

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## Solace for the Troubled and Tried

### Our New Year's Message

*"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." - Isaiah 41:10*

Long ago the Lord God anticipated our need for assurance and consolation. He allowed that this present evil world would be subjected to the temporary rulership of the powers of darkness and evil. He knew that those who would choose loyalty to his divine will would, of necessity, walk a very narrow way. These would be sorely tried for the sake of their faith. Under such circumstances the children of God have indeed needed his messages of comfort and solace.

We find our Lord's words to be totally convincing. Oh, it would be natural enough for us to fear; being surrounded by many adversaries. We do feel overcome at times. We are subject to discouragement and dismay. But his word is so explicit, so definite, that our faith may withstand all tendency to fear no matter who our adversary may be.

### Fear Not- I Am With You

If our heavenly Father is for us, no greater can ever come against us. There is no room for discouragement because he is present with us at all times. He will give the needed strength. He will uphold our hand. All this he does by the power (or "hand") of his righteousness which works for our highest spiritual and eternal good (Rom. 8:28).

Although this generation lives in a time of special spiritual advantage that does not change the basic facts. This is still an evil world. God's kingdom has not yet been established. The powers of evil and selfishness still predominate. In fact, our day was prophesied to be a time of special testing upon the true disciples of Christ. Should we not therefore consciously exercise our faith and claim our share of the Lord's promise? Should we not let him be our strength; let him be our power?

*"Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren..." (Heb. 2:17). For it became him ... in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect*

*through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10).* By these, and other words, it is recognized that Jesus' followers are being changed by God. In their change they are also being tested. An initial profession to follow Jesus is insufficient; God asks that we prove our sincerity by carrying out his will in our lives.

It is, then, a daily question which we face. What are we willing to endure for Christ's sake? How fully are we submitted? How deep does our submission reach? Are we in harmony with the will of the Lord? Is our interest in him superficial or does it permeate our heart.

The summation of God's purpose in the Gospel Age is simply stated. Because he has called believers to such a high and honorable station it is also fitting that he prove them. If we prove ourselves through the end of our lives, and only then, we will be rewarded (Rom. 8:17).

*"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26).* These words were not easily spoken by Job. He had been rich and prosperous but God tested him by allowing his family, wealth, and health to be taken from him. Even his wife turned against him. Yet in all of this Job did not turn against God. He did indeed express wonder at God's dealings, but he looked to God in faith.

*"Thou he slay me, yet will I trust in him..." (Job 13:15).* Job was willing to receive the manifestations of favor through the afflictions that came upon him. This same opportunity exists for us. If we suffer affliction because of our loyalty to the will of God or our trust in his providential leadings and receive these tests joyfully they will, without a doubt, work for our good -- *"...far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).*

### **Love Never Grows Old**

Our theme text promises that God will uphold the faithful by the power of his righteousness. This is the truest and most valuable friendship conceivable -- a friend who sticks closer than any brother (Prov. 18:24). Do you remember when Jesus urged his followers to lay up treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:20)? Surely the most valuable treasure we can have is the personal friendship of God and of our Lord Jesus who is the *"...chiefest among ten thousand..." (Song of Solomon 5:10)* and *"...altogether lovely" (Song of Solomon 5:16).*

To possess this treasure is to possess one which will never change. His love never grows cold or powerless. Who can separate us from his love? *"...Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword" (Rom. 8:35)?* No! Because his love is not like that of this world. The world forsakes its fellows in times of need. He does not. *"Neither death [which consigns to forgetfulness the friendships of this world], nor life, nor angels [even with their superior charms of glory and power], nor principalities, nor powers [the forces of darkness which array against us], nor things present, nor things to come, nor height [of temporary fame], nor depth [of trouble or sorrow], nor any creature [in heaven or in earth]..." (Rom. 8:38, 39)* separates those who have made him their chief treasure from the Lord's special love.

What 1987 will bring none know. As the hymnist said, "He kindly veils our eyes." But we can be assured of three things: God is testing us to see if we will walk loyally before him; if we do we can never be truly disappointed or discouraged; and he will uphold us by the power of his righteousness.

"Faith can firmly trust him Come what may."



## Acceptable Sacrifices -- Part I

*"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." - 1 Peter 2:5*

This is the first of three articles reviewing *some* of the Scriptures dealing with the Sin-Offering. Other views of this subject do exist, and so we offer these suggestions in a spirit of love and with understanding towards those who may differ (1 Cor. 13: 8,9). Our primary concern is that we do not stir up strife among brethren (Prov. 6:19). Remembering the Lord's words, "*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God*" (Matt. 5:9), we would much rather be found to be peacemakers.

### Plain Teachings and Interpretations

We begin by distinguishing between scriptural teachings and interpretations. Take, for an example, the Bible teaching termed "The Ransom." It is clear that Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for all. The words of Paul (1 Tim. 2:5-6) are incontrovertible and require no reasoning on our part.

But there are other matters which are not so clear -- these do require interpretation. Again, using an example: Did Jesus foreknow all the details which were to be involved during his life and death upon earth? Or was he merely aware that it was his purpose to offer himself in sacrificial death? To answer such questions from the Word of God is not so easy (and perhaps not too wise either). In all such cases Christians are free to draw their conclusions based upon their own partial knowledge of God's Word.

We must not force an *interpretation* of Scripture. In point of fact, even the rejection of a plain statement of the Scriptures would give us no license to "...begin to smite [our] fellow servants...." (Matt. 24:49) as has happened in the past history of the Christian church. Only the power of truth sanctifies (John 17:17).

God, who is all-powerful, is instantly able to open the eyes of those who are blind to his Word. If differences prevail among us, we ought to exercise charity toward one another, recognizing that errors can unintentionally be held by the most adamant supporters of a viewpoint as well as by the most timid. Let the reader examine every thought for assurance that we do not arrive at a private interpretation unwarranted by scriptural authority (2 Peter 1:20).

Any author (excepting the inspired apostles), should distinguish between teachings proven by Scripture and those established through interpretation. Dangers arise in both cases because of the limitations on the part of both students and teachers. We note, however, a special danger with regard to *interpretations*, because a completely error-free interpretation can scarcely be hoped for unless it is God's due time to guide both teachers and students into a clear understanding.

There is a promised time to come when God will light our path so brightly that a wayfaring man, though he may be a fool, will not err in it (Isa. 35:8). This time is not yet. Until it arrives we need patience with each other.

## **A God Given Picture**

God pictured our present course in the arrangements for the tabernacle in the wilderness. That structure as so layered over in coverings that every trace of exterior light was excluded. Those who walked inside were dependent upon the inner light. This is figuratively true of the Christian: ". . . *God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, [as it shone] in the face of Jesus Christ*" (2 Cor. 4:6, Author's italics).

## **We Are Not Sufficient**

The record which God provided was written for our admonition (Rom. 15:4). We are not worldly wise (1 Cor. 1:26), but history and experience teach us that God as revealed things by his Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9-10) which "*...eye hat not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*" (cf. Isa. 64:4).

To know him is life eternal (John 17:3). Whether or not one's opinion be correct, we urge friends and brethren to continue their search of God's Word meekly. God reveals the mysteries hidden beneath the coverings of the tabernacle. He will recognize our love for him and our desire to know him more fully.

The sin offering is one of many sub -- is on which knowledge is meager. Some differ with us on various points, but, as the Scriptures inform us that just as the there are due times for the revelation of various truths, are we not also safe in inferring that our great teacher's method of dealing with each individual pupil is similar? Does he not apportion knowledge to each of us according to our readiness to receive it.

## **Reasoning With Him**

Few subjects demand greater care in our approach. If he will teach us, it will be because we are found "*casting down reasonings [Diaglott and margin], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*" (2 Cor. 10:5).

Let us accept a most startling invitation: "*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord*" Isa. 1:18). We ask, in what connection is this statement made It is regarding the cleansing of scarlet sins until they become as white as wool that he would have us reason with him. When we realize that our reasoning is useless, we are humbled and bow in his presence. Humility was necessary for the apostle too:

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God (Eph. 3:8,9).

## **Christ, the Center**

What if our search lead us to reduce the importance of Jesus in God's plan? Were such to occur we could be sure that we had erred. In any study of Scripture, we must not inject our own thoughts. Every finding should be "*...according to a Plan of the AGES [diaglott], which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Eph. 3:11).

Note that the verse (Eph. 3:11) does not say that God's will was purposed in the Logos. Yes, the man Christ Jesus was the Logos during his pre-human existence. We know, too, that the identity always remains the same. How is the verse understood? The thought which we believe the passage conveys is this:

God's plan of reconciliation was dependent upon the Logos leaving the glory which he had with the Father and becoming the man Christ Jesus (cf., Heb. 2:14-16). "Christ" means "anointed"; Jesus was not anointed in heaven but on earth.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in a form of God, thought not by robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:5-8, freely translated, cf. Diaglott).

God perfected his plan for all ages before he laid the foundations of the world (cf. Rev. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:20). Every feature of that plan centered in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:10). Such wisdom lies beyond human intellect. Through this same one, his holy arm, God revealed this plan (Heb. 1:1). The prophets testified of the sufferings and humiliation of Messiah, even to his ignominious death on the cross. Yet, Israel did not believe. Proud of themselves, *they* could not look for such a Savior: theirs must be a great, an honorable, a glorious Messiah; a warrior to lead them to the pomp of victory. Their national pride so blinded them that when he came to his own, his own received him not (John 1:11).

The faithful prophets who spoke consistently over many centuries had not prepared them for this Messiah. Nor has the preaching of the apostles or the consecrated saints to antitypical Israel been rewarded with better success. The arm of the Lord, the true Christ of the Bible, is only revealed to those who are meek and lowly -- to those as teachable as Jesus himself. Hear him: Follow me, for I am meek and lowly (cf. Matt. 11:28). Such an invitation the proud do not hear. His way is not attractive to such; but *"The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way"* (Ps. 25:9).

