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Gifts from on High

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." - James 1:17.

THE EXTENT to which this season of the year has come to be associated with the bestowing of gifts is due largely to propaganda of commercial interests that have, fostered the idea and have taken advantage of the widespread sentiment associated with Christmas. As a consequence, the Christmas season has grown to be a burden with most people and so has lost much of its value as a happy and blessed occasion.

In seeking a precedent for the appropriateness of gifts, we need not rely upon this Italian custom, but can go back to a much better example. The great Eternal One has practised the art of giving, ever since the dawn of creation, and in the exercise of His grace in this respect He looked forward to that supremest of His love, the priceless, Gift of His first work of creation, the One through whom all things else were and are created. We are wont to think of the trials and tests that come upon man, designed (as respects the followers of Christ at least) to develop them in Christlikeness, as being hard to bear. But do we realize that the great Eternal One, who embodies in Himself all perfection, all excellence, all beauty of character, suffers trials and tests of His love and mercy and compassion daily, not only from the unregenerate enemies of righteousness, but also from those who claim to love Him? Have we any measure to determine what it cost the Father to make the supreme sacrifice of His love, the gift of His only begotten Son? Nothing of greater moment to man or more precious to the Father Himself could have been found with which to prove divine love and mercy. Real giving, therefore, originated with the unselfish munificence of God, and so to be Godlike in our giving, we must be wholly unselfish "Freely ye have received, freely give." If we needed any further basis for the Christmas spirit; we could find it in the Bible record of the three Wise Men from the East who came bearing "gifts to the young child Jesus; not that this is recorded to establish any such custom, but rather that it illustrates the spirit in which Jesus came.

Right-giving a Fine Art

The more we think upon the gifts from on High, the more we realize that "right-giving" is a fine art and should reflect the desire of the heart, the character of the giver, the joy of serving, and the thoughtfulness that takes note of the need or pleasure of the recipient. Such must be the motives which actuate our giving if we, as followers of Jesus, are to reflect the divine example. Only in this way can we derive the greatest blessing from giving, and put to its best use the opportunity which this universally observed Christmas celebration gives us. We do not follow the divine example by entering into the feverish spirit that pervades the most of Christendom at this season; nor by subjecting ourselves to the unavoidable expense and inconvenience necessary to the finding of gifts that will be acceptable to those whom we feel reasonably sure are doing the same for us. Realizing that there is much in the Christmas spirit that is good and that many derive blessings from, we would not be understood as condemning its observance, but simply point out that such giving is not the best way to follow the divine example.

It is stated in Acts 20:35 that Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The way in which this statement is put would seem to mark it as a principle or reaction underlying the grace of giving. All such principles are of divine origin and are of universal application; consequently, God Himself must be greatly blessed, for our text declares that "Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father." There can be no doubt but that the Father delights in giving, and in bestowing the kind of gifts that results in blessings to His children.

But the question might be asked, Is it possible to believe that in the giving of His only begotten Son, the Father was more blessed than man? Yes, we answer, if Jesus spoke the truth when He said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John 7:16), then the principle must apply no matter what the cost. Some might be inclined to argue that this Gift did not cost the Father as much as we might at first suppose, because He knew that in the end His Son would be greatly rewarded and exalted; but the Scriptures indicate that this reasoning is not true. Take for example that most familiar of all verses of Scripture, John 3:16: the implication is that the Father looked upon His only begotten Son as being the most valued of all His creatures or possessions, for He cites His sacrifice in the giving of that Son as being the supreme evidence of His love for mankind. "God so **loved** the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

There are, no doubt, fathers so lacking in parental affection that they would sacrifice their children in order to escape suffering themselves, but this could not be said of God, for God is love. It has been demonstrated time and again that parents who truly love their children will go through suffering and death rather than have their children suffer; and if such love still exists in imperfect man, it stands to reason that the God who implanted such a quality in the hearts of His creatures, would not be deficient in that quality Himself. Therefore, had it been possible, God would much rather have taken upon Himself the suffering necessary to redeem man than to have sent His Son into an unfriendly world to suffer. It must be remembered that Jesus volunteered His life in this matter, with the thought of pleasing the Father in the saving of the world. Therefore to stand aside, as the Father did, while His most dearly loved Son passed through all the experiences He had to endure in leaving the glory He had with the Father that He might suffer an ignominious death upon the cross, and then at the end to have to deliberately break that Son's heart by letting Him think He had been forsaken, must have plumbed depths of feeling that the Father had never experienced before, and perhaps never will again. We who have never had that close fellowship and ever-abiding sense of divine presence to aid as Jesus had it, cannot possibly appreciate what it meant to our Lord to suddenly lose His contact with the Father.

According to the statement of our text, God alone is able to give gifts that are good and that are perfect. It remains, therefore, that any gifts we bestow will be found lacking in both these qualities. Our gifts are of necessity temporal and partake of the imperfections of both ourselves

and our surroundings; and when given merely because we feel sure the recipient designs a gift to us, perhaps for the same reason, there is little if any blessedness attached thereto.

We, as Christians, should attempt to copy the divine example when we give, and to do this, we have to remember that God's gifts are characterized by the motive of, love without any thought of return; and that they are designed for the welfare, blessing, and pleasure of the ones on whom He bestows them. Perhaps the best way to understand Godlike giving is to observe a few examples of the divine munificence.

In Romans 6:23 we read, "For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (R. V.) How can we possibly evaluate such a gift. Adam had perfect life when created; but the right to a continuation of that life was conditioned upon his obedience to the divine will. However, when again God bestows life upon man, it will not only be free, but .will be eternal, for those who receive it will have proved under ample trial and testing that they will always remain loyal and obedient to the divine will, and will make the proper use of such an inestimable gift. Such a gift can never lose its value, for the blessings of eternal life can never fade, and the enjoyments of eternal life will never lessen or pall, for ever instant of its possession will bring new joy, and will enable its possessor to make use of all the other endless blessings that divine love, wisdom, and power will take delight in bestowing.

When we read that "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent," we usually think of it as meaning that in order to gain eternal life, we must learn to know God by becoming like Him. This, of course, is true; but possibly there is the added thought that "to know the measure of God's goodness, one must live eternally." Along with eternal life there is also the gift of a perfect organism, adequate and wholly suited to home and environment which are also perfect gifts from on high. No matter from what standpoint these gifts are examined, they leave nothing to be desired; they satisfy. These, of course, are gifts of the future, and are enjoyed, as yet, only by faith and hope.

