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Our Sacred Feast

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

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

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

Then, too, it was not only a matter of asking us to employ this simple method of keeping his love in remembrance, but there was a further remark. He adds a still further measure to our cup of hope and joy by saying, that this feast is to last *only* "Till the day I drink it new with you in the Kingdom of my Father." This is a promise of another and greater feast. It speaks of a time when this present feasting, which is symbolic in its joy, will give place to a banquet of sublime,

celestial grandeur such as our loftiest language could never adequately express. Hence, Jesus is asking us to now join him in a beautiful perpetuation of a feast which, by its very simplicity and richness in hope, will keep fresh and ever green in our affections the reality of his unchanging love, and enable us to continually share with him the joy of unfading anticipations of the eternal feast to come.

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

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

And there must also be uppermost in our thought a very real sense of gratitude as we keep fresh in mind the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf. The full import of the words of Jesus must be pondered: "This do in *remembrance of me*." And so it must be when we hearken to the words of the Apostle as he relays the words of Jesus to us, "Ye do show the Lord's death till become." This sense of overwhelming gratitude will make possible the attitude of heart in which to properly survey the sacrifice Jesus asks us to remember.

Joy and sorrow are strangely blended in that same upper room. Compassionate love speaks there by 'both word and action, in rebuke and pity. Along with his words of happiness over the occasion, Jesus must also speak of things sad and regrettable. Side by side with the sublimest of opportunities ever afforded any of his own, there are things present which are like a dark blot on a what might have been a spotless page of their loyal devotion. And over it all, our minds should prayerfully ponder. It is possible for us to find these things of a regrettable character, a true, picture of our own fickleness, or a much too - real illustration of our own self-seeking and lovelessness. If into that most hallowed room the dark stain of human weakness came; if in the sacred seclusion of that upper room where all that was unworthy and unclean should have been

shut out, or shamed into silence, we hear contending voices, not over an eagerness to be the one to wash the Savior's feet, but in clamor over who ought to be considered greatest among them; if in that place apart and alone with Jesus is found the sinister spirit of betrayal in which, with a shamelessness beyond understanding, a traitor heart asks in unison with the others, "Lord, is it I?" -where, then, are we safe from the baneful presence of inbred sin? Where is there a place so far removed from Satan's influence that nothing defiling can come? -- yes, where indeed, if from this spot selected by Jesus, himself, for so sublime a farewell feast with his own, the inherent weaknesses of our flesh or the malignant forces of evil were not shut out!

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

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

Let us then recall these vitally important words found in John's record: "Jesus knowing that he came from God, and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." He girded himself to do this menial service for men so concerned over claims for highest place in his Kingdom. Let us not forget here that we are in our meditations now as one among them. We are thus not only seeing their neglects, their need of instruction, and their need of a richer measure of his love, but we are being most mercifully and necessarily humbled also. What, think you, was their first startling recollection, and the first sudden awakening of their consciences? Surely there was a

deep inward sense of conviction, a deep sense of shame over their unbecoming conduct, and a rapidly growing wish that they had been more utterly unmindful of self, and more alert to grasp the opportunity to wash the Master's own feet. They had called him Lord and Master, but lips and heart had been out of tune. Peter's reactions to having Jesus wash his feet reveals much of this inward sense of his soul's awakening. This would have been our own inner feeling then, we know, and, alas, even yet it might be often our confessed sense of shame and regret.

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

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

Precious to Jesus are all those the Father hath given him; albeit, there are still impetuous characters rushing in where angels would fear to tread, self-centered hearts still tainted with inherent selfishness, hasty sons of thunder too ready to destroy rather than save, and a sad overlooking of greater things because the *vision* has not risen above the minor concerns. Who among us will not confess within our own ashamed hearts that such we have frequently been. Then, oh, the blessedness of our "remembrance" of Jesus by which we are assured of *his abiding love for us* notwithstanding all our failures.

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

this table such a multitude of those redeemed by the same precious blood. The atmosphere of this feasting upper room is pervaded with the blessed assurance that "at the Cross there's room" for every one. The word, therefore, that rings through all our Savior's doings there, and in the Garden, and on the Cross is the same, "Keep *me* in remembrance" and ever follow me.

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

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

- J. J. Blackburn.

Now and Afterward

"Now, the sowing and the weeping,
Working hard and waiting long;
Afterward, the golden reaping,
Harvest home and grateful song.

"Now, the pruning, sharp, unsparing;
Scattered blossom, bleeding shoot!
Afterward, the plenteous bearing
Of the Master's pleasant fruit.

"Now, the long and toilsome duty
Stone by stone to carve and bring;
Afterward, the perfect beauty
Of the palace of the King.

"Now, the tuning and the tension,
Wailing minors, discord strong;
Afterward, the grand ascension
Of the Alleluia song.

"Now, the spirit conflict-riven,
Wounded heart, unequal strife;
Afterward, the triumph given,
And the victor's crown of life.

"Now, the training, strange and lowly,
Unexplained and tedious now;
Afterward, the service holy,
And the Master's 'Enter thou!'"

"He Is Risen"

"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." - John 16:20.

STUPENDOUS miracle, the basis of Christian hope! Come to the vacant sepulcher of Christ and sing for joy! Angels, spirits of purity and love, hasten to meet us here with their message sublime. Heaven and earth, angels and men, all happily together at the open tomb. Sorrow may be for a night; joy cometh in the morning. With grateful hearts, with uplifted heads, we repeat the great articles of our faith: "I believe in Jesus Christ, who was crucified, who died, and was buried; who rose again from the dead; and who is now at the right hand of God. I believe in the forgiveness of sins, in the resurrection, and the life everlasting." Our cups brimming with gladness, we exclaim with the Psalmist: "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen."

