greek verb has been at all times the most difficult to deal with, being translated in the Authorized Version (and by others) sometimes by the present, sometimes by the past, sometimes by the future, and sometimes by the perfect. Grammarians say that in the main, 'it is the indefinite past.' For example: to say, 'He has cleansed me,' is more than saying, 'He cleansed me,' because the first expression implies a continuance of the act or its effect to the present time; whereas the latter expression speaks of an act at some time in the past, without anything being implied as to its continuance."

In 2 Timothy 2:19 we read (Authorized Version): "The Lord knoweth them that are his." The verb "knoweth" is from the Greek aorist. In this case the English tense is a fairly good rendition. The Lord knoweth those that are his, whether in the past, present, or future.

The verbs in John 3:16 are also in the aorist tense. Our common version reads: "God so loved [past tense] the world that he gave [past tense] his only begotten Son." The Newberry and Concordant Versions, translate the text: "God so loves the world that he gives his only begotten Son." It is hard to give the correct thought in English, for the aorist tense in which the original Greek is couched includes past, present, and future.

It is somewhat like the name God gave to Moses in answer to his inquiry as to what he should tell the children of Israel when they asked who said they were to do certain things. God said to Moses: "I am that I am." The name suggests eternity.

GOD'S GLORY REFLECTED IN CREATION

Isaiah 43:7 tells us that all things were created for God's own glory. All things were intended to mirror the glory of God in some way pleasing to God. Think what that glory must be that requires all of creation to reflect it! Think of the wisdom and power revealed in creation -- no two things exactly alike -- each grain of sand, each atom and ion in that grain, reflecting in some degree and some special sense all its own, the glory of God! As the Psalmist declares, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."

"HE THAT HATH SEEN ME HATH SEEN THE FATHER"

The first creation to manifest God's glory was the Logos. John's Gospel, first verse, says: "In a beginning was the Logos [Word] and the Logos was with the God, and a God was the Logos, The same was in a beginning with the God." This translation harmonizes with the statement of Rev. 3:14 which calls Jesus the "Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

John 1:3 continues by saying: "All things were made by him [the Logos] and without him was not anything made that was made." This agrees with the statement of Paul who said "All things are of the Father, but by [or through] the Son."

The Son of God, called the Logos in his pre-human state, manifests God more fully than any other creation. To begin with, he was the only direct creation of the Father; all the rest were of the Father but by him. In Proverbs, eighth chapter, he is described as the personification of wisdom. He is recorded as saying: "Jehovah formed me in the beginning of his way, before [or the first of] his works of old. Then was I by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."

The Son was always God's right-hand and honored agent; and after his resurrection and exaltation to the divine nature he is described as being the express or exact image of the Father's person-the most complete mirror of God's glory.

FAILING TO REFLECT GOD'S GLORY WE FAIL IN THE PURPOSE OF OUR CREATION

All things having been designed to reflect God's glory, even the lowest forms of creation must ultimately fulfill that purpose. In Rev. 4:11 we read: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power! for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure *they* are and were created." Here we note the object or reason for all things, namely, for God's pleasure, to reflect his glory; and when persons or things cease to reflect that glory, they no longer fulfill the object of their creation, and will be destroyed.

Adam, created in the image and likeness of God, was capable of reflecting God's glory more fully than any other earthly creation; but when he disobeyed God, sin and the resultant corruption began to tarnish the perfect mirror so that it no longer gave a true or perfect reflection.

God foreknew what would occur before he created Adam, nevertheless he went ahead with man's creation because he knew he could cause the treachery of Satan, the wrath of men, and the experience with evil, to work out to his own glory and honor, and to the eternal welfare of all his intelligent creation. In the meantime, these human mirrors have become greatly tarnished, and some almost, if not wholly, worthless. As a whole they were cast off, but here and there God has found certain ones who have been willing to undergo a washing and polishing process in order that they might be used of him.

"THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD"

In the tabernacle type God drew a picture of the plan he would follow in restoring mankind to a perfect condition; and in making the laver, where the priests washed before entering the tabernacle, he used the burnished copper looking-glasses or mirrors of the women. (Exod. 38:8.) This seems to picture the washing of water by the Word, for Paul speaks of the Word as a mirror and a cleansing agent for those who use it. The priests using the laver could no doubt see the heavens reflected therein - as well as their own faces. Is it not the same when we look into God's Word? Does it not reflect God's glory of character as truly as it reveals our own imperfections?