But there are also gifts of the present which do not so readily reveal their desirable qualities, but when scrutinized in the light of the divine purpose and the pressing need of man, prove their heavenly origin. The garden prepared for Adam and Eve was in every way suited to their perfect state; but when man's condition changed, it was necessary that his environment change too in order that he might not be eternally lost. The unprepared earth in its moods and periods of adjustment by storm, flood, and earthquake, and extremes of heat, cold, and wild life, was not so pleasant, but was far better suited to man's need of discipline and instruction, and so still reflected the goodness of God. It has been necessary, for man's own good, that he be subjected to the very conditions with which he has had to cope, in order that he might exist without losing the image of God altogether.

The Priceless Gift of Love

The most wonderful gift God has to bestow, whether it be present or future, is Love, and all other gifts are but the outworking of that one inestimable grace. As already stated, the gift that most truly manifested that love was the gift of His Son.

The most valuable gift we 'have to bestow is, likewise, love; and love is the fountain head from which all truly acceptable gifts emanate; in fact, love constitutes the "summum bonum" of all acceptableness. It matters not how many requirements there are to the Law, love fulfils them all; it matters not how many facets there are to the jewel of Godlike character, love is the sum of them all; for God is love. Only divine wisdom can fathom the magic of the mantle of love: "All things

work together for good to them that **love** God;" so fear and apprehension find no lodgment in the heart and mind of those who truly love. No matter how heavy the load we may have to carry, love will make it seem 'light; and service and sacrifice that would be unbearable, become a pleasure under love's mantle.

"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. **Love never faileth.**"

On account of our own limitations and imperfections, the gifts of our love fall short of the divine standard; nevertheless, such gifts, when truly the expression of love and right intent, can and do bring blessings; and so, to some extent, reflect the grace of the Father's spirit in our lives. Such gifts may not have much intrinsic value according to this world's standards, but worldly standards are not the measure of their worth. Even a kind word, spoken in expression of such a love, may have power to bless and enrich some life at the critical time of need, more that we could imagine.

Such was the experience of a dear old Pilgrim Brother who had spent many years in the service of the Lord and the brethren. Through no fault or change of his own, he became the victim of the wave of intolerance that had laid hold on some of the Truth friends, and his kind, loving heart was torn because of the unwarranted distrust that was manifested toward him. He even wondered if he could have been displeasing to the Heavenly Father; for, after all, we are all painfully aware of our own shortcomings.

Then it was that he received a letter from a sister, saying that he had been much in her thoughts of late, and that when this occurred, she took it as a sign from the Lord that such a one was in trouble and needed the prayers of the brethren. She assured him of her prayers on his behalf, and of the blessings his service had meant to her and the Class of which she was a member. This gift of love did not cost that sister much, outside of a little thoughtfulness and the few minutes of time and effort necessary to write, but what it meant to this dear old wayfarer in his period of heart-ache and bewilderment, will be known only when the heavenly goal is reached and all such gifts of love are rewarded.

It is worthy of note that God's Word does not have much to say in praise of big or rich, worldly gifts; for usually such gifts have some motive other than Godlike love to prompt them. Exceptions to the rule, such as Mary's gift of an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard with which she anointed Jesus, can of course be cited; but more often it is the little things, such as "The widow's mite, the "cup of cold water," or some Samaritan's kindly acts-things which show the spirit that prompts them, that bless not only the giver, but also the one upon whom kindness and love is bestowed.

May God help us, one and all, to give freely, in accord with the dictates of a heart filled with love and the intent that strives to bless and to make glad those with whom we come in contact. And let us also remember, that no gift is too small to bestow if it has such a motive back of it.

The Plan of God -- in Brief

*"According to a Plan of the Ages, which He formed for the Anointed Jesus our Lord."
- Eph. 3:11 (Diaglott).*

STUDY 9 -- The Three Ways

"Wide is the gate of destruction, and broad that way leading thither; and many are they who enter through it. How narrow is the gate of life! How difficult that way leading thither! and how few are they who find it!" -- Matthew 7:13, 14, Diaglott translation.

"And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, nor be found there; but they that walk there shall be delivered." Isaiah 35:8, 9.

Three ways, the "broad road," the "narrow way" and the "highway," are brought to our attention in the Scriptures.

The Broad Road to Destruction

This road is named this way because it is most easy to the degenerate human race. Six thousand years ago, as a sinner condemned to destruction, Adam (and the race represented in him) started upon this road, and after nine hundred and thirty years he reached its end -- destruction.

For six thousand years the race has steadily pursued the broad, downward way. Only a few, comparatively, have tried to change their course and retrace their steps. In fact, to retrace all the steps, and reach the original perfection, has been impossible, though the effort of some to do so has been commendable, and not without beneficial results. For six thousand years sin and death have reigned relentlessly over mankind, and driven them upon this broad road to destruction. And not until the Gospel age was a way of escape brought to light.

The teachings of Jesus and the apostles bring to light life -- a restoration to life, for all mankind, as based upon the merit and sacrifice of the Redeemer; and they show this to be the significance of many Old Testament types. They also bring to light immortality, the prize of the high calling of the Gospel Church.

The Narrow Way to Life

Our Master tells us that it is because of the narrowness of this way that the many prefer to remain on the broad road to destruction. "Strait [difficult] is the gate and narrow is the way that leads unto life, and few there be that find it."

Recognizing the fact that only in the divine nature is life independent, unlimited, exhaustless, ever continuous and neither produced nor controlled by circumstances, we see that of necessity Jehovah is superior to those physical laws and supplies which He ordained for the sustenance of His creatures. It is this quality, which pertains only to the divine nature, that is described by the term immortality. As shown in the preceding chapter, immortal signifies death-proof, consequently disease and pain-proof. In fact, immortality may be used as a synonym for divinity.

From the divine, immortal fountain proceed all life and blessing, every good and perfect gift, as from the sun the earth receives her light and vigor.

Man has not inherent life: he is no more a fountain of life than a diamond is a fountain of light. And one of the very strongest evidences that we have not an exhaustless supply of life in ourselves, or, in other words, that we are not immortal, is that since sin entered, death has passed upon all our race.

God had arranged that man in Eden should have access to life sustaining trees, and the paradise in which he was placed was abundantly supplied with numbers of "every [kind of] tree" good for food or for adornment. (Genesis 2:9, 16, 17). Among the trees of life good for food was one forbidden. While for a time forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge, he was permitted to eat freely of trees which sustained life perfectly; and he was separated from them only after transgression, that thereby the death-penalty might go into effect. -- Genesis 3:22.