Once again we direct our *thoughts* particularly to the great central fact of our faith. But now not so much to dwell upon the abstruse theological philosophy of that event so important to us all, but rather to linger over some of the touching human aspects related to it. We would see more of the wondrous Resurrection story in the light of its immediate effect upon the disciples. We would have our hearts burn as through them we experience their unspeakable joy when the aweinspiring truth was made manifest. To aid us in visualizing some of the dramatic incidents of our noble theme, we shall consider four great paintings through which masters of art have augmented the sacred record in portrayals of deep feeling and understanding. These paintings may well be likened to four scenes in a stupendous play. For our meditation we shall so consider them.

SCENE ONE

The poet has said:

"Calvary and Easter Day,
Earth's blackest day, and whitest day,
Were just three days apart"

Yet how long must have been the day between, and how filled with unutterable sadness! The Scriptures are silent regarding it, but it was a real day, a terrible day to that small group of disciples scattered "as sheep without a shepherd." They had awakened to a realization that the nightmarish scenes of a few hours ago were real after all, and their sense of loss must have been overwhelming

"Mourning each one the unfulfilled fair dream
To which their dead hopes could no life impart."

We are indebted to the genius of the great Swiss painter, Eugene Burnand, for the painting "Holy Saturday," than which there is no finer portrayal of the stark tragedy that gripped the eleven men most closely associated with Jesus. Burnand portrays them dazed with blinding sorrow and confused of mind and heart, once again gathered in the upper room where on Thursday night the Master had washed their feet, partaken with them of their farewell meal, and talked to them with a tender, brooding sympathy. Gathered again, to seek in this hallowed place for quiet, undisturbed meditation and prayer. This is the 15th of Nisan, a great feast day of Israel. Without, the streets

are thronged with the celebrants. Garlanded and arm-in-arm, they troop the streets singing the old familiar songs of rejoicing. Within, the echoes of this merriment penetrate to pierce swordlike the gloom-filled hearts of the disciples. Some are seated at the table; others stand forlornly in the background. There is no ray of hope on any face. Peter, at one end of the table, his agonizing brain resting heavily on his hands, no longer able to think or talk, weeps, and suffers in silence. His is a double grief. John, next to him, trying to comfort

his impulsive friend, appears to feel the futility of words at such a time. James sits at the other end, his deep-set eyes peering into vacancy as if trying to recall something from the sayings of his dead Master that would bring order out of his mental chaos. Andrew stands with downcast eyes and sorrowing face just behind Peter, his conscience-stricken brother. The rest are grouped about the three at the table, some watching with sympathetic faces the suffering Peter, while others are lost in thoughts too deep for words, or are hushed in silent prayer. Only those who have loved much and lost can really know what that "Holy Saturday" meant to the bewildered disciples. The painting might well be called "The Death of Hope" for

"He died!

And with Him perished all that men hold dear;
Hope lay beside Him in the sepulcher,
Love grew corpse cold, and all things beautiful beside,
Died, when He died!"

Though they as yet "knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead," we search their faces to see if, like bells in the distance, a faint melody of coming joy was not being rung to their numbed consciousness by those strange words of but yesternight:

"A LITTLE WHILE AND YE SHALL NOT SEE ME: AND AGAIN, A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL SEE ME. VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT YE SHALL WEEP AND LAMENT, BUT THE WORLD SHALL REJOICE, AND YE SHALL BE SORROWFUL, BUT YOUR SORROW SHALL BE TURNED INTO JOY. A WOMAN WHEN SHE IS IN TRAVAIL HATH SORROW, BECAUSE HER HOUR IS COME, BUT AS SOON AS SHE IS DELIVERED OF THE CHILD, SHE REMEMBERETH NO MORE THE ANGUISH, FOR JOY THAT A MAN IS BORN INTO THE WORLD. AND YE NOW THEREFORE HAVE SORROW, BUT I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN, AND YOUR HEART SHALL REJOICE, AND YOUR JOY NO MAN TAKETH FROM YOU."

SCENE TWO

The scene changes. It is the early part of the following day, the first day of the week. Again have the disciples awakened to a despairing consciousness of their loss and inconsolable grief. Poor crushed spirits! How little did they know that the darkness was past, that a glorious light was about to break forth in their hearts never to be extinguished! For the sun had scarce risen when Mary of Magdala burst into their presence with the strange and terrible news that the grave was empty. Amazed and fearful at this new development, Peter and John are instantly on the way to the Garden; their eager haste hurrying them to the utmost speed. This is the moment Burnand has chosen to transfer to canvas in his magnificent portrayal "Peter and John Running to the Tomb." The artist has marvelously caught the spirit of this incident. The two disciples are shown running at top speed, the brilliant dawn of the resurrection morn left behind. John's air ripples backward as his body bends forward against the wind. The folds of his white robe stream behind. That Peter is the older and is losing out in the race is evident. His longer locks flare in the wind, his cloak tosses behind him, and his mouth opens to make labored breathing easier, while his hand

presses back a heart near bursting from mingled emotion John's hands are clasped together in front of his bosom in the attitude of prayer. He seems not to be conscious of the movement of his limbs; his thoughts are projected far ahead; his eyes appear as fixed upon the distant tomb. Anticipation is written over both their faces. What must be their most inward thought? Are they beginning to feel an awakening within, stirring of vast implications? The eagerness of a strange expectancy is accentuated in every line of face and body as they race onward, our own hearts keeping pace with them.

The sacred record tells us: "So they ran both together; and the other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulcher. And he stooping down, saw the linen clothes lying: yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw and believed." Ah yes, John believed. Nothing is here said concerning Peter's convictions. But shall we question the result of that meeting of the Lord and his brokenhearted disciple when later, as Paul records, "He was seen of Cephas"? And can mere words describe the ecstasy of that reunion?