In 2 Cor. 3:18, Paul says: "We all with open face beholding as in a glass." (*Strong* says this word "beholding" means "to mirror oneself, see reflected.") "We all, with open face, beholding as in a

glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord."

It is the writer's belief that *Rotherham* and *Weymouth* each give a better translation of this verse. *Weymouth* translates: "And all of us with unveiled faces, reflecting like bright mirrors the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same likeness." *Rotherham* reads: "And we all with unveiled face receiving and reflecting the glory of the Lord, into the same image are being transformed."

These translations do not stress the point of God's Word being a mirror, as does the *Authorized Version*, but rather the fact that we, with unveiled faces, because the veil of darkness that had clouded our minds has been removed, reflect more and more the glory of God we see revealed in his Word.

EXCEEDING JOY TO BE OURS WHEN WE REFLECT PERFECTLY

Jesus was a perfect manifestation of God in the flesh, and if we bear fruit, as is intended of us, then we manifest God also-at the present time, it is true, through imperfect, tarnished reflectors, but in the resurrection the medium of reflection will be perfect.

Paul makes this plain in 1 Cor. 13:12, where he says: "For now we see through a glass dimly." A footnote in the *Diaglott* states that in olden times they did not have clear glass, but had to use substances such as horn, oiled parchment, etc., in their windows. These admitted the light, but: revealed objects very dimly. We are like that. This earthly body through which we receive and reflect is very tarnished, so we see and know but in part, and so reflect imperfectly. But then, when we are resurrected, with perfect spirit bodies, we will see and know face to face. Our medium for reflecting will not only be perfect, but will be of super-spirit quality, the Divine nature.

What a delight, what a joy it will be, when we can glorify God perfectly! At the present time our efforts are a mixture of joy and chagrin because we reflect so imperfectly. It is human nature to enjoy most those things we do well, and to neglect the things we find difficult. All creatures are happy in doing the things they are fitted to do. Fortunately our new minds dwell on a plane that delights to do the will of God, and so we find pleasure in reflecting; his glory, even though our mirrors are tarnished. It makes us happy when we realize that we have in some small way conducted ourselves in a manner pleasing unto God; and if this makes us happy, what will be our reaction when we can perfectly reflect that glory? That will be exceeding joy, the Apostle tells us.

In nearly every place where this phrase "exceeding joy" is used, it is connected with the completed work of transformation in our mirrors or characters. Jude says, verse 24 (Jude 24), "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you *faultless* before the presence of his glory with *exceeding joy*, to the only wise God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever." In being made faultless (no tarnish or flaw in our mirror), we must pass through trials and testings; and if we could not by faith look ahead to the finished work, we might become discouraged and quit. But Peter says: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with *exceeding joy*." (1 Pet. 4:12, 13.) Here again, we see the "exceeding joy" linked with the completed work of transformation. Paul, also, links the two in 2 Cor. 4:14-18: "He who raised up the Lord Jesus shall also raise us up by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the

abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not. But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things that are seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

"IF ANY MAN DRAW BACK"

If any man draw back from this process of being made meet for the inheritance in glory, God's Word tells us that he will have no pleasure in that man, but will cut him off from life; for nothing will be permitted to exist that does not in its own station, perfectly fulfill its Creator's will.

James says, "If any one be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he resembles a man viewing his natural face in a mirror; for he viewed himself and went away, and immediately forgot what kind of person he was. But he who looks intently into that which is the perfect law of freedom and continues in it, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of its work, this man will be blessed in his deed. (James 1:23-25.) His contemplation of the perfect character reflected in the perfect law of freedom has a transforming effect upon his own character.

The Scriptures indicate that God has had the new creation in mind from the beginning of his work; he did not, however, see fit to create it outright as he did the various orders of angels and mankind, but has proceeded in the strange and mysterious manner of taking imperfect human beings, the lowest order of beings formed in his image, and is making them over into the image of his Son. The Son, we are told, is the express image of God, having life in himself, even as the Father hath life in himself. This whole matter has been a mystery all down through the ages, and is still a mystery to all except the little flock, the ones who are being transformed.

THE CREATION OF THE NEW CREATION

No other creation has known anything about its own creation before it began to function as a completed being, reflecting in some degree God's glory. But the new creation, including its Head, is made fully aware of what is happening unto it; and what is still more strange, is invited, yea, even expected, to cooperate to the extent of its ability in bringing about its own perfection, and any who will not cooperate are cast aside as unfit.