So the glory and beauty of humanity are seen to be dependent on the continued supply of life, just as the beauty of the diamond is dependent on the continued supply of sunlight. When sin deprived humanity of the right to life, and the supply was withheld, immediately the jewel began to lose its brilliancy and beauty, and finally it is deprived of its last vestige in the tomb. His beauty consumes away like a moth. (Psalm 34:11). As the diamond loses its beauty and brilliancy when the light is withdrawn, so man loses life when God withholds the supplies from him. "Yea, man gives up the ghost [life] and where is he?" (Job 14:10). "His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them." (Verse 21). "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go." (Eccl. 9:10). But since a ransom has been found, since the death penalty has been paid by the Redeemer, the jewel is to have its beauty restored, and is again to reflect perfectly the Creator's image when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. (Malachi 4:2). It is because of the sin-offering, the sacrifice of Christ, that "All that are in their graves shall come forth." There shall be a restoration of all things; first an opportunity or offer of restoration to all, and ultimately the attainment of human perfection by all who will obey the Redeemer.

This, however, is not the reward to which Jesus refers as the end of the narrow way. From other Scriptures we learn that the reward promised to those who walk the narrow way is the "divine nature" -- life inherent, life in that superlative degree which only the divine nature can possess -- immortality. What a hope! Dare we aspire to such a height of glory? Surely not without positive and explicit invitation could any rightfully so aspire.

We learn that Jehovah, who alone possessed immortality originally, has highly exalted His Son, our Lord Jesus, to the same divine, immortal nature; hence He is now the express image of the Father's person. (Hebrews 1:3). So we read, "As the Father hath LIFE IN HIMSELF [God's definition of "immortality" -- life in Himself -- not drawn from other sources, nor dependent on circumstances, but independent, inherent life], so hath He given to the Son to have LIFE IN HIMSELF." (John 5:26). Since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, then, two beings are immortal; and, amazing grace! the same offer is made to the Bride of the Lamb, being selected during the Gospel age. Yet not all of the great company who are nominally of the Church will receive this great prize, but only that "little flock" of overcomers who so run as to obtain it; who follow closely in the Master's footsteps; who, like Him, walk the narrow way of sacrifice, even unto death. These, when born from the dead in the resurrection, will have the divine nature and form. This immortality, the independent, self-existent, divine nature, is the life to which the narrow way leads.

This class is not to be raised from the tomb human beings; for we are assured by the Apostle that, though sown in the tomb natural bodies, they will be raised spiritual bodies. These all shall be "changed," and even as they once bore the image of the earthly, human nature, they shall bear the image of the heavenly.

But "it does not yet appear what we shall be" -- what a spiritual body is; but "we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him," and share in "the glory to be revealed." -- 1 John 3:2; Col. 1:27; 2 Corinthians 4:17; John 17:22; 1 Peter 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

Not only is this high calling to a change of nature confined exclusively to the Gospel age, but it is the only offer of this age. Hence our Lord's words quoted at the beginning of this chapter include on the broad road to destruction all who are not on the way to the only prize now offered. All others are still on the broad road -- these only have as yet escaped the condemnation that is on the world. This, the only way of life now open, because of its difficulty, finds few who care to walk in it. The masses of mankind in their weakness prefer the broad, easy way of self-gratification.

The narrow way, while it ends in life, in immortality, might be called a way of death, since its prize is gained through the sacrifice of the human nature even unto death. It is the narrow way of death to life.

Being reckoned free from the Adamic guilt and the death penalty, the consecrated voluntarily surrender or sacrifice those human rights, reckoned theirs, which in due time they, with the world in general, would have actually received. As "the man Christ Jesus" laid down or sacrificed His life for the world, so these become joint-sacrificers with Him. Not that His sacrifice was insufficient and that others were needed; but while His is all-sufficient, these are permitted to serve and to suffer with Him in order to become His bride and joint-heir. So, then, while the world is under condemnation to death, and is dying with Adam, this "little flock," through the process of faith reckonings and sacrifice, already described, are said to die with Christ. They sacrifice and die with Him as human beings, in order to become partakers of the divine nature and glories with Him; for we believe that if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together. -- Romans 8:17, and 2 Timothy 2:11, 12.

In the beginning of the Millennial age, those who now walk the narrow way will have gained the great prize for which they ran, immortality; and being clothed with the divine nature and power, they will be prepared for the great work of restoring and blessing the world during that age. With the end of the Gospel age, the narrow way to immortality will close, because the select "little flock" that it was designed to test and prove will have been completed. "Now is the accepted [Greek, dektos, acceptable or receivable] time" -- the time in which sacrificers, coming in the merit of Jesus and becoming dead with Him, are acceptable to God -- a sacrifice of sweet odor. Death, as the Adamic penalty, will not be permitted forever; it will be abolished during the Millennial age; as a sacrifice it will be acceptable and rewarded only during the Gospel age.

The Highway of Holiness

While the special hope of the Gospel age is so surpassingly glorious, and the way to it is correspondingly difficult -- narrow, hedged in by hardships and dangers at every step -- so that few find it, and obtain the great prize at its end, the new order of things in the age to come is to be entirely different. As a different hope is held out, so also a different way leads to it. The way to immortality has been a way which required the sacrifice of the otherwise lawful and proper hopes, ambitions and desires -- the sacrifice forever of the human nature. But the way to human perfection, to restoration, the hope of the world, requires only the putting away of sin: not the sacrifice of human rights and

privileges, but their proper enjoyment. It will lead to personal purification and restoration to the image of God as enjoyed by Adam before sin entered the world.

The way back to actual human perfection is to be made very plain and easy; so plain that none may mistake the way; so plain that "the wayfaring man, and those unacquainted therewith, shall not go astray." (Isaiah 35:8. -- Leeser); so plain that none will need to teach his neighbor, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest. (Jeremiah 31:34). Instead of being a narrow way that few can find, it is termed "a highway," a public roadway -- not a narrow, steep, rugged, difficult, hedged byway, but a way specially prepared for easy travel -- specially arranged for the convenience and comfort of the travelers. Verses 8 and 9 show that it is a public road, open to all the redeemed -- every man. Every man for whom Christ died, who will recognize and avail himself of the opportunities and blessings purchased by the precious blood, may go up on this Highway of Holiness to the grand goal of perfect restoration to human perfection and everlasting life.