*"He knows --
How to steal the bitter from life's woes."*

SCENE THREE

We pass on to the wonderful experience of Mary Magdalene whose glory it is that

*"Not she with traitorous kiss her Master stung,
Not she denied him with unfaithful tongue;
She, when apostles fled, could dangers brave,
Last at his cross, and earliest at his grave."*

We find her now returned to the tomb, her spirit overborne with longing anxiety to find him, and refusing to believe that she could not. She is alone, as the two disciples and the women had returned to the city. She peers into the sepulcher; the empty space where Jesus had lain is now no longer untenanted, but instead of the Redeemer, she sees two shining ones, one where the head and the other where the feet had rested. The strangeness of their presence seems lost to her as with eyes half-blinded from weeping, she enters and looks about her. And then -- then a Form suddenly stands at the threshold! O moment mystical and sublime!

This is the wonderfully dramatic setting of Edward Burne-Jones' painting, "The Morning of the Resurrection."

We see the two angelic messengers, great wings folded against the background, their faces turned in silent awe to One they recognize as far above all principalities and powers. A fold of their white robes raised to their lips as if thus to acknowledge their own unworthiness. The one farthest from the threshold, with raised arm, gestures to direct Mary's attention. She, with head slightly turned, looks in startled timidity upon the Visitor's face. Is this the keeper of the Garden come to rebuke her intrusion? With cloak caught up, she is prepared to flee. Yet she cannot take her eyes from Him who looks at her with an all-seeing gaze. Her heart pounds from the tumult of emotion which surges over her spirit. What are these strange stirrings in her slumbering memory? What is there about that face? -- but no, it could not be! Her tear-misted eyes must be deceiving her!

Only a moment intervenes until a heart full of the deepest sorrow is raised to rapturous joy, and that through the utterance of but *one* word! *One word* -- which will send her, fleet as a deer, to astound the disciples with the amazing truth,

"I HAVE SEEN THE LORD"!

SCENE FOUR

And what is our fourth painting? Ah, it has not yet been painted, though the Great Artist has been long preparing. It will not be painted on canvas but on more durable material, which shall survive eternity. And when that glorious work is finished, strong men shall weep with joy as they contemplate it, and the heaven shall resound with the voice of angelic singing. For a stupendous scene shall it unfold. Its setting, this earth; its subject, all mankind; and its theme, the everlasting love of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. For our three pictures are but miniatures of far greater scenes. The grief and sadness of the Eleven in the upper room is multiplied a million-fold in the hopeless grief of humanity. John and Peter running to the tomb may well show forth the coming experience of the nations when the "word shall go forth from Jerusalem." And Mary at the tomb, the amazed awakening in the heart of all peoples that "One there is above all others well deserves the name of Friend." For we have all a nearer, a more special interest in the deserted tomb of Jesus Christ. For us all he died, and for us all he rose again. Firm and fast as the grave now seems to hold the buried generations of our race, it is doomed, as a fruit of Christ's resurrection, to relax its grasp and yield them up again. Empty as was Joseph's sepulcher when the angel spoke to the women, so empty shall be every grave of earth when another angel shall sound his trumpet, and it shall ring through the regions of the dead, and stir all to life again.

Blessed was that morning which dawned upon the empty tomb at Calvary, but more blessed to us shall that other Morning be which shall dawn upon the empty graves of earth.

O Earth, thou grain of sand on the shore of the Universe of God; thou "Bethlehem" amongst the princely cities of the heavens; thou art, and remainest, the Loved One amongst ten thousand suns and worlds, the Chosen of God! Thee will his Son again visit, and then thou wilt prepare a throne for him, as thou gavest him a manger cradle; in his radiant glory wilt thou rejoice, as thou didst once drink his blood and his tears, and mourn his death! On thee has he a great work to complete! Hear the word of the Lord! --

BECAUSE I LIVE, YE SHALL LIVE ALSO."

- *W. J. Siekman*

Ministry of the Word

"Paul thanked God and took courage." - Acts 28:15.

AS THE testing of the New Creation continues, it is becoming *increasingly* evident that Satan has stepped up the power and scope of his efforts to destroy the remaining "seed class" members. The principal test upon us today, as indeed it has always been, is that of developing and manifesting "agape" love; not a love simply between those who agree together on various teachings, but a love similar to our heavenly Father's, who loves all his children irrespective of their human affiliations, or penchants, or weaknesses.

The tendency of our day is for people to want to belong to something; we are living in an age of organizations in which people are urged to do things "together." Satan now realizes that his kingdom is undergoing the final stages of its destruction and one of his last ditch maneuvers is to get masses of people the world over to band together to clean it up in every respect and thus they will have no desire for Christ's kingdom.

Our text reminds us that St. Paul and his company were met and warmly welcomed by deputations from the Roman church. Three years before the Apostle had written his grand epistle to its members expressing his strong desire to visit them, and now this fervent greeting deeply moved the Apostle's heart. Here was proof of the great work God was doing in the hearts of the Roman brethren and concerning which Christ had already given him an assurance of success. Therefore, with glad and hopeful spirit this trusting Apostle, as he grasped these welcoming hands, "thanked God and took courage."

And how true in our own experiences, in minor degree to the Apostle, to find ourselves sometimes misunderstood or misrepresented, but along with that to also be welcomed by loving hearts and enjoy "fellowship of kindred minds, which is like to that above." Of course the worldly spirit of dissent, also fostered by Satan, has crept into our own fellowship and, consequently, many have overlooked the Scriptural teaching that the New Creation is described in the New Testament as an "organism," not an "organization." The latter is manmade, tailored to the promoters' ideas of services to be rendered; it is not flexible and therefore unable to adjust itself to changing conditions and needs.