Nothing like this has ever occurred before, nor, as far as we know, will ever occur again. God has followed this course, we understand, because of the very exalted position this class will occupy when completed. These are free moral agents; it is left to their own volition as to whether they will be made to reflect God's glory or not. God will not need to test this new creation after it has been perfected, as he has tested all other free moral agents; because this class has been fully tested in the process of making it meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, where it will be crowned with immortality.

"IF I IN THY LIKENESS, O LORD, MAY AWAKE"

It is believed by many that once God has given any one the divine nature, even he himself could not destroy that one. Whether this be true or not, the course God has followed in his development of this class has obviated such a contingency, because the ones that are given the divine nature will have proved beyond all possibility of doubt that they will forever remain loyal to God and his will.

We now have the opportunity of demonstrating our loyalty to God and the principles of righteousness, and should rejoice in any test he sees fit to permit. "Count it all joy," says the Apostle (James 1:2-4), "when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

It rests with us whether we will let God work in us both to will and to do his good pleasure. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2.) It rests with us whether we will "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God in order that he may exalt us in due time."

In the 44th chapter of Isaiah we read: "Behold I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth, shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. . . . I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; they shall *show forth my praise*." They shall mirror or reflect my glory.

"Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth [mirror] all his praise?" "We thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks forever; we will show forth [mirror] thy praise to all generations."

- J. T. Read

Grant skill each sacred theme to trace,
With loving voice and glowing tongue,
As when upon Thy words of grace
The wondering crowds enraptured hung.
Grant faith, that treads the stormy deep,
If but Thy voice shall bid it come;
And zeal, that climbs the mountain steep,
To seek and bring the wanderer home.
Give strength, blest Savior, in Thy might;
Illuminate our hearts, and we,
Transformed into Thine image bright,
Shall teach, and love, and live, like Thee!

Unity or Uniformity? Which?

AS WE watch with keen interest the developments in the ecclesiastical heavens, and note the fine Scriptural sentiments sometimes expressed, shall we not do well to examine our own hearts that no sectarian prejudices may hold sway there. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many is waxing cold, and today many are beginning to feel that if it is impossible for men to be united in the fellowship and service of Christ, then Christianity is either an idle dream, beautiful but impossible, or an empty fairy tale. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the scoffs and jeers of the world, and the bickering and wrangling of worldly-minded Christians; in spite of the irritation outside the Church, and the agitation within, all truly consecrated followers of Jesus long for a larger fellowship. When that longing becomes a determination, when the wish becomes a will, where there is a will there will be provided a way to overcome the lethargy that is upon us, to overcome the, sectarian vanity from which perhaps none of us is entirely free.

When the Gospel first began to be preached by our Lord and his Apostles, what a oneness was manifest in the Church, as 'the little band of followers sought to walk in the footsteps of the Master! They were only a humble folk, without wealth, or scholarly attainment, or social standing, but they seemed to catch the spirit of the Master, and after Pentecost such a spirit of joy and love and faith and hope possessed them, and such a fervor of missionary zeal, such a oneness of heart and action, that it seemed almost as if the prayer of Jesus would find speedy fulfillment, and that the whole world would soon believe on him. (John 17:21.) In the early centuries the Gospel message seemed to spread like fire. In the language of the Revelator: "It went forth conquering and to conquer." (Rev. 6:1.) * Just to read the story of those early days is enough to make the heart beat faster. Well might the powers that were in those days be astonished as they witnessed the power of the Gospel in the lives of those who received it, giving to believers such a vision of our glorious hope as enabled them to stand undaunted in the face of cruel deaths, to meet the furious hate of their persecutors undismayed; nay more, to meet that hate with a gentleness, a love, a compassion, which only close followers of Christ can display.

* See Vol. 1, pages 305-309, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

Alas! the rider on the white horse, which seems to symbolize that period of the Church's history, was followed by other horsemen, as those of us who are familiar with our Lord's revelation are aware, and ere long, as history shows, a great compromise was effected between the world and the Church. Since then, the story of the Church has often enough been a history of hatred, of narrowness and stupidity, of inconceivable bigotry and brutality. What crime against God and man has the Church not committed? How appalling is the record! As we read the pages of history, the outrages there revealed fill our minds with horror, remembering as we do, that they were perpetrated in the holy name of Jesus.