*"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? [It is understandable they could not believe...] For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant [yes, he was far too tender to find a place in an, of their human schemes...], and as a root out of a dry ground..."* (Isa. 53:1,2). Could there be a picture of a more hopeless human being? Nothing but a shapeless root, no beauty, no sign of life: only death in evidence, and no trace of moisture in the ground to revive any life that might happen to be then. They say, *"he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him"* (Isa. 53:2).

The people did not recognize Jesus as the arm of the Lord (Isa. 53:1). They did not recognize the power of his salvation. They did not accept the means by which Jehovah was reconciling the world to himself. It was Jesus' flesh, his humanity, and all which that implies, which hid these things from their eyes. To them he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief [Leeser: "disease"] (Isa. 53:3). So they despised and rejected him. To them he was despised, as one from whom men hide their face, and they esteemed him not. He bore their griefs [Leeser: "diseases"], and carried their sorrows -- yet they esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted (Isa. 53:4).

Only a handful of the billions of mankind have believed his report. The others turn their face from him And even among that first handful of believers, those who shared day to day life with him, most had shamefully neglected him at times. Nevertheless, it was foretold long before he came to die:

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and [Jehovah] hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:5-6, RV).

Later in this issue we look at the tabernacle picture for corroboration of these findings. We will show how God concealed the beauty of the one who is altogether lovely (Song of Solomon 5:16) until his own due time.

- P.E. Thomson

## **Acceptable Sacrifices - Part II**

*"...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." - Ephesians 5:25*

Before turning to our discussion of the Sin-Offering consider how God has obscured the old and sacred localities. By so doing, he has kept his people from idolatry. Men would have lauded these sites: the burial places of Abraham, *'father of the faithful'*; of Joseph, whose rejection by his brethren foreshadowed our Lord's rejection at his first coming; of Moses, type of the real Lawgiver; of Joshua, whose triumph in leading Israel into the promised land foretold the greater deliverance and triumph; and of David, type of our great Shepherd-king. Instead, these places have been obscured by time.

Neither has archaeology located much associated with the life or passion of our Savior. Profane worship would have seized upon such. There are places in Palestine where it is known that our Lord was wont to go. He frequently taught in Solomon's Porch; he resorted to the Mount of Olives; to the Garden of Gethsemane, hallowed by many moments of sacred communion with his Father and the scene of his great agony; and the most sacred of all places, Golgotha, where his blood was shed. The general localities of these is known, but of the exact spots, where idolaters could attach their worship, little is known. True devotion stands under an open sky repeating the words,

There my Master ascended  
And there shall my affections be set.

Similarly, divine wisdom hides features of his plan until their time to be understood arrives.

### **God's Hidden Purpose**

Contrast in your mind the human and spirit natures of the one before whom mighty angels bowed. Compare the exalted glory from which the Logos had come with the humble dwelling and position of the man Christ Jesus. He came to earth to be despised and rejected of men.

Next visit the tabernacle. Behold in your mind the indescribable beauties of its two golden chambers. Meditate on him who prayed that he might be glorified with the glory that he had with the Father before the world began.

Now step outside the clothed building. See its unsightly exterior and think of him who came unto his own. They did not receive him because they saw nothing desirable! And yet, beneath this unsightly exterior were pictures of the divine purpose.

The tabernacle had four coverings: Seal's skins over the outside; Ram's skins dyed red next; Goat's hair cloth followed; Embroidered white linen lay closest to the interior.

Some have been surprised at the glory and beauty of the tabernacle -- its golden walls, golden and engraved furniture, its veils of curious work -- were completely hidden from the view of the people. Even the sunlight was excluded -- its only light being the lamp in the Holy and the Shekinah Glory in the Most Holy. But this is perfectly in keeping with the lessons we have received from its services. As God covered the type and hid its beauty under curtains and rough, unsightly skins, so the glorious beauty of spiritual things is only seen by the consecrated -- the "Royal Priesthood." These enter a glorious hidden state which the world and all outside fail to appreciate. Their hopes and their standing as new creatures are hidden from men.

It was only by becoming a man that Christ Jesus could bring about atonement. By becoming a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3) he could become the merciful and faithful High Priest (Heb. 2:17).

Joshua passed through the Red Sea and all of the wilderness experiences with the children of Israel before he could become their leader in the triumphal entry into their promised land. The greater than Joshua must also participate; in the sufferings of his followers if he would bring many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10).

God arranged for his typical people to learn obedience by the things which they suffered. They were prepared for their ultimate perfection through these sufferings. They were steadfast until death, seeing by faith the promised deliverer. But now not only the types and prophecies are ours, but also the realities. We know that he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, and that the chastisement of our peace was upon him. We, like sheep, had gone astray, but the Lord laid upon him our iniquity.

### **Made Like Men**

The outermost tabernacle covering was made from the skin of a marine animal, unadorned by human arts. Taken from the sea it speaks of one who would leave his element and come to earth. Beneath the "seal skins" (RV) and hidden from every eye, were ram's skins *dyed red*.

In retrospect, it is easy to read the story of the Ransom in this concealed covering. Abel came away from his sacrifice (also typical of the ransom) perhaps wondering at its acceptableness. Abraham may have spent hours pondering his journey to Mount Moriah and the lamb that was substituted there. He knew nothing of the subsequent tabernacle or of its pictures. Nor did he know that it was to grow into a marvelous temple which traditions say was erected on the spot of Abraham's own sacrifice.

That which Solomon's glorious temple symbolized carries us beyond our imperfection. In it, the ram's skins dyed red were no longer needed, nor was the goat's hair covering that lay concealed



under the ram's skins. The temple represented the time when we shall know even as we also known (cf. Jer. 33:3, margin; 1 Cor. 14:12).

### **A Hidden Curtain**

The goat's hair curtain was hidden. Not even the priests, during their tabernacle services, saw it. Within the tent they saw the curtain of white linen, with golden threads embroidered into the cloth. Covering this curtain of goat's hair was the curtain of ram's skins dyed red. By sandwiching the goat's hair curtain between two others (covering it above and below) we see illustrated the application of Jesus' blood, allowing imperfect ones (such as those represented by the goat), to have a place in that tabernacle picture. Those inside the tabernacle saw pure white and gold when they looked above, seeming to say "*...henceforth know we no man after the flesh...*" (2 Cor. 5:16), but after the spirit. Those outside the tent saw the ugly covering that represents how these view the one whom they rejected.

### **Why Seal Skin?**

Was it the *death* of this sea animal, whose skin formed the outer covering, that portrayed a lesson? No. Of all the tabernacle's ceremonial sacrifices, not one marine animal was presented on the altar. The curtain seems, therefore, to represent the fact that one would leave his original condition, his Father's house, to serve here -- the one in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge (Col. 2:3).

### **Why Ram's Skins?**

If God had only explained the sin atonement in the tabernacle we might infer that Jesus' merit lay not in his having left heaven but in the sacrifice which was pictured by the covering dyed red. Turning, however, to the Word, we are not left to our own interpretation. Salvation for all mankind is in the shed blood of the Lamb, in it alone: "*...there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12).

*"None ... can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him [(for the redemption of their soul is precious) Heb.: yagar, "valuable," requires a corresponding price]"* (Ps. 49:7-8). The reason is that "*...there is none righteous, no not one...*" (Rom. 3:10).

Effort alone will not constitute one a savior. Illustrating this fact we note that the linen and goat's hair coverings were not dyed red. Instead, they lay beneath the one covering that was. Thus, the tabernacle describes those who secure a place in that picture through a merit which is not their own. These are acceptable through the merit of the one who poured out his soul unto death (Isa. 53:12) as a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:6).

Such a pictorial teaching cannot be held with certainty unless its lessons are plainly set forth in God's Word. We look to see if the Scriptures teach that a provision has been made for *some* members of the human race to acquire a standing before God which would allow them to be pictured in that holy structure, the tabernacle.

We know that "*...in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*" (1 Cor. 15:22). But the Scriptures seem to be silent concerning any plea made in heaven for Adam or his race. Instead, we find statements that bypass the general family of Adam and single out a special class.

It is of these that the apostle John speaks: "...we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Again, we hear in Hebrews,

Who being in the brightness of his [the Father's] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3)

"But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13 A V). And again:

"...Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). He "...gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver from this present evil world..." (Gal. 1:4).

This class is distinct from the world in general as regards the application of the ransom price. The apostle speaks as though (for the time being) Jesus died only for the church, saying, "*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it*" (Eph. 5:25). Again: "*or ye are bought with a price....*" (1 Cor. 6:20).

This fact must not cloud the plain teaching of Scripture: Only Jesus gave himself a ransom *for all*. The sacrificial offering of Jesus was foretold by divine inspiration as having been completed nineteen hundred years ago. Nothing can be added to that one ransom price, for it was a corresponding price. "In the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ there is an infinite fulness, which meets every necessity of man." As yet, Jesus has appeared in heaven only on our behalf. Nevertheless, we rejoice:

"... in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves, also, which have the first-fruits of the spirit... (Rom. 8 20-23, ASV) ... ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you..." (1 Pet. 1:18,20).

A marginal note on Peter's first general Epistle (1 Pet. 2:9) suggests the following reading: "...ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people..." thus distinguishing us from the mass of mankind who are as yet unpurchased (though the full price is already provided). Evidently "...Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor" (Eph. 5:2). "...His own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree..." (1 Pet. 2:24). "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10). He was "made to be sin on our behalf" (2 Cor. 5:21, ASV).

### **A Priesthood Offers Sacrifices**

It would seem impossible that the Scriptures could so consistently pass by the world without mention in connection with the *present* benefits of Jesus' sacrifice without intending to teach some point by the omission.

Jesus invites us to take up our cross and follow him (Matt. 16:24). Still more clearly, Paul says, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living*

*sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Adding a third choice, Peter says, "...ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual [Sinaitic Ms. omits] sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5). We were once without God and without hope in the world. Now our privilege to sacrifice is plainly stated by the Apostle Paul, saying,*

"...grace was given me of God, that I should be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:15, 16, ASV).

Would our loving heavenly Father invite us to bring a sacrifice which he has said is acceptable and then upon receiving it tell us that there is no place for it in his plan? We think not. Since it is acceptable something will be done with it. In the following verses (1 Pet. 2:6-8) our faith in Jesus as our Head is described as the key to our acceptance in the Beloved. How wonderful an outcome that will be when we are caused to be "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6)! The sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15) must be the fruit of our lips; but it is only a part of the sacrifice of the body of those who are to be to the praise of his glory.