An organism, on the other hand, is a living thing, created by our Father (Eph. 1:18; 2:10), and is adaptable to changing conditions and the different stages' of development of each new creature. Such are bound together by the law of love (Phil. 3:15), and find their greatest satisfaction in abiding in Christ (Col. 3:16). Every need of life is absolutely guaranteed to such as rest in God. Security? "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Provision? "He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." Grace? "My grace is sufficient for thee." Love? "God is love." O, the all-sufficiency and faithfulness of God, if we would but let it possess our hearts!

Last year our Pilgrim journey took us through the states of Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Kansas, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, North Carolina, New York, Ontario, Can., New Jersey, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, Virginia, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Missouri for a total automobile mileage of almost 17,000 miles.

We found the brethren hungry for Christian fellowship and earnestly desirous of discussing God's Word. All loved the Lord and sought a better understanding of his will in these critical times. Some had personal problems of one kind or another and we sympathetically listened, offering counsel from God's Word and joining with them in a word of prayer. It made our hearts glad to know that the Lord does comfort the hearts of his people through the ministry of the *Herald*. The burden of our message was that we should prize the truth which sanctifies and devote ourselves assiduously to it, as says St. Paul: "not in the letter, but in the spirit, for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6). We urged the friends every here to grow in the grace of gentleness, a sympathetic understanding of the attitudes and viewpoints of others, and in the spirit of prayerfulness to do good to all, especially to the house old of faith, remembering ourselves lest we fall into a similar temptation and a snare (Gal. 6:1).

If we indulge fretful feelings, either of anxiety or irritation, we know not what an opening they may give to Satan in our hearts. "Fret not thyself," says the Psalmist, "else shalt thou be moved to do evil." In harmony with this warning is the precept of St. Paul against undue indulgence in anger: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:26, 27). Peace is the sentinel of the Soul, which keeps the heart and mind of the Christian through Christ. So long as this sentinel is on guard and doing his duty the castle of the soul is kept secure. But let the sentinel be removed and the way is opened immediately for an attack on the fortress. And our spiritual foes are vigilant, however much we may sleep.

We emphasized the message of St. Paul that we are bond slaves of Christ (Gal. 6:17) and if we have covenanted our all to the heavenly Father and dedicated our lives in the service of Christ, then there is nothing left for us to give to anyone else. Sectarianism comes in many guises and in the beginning is almost imperceptible, but once started it moves relentlessly forward to complete domination of the individual, unless resisted with the pebble from the brook -- a "thus saith the Lord."

Between meetings were opportunities for personal discussions, including questions of practical import as well as those having to do with prophetic matter. This year a perennial question, having to do with the return of our Lord, faced brethren in widespread areas, in the course of which separations took place in some groups. Some concluded that if Christ returned in his Parousia in 1874, then that year would mark the beginning of his earthly kingdom. It seemed proper for them to advocate new meetings together with other brethren who shared their views. We noted that there is considerable dissent from this conclusion, resulting in hurt feelings on both sides of the question. This report is not the place to discuss the pros and cons of the subject, nor to offer an opinion as to the correct answer, but simply to note that this question has been before brethren a number of times in the past sixty years.

A far greater principle is at stake -- Christian love. It ought not to be surprising that the Lord's people would learn fresh prophetic truth in the Bible (Col. 1:10), as prophecy passes into history, and that modification of some conclusions which we once held as truth must be made, because facts have rendered them obsolete. However, when division is deemed the only action to take in view of such differences, one must pause and give the subject another and more searching look, remembering the words of St. Paul (1 Cor. 12:25) declaring there is "no schism in the body of Christ" based on differences of opinion. Unity in Christ forbids such action, in this case resting on such fragile grounds.

In the midst of the shakings going on around us, there are some lessons we must remember. In the church we must recognize individual rights and responsibilities, and also the fact that each individual member is accountable to our heavenly Father. Our sanctification includes the effort to

build up one another in faith, hope, and love, encouraging the spirit of self-sacrifice and patient endurance. In the manner in which our consecrated talents are used we may exercise either good or bad judgment, but our Lord will reward each of us according to the motives involved in the action and not according to the actual results.

We must not be disappointed, cast down, or disheartened because we find our self-improvement very much slower than we expect. We must not complain if a temptation which we have had much trouble with becomes stronger instead of weaker, if we fall after we have begun to think ourselves tolerably safe, if we try all manner of helps and aids and find them insufficient. We must not complain if we find that earnest and warm prayers are followed in a few hours by feelings so cold that we can hardly keep in the strait path for want of impulse to do so; if very determined resolutions gradually wear out until, when the moment comes for acting on them, we even forget that we made them. Such results we shall surely find, for our enemy can assume various guises and still retain his power, and all our best endeavors will not repel him. God only can give the victory and God assuredly will, but he may not give it in the precise way that we desire it. And hence it is that, beyond all other graces, the grace of perseverance is the one on which victory is based; that perseverance which, in spite of disappointment within ourselves, and of seeing no fruitage of all our endeavors, and of poorness in our devotions, enables us to continue still in the way which he has commanded. That perseverance shall one day be acknowledged as a proof of our being God's children.

Christianity consists of principles, but the application of those principles is left to each individual's conscience. In 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 the Apostle gives us two motives for Christian unworldliness. The first is that "the time is short." This world is not ours; things are passing; our friends are dropping away from us; strength is giving out; the world no longer has any appeal. The thought of the passing of time is solemn to all minds in proportion to their depths. The second motive which the Apostle gives us is the changing character of the external world; literally, "the scenery of this world," a dramatic expression drawn from the Grecian stage. To be unworldly is to hold all earthly things with the conviction they will not last; to have the world, and not let the world have us; to be the world's masters, and not the world's slaves.