So we have found a "Broad Road," on which at present the masses of mankind travel, deluded by the "prince of this world," and led by perverted tastes. We have found that it was opened up and that our race was started in its headlong course upon it by "one man's disobedience." We have found that the "Highway of Holiness" is to be opened up by our Lord, who give Himself a ransom for all and redeemed all from the destruction to which the "Broad Road" leads, and that it will, in due time, be accessible and easy for all the redeemed ones whom He bought with His own precious blood. We have found, furthermore, that the present "Narrow Way," opened up by the merit of the same precious blood, is a special way leading to a special prize, and is made specially narrow and difficult as a test and discipline for those now being selected to be made partakers of the divine nature and joint-heirs with our Lord Jesus in the Kingdom of glory soon to be revealed for the blessing of all. Such as have this hope -- who see this prize -- may count all other hopes as but loss and dross in comparison. -- Philippians 3:8-15.

- C. T. Russell

(to be continued)

"Still o'er earth's sky the clouds of anger roll,
And God's revenge hangs heavy on her soul;
Yet shall she rise-though first by God chastised --
In glory and in beauty then baptized.

"Yes, Earth, thou shalt arise; thy Father's aid
Shall heal the wound His chastening hand hath made
Shall judge the proud oppressor's ruthless sway,
And burst his bonds, and cast his cords away.

"Then on your soil shall deathless verdure spring;
Break forth, ye mountains, and ye valleys, sing!
No more your thirsty rocks shall frown forlorn,
The unbeliever's jest, the heathen's scorn.

"The sultry sands shall tenfold harvests yield,
And a new Eden deck the thorny field.
E'en now we see, wide-waving o'er the land,
The mighty angel *lifts* his golden wand,

"Courts the bright vision of descending power,
Tells every gate and measures every tower;
And chides the tardy seals that yet detain
Thy Lion, Judah, from His destined reign."

- Heber.

The Friendships of the Apostle Paul

"In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another."- Rom. 12:10, R.V.

MANY SERMONS have been preached and written about the Apostle Paul's genius for theology, or for church government, or about his magnificent accomplishment in missionary work and care of the churches. But we can not get much insight into the depth of feeling within the man merely from the history of all his labors and journeys.

Paul's relation to those who were in the inner circle of his associates does not lie on the surface either of the record of his deeds or even his letters, but has to be gathered little by little from expressions written here and there in his epistles. The epistles were not, as a rule, personal letters, but addressed to a community and dealt with subjects of general interest to the church at large. At the same time, a man of Paul's temperament reveals in his letters a depth of feeling for individual Christians that warms our own hearts as we read. If he was amongst the most hated men of his day, he was also one of the best loved.

Space will not permit us at this time to consider his unselfishness, his untiring zeal, and great intellect, and such like. We will confine ourselves to his great expressed need for human love and encouragement. Some may scoff at the great Apostle Paul's needing less able men's companionship. Nevertheless, it is indicated that he did, in several places in his writings.

Paul always gave more to others than he ever needed to receive, which is the privilege of the strong and gifted. He was so easily first in his outstanding qualities of brain, heart, and soul that it does seem, from a natural viewpoint, almost absurd to speak of any mutual relation between him and any of his converts and beloved friends.

His Epistle to the Philippians is one of the noblest, sweetest love-letters ever written, full of loving reminiscences and affectionate terms: "my brethren, dearly beloved, and longed for, my joy and crown," etc. Note the expressions, and you will realize what a true pastor's heart Paul had.

But, like other men, Paul hungered for closer ties than these. And it is well that it is so. We are apt to put Paul so far above us that he becomes unapproachable, and then his example would have for us no real inspiration. He possessed so many qualities which divide him from us that he rises more 'than once to the high-water mark of human nature, as when he says with such fervent sincerity, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren's sake." We stand astonished with wonder at his seeming immunity from the things that tempt other men, as when, in the glow of a wondrous love, he counted all things for which other men strove as **dross**. God alone knows how small we feel beside such a man who had won his sainthood through suffering, even resisting unto blood. But it is good to note the common grounds of his life and ours, and as he opens his heart and lays down his life for those he loves, it may be that the inspiring thought will grip us, that even we, in our measure, may, become like him. He hungered for the sympathy of his friends and felt desolate when derived of them. More than once he was cast down and needed to be comforted by the coming of a friend like Titus.

Unfortunately, space will not permit us to trace the relationship in which Paul stood to Timothy, to Titus, to Luke, the beloved physician, and to Barnabas. He pleads for their support and appreciated it fully, as when he says, "When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest,

but we were troubled on every side. . . . Nevertheless, God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus." Or again, he writes to Timothy "Do thy diligence to come unto me shortly, for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world; Crescens hath gone to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

Closer Friendships Longed For

He was not afraid to let his friends know how he loved them, and he never grudged praise to his associates. What a generous, large-hearted friend he was! He hardly ever mentions one of his fellow workers without an endearing epithet such as "my beloved," or "our sister," or, as with Timothy, "my dearly beloved son."

No wonder he received such devoted love. Read the last chapter of Romans, with its beautiful salutations, and you will realize how many friends Paul had. There is a chapter in every epithet, a chapter of his heart, as in this one: "Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine." What an unrecorded chapter these words hint at -perhaps when the mother of Rufus succored the apostle or nursed him in illness and was ever after --"my mother."

One other incident holds so much of value to us that it is with regret we must pass on hastily with just a word from Paul when he speaks of Priscilla and Aquila and calls them "my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my life laid down their own necks." Read of their friendship, extending over a period of ten years or more, from Rome to Corinth, to Ephesus and back to Rome,

How appealing is his tender care -- like a mother's -- for Timothy's health. How tactful and gentle his appeal to Philemon, whom he feels he might well have commanded, "yet for love's sake I rather beseech you, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ."- Could anything reveal the sweetness of Paul's character more fully than the record that Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon traveled over a hundred miles to reach Paul's side and protection. He quite obviously felt sure of understanding and tenderness and knew that justice would be done him. Let the words of Paul written to Philemon, sink deeply into your heart: "If he oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." How like the Master!

Paul had no time or heart for the comradeship that meant nothing but sociability. His friends were all fellow workers with the same great objective. This sometimes made him seem hard or unfeeling, as when he refused to take Mark on his second missionary trip because he had turned back from the first.

Paul, with his eager, overwhelming desire to serve Christ and His cause, was unable to understand vacillation or weakness. He preferred to separate altogether from Barnabas rather than let Mark go with them. There is much of interest recorded about John Mark, and we wonder if Paul's sternness or Barnabas' gentleness and trust won Mark back to faithful service. But when Mark had proved true, Paul's generous commendation and love were again his, and he, Paul, longed for him while in prison, writing his last letter to Timothy of which we have any record. How sorely he must have missed Mark, to write for him, and to care for his cloak and parchments, which he seems wont to forget. And how glad Mark must have been to again have that wonderful privilege of serving the greatest missionary this world has ever known.