The apostle does not teach that the church is a sacrifice for the cancellation of the death penalty against the sinner. Yes, her sacrifice is acceptable -- we have no reason to doubt that fact. But, it must be equally evident that she is not acceptable for the cancellation of Adam's sin nor does she have any inherent merit. Scripture is unequivocal: the one sacrifice for sins (Heb. 10:10-12; 1 Pet. 3:18) which Jesus offered (which was foreshadowed by the Passover lamb) is continually effective to accomplish God's great purpose of putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Heb. 9:26). The corresponding price has been provided. It is sufficient to cancel the debt of Adam. It is sufficient to meet all of the indebtedness which Adam's children inherited. Any subsequent sacrifices must be for some other purpose than the securing of that corresponding price.

We still face two difficulties: Concerning that our sacrifices are acceptable, what have we to present? To what end has the great Judge agreed to accept our sacrifice?

Regarding the first question we recognize (knowing that we are sinful) that the secret of our acceptableness to God lies in justification. Yet, it is not our justification. It is presented to the Lord but our bodies (Rom. 12:1) which are justified. The Master uses the picture of taking up our cross to follow him to Calvary (Matt. 16:24).

To sacrifice a body is to lay down its life. But if we are imperfect, what life have we to lay down? This dilemma is answered when we take up the second question. We may put away our fears that our acceptable sacrifice might rob our beloved Lord of any of glory. We find in the last of this series that by acknowledging our acceptableness we can appropriately praise his glorious grace.

O, how can words with equal warmth  
The gratitude declare  
That glows within my inmost heart?  
But thou canst read it there.  
Through all eternity, to thee,  
A grateful song I'll raise.  
And my eternal joy shall be  
To herald wide thy praise.

- P.E. Thomson

## Acceptable Sacrifices - Part III

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." - Romans 12:1*

God arranged for the offering of a sacrifice by the church. He also arranged that it would be acceptable through his Son, Jesus Christ the Righteous. These truths notwithstanding, there remains a controversy over the subject of the sin-offering.

We reiterate one primary fact: no one can understand the scriptural pictures employed by God unless they are under the guidance of the same Spirit which inspired them (1 Cor. 2:14). That Spirit has been promised to us as a guide which would lead us into all truth (John 16:13). -- But it is nowhere said that such insight will come concerning all truths simultaneously. Beginning this last segment of our study, we ask readers who differ with these thoughts to be understanding in comparing their interpretation with this.

The oneness to which followers of our Master are called may not be attained merely by similar reasoning on various subjects. That oneness is ours because "...by *one Spirit we are all baptized into one body*,..." (1 Cor. 12:13). If we have that spirit, we realize our need of every member of the body and we will seek to be mutually helpful.

When, plain statements of Scripture contradict an interpretation, that interpretation is disapproved. Yet, even here there is a danger that it may be an individual *interpretation* of the Scripture that contradicts, instead of the Scripture itself. We each may fail to recognize Scriptures which contradict the opinion which we hold. To fail in this way does not prove that there are no such Scriptures. As for this interpretation of the Bible teaching on the sin-offering, to date we have not found any Scripture which, in our understanding, is contrary to the views suggested here. Some have been suggested, but in each case it seems that the contradiction lay in thoughts added by interpreters rather than in the text itself.

### Planted Together in Death

Jesus records his special interest in those whom the Father had given him (John 17). Our Lord declared: *"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine"* (John 17:9). He had sent these into the world just as the Father had sent him into the world. Through their sanctification and oneness with the Father and the Son the world would come to believe. He stated further, that the Father loved these chosen ones even as he loved the Son.

Jesus thus exalts those who are to be partakers with him in all his glory -- partake in his sufferings, partake in his sacrifice, partake in his death, and therefore partake in the glory that is to follow. These are planted together in the likeness of his death. Therefore, they are raised in the likeness of his resurrection: *"...If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him..."* (2 Tim. 2:11,12). There is no greater honor than that which the Lord has bestowed on his body members, the under-priesthood.

We have suggested that the church is seen in the tabernacle picture, being represented in one of the coverings of the building. Bible students generally agree that the main picture of the tabernacle and the one essential for all to understand is the representation of the Lord's acceptableness as a

sacrifice for the sins of the world. All also agree that Peter cone is the church with the tabernacle picture by speaking of them as a priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9) and that under the symbol of the anointing they are even represented as members of the High Priest's body (Ps. 133:1,2; 1 Cor. 12:12,13,27; Eph. 5:29,30).

Since the church is invited to sacrifice and suffer with Christ, is it unreasonable to expect the tabernacle types to show the church's share with Jesus in the privilege of presenting an acceptable sacrifice?

The New Testament refers to our privilege of presenting ourselves for sacrifice with him on the altar. The symbol of consecration, water baptism, represents our baptism into his death. Note the wording. We are not baptized "into death" but "into his death." The church's hope, as distinguished from the world's, is summarized in this point.

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him in baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. (Rom. 6:3-5)

Paul, in the succeeding verses, suggests that we are dead to sin. This thought must not distract us from the astounding truth that he is asserting here. We are to share *in the death of* the one who knew no sin and who therefore could never die *to sin*, but who did die on account of sin!

We restate our cardinal points for clarity:

- 1) Any interpretation which suggests that the church shares in, or adds to, the ransom is false.
- 2) The members of his body die with him.
- 3) His death was sacrificial: the just for the unjust.
- 4) They, however, cannot bring any merit of their own for the cancellation of another's debt.
- 5) When they *offer* themselves acceptably, then they consecrate and are "baptized for the dead." it cannot be because the dead need an addition to the price already secured for their release.
- 6) Nor can it mean that this poverty stricken church could find anything to add to that price.

Our Lord "learned obedience from the things which he suffered (cf. Heb. 5:8). Christ is the propitiation "...for *our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*" (1 John 2:2). Note the lack of information which now lies before us. The Scriptures tell us that Christ appeared in the presence of God on behalf of the church. Nowhere do they say that he has appeared on behalf of the world. We are led to believe that he has not yet done so.

When Jesus appeared for the church, his acceptance was manifested by the sending of the promised holy Spirit upon the waiting disciples. When the merit of his sacrifice has been presented for the world, another promise will be fulfilled: "*I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh*" (Joel 2:28; Ezek. 36:26,27). In other words, after this work of appearing before God on

behalf of the world there will still remain another work to be performed. It too is a necessary feature of Christ's work.

This second work is the uplifting of the willing and obedient from their fallen estate to the glorious perfection which father Adam and all his family would have enjoyed had there been no fall. God will pour out upon them his spirit. Thus, God receives our acceptable sacrifice, along with Christ's, for the same two reasons: that we might be perfected and that we might share the privilege of bringing the willing of the earth to their perfected estate.

### **In One Spirit We Were All Baptized**

Prior to Jesus' being made flesh, he saw that the blood of bulls and goats, even though thousands were slain, could never accomplish the redemption which the loving Father had planned. The Logos pitied the fallen race, agreed with the Father's desires, and being prepared to discern the truth which these bloody sacrifices were intended to teach, Jesus presented himself in sacrifice and was accepted.

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened [by these thousands of slain animals whose shed blood could never take away sins]; burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. [When I saw this] Then said I, Lo, I come (Ps. 40:6,7).

It was the spirit of sacrifice that brought him to earth to die on behalf of the fallen race. In "*...one spirit are we all baptized into one body...*" (1 Cor. 12:13). It is our privilege which is added to by this baptism and not the efficacy of Jesus' sacrifice. The presentation of merit does not mean that the container of that merit is, itself, worth anything. The excellency of the power is wholly God's. In the future the church will be entrusted with many tasks. Among these tasks will be the blessing of the world. But we dare not suppose that those then benefited by the church will raise their voices in praise of the earthen vessels which the church is now figuratively breaking and casting aside. These earthen vessels will always remain unprofitable servants.

The Master foretold that all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias (cf. Luke 11:50,51) was to be required of the generation then living. This indicates that our God has some further reason for accepting the sacrifice of the church. The Jews who fell in the horrible massacre that attended the destruction of Jerusalem were no part of the ransom sacrifice. Neither do they detract from the glory of the one who by hanging on the tree took away the handwriting of ordinances that was against the Jew. Yet, we ask one more question: What purpose is Scripturally designated for the appropriations of the church's sacrifice?

### **Offerings Burned Outside the Camp**

Remember how closely Christ and his body members are associated in their sacrificial work:

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach (Heb. 13:11-13).

The apostle explains a picture which would otherwise remain dark and mysterious. He reminds us that certain beasts (whose bodies were burned outside the camp) were offerings for sin. (There were only two such sacrifices we dealt with.) Next, he tells us of those who are represented:

Wherefore Jesus suffered without the gate, let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

The allusion can refer only to the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev. 16) those of the bullock and of the goat. Aaron offered the bullock for himself: d his house. Christ "*appeared in the presence of God for us*" -- his body and the household of faith. Next Aaron offered the kids of a goat taken from the congregation of the children of Israel (Lev. 16:5), representing the church taken from the world. All that was done with the bullock was done with the goat. Its blood was presented for the transgressions of the children of Israel (Lev. 16:16) -- representing the world of mankind.

We now pay special attention to a very small phrase, the words "for sin" (Heb. 13:11). We must not change those words to suit any thought of our own, as for instance to make it read, '*for* [providing the price for the cancellation of] *sin*.' The expression "for sin" is a broad one that may include anything that will be done in connection with sin.

The Savior had examined the tabernacle types. He saw that the blood of literal bulls and goats could never take away sin, "*Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.*" On the day in which the bullock was sacrificed and its body burned without the camp, to represent the Lord's willing death, there was another animal sacrifice. This second sacrifice was insignificant by comparison to the bullock. But its blood was also brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin (Lev. 16:15) and its body was burned without the camp (Lev. 16:27). Can we, like our Master, hear the tabernacle's lesson? If so, let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

### **Two Presentations of Blood**

Some say: We must not miss the point found in the phrase "bearing his reproach". But both points are important. We are to bear his reproach, but that happens by our going forth unto him without the camp. The bullock and the goat were offerings "for sin". However, both were not required to meet the sinner's penalty -- that had been accomplished in the death of the one who is the antitypical bullock.