The world's present commotion on religious and social questions is the result of the lifting of the veil of ignorance by Satan (Rev. 12:15). The sudden enlightenment of the masses through education, invention, technology, the news media, and other sources has considerably reversed his previous practices. Formerly he trusted on ignorance and superstition to keep the masses in control, but now that the time approaches for his demise Satan is making desperate efforts to prevent his overthrow, even to arousing anarchy worldwide now at the doors. The careful reader of current literature will note that the great advancement in knowledge the world over does not direct men's minds to the Utopia of the future, but, on the contrary, is busy describing and analyzing the ignorance, superstition, heathen religions, sickness, pain, and death of the past. We are told of the evils within society and in the political, religious, and financial structures, and that the future is somber indeed unless the people arouse themselves and have more to say in the control of these things.

What mankind needs today is the recognition that they need a savior for their deliverance from the evils of Satan's kingdom and that humanity is in its present condition because of Adam's original sin. Only Christ, through his Messianic kingdom, can bring about alleviation from the present evil conditions and introduce an era of righteousness based on the ransom which he provided at Calvary nineteen centuries ago. Included in the Kingdom rule is the wiping out of the sentence pronounced on Adam, with its concomitants of sin, sorrow, pain, and death. This, together with the great work of the resurrection of the dead, as Christ promised in John 5:28, 29;

not the present human body, but the individual ego, commonly referred to in the Bible as "souls." How glad we are to be able to declare that the Lord's kingdom is even now at the door, and soon earth's night of weeping will give place to the morning of joy and blessing through Christ's Messianic rule.

For years we have been witnessing the reaping of "the vine of the earth" (Rev. 14:18), in the course of which the shaking of the ecclesiastical "heavens" has been breaking the fetters of superstition and plunging the masses of the people into skepticism and open unbelief. Quite evidently Christ has abandoned the great professed Christian system with its ostentation, pride, and wealth, to the worldly wise of our day, so that it has become a social ally in trying to rebuild the great financial, political, and religious structures in terms of social gain.

We know from the Bible that the present unrest, revolutionism, and anarchism are all permitted of God to prepare mankind for the introduction of his Son's worldwide kingdom of righteousness. In a sense, what man is now doing is contributing to the downfall of his own institutions, that when Christ's kingdom takes over humanity will recognize that it "is the desire of all nations." And the result-peace on earth, goodwill to all, and people cleansed from the effects of sin and death and no longer afraid, because they will be reconciled to God through the restitutionary work of Christ (Isa. 35). A wonderful future awaits humanity here on earth in terms of God's marvelous plan of redemption revealed in the Bible.

We were cheered and much comforted by the kindness of the brethren along the way and to all we are most grateful. We would have lingered for longer visits, but perhaps we can return "in due time," if the Lord will. Our prayer for all the dear brethren, whom we warmly love in the Lord, is that he will enrich their hearts and lives by his holy spirit, and comfort them in these days of their pilgrimage to the heavenly Kingdom. Lo, I am with you, saith the Master, till the age shall end. Be of good heart, ye sons of the Most High! Moreover, Providence opens up to us a cheering vision. Unmistakable signs there are even now of that coming light that shall beam on every family upon the earth. The heralding star is up. Night is waning. The morning breaketh. Labor on in joy and hope. Soon will come the Hallelujah chorus, "Praise ye Jehovah," who doeth all things well.

So we commend the ministry of both the written and the spoken word to Him who is "the giver of every good and perfect gift" (James 1:17), thankful for the privilege we have personally enjoyed of representing him, and humbly grateful for the opportunity of service in his name.

These observations and reflections were noted during this pilgrimage and reminded us anew of the forthrightness of our Father's Word in that present world conditions affecting the Lord's true people, the nominal Christian house, and developments within Satan's kingdom have been so clearly detailed to the eye of faith. To the true child of God, world events are enacting the prophecies as the moving film pictures the progress of a story to its conclusion, and in these matters we are increasingly walking by sight.

Sister Muir accompanied us in part of this journey as physical strength permitted, and joins in these expressions of appreciation and love to all.

- *A. L. Muir*

"We should fill the hours with the sweetest things
If we had but a day;
We should drink alone at the purest springs

In our upward way;
We should love with a life-time's love in an hour
If the hours were few;
We should rest, not for dreams but for fresher power
To be and to do.

We should guide our wayward or wearied wills
By the clearest light;
We should keep our eyes on the heavenly hills
If they lay in sight;
We should trample the pride and the discontent Beneath our feet;
We should take whatever a good God sent
With a trust complete.

We should waste no moments in weak regret
If the days were but one;
If what we remember and what we forget
Went out with the sun;
We should be from our clamorous selves set free
To work or to pray
And to be what the Father would have us be
If we had but a day."

Our Precious Relationship

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

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

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

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

Though we are told "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (John 3:6), do we not realize that our relationship to God is nonetheless real because of the spirit? Surely if a fleshly relationship, lasting 60 or 70 years, is real to us, should not a relationship of the spirit, which can last an eternity, mean much more to us?

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

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

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

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

- H. J. Barlow

The Trial of Faith

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." - 1 Peter 1:9.

Peter in his first epistle (1 Peter 1:1-7) writes to the saints in districts to the north of Palestine, in substance giving praise to God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which had revived their hope of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for all who were being kept by the power of God through faith, unto or for the salvation that would be revealed in the last time. This, says Peter, should make you exceeding glad; although for a time, you will be distressed by trials and temptations, permitted of God to test the genuineness and endurance of your faith that, when proven, may redound to praise, honor, and glory -- not now, but -- when you appear before Christ for his appraisal of your works.