Lessons for Us

For Demas or any other to have had the chance of friendship with Paul and to have given it up for any worldly advantage, is tragic indeed. And now, we ask ourselves, what practical lesson may we draw from Paul's need of friends?

First, we should see to it that our friendships are among those who are following in the footsteps of our Lord.

Secondly, we should be willing and glad to spend and be spent in their service.

And third, may there not be some lesser Pauls in the Church today, needing our support and love, just as the Apostle Paul did? Some have labored faithfully through the years, doing harvest work, using their talents and strength to serve us who perhaps have little ability for such work.

Our Lord says that a cup of water given to one of His little ones is a privilege and done as unto Him. And what would the equivalent of a cup of water be? The refreshment and inspiration they would derive in seeing us walk in unity and love, upholding their hands, profiting by their ministry insofar as they follow Christ's teachings. And then shall we all be to the praise of His glory in His own due time.

- O. Anderson

A Remarkable Argument for Sincerity

"As God is faithful our word toward you is not yea and nay." - 2 Cor. 1:18, A.R.V.

THE PASSAGE from which our text is taken contains several valuable lessons, yet the one which appeals to us as outstanding is that of sincerity; hence the caption assigned to this article. The suitability of the caption may not appear at the outset, but we think our readers will agree before the conclusion of our meditation. Let us then consider the circumstances under which the passage came to be written.

About fifty years after the birth of Christ, less than twenty years after His death, resurrection, and ascension to God's right hand, the Gospel was introduced into Corinth by the Apostle Paul. Some five years later he wrote his first letter to the church there. During those five intervening years, local influences, both doctrinal and moral, had developed themselves within the bosom of the church, corrupting both its doctrine and its conduct. A variety of separate questions had arisen; some relating to doctrine, as for example, the resurrection. Others related to morals, as concerning the man who was a fornicator. Others, again, related to the eating of meats offered to idols; still others had to do with church order and discipline, while yet others had to do with the relative value of spiritual gifts. Greek philosophies, Oriental mysticisms and asceticisms, Hebrew traditions and bigotries, Corinthian vices were striving confusedly together, and making a common assault on the truth and grace of Christ.

On this strife of passion and prejudice St. Paul tried the effect of argument and expostulation. In his first letter he restated the main truths of the Gospel he had preached among them, and indicated the spiritual unity which might underlie the freest exercise of thought and the widest differences of opinion, if only love were allowed full scope. In the very first chapter he exhorts them not to permit divisions, asking them pointedly: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?" On the question of morality his words are clear and unmistakable when, in the fifth chapter, he insists that they "put away from among themselves that wicked person," and in the sixth chapter, where he inquires: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" and that far from practicing such immorality they were to glorify God in their bodies. Their departure from and denial of the resurrection brought forth his wonderful reaffirmation of that foundation truth as it is set forth in the celebrated fifteenth chapter of his letter, in which he first summarized the evidence as to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Himself, and then showed that Christ's resurrection is a pledge of our own. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. . . . O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" When he took up the question of gifts with which the church at Corinth had been so well endowed, while he gave to each its due weight and value-while he, indeed, taught them to earnestly desire the best gifts-there could be no mistaking his doctrine when, in the thirteenth chapter, he proceeded to show them that still more excellent way, the way of love; love without which, though one were to speak with tongues of men and of angels, he would be as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; love without which, though one understood all secrets and possessed all knowledge; though one had all faith, so as to remove mountains; though one were to bestow all his goods to feed the poor; yea, though one were to give his body to be burned -- he would be nothing.

His letter was necessarily as severe as it was tender, for he had to deal with one of those cases in which truth is severity, in which tenderness can heal, or alleviate, only the wounds which truth is compelled to make. The result of his intervention was doubtful, as in such cases it always is. One

cannot touch the hearts and lives of men, one cannot criticize the doctrine and code which they have framed for themselves, and still less can one censure the prejudices and bigotries which corrupt their doctrine without: running grave risk of exciting the venomous passions which lurk in an irritated self-love. No man better understood the rights of free thought or the irritability of self-love than the apostle. Hence, he waited with tremulous anxiety, with many misgivings and fears for tidings of the reception his letter had met. At last Titus brings him the news for which he had waited. On the whole, it was of a nature to allay his solicitude. The larger and better part of the chuck had been moved to shame and godly contrition. They had renounced the heresies and the immoralities which had given him so much concern. His anxiety before the good news came and his relief when it arrived are pathetically expressed in this second epistle to the Corinthians. "Our flesh had no rest," he writes. "We were troubled on every side; without were fightings; within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me. . . . For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent; for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.... for behold, this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea; what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. . . . Therefore, we were comforted." - 2 Cor. 7:5-16.

As we read these words, we can feel St. Paul's heart throbbing under them, and are constrained to sympathize with the tumult of passionate emotion which was sweeping through his heart when he wrote them.

Opposition Leaders

The apostle's joy and comfort, however, were not unmixed. Those who had fostered dissension and strife in the church, the leaders of its several factions, were not humbled but embittered by his rebuke. The godly sorrow, the humble submission of their brethren galled these prating lovers of preeminence. Their importance was gone-the letter of the absent apostle outweighing their living presence and word. Cut to the quick, they set themselves to arrest this new movement towards trust and unity. And as the most likely means to that end, they set themselves to undermine the apostle's authority -- the authority which he derived, not by any arbitrary assumption, but simply from an ampler knowledge of the truth and a more perfect devotion to the service of Christ. With him out of the way, their course would be clear, and they would come to be of some importance again. And so they began to wrest his words, to disparage his character, and to sow suspicions of his honesty, his veracity, his disinterestedness, his courage. "No doubt," they said, "Paul can write very strong and eloquent letters; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech is contemptible-- as he himself knows very well. Because he knows it, he is afraid to trust himself among you-- afraid to meet us face to face, who can at least talk as well as he. He is always promising or threatening to come, but he never comes. He is afraid to come. He is cowardly, irresolute, and insincere. And since this is the case with regard to his visits to Corinth, it may well be the case also with his preaching and teaching. How can we trust the word of one who does not know his own mind? who is forever vacillating between yea and nay? who, when he says 'yes,' doesn't mean 'yes,' and when he says 'no,' doesn't mean 'no'? He is a man who can teach plausibly enough, but half the time he means something different from what he says. He is a man who will make a promise for a momentary purpose and then break it for his own private ends."