Through inspiration, a phrase was chosen that applies to both sacrifices. Both are for sin -- one represents the presentation of that corresponding price for; the other shows the church's share in bringing the benefits of that sacrifice to the world.

The sacrifice at Calvary would have availed the church nothing if there had been no presentation of that merit on it's behalf or if there had been no provision of grace whereby we might learn to appropriate its benefits for our transformation into the likeness of our Lord. So also the world's case: there must be a presentation of that merit for them and there must be an arrangement by which the benefits of the life thus provided for them may be made permanently theirs.

Many object to accepting the Lord's goat as representing the church. These remind us that it's blood is brought into the tabernacle by the High Priest. They pose the question, "Can this represent a church which has nothing to offer?"

Since Christ's merit is imputed to the church it does indeed have an acceptable sacrifice to offer. This point could not have been pictured by the literal tabernacle arrangement, yet the illustration is true. We state again that this point could not be literally illustrated. Why? What would have been needed to exactly illustrate this process: a dead goat would have been needed to represent us who were "*dead in trespasses and sins*" and then a transfusion of the blood of the bullock would have been needed to

bring the goat to life. The picture is both clear and simple if we remember this truth which would not be pictured.

No one will complain that our Savior has been robbed of his glory when the blood of the anti-typical goat of the sin-offering that is for the people is sprinkled by the High Priest himself within the veil. All the blood presented there will belong to him. *"He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2): "None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: For the redemption of their soul is precious ... [Heb. yagar, "valuable", requires a corresponding price]."*

Blood represents life (Gen. 9:4). The only life which the church has is imputed life. Therefore, when presented on the altar she is returning that which she has received at his hand. With this in mind we can accept the assurance that *"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116:15)*. We can even take the full meaning of the Hebrew word *yagar*, and read: *"Valuable in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."* The world does not know them, but in the Lord's sight the death of these lowly ones becomes valuable, even though by itself it is as lean as a goat. The life, the blood, of his dearest treasure -- his only begotten Son -- is to be presented this time. The presentation is not for us (his body members, the household of faith) but for the people. An acceptable sacrifice will be given to God for the sins of the whole world, even though it be borne in earthen vessels.

### **Partakers With Christ**

This blood is not common or unholy. Nor is it to be trampled under foot (Heb. 10:29). Jesus' perfection makes the life which is laid down by the church a perfect thing *"...through the blood of the age-lasting covenant."* This is the only way in which the apostle could speak of our partaking of the cup which it represents (1 Cor. 10:16).

The adjective translated "unholy" (in Heb. 10:29) has a primary meaning of "common," as of a thing shared. Some find this an insurmountable obstacle to accepting the thought that the church shares in the communion cup. Such overlook that this is the adjective form of the noun which is translated "communion" in 1 Corinthians 10:16. Paul here urges us to appreciate the privilege of being partners in this cup, while in the former verse he warns against losing sight of the great value which it carries. This privilege is indeed not a thing to be lightly esteemed. *"Behold, Israel after the flesh: have not they which eat the sacrifices [communion] with the altar" (1 Cor. 10:18)?* Thayer's Greek Lexicon gives "joint participation" as one of the definitions of this word "communion."

Another objection is raised. Some comment that the Epistle to the Hebrews states that the High Priest went into the Most Holy only once each year, bearing the blood (Heb. 9:6,7,24-28). We find this objection without foundation. The High Priest actually visited the Most Holy twice in that day for the purpose of sprinkling the blood of the bullock and later the blood of the goat (Lev. 16:14,15,34). Between these sprinklings was time for the slaying of the goat. Evidently the writer referred to the entire ceremony of the Day of Atonement, (which was observed once a year) as one event (Lev. 16:34). This also illustrates the closeness in which we find our lives and our sufferings knit with the experiences of Jesus. We are one in the New Testament's revelation of his purpose for us. *"It is ... necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things ... with better sacrifices than these" (Heb. 9:23)*. Only the first of these sacrifices has as yet been presented.

The difficulties which might be suggested regarding the twelfth verse of this ninth chapter (Heb. 9:12) disappear we remember that the subject is a work done after "having obtained eternal redemption," and not with the still later features of God's Plan which relate to cleansing the world from the stains of sin. Having obtained eternal redemption (though not yet applied for all), Jesus became Lord of all and to him was given all power in heaven and in earth (cf. Matt. 28:18) -- yea, even *"the keys of death and*



*hades*" (Rev. 1:18) are his. Together with Him and because of their mutual association, the Christ, the anointed company (Gal. 3:16,29), will bless all the families of the earth, bestowing upon them the benefits of Jesus' ransom sacrifice.

Peter adds to our evidence that the sufferings of Christ were not complete with the death of Jesus. When he wrote, thirty years later, of "...the *sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow...*" (1 Pet. 1:11), he declared that these were still things which the *"angels desire to look into"* - 1 Peter 1:12). Jesus had already suffered and died, but the angels recognized that the work of the antitypical atonement day had only begun. Again, our Lord's words to Saul long after his ascension, *"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest..."* (Acts 9:5), show that the sufferings of his followers are considered as the sufferings of Christ ("the anointed"). *"Sanctified through the offering of the [natural] body of Jesus Christ once for all"* (Heb. 10:10) henceforth *"Know ye not that your [natural] bodies are the members of Christ"* (1 Cor. 6:15).

Those who accept the invitation to share in Christ's sufferings can also share Paul's emotions. He spoke of himself as one who could,

"... now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." (Col. 1:24-28).

This is the reward of those who are baptized for the dead. They do not provide the price which would meet the penalty against the death. Yet, they are become the instrument through which the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice will reach the dead. The church's baptism is into his death, and that includes suffering with him, enduring experiences such as those that lead up to his death. *"If the dead rise not..."* (1 Cor. 15:16) then all these sufferings would be of no avail -- the church would not rise to its promised perfection, nor would they uplift their fellow-men to a similar, but human, perfection. *"But rejoice in so far as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering, in order that when his glory shall be revealed ye may be glad with exceeding joy"* (1 Pet. 4:13, author's literal reading).

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which my blessed Savior died,  
All earthly gain I count but loss;  
How empty all its show and pride!

I'm not my own, dear Lord -- to thee  
My every power, by right, belongs,  
My privilege to serve I see,  
Thy praise to raise in tuneful songs.

And so, beside thy sacrifice,  
I would lay down my little all.  
'Tis lean and poor,  
I must confess; will  
I would that it were not so small.

But then I know thou dost accept  
My grateful offering unto thee;  
For, Lord, 'tis love that doth it prompt,  
And love is incense sweet to thee.

- P.E. Thompson

## Lamps

*"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." - Matthew 5:16*

One explanation of the Bible's universal appeal is the abundance of its word-pictures. It abounds in parables, allegories, metaphors, similes and other figures of speech. A right understanding of the word of truth, therefore, requires a correct interpretation of the pictures and figurative language of the Word. Lamps appear in the Bible more frequently as figures than as literal articles, but we shall look first at lamps themselves before we turn to a discussion of what they sometimes represent.

### Candlesticks

There was a continuously burning seven-branched lampstand in the wilderness tabernacle. There was the dimly burning lamp before the sacred ark in Shiloh; actual, yet symbolic of the dimly, burning zeal of Samuel's nation at that time. There were the ten lampstands that lighted the shrine of Solomon's temple, five on either side. All of these were oil lamps, probably with wicks.

### Torches

When the temple guards entered Gethsemane to arrest our Lord they carried both lamps and torches. Gideon's three hundred carried torches in their pitchers at the rout of the Midianites. A torch was either a length of resinous wood or else a piece of absorbent material dipped in oil, lighted at one end. There were many of these in the third floor room at Troas from which sleeping Eutychus, overpowered perhaps by the heated air, as well as by Paul's long preaching, fell to the ground (Acts 20:7-9).

These torches needed to be replenished frequently with oil; so for prolonged burning, oil had to be carried in a vessel. It was the lack of these which marked as "foolish" five of the virgins in Christ's parable (Matt. 25:3).

### Old Testament Lamps in a Figurative Sense

*"How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them" (Job 21:17)! (The King James Version translators frequently used the word candle for the original word for "lamp," probably because candles were the predominant form of illumination in their day. Candles were not invented until the end of the first century A.D.) Job spoke of a person who lives as a lamp shines. When the person died, the lamp was, as it were, put out. One could imagine Job greeting his friends with the words, "Long may your lamp bum!"*

*"...For David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem" (1 Kings 15:4; 1 Kings 11:36). While one of David's seed reigned upon the throne of Israel, God proclaimed that David's lamp continued to shine before the divine presence.*

*"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory .... (Isaiah 62:1,2).*

This "lamp" is a torch, representing something that can be seen from a great distance. An event is to occur in Jerusalem that will be seen by all the nations. Jerusalem will become an exemplary city and men will take notice. May our prayers speed that great day.

*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and ' light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). As the flashlight can show s the way in the dark, so the Bible can show us our way .ugh life.*

*"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light... " (Prov. 6:23). A single instruction, from the Lord or from another, can shine a ray of light upon our pathway.*

*"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts, as unto a lamp that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise" (2 Pet. 1:19, Companion Bible). The prophetic portion of the word is a searchlight shining down the future way. Let us take heed to it throughout the night till day breaks and the Morning Star appears.*

*"For thou art my lamp, O Lord: and the Lord will lighten my darkness" (2 Sam. 22:29). Throughout the Judean hills David had fled from Saul. By day, by night, David never knew where next to flee for safety; but the Lord had been his lamp, and had always shown him the next step. May we be able to give similar testimony to this of David's, when our period as outlaws from the grace of God comes to an end.*

### **New Testament Figurative Usages**

We find that on several occasions our Lori Jesus used lamps to illustrate his point. He spoke of John the Baptist as "...a *burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light*" (John 5:35). This "lamp" was a man who gave a witness. John had shone a powerful "beam" upon the Lamb of God, and those who heard John came and heard Jesus gladly. But by the time Jesus said this, they were already conspiring to kill him.