The crucial point of what Peter is saying relates to the trial of faith. But why should faith be tried, what is accomplished thereby? We must recognize that it is only by the exercise of faith, that we can come into vital relationship with God; for he cannot be apprehended by our physical senses - only by faith. Faith of itself must constitute the reality of things that pertain to God, and to his promise of salvation through Christ. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Faith is the substance [reality] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And in Romans 10:17, Paul on the basis of what he has just been revealing says: "So then faith cometh by hearing [heeding], and hearing by the word of God."

Beliefs are often accepted as truth merely on the basis of one's own or another's reasoning, or because of what some person, sect, or organization, claiming to be the repository of truth, requires that we accept as truth. But according to the Scriptures above quoted, such beliefs are not faith, for faith must have the Word of God as its basis, and must relate to the unseen things of God.

Our only approach to God is through faith; the development that we achieve has to be accomplished through faith; faith constitutes the victory over our physical senses. Therefore God not only permits but he overrules and chooses the conditions that require the exercise of faith under adverse circumstances in order that faith may be tried and strengthened.

Furthermore faith is not a passive operation of the mind; it must be active in order to exist. Its constant exercise is essential to the making of our calling and election sure to that salvation which is not a present actuality but is a prospect of faith and hope which becomes ours if we remain faithful unto death. Neither is faith a mere mental attitude of trust. It goes beyond this, for it is a belief that *worketh by love* (Gal. 5:6). As James says, "Faith without works is dead." It must be kept alive and manifested by works of love; for as already stated, faith constitutes the believer's relationship to God in the doing of his will concerning us. Therefore if we neglect or ignore opportunities of rendering service and love where needed, we demonstrate that our faith is weak or inoperative, not what it should be. And so opportunities of service become tests of faith.

Two of the ways by which the endurance of faith may be tested are by long-delayed answers to prayers and by experiences that seem diametrically opposed to our spiritual interests and service. Paul was tested in both of these ways. First by a physical ailment which he called "A thorn in the flesh." The account given us in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (R.S.V.) says: "To keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it

should leave me; but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness: ' Perhaps it was his eyes; but whatever it was, it was a constant trial. The second experience was his trip to Rome, initiated by his letter from Achaia, recorded in Romans 15:22-33 in which he asks the brethren at Rome to strive with him in prayer for three things: first, that he be delivered from unbelieving Jews; second, that the gift of money which had been donated by the saints at Macedonia and Achaia might be accepted by the needy brethren at Jerusalem, and third, that he might get to Rome with joy by the will of God. The second, of which he was fearful, was fulfilled on arrival at Jerusalem, for the brethren accepted the gift gratefully. But the way in which the first and third requests were fulfilled was a very severe test to his faith and patience, by which he must have experienced a growth in character.

James 1:3, 4 says: "The trial of your faith worketh patience," that is, it calls for the exercise of patience. If we do not experience this, then we miss a means of demonstrating willingness to exercise cheerful endurance. Therefore we should not think it strange that we have trials, for trials give opportunity for our perfecting by the spirit with which we are imbued, whereby we are made perfect and entire, wanting in nothing. It is because of this prospect that James says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Trials are not joyful to the flesh; but a mind and heart imbued with God's spirit can rejoice. There are those who think it utter folly to be submissive to ills and injustice, but both God and Christ are examples in long-suffering and patience under trial, and so we know we do not go astray in being submissive under what God permits to afflict us (1 Pet. 3:20; Heb. 2:10; 5:7-9).

Paul (Rom. 5:3-5) teaches a like result from trials to that given by James, and says: "We know that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy spirit which is given unto us." "Therefore," says Paul, "we glory in tribulation." Not because tribulation itself is desirable, but because it calls forth from within graces of character that need to be exercised in order to develop properly. Manifestly any power or function needs to be exercised to increase, for graces that are not used will fail to develop. It is then just as Paul says: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts -- not by temptation or tribulation -but by the holy spirit which is given us." The prayer of David should be the earnest entreaty of our lips: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139: 23, 24).

We are all aware that there have been divisions among those more or less enlightened through the Truth Movement; an enlightenment that has exercised much influence upon religious thought in the past ninety-odd years. We have no reason to think that anyone of these groups has been aught but sincere: and if this be true, then sincerity is not a criterion of truth. Sincerity is essential to God's approval of us, but is not a proof of truth. In seeking guidance, it is very comforting to have the assurance that "The Lord knoweth his own sheep, and that they knowing his voice (knowing the foundation truths of the Word) will not follow another." It is also good to know that the very elect have the protection of the Lord, and will not be led away by subversive deceptions.

But does this mean that the very elect will have no errors in their beliefs? This would be wonderful if true; but where is the humble, conscientious saint that can truly make such a claim? If then we cannot claim freedom from error, what does the assurance of not being deceived mean? And what must we do to be safeguarded in this evil day?

Errors of understanding and subversive teachings were manifest in the early church groups almost from the beginning. Regardless of the knowledge the Apostles had, they knew only in part. There were no errors in their teachings or writings, for as promised by Jesus, the holy spirit brought to

their minds all that he had said to them, and directed them in their utterances, which were therefore infallible. But translations and interpretations of their writings cannot claim infallibility. Therefore, except for the fundamental teachings which are plainly, definitely and often stated, requiring no interpretation, God has seen fit to permit those running in the race for the prize of the high calling, to reach their own conclusions with respect to many of the lesser issues of the Divine operations cited in the Word of truth.