The Alleged Proof of St. Paul's Insincerity

The alleged proof on which the charge was founded was that he had promised to come to Corinth and he had not come. This charge the apostle proceeds to meet, first with peremptory denial, and then with reasoned argument. First, he says, or rather swears, "As God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay." (2 Cor. 1:18.) And then he gives the true reason for his apparent vacillation: "Moreover, I call God for a witness upon my soul that it was to spare you I came not as yet to Corinth, for I determined that I would not come again to bring you grief, and for that cause I did not come, but wrote you out of much affliction, and anguish of heart, with many tears." (2 Cor. 1:23-2:4, paraphrased.) It will be noted that in his reply St. Paul admits the fact he had intended to go to Corinth, and he had not fulfilled his intention. But he denies the inference of trifling with his word, or that it was with him "yea, yea," and then, with a juggler's dexterity, "nay, nay."

Even his peremptory denial of this false and damaging charge, however, is something more than a mere denial, clenched with a solemn oath. St. Paul was one of those rare men whose reason penetrates and controls their passions as the sun and moon rule the waves and tides of the sea. "God is true, true to His word," he argues, "and therefore I am true." "The Son of God," he continues in the next verse, "is true; **His** word is not Yea and Nay; and therefore I am true, **my** word to you cannot be first Yea and then Nay. The words of the heavenly Father and those of His dear Son do not show a fluctuating and irresolute will; nor do mine. When I said I would come and see you, it was my love for you which prompted me to come, and the hope that I might bring you joy. If I did not come, or did not come as soon as I intended and you expected, that was not because of any change in **me**, but because **you** had changed. My love for you continued in spite of your change, and it was that which held me back; I deferred my coming that I might not bring you grief instead of joy."

Here, however, at this point many who read or listen to the apostle's words with attention will be likely to raise an objection. Such may say: "That looks like logic, indeed, but surely it is a very strange kind of logic. St. Paul's words sound very strong, but do they signify much? Taken simply as an argument -- unless, indeed, there be some suppressed premise, some implied and connecting truth which the apostle has failed to express -- they prove nothing. One man is not true simply because another man is true. Much less is any man true simply because the perfect God is true. Put the 'apostle's argument into an apostate's mouth, and where is the logic then? Is an apostate true because God is true? If St. Paul is true because God is true, it is not simply as a man, or as a Jew, or as a Christian, or even as an apostle, for some in each of these categories have been notoriously untrue."

The Unexpressed Truth

What, then, is the truth which the apostle has failed to express? the implied truth which gives soundness and force to his argument? Because God is true, and because of something else, therefore Paul is true. What is that something else?

That implied, but unexpressed, truth we take to be this: God's spirit dwells within Paul, and manifests itself in Paul as it did in God's Son, though in lesser measure.

Because God is true and because His spirit dwells within Paul, therefore Paul is true. Otherwise, the faithfulness of God is no more a guarantee of St. Paul's truthfulness than it is of his traducers'. But if it be true of St. Paul that he has been begotten of the Father to a new nature, even the divine nature, and if, in the narrow conditions of humanity, that new life retains the same qualities which it possesses in the infinite being of Almighty God, then, indeed, the inference will hold good: that as God is true, Paul must be true.

This, we suppose, was the truth which the apostle assumed here: that he was now of one mind, one heart, one will with God and with the Son of God. The thought was so familiar to him, as we may see in all his writings, that he does not always stop to express it. He assumes his readers to know that by the grace of God he has become a son of God, that for him to live is for Christ to live in him, by the power of His spirit.

And yet, what a wonderful, what a well-nigh incredible truth it is which he so calmly assumes! Will the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity in very truth dwell with man on earth, and not only with but dwell **in** him? Is it true that not Paul alone but every man who believes in Christ may become a temple, a sanctuary, for the holy spirit of God, of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? Between heaven and earth, between the human and the divine, between the Creator and His creatures there is a distance, an interval, so vast that we cannot easily accept the fact which to St. Paul's mind was so familiar as to need no formal expression. His argument—unless this wonderful truth of the indwelling spirit of God were assumed, unless this connecting link were instinctively supplied by the Corinthian brethren to whom his letter was sent—would have been a mere absurdity. Yet he gives it no formal utterance, sure that it needs none.

"Christ: Liveth in Me"

Nor does it! For is it not exactly the same thought which our Master expressed in His last discourse: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." (John 14:23.) Nor was this promise for the apostles alone, but for all who would meet the conditions. If **we** sincerely believe on Jesus, if we, too, have whole-heartedly abandoned ourselves to Him, St. Paul's words are as true on **our** lips as they were on his: "Henceforth I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

To be able to speak these words with truth and strong conviction, is the noblest ambition to which we can aspire, the greatest honor of which we are capable. But great blessings entail grave responsibilities. If God, by the power of His spirit, dwells within us, indeed, we must try ourselves by new and higher standards than before. We shall be both able, and in duty and honor (to say nothing of, privilege) bound, to adopt St. Paul's argument, and say "God is true; the Son of God is true; therefore I am true." And, extending this line of argument, further say: "God is pure; the Son of God is pure; therefore I am pure." And again "God is love; the Son of God is love; and therefore for me, too, love is lord of all and shall be the controlling influence in my every thought, word, and deed." We shall be able, and we shall be bound, to run this argument through

all the imitable perfections of God. For we cannot have His spirit within us and not manifest the graces of that spirit.

No doubt there are limitations and imperfections in our nature, and hence, there must, and will be, flaws in our obedience -- in the unity and correspondence of our will with the divine will. We have not yet grown up into the full stature of Christ, whatever the advances we have made. Nor had St. Paul. Even he did not count himself "already perfect," or assume that he had already "attained to the measure of the stature of Christ." Yet he could say: "God is true; Christ is true; and therefore I am true. Even he might now and then use "lightness of speech" or "purpose according to, the flesh" (although we have so far failed to note any such incident in his life). But this was not his custom. That which was habitual with him was veracity, truthfulness, whether he was preaching, or writing, or making a promise. He was not wont to utter deedless words, nor were his purposes and resolves at the mercy of every shifting breath of influence and caprice. The indwelling spirit of God made him sincere and steadfast. He measured his speech and conduct by, and adjusted them to, divine standards rather than human. He could not but do it, since both God and the Son of God had come to him and had taken up Their abode with him.

- P. L. Read

Thy Word Have I Hid in My Heart

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." - Psa. 119:105.

IN THE tabernacle erected in the wilderness the Holy of Holies represented the place of God's dwelling among His people. Within that sacred place there was the ark of the covenant, and enshrined in that ark, covered by the mercy-seat, overshadowed by the cherubim, and illuminated by the glory of the shekinah light, there rested the two tables of the law-holy words graven by the hand of God, these words representing His righteousness and man's consistent attitude thereto. Thus in the heart of that sacred enclosure, curtained off by the surrounding white linen wall, God placed in this inmost shrine a sacred and profoundly significant revelation of a holy God to sinful but not forsaken men.