In another instance we find Jesus using a double word-picture. In this instance Jesus likens the mind to an eye and the eye to a lamp.

No one takes a lamp and puts it in a cupboard or under a bucket, but it is put on a lampstand so that those who come in can see the light. The lamp of your body is your eye. When your eye is sound your whole body is full of light, but when your eye is evil your whole body is full of darkness. So be very careful that your light never becomes darkness. For if your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in shadow, it will all be radiant, like the light you get from a brightly burning lamp (Luke 11:33-36, Phillips).

That sign-seeking generation did not recognize Jesus. Their mental vision was defective; as it were, the lamp of their spiritual sight was not in the right place in the house. Jesus implied that if they would let their minds function properly then they would recognize him and every part of their lives would become bright.

## Light of the World

Elsewhere, Jesus spoke another parable about a lamp. This second parable, which was uttered during the Sermon on the Mount, should not be confused with the first.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:14-16, RSV).

Here the lamp represents the disciple, each individual follower of the Master. The city is the church, shining forth with the combined shining of all the lamps or disciples that compose it. Because it is "set on a hill," it is seen easily. The city acts as a beacon. The effectiveness of this illustration would be appreciated by anyone who had traveled at night in those days. This view of the elevated city would have been cheering indeed, its twinkling lights guiding the pilgrim's way.

If we are among those disciples to whom Jesus addressed the sermon, then each of us is one of the lamps that comprise the light of the world (Matt. 5:14), and to each of us Jesus addresses the word, "...let *your light so shine...*" (Matt. 5:16). For this Jesus gives us two reasons. Firstly, that men may see our good works. A lamp under a bushel may be detected but will not be seen, and it may easily be extinguished by lack of air. Tragically, it is possible to be Christians in our prayer-chamber and nowhere else. "*The fear of man bringeth a snare...*" (Prov. 29:25). A lamp is used by others: it does not exist for its own illumination.

Secondly, our shining should result in the glorifying of God by men. This is not for the purpose of showing our good works. All our acts of kindness and self-sacrifice must be done in such a way that all the credit goes to God. From this scripture it is clear that our witness (our "shining") is to be both by our conduct and our preaching. The purest life, without verbal testimony, may be considered no more than a monument to self-discipline; while the finest testimony, without a consistent life behind it, will be hollow and hypocritical.

The Master described John the Baptist as *a burning as well as a shining light*. There are almost no natural instances of shining which are not accompanied by heat; and no light is produced without something being consumed. A Christian who is shining will know the burning too. "*Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*" (2 Tim. 3:12). It has been said, "There is no such thing as a secret disciple; for either the discipleship will kill the secrecy, or else the secrecy will kill the discipleship." So let us keep our lamps on the lampstand, and let them bum brightly.

The apostle Paul follows his Master's train of thought with a closely paralleled exhortation.

"Do all things without murmuring' and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life..." (Phil. 2:14-16).

Paul shows, as did Jesus, that our shining in the dark world consists of both our life and our preaching, our deeds and our words. Yet how easily we slip into grumbling and argument, not only in our contacts with the world but also in our Christian fellowship. Paul's instruction is to abstain from both. It is not that we should lay aside our critical faculty but that we should subdue this to the law of love. Then, with our lives as pure and loving as lies within our power, we have to hold forth the message of life to others. All the Word is our message, but God will reveal that part which is the Word of the moment to our hearers. Let us continually pray, with David, "*O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise*" (Ps. 51:15). The prayer will be answered, for has not God given us the spirit "*...of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*" (2 Tim. 1:7).

## Lamps for Jesus

Since Christ and Paul both liken the believers to lamps shining in a dark world, let us ask ourselves some questions about this picture. If we are lamps, how did we get the light? Paul answers: "...God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the office of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). The psalmist confirms that light comes from God: "*For thou didst light up my lamp, Yahweh my God enlightened my darkness*" (Ps. 18:28, Rotherham). Such is the privilege of all who will offer their hearts to his service, once and for all. These he accepts and within them places his spirit. Henceforth, as little lamps, they shine forth the light of his love wherever they go.

Since God has lighted our lamps, what must we do to keep them lit. Paul answers again: "...*be filled with the Spirit*" (Eph. 5:18). The lamps of the apostle's day were simple things, sometimes just roughly molded cups of clay. Occasionally covered, they had a spout from which a wick extended, bearing the flame. They were so crude that one wonders how they acted as lamps at all. And then one reflects that of course it was not the lamp that produced the light but the oil that was put into it! And we can only shine for Jesus as we let him put the oil of the holy Spirit into these crude lamps of clay.

How does one keep his lamp burning brightly? Here are five simple rules for trimming the wick.

- 1) Listen to the voice of God. He speaks through the written word and through the voice of conscience. Let us get quiet and listen to them both.
- 2) Let us make use of the privilege of prayer, not only at set times, but whenever there is anything to praise or thank God for, or to petition God about.
- 3) It is essential that we confess all our conscious sins to God. When sooner we do this, the more time we shall spend in fellowship with God, the stronger we shall be to resist temptation, and the more blessing we shall be to our fellow men. Further the more often we claim the cleansing of Christ's blood, the deeper will be our appreciation of what he did for us.
- 4) We must obey and do that which God dictates. His will becomes clear to those who are prepared to carry it out at any cost. Nothing makes our light flicker and diminish more than turning to our own inclinations.
- 5) Keep our eyes on Jesus. He is the Light of the World, and the church warrants the same title only as each member shines as he did.

## Send out Thy Light

How can we pass the light to others? "*Freely ye have received, freely give*" (Matt. 10:8). The light we have has come to us without our own effort. It has been revealed to us without measure: being limited only by our capacity to receive it. If kept to ourselves it will steadily diminish. "*There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty*" (Prov. 11:24).

Our light must include within its rays the entire range of divine truth. But, like the Baptist's, its beam must come to a focus on one personage, with one object: to lead men to him. Thus we sing:

O for a closer walk with God,  
To glorify his name;  
To let my light shine on the road  
That leads men to the Lamb!

Our light includes any help which we can be to our brethren and to the world, whether physical aid or spiritual instruction. The Good News can be passed on in so many ways, individually and collectively. In these days perhaps children are the most receptive, and with them one can have the privilege of seeing many new little lamps lighted. Who knows how far they may shine. But in whatever work we do let us watch for the opportunities God gives us. Then the work will be blessed, it will be God's light that shines out.

All of us cannot be leading lights. For our encouragement, God has caused records to be left of those who did what they could. These saw God's plan advance through their small contribution. In the Old Testament, for example, we have the Israelitish maid, a slave in a Syrian household. She could not heal her master's leprosy, but she bore witness to one who could. The result was Naaman's miraculous healing (2 Kings 5:1-14).

In the New Testament there is an apostle of whom we hear little beyond that he brought others to the Master. He brought the lad with the loaves and fishes, and five thousand were fed. He brought his own brother to Jesus, and Peter became the mouthpiece for the early church. Thank God for Andrew. While we may not be able directly to help those in need, we each have the inestimable privilege of introducing them to our Master, the one who can help them in all their difficulties.

As disciples of the Light of the World we have the responsibility to shine more brightly every day as the world grows darker. Let us resolve to shine into some new darkness every day, be it darkness of want or sin or error. Let us shine continually till the day comes when, as overcomers, we shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father.

'Twas but a little light she bore,  
While standing at the open door,  
A little light, a feeble spark,  
And yet it shone out through the dark  
With cheerful ray, and gleamed afar  
As brightly as the polar star.

A little light, a gentle hint  
That falls upon the page of print,  
May clear the vision and reveal  
The precious treasures doubts conceal,  
And guide men to an open door,  
Where they new regions may explore.

A little light dispels the gloom  
That gathers in the shadowed room,  
Where want and sickness find their Prey,  
And night seems longer than the day,  
And hearts with many troubles cope  
And feebler glows the spark of hope.

Oh, sore the need that some must know  
While journeying through the vale of woe!  
Dismayed, disheartened, gone astray,  
Caught in the thickets by the way,  
For lack of just a little light  
To guide their wandering steps aright

J. Thompson, England

## Memory

In the days of mine early learning,  
With tears mine eyes were wet:  
I tried so hard to remember,  
I feared so much to forget.

But now that the sweet and the bitter,  
The joys and the sorrows are met,  
I cry, "*Alas! I remember,*  
*Would God that I might forget!*"

## I Offer Thee

Every heart's throb, it is thine;  
Every human tie of mine;  
Every joy, and every pain;  
Every act of mind, or brain -- my blessed God!  
Every hope, and every fear,  
Every smile, and every tear,  
Every song and every hymn -- "Laudamus Te."

Take them all, my blessed Lord,  
Bind them with thy secret cord;  
Glorify thyself in me -- Adored One!  
Multiply them by thy Word,  
Strengthen, bless, increase, my Lord,  
Perfect in love!  
Thou first, and last!

## God Is My Rock

*"Thou art my rock and my fortress." - Psalm 31:3*

In this changing world, when former standards and customs are disappearing and nothing seems beyond decay, no quality in persons or possessions is more sought after than stability. Since our first parents were cast from the Garden of Eden, and subjected to the processes of death, men have never been able to avoid the reality of the temporary nature of all earthly plans. Soon after their expulsion Adam and Eve were reminded, by the tragic death of Abel (his name itself meaning "vanity"), that the security of Paradise was no longer theirs. Generation has followed generation, and we have learned that *"...here we have no abiding city."* Only a few have lived by faith and *"...seek one to come"* (Heb. 13:14, ASV). Men seek to hide themselves behind the possessions of time and sense that seem to them most enduring. These they multiply to themselves. They *"...trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches"* (Ps. 49:6).