We should note that there is a vast difference between errors of understanding respecting non-fundamental doctrines and the promulgation of subversive teachings which are designed to draw away disciples from the Lord and his truth to one of the many agents of Satan. Many errors of belief would not come under the classification of subversive, as they are largely the result of faulty reasoning without evil intent. Subversive teachings on the other hand are dangerous in the extreme, as they lead away from the one and only hope of salvation provided through Christ. Anything that would tend to destroy our faith in God, in Christ, in the Ransom, and in the hope of salvation through faith and obedience to the will of God in Christ is subversive and should be rejected at once. All that is presented to us as truth should first be tested by the fundamentals of our faith, and if not subversive, then accepted in accord with their value to Christian growth, or as a help in the understanding of the more or less obscure teachings of the Word, but never used as a basis for judgment of a brother's standing with God.

Not only is the trial of faith important to faith's development, but no one can retain membership in the Body of Christ who has not been tested and proven in the crucible of experience. What God seeks in us is the development and perfection of faith. The statement by Jesus, "According to your faith be it unto you," was not only essential to experience the healing of physical ailments, which were signs of the power and authority given to him by God, but it was also essential to the gaining of salvation from the power of sin and death. Then, too, the obtaining of God's favor and blessing would likewise come in response to the obedience of faith. By patient continuance in an obedient faith we will gain everything promised; without faith -- nothing.

Whereas both Peter and Paul state that we are to be judged by our works, (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Pet. 1:14-19) yet they refer to works following consecration, not works of the flesh as a means of self-justification; for without faith it is impossible to please God, consequently, the trial of faith is not left to chance or circumstance.

Malachi 3:1-3 foretells that it will be our Lord who will "sit as a refiner and . . . purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." It was the sons of Levi back in the time of Moses that were made priests and helpers of the priests (Num. 8:5-22) in typifying the consecrated members of the house of Christ in this age, over which he sits as the refiner; and he will designate to which class we belong when we come before his judgment seat (2 Cor. 5:10).

Our Lord's last message and prayer on behalf of his disciples reveal great love and deep interest in their welfare. Knowing the very severe trials of faith they would soon have to face, he bids them be of good cheer, for he had overcome the world. Jesus did not overcome with carnal weapons and warriors, although he could have asked of the Father and have received more than twelve legions of angels, which under his command could have changed the course of this world. But to what avail? Man was under the sentence of death by the will of God, and even a righteous government, regardless of how efficient it was, could not have imparted life. Nor would our Lord for one moment have contemplated doing this; for he knew that it was God's will that he suffer and die as a ransom sacrifice, that he might restore the willing and obedient in their judgment time. Nor did he endeavor to influence with oratory or by personal magnetism; that he might have

done so was evidenced by the report of the officers that returned to the priests and Pharisees without him, saying, "Never man spake like this man."

Jesus overcame the world by not yielding to its influence, nor by heeding its pressing need of reform; nor by a course that would have deprived his followers of the great privilege of participation in his sufferings and death, which was essential to participation in his glory and work. He overcame by adhering strictly to God's will and plan. And those of his followers who overcome do so in the same way.

In all probability, many have been hindered from experiencing the special blessing that God has designed for those who approach the portals of entrance to the Most Holy, because of their lack of faith in God's ability and willingness to thus favor one so weak. If we trust in God, there is nothing too hard for him to do on our behalf. God does not call us because we are worthy, but because of what he is able to accomplish in us if we will exercise faith and be obedient in our hearts. Nor should we spend all our time in the Court condition, regardless of how much we appreciate the various features of salvation therein provided for us. God's will for his elect is their sanctification to his will and purpose, by which they enter into the holy of spiritual insight and development, that they may be qualified to become body members of Christ in the Most Holy. So we should not think it strange that we are being fitted through fiery trials, but rejoice inasmuch as we are partaking of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory is revealed, we also may be glad with exceeding joy.

"Wherefore," says Peter, "let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" . . . "Gird up the loins of your mind [brace or prepare yourself for the warfare of faith], be sober, and *hope to the end* for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 4:19; 1:13).

- J. T. Read

Laborers Together With God

*"These were the potters, and those that dwelt among plants and hedges:
there they dwelt with the king for his work." - 1 Chronicles 4:23.*

With infinite care and forethought God has chosen the place in which you can do your best work for the world. You may be lonely, but you have no more right to complain than the lamp has, which has been placed in a niche to illumine a dark landing or a flight of dangerous stone steps. The master of the house may have put you in a very small corner and on a very humble stand; but it is enough if it be his blessed will. Some day he will pass by, and you shall light his steps as he goes forth to seek and save that which is lost; or you shall kindle some great light that shall shine like a beacon over the storm-swept ocean. Thus the obscure Andrew was the means of igniting his brother Peter, when he brought him to Jesus. - *Author unknown*

The lesson seems twofold, - First, that anywhere and everywhere we too may dwell with the King for his work. We may be in a very unlikely or unfavorable place for this - it may be in a literal country life, with little enough to be seen of the goings of the King around us; it may be among hedges of all sorts, hindrances in all directions; it may be, furthermore, with our hands full of all manner of pottery for our daily task. No matter! The King who placed us there will come and dwell there with us; the hedges are all right, or he would soon do away with them, and it does not follow that what seems to hinder our way may not be for its very protection; and as for the pottery, why, that is just exactly what he has seen fit to put into our hands, and therefore it is, for the present, his work.

Secondly, that the dwelling and the working must go together. If we are indeed dwelling with the King, we shall be working for him too, as we have opportunity. The working will be as the dwelling-a settled, regular thing, whatever form it may take at his appointment. Nor will his work ever be done when we are not dwelling with him. It will be our own work then, not his, and it will not abide. We shall come under the condemnation of the vine which was pronounced empty, because he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.

We are to dwell with the King for his work; but he will see to it that it shall be for a great deal besides -for a great continual reward according to his own heart and out of his royal bounty-for peace, for power, for love, for gladness, for likeness to himself.

Laborers together with God! workers together with him! the Lord working with us! admitted into divine fellowship of work!-will not this thought ennoble everything he gives us to do today, even if it is among plants and hedges! Even the pottery will be grand!