In the age of law there was necessarily this fixed location for that which would represent God's presence with Israel, and toward which center the worshiper's mind would habitually turn. Thus it was that the beloved Daniel opened his window toward Jerusalem as three times a day he made supplication to his God. But in this our favored day, since "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," the approach to God is through "a new and living way." No longer is it necessary to think that alone in Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim may worship be offered to God, but access to the sacred place of worship and intimate communion is now open to all who in any place offer Him worship in spirit and in truth.

Once God spoke to His people "at sundry times and in divers manners," but now He "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." (Heb. 1:1, 2.) Once it was in the words of the law spoken from clouds of "blackness and darkness and trumpet," but now His voice is heard in the tender tones of grace, speaking peace through One of whom He has said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." - Matt. 17:5.

Still, however, at the center of our worship, and as the inmost shrine of our devotion, there the Word of God must be. If we would worship in truth, surely the instructions of the Word are of greatest importance lest "strange fire" mingle with our approach to Him. In true prayer we speak to God, and our prayers are purified of dross only when they are offered as directed by the Word. In that same Word God speaks to us, but "the word spoken" will profit us nothing if the heart is out of tune with the infinite One who speaks through that medium of communication with us. This is made important because for us the New Testament contains a message peculiarly intended for the ears of the heart, and thus the apostle prays, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His invitation, what the glorious wealth of His inheritance among the saints." - Eph. 1:17, 18, "Diaglott."

In this New Testament message there is a revelation, perfect, grand in its simplicity, and purifying in its influences, which ought to lie deeply fixed in our heart of hearts. This message should pervade all our worship, give clearness to our reason, ennoble our affections, and cause our daily walk to bear witness to its elevating power. Therefore, says the same apostle, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Antecedent to Paul's day, having the Word deep in the heart was recognized as important. The Psalmist found it so and thus gave testimony thereto: "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." (Col. 3:16; Psa. 119:11.) Certain it is, if our minds are well stored with the Word, our songs will

be of His grace, and because that Word enlightens our pathway, the pitfalls of sin will be discerned and avoided.

How Much of the Word is Hidden in our Heart?

Church history tells of a time when the Bible was forbidden to the people. It was buried in dead languages, and at most there were only a few copies, and these chained to pulpits in places of worship. Today we have it printed in many languages and dialects, and over its pages the devout searcher for truth, in most countries, may meditate and pray with perfect freedom. But notwithstanding the more favorable conditions of this time, are there as many as might be whose devotion to this, divine revelation is such as we have expressed in the familiar lines:

If all copies of our Bible and all Biblical literature with which we are familiar were somehow destroyed, what portions of that professedly treasured Word could we contribute toward its restoration? Remembering the inspired warning, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," is it not made important that we too may say with the Psalmist, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart"? Many are the reasons why the Word of God should be stored up in the memory. Blindness can come, various physical afflictions can remove from us the joy of reading its pages for ourselves, but if the memory be filled with its promises, prophecies, and precepts, there can be unbroken contact therewith. Then, too, what weapon is so effective as "the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," when Satan comes with his subtle temptations? No better weapon has been given us whereby we may "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." Fortified with that Word, our faith will never be found standing "in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," for a "thus saith the Lord" will be required for every item of our faith.

Such a book as the Bible is needed by the human heart. "Whoever made that book made me," was the remark of a Chinese teacher who, himself a Confucianist, was reading the New Testament in Chinese in order to teach the English missionary the language of China. And will this testimony not be corroborated by every openhearted reader of that same book? It reveals, as no other literature in the world does, the heart of God in relation to the sons of men, whose joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, sins and doubts, and longings and failures remain ever the same. Only in the light of that revelation can these varied experiences find a satisfactory interpretation. It has been well said by some one, "As long as the heart has passions, and as long as life has woes" the comfort of the Holy Scriptures will be the boon of the inquiring or troubled heart. And what a telescope it is by which the eye of faith may look far beyond the horizons of physical sight, seeing the King in His beauty, and catching visions of future glories and perfect knowledge framed in the large dimension of eternity.

The whole earth seems to be explored for figures with which to convey to our minds the completeness of the Bible, of which the words of Paul are beautifully corroborative when he says, "All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) It is a lamp and light to guide individual steps along life's devious paths, a sun above showing whither the path as a whole trends and leads—even to heaven itself. (Psa. 119:105.) God's Word comes as the rain in showers of refreshing, and it distils as the dew when the heart is stilled into meditative quietness, and sweet as honey to the taste. (Deut. 32:2; Psa. 19:10; 119:103.) There is milk for babes and strong meat for the mature. Freedom is its promise. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He who follows it walks at large in liberty, is the word of the Old Testament writer, and Paul in prison declares, "The Word of God is not bound." (2 Tim. 2:9.) Great treasure indeed to the individual believer, and also to

the Church of Christ collectively. Its Author-One, though speaking by many voices-is the Author and ruler of life, who in His Word describes, directs, rebukes, consoles, elevates the soul which none but He Himself can thoroughly know, and none but He can abidingly satisfy, none but Himself can finally save.

"Speak, Lord, for Thy Servant Heareth"

No "private interpretation" of individual or church can ever be allowed to petrify or fossilize the Word, which holy men spake because "moved" to do so by the Holy Spirit, and which that same spirit will move humble searchers to study and understand. Nothing is made clearer in the Bible than the fact that the Holy Spirit will ever be making fresh applications of that Word to our present need. To be what God wants it to be to us, it must be taken as a personal message, a message calculated to wash and sanctify us. Possible it is to treat the Bible as an idol, to make it a book valued mainly because it is understood to support a line of interpretations dear to us, the product of our own imaginations. The remedy for this is a rich possession of the spirit, the spirit of teachableness and obedience, which prays, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Then the Word will be made a living message, with new power, new aspirations, and "the man of God may be thoroughly furnished" at all times and have his feet directed according to that Word.

"The Light of the world is Jesus." In Scripture all leads up to Him or on from Him. Therefore, to make Him the Master-light of our life is to follow a sound and wise law of interpretation based on the facts of the case. In this we have His own example, when He would clear away misunderstandings and fill hearts with burning joy, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:27.) Thus we look unto Jesus our Light and Life, and He is also "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession." This looks into the future associations promised those who shall reign with Him. All this, therefore, involves an eventual attainment of perfect training and a fixity of character in the principles of righteousness. And for this same training and character, this mature power to judge of all things in the light of perfect truth, and estimating all issues with proper insight, the Word of God is the chosen instrument Jesus taught us the spirit would use. Thus, indeed, it was written long ago: "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation." - Psa. 119:99.