### Fleeting Riches

Life teaches us a further lesson. When a man dies, *"...he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him"* (Ps. 49:17). Even the writer of Ecclesiastes, who was wealthier than all his contemporaries, realized before death robbed him of his wealth that *"...all is vanity"* (Eccl. 1:2). There was no satisfaction in his possessions. Moreover, the sum of all experiences was that frustration so common today, *"...vexation of spirit..."* (Ps. 49:14): *"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun"* (Eccl. 2:11).

*"Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes from the preaching of Christ"* (Rom. 10:17, RSV). Those who exercise such faith, because of God's character and his purpose as demonstrated to them, gladly turn from the perishing things of time to find stability and rest in the Eternal One, the Living God. And this, in contrast to the dying world, and the dead idols all around them. Just as a great rock may remain in a land of shifting sand, as that rock witnesses the passing of many generations, so the Eternal God appears to these pilgrims and travelers as a mighty rock, *"...with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"* (James 1:17).

### God Is My Rock

*He is the Rock, his work is perfect* (Deut. 32:4).

*... he ... lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation* (Deut. 32:15).

*Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful...* (Deut. 32:18).

How should one chase a thousand ... except their Rock had sold them... (Deut. 32:30).

For their rock is not as our Rock. . . . (Deut. 32:31).

It was Moses who coined this expression, using it five times in this one chapter. The idea is taken up by the psalmist repeatedly, as he contemplated the eternal God who met his every need from various standpoints: A stronghold and refuge, welcome shade, shelter from storm.

### Stronghold and Refuge

God epitomized all of the defense which humans seek for their defense.



The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies (Ps. 18:2,3).

In this passage it is the Hebrew word *sela* which is translated "rock." This is the same word from which the name of the capital of Edom was derived (2 Kings 14:7) and which was known as Petra in Roman times. This is the word from which we obtain the name Peter. The building of this "rose-red city half as old as time" were literally carved out of the living red sandstone hills, and access to the fortress was so narrow and torturous that the place was considered impregnable. It was no mean feat of king Amaziah of Judah and his army to storm the fortress and the fact that he succeeded in so doing emphasizes the contrast between human plans for safety and the abiding refuge to be found in the everlasting arms of eternal God (Deut. 33:27).

### **Welcome Shade**

Not only does a rock symbolize security, it also offers shade. In the hot and sandy wastes through which Israel traveled from Egypt to the Promised Land, such a shade must have been more than welcome. Because of the rapidity with which the human body dehydrates when exposed to the direct rays of the sun it would be accurate to suggest that such shade was probably the preservation of life itself.

We compare these thoughts with the spiritual shelter offered by the Rock of Ages:

"For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall" (Isa. 25:4).

The Christian experiences this shade in Christ. The thought is expressed well in the hymn:

Beneath the cross of Jesus  
I fain would take my stand,  
The shadow of a mighty rock  
Within a weary land;  
A home within the wilderness,  
A rest upon the way,  
From the burning of the noontide heat,  
And the burden of the day.

### **Shelter From Storm**

In some countries shade is needful, but in others shelter from storms is more important. In David's experience, he encouraged himself in God,

"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings" (Ps. 61:2-4).

How precious, throughout all generations, has been the confidence of God's people as expressed in the ninety-first Psalm: *"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust"* (Ps. 91:1-2).

## **An Unmovable Kingdom**

Since the Fall introduced impermanence into all human affairs men have sought to counteract its effects. They have devised elaborate institutions calculated to outlast the span of a single human life. They have increased the permanence of their houses, extending the useful life of such into the lives of their successors. They have sought stability on a larger scale by introducing orderly governments and dynasties. These have been seen to endure for centuries instead of mere decades.

Such attempts at immortality through organization have universally failed. History watches as each kingdom, each democracy, ultimately makes room for another. And how frequently these changes have taken place through great times of violence.

It was this that Nebuchadnezzar considered as he wondered about the future of his kingdom (Babylon), which he had built (Dan. 2).

The prophet revealed that Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom would be no more permanent than any other. Nor would any that succeeded it. At least not for a long time. But then a kingdom would be set up which did not rely upon human power or plans. This kingdom would overcome all others and replace them. And not only so, but this kingdom would end the transitory nature of all human affairs. Here was a promise that the change and decay which lay all around would eventually be replaced by a stable, ordered government upon earth.

## **A Peaceful Kingdom**

Peace is inseparable from stability. Nothing disrupts and ruins like strife and war. This element of the God ordered kingdom is seen in prophecy:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor the mighty God, the everlasting Father [Septuagint: "the father of the age to come"], the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:6,7).

We find reference to this external aspect of peace elsewhere (Isa. 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-4), but in the New Testament a deeper concept of the causes of unrest is revealed. There we find that the true basis of peace is as a God ordained relationship between the individual human and God, which is obtained and sustained through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Human unhappiness is not only the result of strife and war on a national level. Nor just between classes or families. Man's lack of peace transcends all these and centers in the individual.

The "...kingdom which cannot be moved..." referred to by the apostle (Heb. 12:28) can only be enjoyed by those who completely embrace the moral government of God as the governing principle in their lives. "*There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*" (Isa. 57:21). "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matt. 6:33).

## Stable Character

We turn to the last element of our subject. The Fall from perfection has undermined the stability of character in all of Adam's descendants, yet no human characteristic is more valued, and instability has been the ruin of many. Esau (Gen. 25) illustrates the ruin brought upon many. Esau despised his birthright and sold it to his brother Jacob for a meal. As much as Jacob desired the birthright, we are now better able to evaluate the folly of Esau's actions more than either of the two brothers could then. Faith in God's promises has always been necessary to appreciate and retain the birthright. Esau lacked this faith.

Throughout history God's dealings with men have centered upon their regard for the promises given to them. Looking [from 1986] back through history we see that this chosen people are counted through the descendants of Abraham and thence through Isaac and thence through Jacob -- not Esau. The inheritance of these promises is the work of the immediate future.

## Unstable As Water

Esau was not alone in forfeiting his birthright. Hebrews, chapter twelve, verse sixteen (Heb. 12:16) makes reference to two individuals. *"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."* The Genesis record links two individuals with the same birthright, but there is no evidence in the Scriptures (of which we know) that Esau was a fornicator. Esau was profane in regarding his birthright so lightly as to dispose of it for such a mean price. In time, this birthright was to have passed from Jacob to his firstborn son by Leah, Reuben. But the birthright did not pass through Reuben:

"Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed, then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch" (Gen. 49:3,4).

Reuben, the fornicator, forfeited his birthright too, and it passed to Joseph, the first-born son of Rachel. God's prophecies are precisely fulfilled:

"Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, for he *was* the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's" (1 Chron. 5:1,2).

## The Chief Ruler

Jacob's dying blessing describes Reuben with a twofold excellency, namely, *"the excellency of dignity"* and *"the excellency of power."* In his next breath, however, Jacob declares that *"unstable as water, [you] shall not excel"* (Gen. 49:4). These characteristics passed from him. Judah inherited *"the excellency of dignity."* *"...[O]f him came the chief ruler";* in the first instance King David, who was a prototype of his greater Son yet to come: our Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph's sons inherited the birthright, which includes *"the excellency of power,"* and in the preceding chapter (48) Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons placed the younger one (Ephraim) before the older Manasseh). Hence, the future prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. 31:9) (which refers to the regathering of Israel) is accurate: ". . . I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is firstborn."

How sobering it is to realize the extent of the influence that Esau and Reuben have had upon history. In our day it is the descendants of Jacob who are regathered in the land of promise -- not those of Esau. Further, the "*seed of David according to the flesh*," Messiah, has descended from Judah and not from Reuben. The poet plainly stated the facts:

Sow a thought and you reap a word,  
Sow a word and you reap an act,  
Sow an act and you reap a habit,  
Sow a habit and you reap a character  
Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

The damage wrought is not only upon the destiny of one's posterity. Individuals also reap the result of their actions. "*A double minded man is unstable in all his ways, "For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord"* (James 1:8, 7).

The reverse is equally true, and is well illustrated in the life of Joseph. Tempted under trying conditions in Potiphar's house, he stood fast, and suffered disgrace and imprisonment rather than to sin. Reuben, on the other hand had no excuse. Joseph looked beyond his master realizing that in the final analysis he would have been sinning against God (not merely against Potiphar). For thirteen years Joseph was tried. In it all he was being prepared for rulership and honor. Iron entered his character, he became stable, fixed, and suitable for God's use. Correspondingly, he determined the future of his descendants.

### **Unite My Heart**

We quoted above one cause, listed by the apostle James, for personal instability. A full devotion, or consecration, to the will of God will effectively guard us from instability. The Psalmist prayed, "*...unite my heart to far thy name*" (Ps. 86:11). Paul defined his attitude, saying, "*...this one thing I do...*" (Phil. 3:13). Paul exhibited no double-mindedness. He imitated his exemplar, the Lord Jesus. -- Jesus was pursuing his father's will upon earth we read that "*...he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem...*" (Luke 9:51) and to calvary. Isaiah phrased Messiah's attitude thusly, "*...I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed*" (Isa. 50:7).

In such complete conformity to the Father's will our union in Christ Jesus becomes complete (Rom. 12:5). United to him we partake of his rock-like stability. Such strength enabled Paul, facing imprisonment, to persist in going to Jerusalem. Paul could say, "*...none of these things we me, neither count I my life dear unto myself*" (Acts 20:24) And again, "*...I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*" (Acts 21:13).

Thus it was that Peter was changed from being one who denied his Lord into being a champion of the Crucified One, and thus we may be enabled to say with the Psalmist, "*My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed...*" (Ps. 7:7). "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch, as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord*" (1 Cor. 15:58).

## Discipline

*"Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." - Deuteronomy 8:5*

In the words of one observer:

"We are living in an undisciplined age. The old disciplines are breaking down, and the foundations of society are therefore crumbling. The discipline of the home seems to be vanishing in the new psychology which teaches "parents, obey your children." The discipline of the schoolroom is becoming unpopular according to the so-called progressive education, lest the personality of the child be thwarted by the imposition of a *will* higher than his own."

"Above all, the disciplines of divine grace are derided as legalism, or are entirely unknown to a generation that is largely illiterate as to the Scriptures."