Yet through all the centuries, amid wrangling bigots and proud tyrants, the true faith was kept alive. Though the Church as a whole was not Christian, became indeed anti-Christian, some few were found at all times who had not defiled their garments. These have been the salt of the earth, the light of the world. As another has said: "If one seeks the Apostolic succession, here it is, unbroken and uninterrupted, a shining tradition of vision and service. It is in their gentle lives, silhouetted against dark backgrounds, that we trace the history of the hidden Church, the 'little flock.'" Though not inspired as were the Apostles, they were entrusted by God and by Jesus with the Gospel, and they guarded it, dear brethren, for us. They kept watch over it as of a sacred treasure, as keepers of a holy fire, which must never be stamped out. They yielded their lives to the sweet, mellowing influence of the holy spirit of love and truth, though it meant for them

certain privation, loss and hardship beyond our experience, enjoying withal a fellowship of spirit which not even the curse of sectarianism could destroy. And if these, with their feeble light, were enabled to preserve a fellowship of spirit even in the midst of sectarian bondage and in the darkness of the Dark Ages, will not the Lord expect at least as much from us as we face the issues which confront us today?

For ourself, we are more interested in unity of Christian spirit, and in fidelity to Christ in thought and deed, than we are in unity of name, creed, or organization. Jesus said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. We are more concerned about attaining that sort of unity in the Christian family than about any other person's definitions, or -efforts, to limit the Church by any name or professed unity of his own.

Christian unity is a spiritual fact. (Eph. 4:3.) Christian uniformity will never come, and would not be a good thing if it did. There was unity without uniformity in the early Church. The message of the Church is more important than its machinery.

- P. L. Read. (*Herald*, August 1949)

Israel as I Saw It **In the Light of Prophecy**

Most of our readers are aware that for some time Brother Casimir Lanowick has been devoting much of his time to the presentation of illustrated lectures on the above-mentioned topic. However, his lectures are not confined to the Israel theme, but often relate to other features of the Divine Plan. They are usually accompanied by film-showings, but not always. Moreover, they are sometimes delivered in parlor meetings for the friends alone, although more often in halls at advertised meetings.

In response to our inquiry, Brother Lanowick expressed himself as being very willing to serve any of the friends with whom we are in touch, should they so desire. In a letter just received from him, he mentions that around the 1st of April, he will be completing a rather full schedule in Florida, and heading back to his home in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He expects to travel by way of St. Petersburg, Jacksonville, Atlanta, Richmond, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Boston, Portland, Albany, Syracuse, Buffalo, Cleveland, Toronto, and Detroit. If notified in time, he will be able to accept appointments in all the East Coast States, anywhere in New England, all of the State of New York, Ontario, and Michigan. Will those Classes desiring to be included in his schedule kindly advise us promptly.

"They Go From Strength to Strength"

"Be ye filled with the Spirit." - Ephesians 5:18.

LET us consider together briefly these words of the Apostle Paul, addressed to the Church of Christ, the saints. They do not apply to those who are merely empty professors, having a form of godliness only, but to those who have fully accepted the terms of God's Call, who have made the full consecration which alone brings us into the position of sons of God. These are the only ones who have the spirit of God. These only are begotten from Above. But St. Paul would have us remember that it is not sufficient that we receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit, which comes to us at the very entrance of the narrow way. We should see that the Holy Spirit of God abounds in us more and more as we go on in our heavenward course. The little spark of the new mind should grow stronger and brighter day by day.

If this development does not take place, if we merely stand still, we shall soon begin to lose ground; but if we progress, the natural man will gradually perish and the new man will thrive. Christian development should be steady and continuous. We are to be more and more filled with the Spirit. Sometimes the Lord's children say, "I do desire to be filled with the Lord's spirit, but it seems as if my capacity is so small. I wish to have his spirit in large measure, but I am unable to be what I long to be. I am not satisfied with my attainments." But if we are striving earnestly and prayerfully to become like Christ, let us not be discouraged....

If it were an impossibility for us to be filled with the Spirit of God, the inspired Apostle would not have so instructed us. To the truly consecrated child of God this is possible, and not only possible, but obligatory. But as there are ebbs and flows in the ocean tides, so with our sense of the Lord's presence with us and his smile upon us. We may not always realize his presence to a large degree, but the Lord's saints must learn to walk by faith, to trust him and his abiding love....