Many passages of Scripture set forth the close relationship between the pure Word and our sanctification through its assimilation. In John 17:17 our Lord prayed, as given in the Authorized Version, "Sanctify them through Thy truth," and this may well be taken to prove the Word the most effective medium of our sanctification. The Revised Version reads, "Sanctify them in the truth." At first sight this may not seem so easy to understand. But this version implies rather strongly that there is need for a devotion to the whole sphere of purifying truth, all of truth brought within our reach as we endeavor to "comprehend with all saints" the immeasurable lengths and depths of divine revelation. Thus, only as we seek to be sanctified in the truth can we be preserved from blending its pure gold with the alloy of human invention, or altogether debasing its lofty inspiring significance and standards.

Can we affirm to God, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart"? Can we affirm it so truthfully that under test we will be found fortified, sanctified, and matured by it? Then, remembering that He who is the Living Word has made us know that He too must be enthroned in the heart, can we affirm in confidence that He has an undisputed rulership there? Truly, if the written Word and the Living Word are both in possession of our hearts, sin can never gain the mastery over us.

This being so, how deep a truth lies in the words of another apostle: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7.) Here love is the test of our light and cleansing. The proof that we are in the light of God's Word is found in our universal fellowship with all who have Jesus as their light and the cleansing of His blood. He who walks in this love is in the light. He who walks not in this love walks in darkness, and in that darkness there can be no vision of the face of Jesus Christ. If no vision of His face, "the light of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ" is obscured; therefore, no sanctification, no transformation into His image. Like the foolish virgins of the parable, whose lamps were no doubt as well trimmed as those carried by the wise, but alas! no oil in their vessels with the lamps-so it can be with us. A well known Bible is no substitute for a Christ-filled heart. It is only when the beauty of His perfection is brought into our hearts and lives that we see light in His light and gloriously receive and reflect the light of the glory of God. Shall we not prize still more highly the Word of God, knowing that it really is a "boon most sacred from the Lord."

- J. J. Blackburn

FATHER of mercies, in Thy Word
What endless glory shines!
Forever be Thy name adored
For these celestial lines.

'Tis here the Savior's welcome voice
Spreads heav'nly peace around,
And life, and everlasting joys,
Attend the blissful sound.

O! may these heavenly pages be
My ever dear delights;
And still new beauties may I see,
And still increasing light!

Divine Instructor, gracious Lord
Be Thou forever near;
Teach me to love Thy sacred Word
And view my Savior here.

Clean and Unclean Meats

"For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing." - Deut. 14:2, 3.

GOD GAVE certain instructions to the Jews regarding the use of foods, and it would seem that there was a physiological reason for this as well as a typical reason; but it is the "typeism" of the matter that is of the greatest interest to the spiritual Israelite.

Here are some of the things that God told the people not to eat. In the first place, anything that does not divide the hoof and that does not chew the cud. "The camel, the hare, and the coney . . . chew the cud but do not divide the hoof: ye shall not eat them. The swine divides the hoof, but does not chew the cud. It is unclean." Then there are unclean birds, such as the eagle, the kite, the osprey, the raven, the owl, the hawk, the pelican, the cormorant, the heron, the lapwing, and the bat.

These things are symbolical or typical of spiritual foods that Christians should not receive today. Good animals divide the hoof, and are ruminants. Good doctrines are similar-what they stand on is of two parts, and therein lies one of the great differences between the truth and the creeds. The truth teaches two parts of the divine Kingdom; and the nominal church creeds only one part, namely, the heavenly or spiritual. In Zechariah 14 we read of the Mount of Olives being divided into two parts. If only the Church goes to heaven, man must have the earth. These two parts take in everything.

After a public meeting a lady once said, "Why, that's a wonderful message you have. I see now where my boy will fit in. He died six years ago, out of Christ, and I have had no hope for his salvation until now."

We replied, "You can hardly say that he died out of Christ, for the death of Christ embraces every member of the human family, and because of this fact your boy will come forth from the grave and have a chance to win eternal life."

True doctrines are ruminating doctrines. They go over the same thing again and again. The great main things must be kept before our minds. Do we ever grow tired thinking of the works of creation? Did you ever closely examine a star-fish taken out of the ocean? It is one of the most wonderful things in the sea. Did you ever examine a common dandelion through a microscope? It is an exceedingly interesting creation. Take that large butterfly called the Chamberwell Beauty. Look at its wings. Man could never make anything like one of those wings.

Do we ever grow tired of the divine promises? Suppose that a friend in New Zealand told you that he was leaving you a vast estate. Would you ever grow tired of hearing about it? Does the great scheme of redemption weary us? We go over and over these things. It is an abnormal appetite that demands something now all the time. What did Paul preach in the Book of Romans? Christ. In the Book of Hebrews? Christ. In the Book of Galatians? Christ. And Christ Jesus was the theme of Peter, John, and all the rest of the early writers.

There are many things good to eat without eating mice and rats, pelicans and bats, dogs and cats. And who would want to eat a carrion bird such as a crow? It is black, and it says "Caw, caw," and

feeds on dead carcasses. We do not want doctrines of the "dark ages" that say, "Caw, caw," and that are of carrion nature. We do not want to eat the owl, that says, "Who? who?" and flies about in the night-time. It is too mournful. No mournful doctrines for us. We do not want to eat bats that are part mouse and part bird, being neither the one nor the other, just likee certain doctrines that are not clear-cut, but are all mixed up.

Fishes that were classed as fit for food were to be possessed of fins and scales. Fins gave them symmetry and balance in the water, and scales a bright, shiny appearance, as well as some degree of protection.

And so, indeed, the doctrines of the Scriptures are well balanced. As we have already pointed out, they hold forth both heavenly and earthly promises. They are also bright and shiny, reflecting the glory of wisdom and of love.

So give us the clean things. For "the wisdom that is from above is first pure." Purity is a great thing. We do not care to drink water that is crawling with minute animals. We like pure water to drink and to look into. Yes, we love to look into pure water, far, far down, to see the reflection of the hills and the skies. "My oxen and My fatlings are killed," said the Master. So let us feed upon the bullock of the ransom; also, the Passover lamb, the bread of life, and the green herbs in the form of the promises pertaining to everlasting life, and eliminate all unclean food from our spiritual bill of fare.

- W. Sargeant

Entered Into Rest

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