-F. R. Havergal

When the Master of all the workmen
Called me into the field,
I went for him light and happy,
The tools of his service to wield;
Expectant of high position,
As suited my lofty taste --
When Lo! He set me weeding
And watering down in the waste.

Such puttering down in the hedges!
A task so thankless and small!
Yet I stifled my vain discomfort
And wrought for the Lord of all,
Till, meeker grown, as nightly
I sank to my hard-won rest
I cared but to hear in my dreaming,
"This one has done his best."

The years have leveled distinctions,
There is no more "great" nor "small";
Only faithful service counts
With the Lord of all;
And I know that, tilled with patience,
The dreariest waste of clod
Shall yield the perfect ideal
Planned in the heart of God.

- *Author unknown*

What Shall Be Our Attitude?

AS DISCIPLES of Christ whose lives are pledged to His service and who desire above all else to learn and do His Will, there must often come to our minds a realization that the whole life and outlook of our fellowship is changing. It is not just that the forms of words which express our articles of faith are remoulded and expressed anew; not just that in many matters of doctrinal belief there are doubts expressed and objections raised. These things have always been a feature of our assembling together and always must be while free and healthy research into the Fountain of all Truth continues. Besides all this there is the indisputable fact that various features of "Present Truth" have permeated the structure of present-day Christian thought, and that this has borne fruitage in the shape of many separate schools, each holding to some peculiarity of belief or expectation, yet withal manifesting a very definite appreciation, first of the basic truth that God *will* in due time bless all the families of the earth, and secondly, of the dispensational features of the Divine Plan. Whereas fifty years ago that understanding of the "two salvations" and the "Ransom for all" which then came to light was confined virtually to one movement directed by one master mind, the assiduous witnessing to these, "Harvest Truths" which was carried on for forty years has borne fruit in a hundred ways, and today one may find a number of movements and proclamations, all outside the scope of "Present Truth" as we know it, and yet manifesting very plainly that in conjunction with much that would be considered undesirable relics of Dark Age theology there is combined a clear appreciation of some aspects of Truth which we ourselves consider to be of prime importance at this time.

What is the right attitude to adopt towards this development? Is it right to follow the example of those disciples who "forbade them, because they followed not with us." Or should we acclaim the truths we find expressed in such movements, ignoring the error, and join with them in their work? These questions are not idle ones, for in many places our brethren find that with perhaps the breakdown of their local group, the opportunity of worship and fellowship with adherents of some such enterprise offers a satisfaction to the heart that yearns for Christian fellowship and the joy of association in a common purpose, and to an increasing degree the lines of demarcation between ourselves and movements of this nature are breaking down. How then are we to answer the question?

Not by ruling out of the purposes of God those whose studies in His Word have led them to other conclusions than our own, for that implies the denial of the very principles for which we should stand. And most decidedly not by concluding that in professing the name and service of Christ it matters not in what organization we serve Him nor what is the precise character of the message we proclaim. For whatever developments the future may hold, and by whatever means the divine revelation may come to man, tomorrow, it still remains true that the knowledge of God's Plan which is our inheritance carries with it a responsibility which can not be ignored if we would continue to bear the honorable title of ambassadors for Christ.

There lies the answer to our question. As a company of Christians we have a clear outline of the Divine Plan and the fundamentals of Christian teaching which it is our duty to keep alive in our midst. Without impugning the sincerity or the sterling character of many whose lives are devoted to other movements it still remains true that, unless we are grievously mistaken, that which is called "Present Truth" is far in advance of present-day thought among Christians generally. If that is so, then we are in the position of Watchers in Zion, and our place is on the watchtower looking for further signs of the day of "He that shall come.", Let those in the city go about their business

and serve as seems good to them. Those who are the "Lord's remembrancers" (**Isa. 62:6** margin) have a higher calling and a sterner duty to perform. Let us then continue as a separated people, not in the spirit of the man who thanked God that he was not as other men but in an attitude of sober realization that in this great day, we who have received the grace of God in revelation of His Plan are called to be like John the Baptist; a voice crying, in the wilderness to be sure, but crying nevertheless in the certainty of imminent fulfillment -- "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

-- *Bible Students Monthly*. London. Eng.

"Even at the Doors"

Other pressing duties have combined with space limitations to prevent us from contributing additional comments here. For the same reasons *The Question Box* is being omitted. However, we hope (D.V.) to resume both in subsequent issues of the *Herald*. - Editorial Committee

Notice of Postponement of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute, due to be scheduled for Saturday, June 5, is being postponed. Plans are now under way to hold it in September, in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

We are making this early announcement so that Institute members, who might wish to participate in conventions now being planned-by Associated Bible Students in various parts of the country to be held during the summer months, will know that they need not reserve the June date for the Institute's Annual Meeting.

Further particulars as to the date, hour, and place of meeting will be announced later.

Entered Into Rest

Cecile H. Adams, Albany, N.Y.
Sis. N. W. Allen, Leicester, Eng.
C. Earnest Brown, Madisonville, Ky.
Ione Dills, Sharon, Pa.
Bro. W. A. Dinsdale, Eastbourne, Eng.
John E. Green, Providence, R.I.
Rosa Hess, Seattle, Wash.
Sharon Holmes, Linby, Eng.
Rudolf Noffke, Sigel, Ill.
May Parsons, Bristol, Eng.
Martin Robotka, Grand Haven, Mich.
Jennie L. Rubin, Minneapolis, Minn.
Sis. M. Short, Warrington, Eng.
Clyde Wilson, Bronx, N.Y. Sis.
G. Wilson, Londonderry, N. Ireland
Albert Ziesemer, Appleton, Wis.