The Spirit of the Lord dwelling in us in fulness, as it should be, will cause our entire being to be so absorbed by the principles of righteousness laid down in the Lord's Word, to be so in love with the heavenly things, heavenly hopes, heavenly prospects, that everything else will be of no value to us. And this will be more and more our blessed experience if we continue faithfully in the narrow way, if we "follow on to know the Lord.

But if, on the contrary, we find ourselves making provision for the flesh, making worldly plans; if we find ourselves inclined to lay up treasures on earth instead of in heaven, we should take alarm, and should ask ourselves whether we are deficient, whether we are neglecting the means of grace -- prayer alone with God, study of his Word, meditation upon the glorious things to which we have been called, watching ourselves as to our growth in the fruits of the spirit....

But we need to continually watch and pray; for there is constant danger otherwise that we may be tripped up or stumbled either by our own faults or those of others. We are never safe from being side-tracked unless we go often to the throne of grace; we cannot be filled unless we keep very close to the great Fountain from which our infilling comes. We must daily carry our earthen pitcher to this heavenly Fountain to be replenished; for we are leaky vessels. We are not to feel discouraged if we do not find in ourselves the rapid growth that we desire to see. Strong, sturdy trees that can withstand the fiercest storms are not developed in a day. Their growth is a slow, steady process. We should show our loyalty to the Lord by renewed effort every time we fail. He is looking at us not to see if we are perfect in the flesh-for He knows that we are not and can

never be-but to see whether or not we have the spirit of earnestness and loyalty which daily and hourly seeks to keep the body under and to cheerfully take up the cross.

BLESSED RESULTS OF SPIRIT'S INFILLING

The Christian is not to be like the worldling who seeks to drown his troubles and afflictions in drink or in pleasures, dissipations and frivolous diversions; but in every trouble he is to fly to the only true Source of solace and comfort and strength. This will drive away all anxiety and give him rest and peace even in the midst of trouble. Like the fabled halcyon, which built its nest and brought forth its birdlings in the midst of the sea, the true child of God can be at rest even amidst the billows and storms of life, and can prosper as a new creature and accomplish all the good pleasure of God's will.

This unwavering trust in the Lord, this abiding rest of soul, this zeal in God's service, is a matter of growth. "They go from strength to strength;" the Psalmist declares of the inhabitants of Zion. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," said our Lord of this class. (Psalm 84:7; Mark 4:28.) Notwithstanding the difficulties of life, these can continue to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. They rejoice no matter what may be the outward earthly conditions. They can smile even through their tears, knowing that, according to his promise, all things are working together for their good. To attain this development is to be filled with the Spirit; and each consecrated disciple of Christ should reach this plane.

Some Christian writer has well said: "Wherever there has been a faithful following of the Lord in a consecrated heart, several things have, sooner or later, inevitably followed. Meekness and quietness of spirit become in time the characteristics of the daily life. A submissive acceptance of the will of God, as it comes in the hourly events of each day, is manifested; pliability in the hands of God to do or to suffer all the good pleasure of his will; sweetness under provocation; calmness in the midst of turmoil and bustle; a yielding to the wishes of others [where there is no conflicting principle involved], and an insensibility to slights and affronts; absence of worry or anxiety; deliverance from care and fear-all these, and many other similar graces, are invariably found to be the natural outward development of that inward life which is "hid with Christ in God."

- R5912.

The Question Box

1 Cor. 10:16, 17

Question:

Will you please discuss 1 Cor. 10:16, 17, where we read: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ? For we, being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."

Answer:

The context indicates that the design of the Apostle is to lead the brethren at Corinth away from that temptation to which, it would appear, they were peculiarly liable, namely, that of idolatry. "Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them." "Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry." - 1 Cor. 10:7, 14.

Now, there might be no defilement of conscience for a well-informed brother to attend a feast and partake of meat which had previously been offered in sacrifice to the idol, for, with the Apostle, such a brother might "know that no idol is anything in the world." (1 Cor. 8:4.) But his participation in such affairs would be likely to be injurious from two standpoints:

(1) It might stumble a weak brother (1 Cor. 8:9-13); and

(2) It would inevitably result in his own defilement sooner or later, for the associations of an idol temple and of the feasts in connection with idol worship were not such as to elevate him to the exalted plane of close fellowship with our Lord, but the reverse.

It would, however, seriously affect the Christian's secular business if he abstained from all participation in idol worship, and those only who place the "King's business" first, and who count all else but loss and dross, would be able to forego this temptation. Others would doubtless attend such feasts with "mental reservations" as to their import, but the weak brother, knowing nothing of such mental reservations would be "stumbled," and it would not be long ere the "mental reservations" would give way to a more complete participation.