"We need the rugged strength of Christian character that can come only from discipline, the discipline of mind, of body, and of society. Otherwise, the home will lose its heart as well as its hearth, the schoolroom its strength and the textbooks their exactness, the Scriptures their sanction."

We do not share in the expectation that the trend will stop this side of a complete breakdown of the present social order, prior to the setting up of the Kingdom, at which time kingdom laws will require rightly directed disciplines which will have the desired effect in character development.

The word discipline is found only once in the Bible. Its equivalent, however, is found many, many times, and all true Christians know that it must come in for much thoughtful consideration in relation to our growth and development as footstep followers of the master.

### Not A Natural Tendency

The thought of Christian discipline runs counter to the tendency of the fallen nature, and is therefore generally unpopular. Discipline, as such, is variously employed by all who hope that by its use they may the more quickly attain to a desired goal in such fields as scholastics, athletics, science, etc. In all of these fields we may find individuals who deprive themselves of life in order to complete a course of study that will fit them for their life's work, and a fair opportunity of attaining eminence in their particular field. The scholar will bum "midnight oil" in pursuit of knowledge. The athlete will submit to the most rigorous training while denying himself the pleasure of indulging his appetites and enjoyment of night life. The scientist loses all consciousness of time, and awareness of social responsibilities in pursuit of his laboratory experiments. In each case their interest or goal takes precedence over every other consideration. Would that every professing Christian would apply the same energy and zeal, the same oneness of purpose in living the Christ-life. The way would then not seem so hard or rough, nor the course so long as it appears to those who enter it half-heartedly and travel it with faltering steps.

Christian education has taught all of us the need for discipline in our daily life, and if self-applied *will* render less necessary those divinely directed experiences that are calculated to impress needed lessons upon our minds and hearts some of which are not as pleasant as we would like them to be. If we persist in ignoring the opportunities for sacrifice and self-denial while walking in the narrow way, we should not be surprised if disciplinary experiences are permitted in order to awaken us to a deeper appreciation of our responsibilities.

What experiences in life serve as disciplinary in our Christian walk? Our first step in response to God's call involves a degree of discipline that is at once apparent and is suggested by the words of Jesus: ". . . If *any man will com' after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me*" (Matt 16:24).

Discipleship means discipline; the two words have a common root. The disciple is one who has been taught or trained by the Master, having heeded his call to come unto him (Matt. 11:28).

### **The Cost of Discipleship**

Discipleship requires the discipline of conversion. Recognizing our lost estate because of rebellion against God, we come in repentance to our Lord Jesus, assenting with our hearts to the fact that "*...all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way....*" (Isa. 53:6); that "*...all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23); and that we "*...were by nature the children of wrath..*" (Eph. 2:3) -- "*...Strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope, and without God in the world..*" (Eph. 2:12). Such an admission requires discipline. It is difficult for the natural heart to humble itself to admit of its sin and shame and the need for the provision made for us in Christ Jesus.

Discipline comes also in considering the cost of discipleship. "*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me*" (Matt. 10:37). This is further exemplified when the Master says, "*If any man come after me and hate not his father and mother, wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple*" (Luke 14:26).

This is strong language. What can it mean? We know that love is the very essence of the character of our God and of our Lord Jesus, whom we are endeavoring to follow. How then can we interpret such instruction in connection with discipleship? Does it not mean that we are to make our Lord Jesus supreme, permanent, and preeminent in our heart, so at no person, no thing, shares that place *in* our life? No person, no possession, nor life itself is too great to surrender for his sake.

This is doubtless the reason why Jesus advised each one considering discipleship to sit down first and count the cost (Luke 14:28). This denial of all, including ourselves, is the greatest of all disciplines. There are those who are dearer to us than life itself, but they should not be dearer than the Savior. For him and his cause we have died to these and to every other earthly creature or pleasure. It is "Jesus only"! And the step should not be taken lightly or thoughtlessly as is illustrated in Jesus' words:

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish." Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple (cf. Luke 14:28-33).

Discipleship also requires the discipline of cross-bearing, one of the three things considered a daily necessity: our daily bread, our daily work, and our daily cross. ". . . If *any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me*" (Luke 9:23).

*"...Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).* This cross is not that which our Savior bore to Calvary. We are, however, privileged to join with him insofar as self-denial is concerned, as seen in his ministry from Jordan to Calvary. During those three and one half years we are given an everlasting lesson in the meaning of self-sacrifice, the meaning of having no will of our own, having only the will of the Heavenly Father. It was the Son's chief delight to do the Father's will, and should it not therefore be ours also? The attainment of this standard will mean self-denial in the deepest sense of the word. The thought is suggested by the writer of these lines:

I take, O cross, thy shadow  
For my abiding place;  
I ask no other sunshine than  
The sunshine of His face;  
Content to let the world go by,  
To know no gain nor loss,  
My sinful self my only shame,  
My glory all the cross!

### **Discussed in the Book of Hebrews**

In Hebrews the twelfth chapter the question of discipline comes up for consideration. Here the apostle advises all to consider the great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, and to lay aside every encumbrance and the close-girding sin, to run with patience the course marked out for us, looking not at self, but away from self to the leader or perfecter of our faith. His great motive was the *joy* that was set before him, enabling him to endure the cross and to disregard the shame. Motivated by that hope, he was faithful unto death, and so was elevated to the highest possible station in the universe to the right hand of God. Was this attained by walking in a course of self-gratification or self-will? No indeed! His chief delight was the doing of the father's will. As he expressed it: *"...my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me..." (John 4:34). "I delight to do thy will, O my God: Yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8).*

The apostle urges us to consider him attentively, and to note the opposition that he endured from his own people in order that we may not be wearied, nor discouraged, when brought face to face with the same difficulties, pointing out at the same time that we have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin.

We are reminded of the Old Testament scripture which carries an obvious truth: *"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father his son in whom he delighteth" (Prov. 3:11,12).* And, *"...thou shall also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee" (Deut. 8:5).*

The Diaglott rendering of this Scrip ' - , as quoted in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, verses five and six (Heb. 12:5-6), uses the word discipline as follows:

"My son, slight not the discipline of the Lord, neither be discouraged when reproved by him for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives. If you endure discipline, God deals with you as with sons. For is there any son whom a father does not discipline?"

## **A Sign of the Father's Love**

These Scriptures are suggestive of a close and remarkable relationship which exists between the believer and his God and heavenly Father, pointing out the fact that discipline is based on love. This makes it more educational punitive. In other words, it is for our Christian development and not merely for punishment. If there is no discipline in the Christian life, then we may have reason to feel concerned about our being true sons. *"But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then truly are ye spurious and not sons"* (Heb. 12:8, Diag.).

All of us have been subject to pare discipline in our early years, some of which, administered with the aid of the rod, doubtless left a lasting impression. This very likely caused us to hold the parent in high regard, since we doubtless knew that the discipline was deserved, although it may not have been administered in the proper spirit. How much more satisfactory, then, to submit ourselves to the Father of spirits and live. Our earthly parents disciplined us in the way that seemed right to them, but the heavenly Father disciplines for our advantage, in order that we may partake of his holiness. No discipline as it relates to the present seems to be joyous, but rather grievous, *"...yet afterwards it returns the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it"* (Heb. 12:11, Diaglott)

## **Learn From Moses' Discipline**

We may gain some helpful lessons on this subject by considering the experiences of Moses and the children of Israel in their deliverance from Egypt, and in their wilderness wanderings. This would naturally begin with the history of Moses, who, as a babe, was providentially cared for, having been born in very distressing and dangerous times. The destruction of all Hebrew male children was a master stroke of diabolical cruelty on the part of Pharaoh to avert the possibility of the children of Israel outnumbering the Egyptians. The story of Moses reveals divine oversight and protection in the preparation of one destined to *play a* most important role in the affairs of Israel.

Educated in the palace of Pharaoh in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Moses came to a time of life when it became necessary to make an important decision. He chose to suffer the reproaches of his own people rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:25). Did this require discipline? It is obvious that for the advantage of the flesh, the thing for Moses to have done would have been to remain where he was and perhaps one day be a pharaoh himself, and then by reason of his high position and mighty authority be able to emancipate the entire host of Israel. Is it not possible that some such thought occurred to him? His decision to abandon any hope of promotion in Pharaoh's courts in favor of a less prominent position, and even one of reproach, shows a strength of character that would very easily lend itself to divine leading. He here displays a meekness that is precious in the sight of the Lord. *"The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way"* (Ps. 25:9). In this attitude Moses was teachable as subsequent events proved well.

## **Dependence**

First, however, he must learn the lesson of dependence on God and waiting on him for instruction. This was very soon forthcoming when Moses, with very grave consequences, attempted to settle the personal quarrels and strivings of one of his own people with an Egyptian. The second attempt along this line resulted in Moses' fleeing from Egypt to the land of Midian, where he almost drops from sight for forty years. During this time he tended the flocks of his



father-in-law Jethro. We should not assume either that they were wasted years even though spent at such a menial task as being a shepherd. Some of the world's great men have been those who were privileged to learn lessons of discipline, amid the scenes of pasturelands, while caring for such submissive creatures as sheep.

Forty years seem to be a very long time, and how interesting that their end coincided with the end of the prophesied period of Israel's bondage, which meant that Moses' preparation for the divinely appointed task was completed. This was signaled by a remarkable event (See Ex. 3:1-6). There in the quietness of the desert a bush broke into flame, but, wonder of wonders, the bush was not consumed. Still more awful was the voice that came from the midst of the burning bush, "*Moses, Moses.*" Moses replied, "*Here am I,*" and the voice said, "*...put off your shoes from your feet for the place on which you are standing is holy ground*" (Exod. 3:4,5). What an illustration of the need for discipline even in reverence!

Thus begins a new chapter in the life of one who in the years to come was to learn more concerning the disciplines of the Lord and the inestimable privileges of communion and fellowship that were necessary in order to fit and sustain him for the tremendous tasks that lay ahead.