To make this point, and to press it home to the brethren in Corinth, the Apostle instances two parallel examples, or illustrations:

(1) The Lord's Supper and

(2) Jewish sacrifices.

His point in each illustration is the same. In the first illustration it is evident that those who join together in the Lord's Supper thereby give evidence that they are Christians, that they have fellowship with each other and with Christ. Similarly they who join in idol worship, those who share in idol festivals, who eat things which have been offered to idols, give evidence thereby that they are in fellowship with the idolaters, and with the demons they worship.

Or, again, to make use of the second illustration, those Israelites who offer sacrifices and partake thereof, thereby manifest themselves as being in fellowship with the purpose of such sacrifice and

with the object of their worship; so also those who participate in idol festivals furnish proof as to their communion.

The whole, or at least the main, point to which the Apostle is leading his readers is, that to partake ceremonially of the thing sacrificed is to become a sharer in the sacrificial act, and all that it involves, and that, therefore, they should flee idolatry.

Now, assuming that the foregoing will be admitted as the design of the Apostle in the passage before us, it seems to us that we must not press into our interpretation of the *Christian illustration* an idea which can have no counterpart in the *Jewish* or *Idolatrous* ceremonies. The Israelitish worshiper is not represented as participating in the *sufferings* of the animal slain, but merely in the benefits which accrue as a result of the victim's death. The Idolater in no way shares in the *sufferings of*, or the death of the animals sacrificed in their idol worship. While, therefore, it may be true-indeed, we know from other Scriptures that it is true, that we are invited to be "dead with him," to know the "fellowship of his sufferings" it is difficult to believe that this is the lesson to be learned from this passage.

In the Greek it is the same word "*Koinonia*," or a derivative of the same, that is employed in reference to all three (Christian, Jewish, and Idolatrous) ceremonies. In 1 Cor. 10:16 it is twice translated "communion"; in 1 Cor. 10:18 "partakers"; in 1 Cor. 10:20 "fellowship."

In 1 Cor. 10:16 the reference, to our understanding, is to the blood and body of the anointed Jesus, not to that of the Christ followers referred to in 1 Cor. 10:17.

1 Cor. 10:18 refers to the Jewish altar, which represented Jehovah. Evidently the Apostle has in mind the feast which completed the peace-offering. (See Lev. 7.) The sacrifice, once offered, the Jewish worshiper, with his family, celebrated a sacred feast in the temple court, in which the part of the victim not consumed on the altar, was eaten in common.

1 Cor. 10:20 refers to the demons.

As above indicated, we do not deny, but on the contrary affirm, in harmony with Brother Russell's able expositions, that to the Church of this Gospel Age has been extended the inestimable privilege of "being made conformable unto his death." (Phil. 3:10.) The point we make here is that, in our judgment, it is open to serious question if such a meaning may be assigned to *Koinonia* in verse 16 when it quite evidently cannot be so assigned in 1 Cor. 10:18 and 1 Cor. 10:20.

Again, the idea that the one loaf composed of many grains is analogous to the one Body composed of many members, is one which has been traced back at least as far as Augustine, but however true in itself, it would appear to be foreign to this passage. There is not the slightest indication that it was present to the Apostle's mind when he penned these verses. There is another, a more obvious lesson the Apostle would teach here—a lesson of oneness. Let us suppose that, instead of the *one* loaf, our Lord, in instituting the Memorial, had used several loaves. This would have suggested that instead of being *one* company, *one* body, *one* fellowship, Christians might be considered as consisting of *several* groups, *several* companies, *several* bodies, *several* fellowships. But no such *division* was contemplated. Because our Lord used only the *one* loaf, and we each partake of (eat of) that *one* loaf, therefore, so reasons the Apostle, we are not many bodies, but one body.

- P. L. Read

Recently Deceased

Sr. E. C. Bigger, Walnut Creek, Cal. - (Jan.)
Sr. F. L. Brown, St. Petersburg, Fla. - (Dec.)
Sr. Mary M. Cook, Oakland, Cal. - (Dec.)
Sr. B. E. MacIntyre, Toronto, Ont - (Dec.)
Sr. Alpha Pingree, Los Gatos, Cal. - (Dec.)
Sr. Anna Vastola, Rochester, N. Y. - (Jan.)
Bro. I. P. Whitaker, Bowie, Texas - (Jan.)