Now the entire history of these great events presents a most interesting picture or "type" of the deliverance of the church from the powers of Satan and the world as represented by Pharaoh and Egypt. Instructions divinely given were followed out to the last detail in the preparations for departure, so that when the final blow was struck and the first born of the land of Egypt fell under the power of the angel of death, their taskmasters and rulers, including hard-hearted Pharaoh himself, were only too glad to let them go. So they came out, six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, with great substance because the Egyptians loaded them with jewels and gold and silver, so much so that they spoiled the Egyptians.

### **Discontent**

It is here that their discipline as a nation began and very soon we find them confronted with a most distressing situation, and one in which their faith was sorely tried. With the Red Sea before them, hemmed in on both sides by mountains, and with Pharaoh's hosts in hot pursuit coming up on their rear, things looked very grim indeed, so much so that the people lost heart and began to murmur against Moses.

"...Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us? ... It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness (Ex. 14:11,12).

Surely there is here a deep lesson for all who have come under the blood and taken up the cross to follow in the footsteps of the Master.

We are told, "*And when the people complained it displeased the Lord...*" (Num. 11:1). Is it any less displeasing to him for us to fail in the same way? "*Godliness with contentment is great gain*" (1 Tim. 6:6). Discontentment disregards the divine presence promised to the Lord's own. In the wilderness journey the children of Israel had the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night to go before them in the way, to defend them from their foes, to show them where to pitch their tents and when and where they should journey. These were the outward, visible assurances of divine presence. By day or night they had only to look to the pillar above the Tabernacle to

receive that assurance. Moses had been promised: *"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest"* (Ex. 33:14).

In the New Testament times since the day of the apostles, we have no visible indications of his presence with his people, but we have the strong and sure promises by the Savior, *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"* (Matt. 28:18), and, *"...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the [age]"* (Matt. 28:20). This is effected by the holy spirit and its work in the hearts of his people. So when we become discontented, we give evidence of a lack of that spirit. Discontent is an outward evidence of a lack of faith in the promises of God.

The children of Israel were led out of the iron furnace of Egypt by the strong hand of God to go to the land promised unto their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When dissatisfaction gripped their spirit they despised the pleasant land (Ps. 106:24) and remembered only *"...the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and garlic"* [sic] (Num. 11:5). Complaint caused them to prefer these in Egypt's hard bondage, to freedom in a land flowing with milk and honey.

Discontentment discounts the provision *God* makes for us. For the children of Israel there was the daily bread in the form of manna, enough for everybody. To the hungry, grateful people to whom it came, it was like the coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. When they became disgruntled they could say, *"But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, besides this manna, before our eyes"* (Num. 11:6). By that time the taste of it was like the taste of fresh oil -- the taste of honey when they were delighted and the taste of fresh oil when they were discontented.

### **Learn from Our Weaknesses**

Does this alteration of taste, caused by a change of attitude seem far-fetched, or do we remember seasons when the Word of God was exceedingly sweet to our taste, and then when under a cloud of complaint we found it tasteless and commonplace? Discontentment displeases God, and our relationship to him can be so marred by it that our progress is greatly retarded and our pilgrimage made much more difficult. This is a lack of faith. It is said of Israel, they believed not his word, but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord (Deut. 1:27).

Discontentment may be a part of our disposition, but contentment can still become a major characteristic of our Christian life. The Apostle Paul said,

*"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Phil. 4:12-13).

The discipline of discontentment is to turn from a complaining spirit, from criticism that corrodes and the dissatisfaction that displeases God, to a thankful attitude, to faith and praise that will be pleasing to him who said, *"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee"* (Heb. 13:5). We may boldly say, *"The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me"* (vs. 6).

Bunyan paints a colorful portrait of contentment in his description of the shepherd boy in the valley of humiliation:

Now as they were going along and talking they espied a boy feeding his father's sheep. The boy was in very mean clothes, but of a very fresh and well favored countenance; and as he sat by himself he sang;

He that is down, need fear no fall,  
He that is low, no pride,  
He that is humble, ever shall  
Have God to be his guide.  
I am content with what I have,  
Little be it, or much;  
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,  
Because thou savest such.  
Fullness to such a burden is,  
That go on pilgrimage;  
Here little, and hereafter bliss  
Is best from age to age.

If we have to any degree succumbed to the spirit of the times, which is restlessness and discontent, the need for discipline is very urgent; and much good may result from mentally retracing our steps from the time we first enrolled in the school of discipleship to the present moment. Perhaps our sense of values has changed since first we sat down and counted the cost. If this be true, the cross will have become heavier as time has gone on, and the tendency to lay it down more marked. Let us then consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself lest we be weary and faint in our minds; and in addition let us note the sense of values expressed by the great apostle Paul in the words: "*For I reckon that sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be counted with the glory which shall be revealed in us*" (Rom. 8: 8).

No doubt Paul suffered more for the sake of the Gospel than any other person, save the Lord Jesus himself. Paul never lost his keen appreciation of what the Master had suffered for him, nor did he ever let slide away the vision of the glory that was to be revealed when the spirit that had so quickened him would be poured out upon all flesh.

Moses too was one whose sense of values enabled him to enter the way of the surrendered life in order that he might serve the living God. Nor did he lay down the privilege of carrying out the divine directions until his mission was accomplished. We detect no note of disappointment or dissatisfaction coming from Mount Pisgah, but rather the acquiescence of a meek and quiet spirit as Moses is brought to the close of a life of service and discipline.

The true disciple is the one who in all of life's affairs, the supervisory and overruling hand of the one who has enrolled him in the School of Christ, even our heavenly Father; and if the lessons in that school be disciplinary even to the point of scourging, the response should be:

Content whatever lot I see,  
Since 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

- J.B. Webster

## The Cost of Discipleship

Would ye be my disciples? Consider again:  
Can you follow my footsteps through trial and pain?  
Can you throw away pleasure, and glory and fame,  
And live but to honor my cause and my name?

Can you turn from the glitter of fashion and mirth,  
And dwell like a pilgrim and stranger on earth,  
Despising earth's riches, and living to bless?  
Can you follow the feet of the shelterless?

Can you ask from your heart the forgiveness of men?  
Can you list' to reproaches, nor answer again?  
Can ye pray that repentance to life may be theirs  
Who've watched for your falling, who've set for you snares?

When you hear I am come, then can you arise,  
The joy of your heart springing up in your eyes?  
Can you come out to meet me, whate'er the cost be,  
Though you come on the waves of a storm-crested sea?

When I call, can you turn and in gladness "come out"  
From the home of your childhood, the friends of your heart?  
With naught but my promise on which to rely,  
Afar from their love -- can ye lie down and die?

Yea, well take up the cross and in faith follow thee  
And bear thy reproach. Thy disciples to be.  
Blest Savior, for courage, to thee we will fly;  
Of grace thou has promised abundant supply.

## **Our Brother Philip: the Evangelist**

*"...we ... departed, and came unto Caesarea, and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, ... and abode with him." - Acts 21:8*

Bible students are familiar with the Book of Acts; however many consider it only a record of the activities of the apostles during the Church's formative period. We admire the bravery of these early Christians in witnessing to their good conscience before many.

Such respect is proper, but the Book of Acts may be much more than this. The characters there recorded are our brothers and sisters. If we remain faithful to God unto death, we shall know these dear people personally. We shall be with them in glory. For the present we are not with them. We can only read their stories, stumbling as many of us do over their names and identities. But when we stumble, is it because the names are so difficult? Or do we err because we have not studied them carefully enough for them to live in our thoughts and minds. They are as real as our associates in the church today.

We do not advocate that God's children spend time reading legendary tales. But, if we piece together the sketches provided in God's word, we obtain an idea of the personality of some. Consider Philip the Evangelist as one example. We divide the record about Philip into two parts: his conspicuous: twice, his practical obscurity.

His name suggests that he was not a Palestinian Jew, having been born, instead, in a gentile land. If so, his habits and associations were much like the gentiles. This suggestion seems sound as we note Acts the sixth chapter (Acts 6:1-6). We find there a complaint among the Hellenists (or Grecian Jews) that partiality was shown to the Palestinian Jews in the distributing of goods as it was then practiced in the church.

The apostles suggested that the church appoint a committee of seven. These were to see that all were fairly dealt with. No doubt, the dissatisfied ones would choose seven whose viewpoint would address the complaint of the Grecian Jews. We read, in fact, that six of them were Grecian Jews and only one a proselyte of Antioch.

We find a valuable lesson in this experience of the early church. How did they overcome disagreement and restore confidence in a suspicious group in the church? They formed a committee. When the need for the committee passed, the office died out. This possibly happened very soon after, when the early church was scattered after the stoning of Stephen.

Philip was among those who fled from Jerusalem after Stephen's martyrdom. Finding himself in Samaria, he proclaimed Christ to the Samaritans (Acts 8:4-14).

His brethren had appointed him as a trustee, to distribute to those in need, but this step was taken spontaneously. Perhaps he remembered the words of his risen Lord, "...ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea..." (Acts 1:8).

There, among his ancestral enemies, Philip quickly noted their need of Christianity. He did not wait for the apostle's sanction, but planted the church among them. He is distinguished by being the first Christian to cross the boundary of Judaism and give light to Samaria. His success in making converts was so great that Peter and John came to lend their authority as apostles and pray that the holy Spirit be given.

Before Jesus' death (Luke 9:51-55), as he was on the way to Jerusalem, he sent his disciples ahead into a village of the Samaritans. There they were to prepare for his arrival.

"...And they [the Samaritans] did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire ' come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" (Luke 9:53-54).

How intolerant these disciples were! They would invoke the fire of heaven upon those who did not receive Christ. They were quite sincere too. The intolerance of the ignorant Samaritans was met by an intolerance fiercer than their own.

Jesus turned and rebuked them. "...Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:55-56). Jesus did not reprove the Samaritans. He bided his time. His kingdom had not yet come. But as he turned from the bigoted sectarian spirit of the Samaritans, he grieved still more over the fierce intolerance of his own disciples. He could find comfort in the knowledge that the Samaritans would yet receive him. And now, through the ministry of Philip, "...Samaria had received the word of God" (Acts 8:14).

This spirit of intolerance, so familiar even in our day, was positively forbidden by Jesus. The apostle John told the Master of one who was casting out devils in Jesus' name "...and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us" (Mark 9:38). Men are not content to serve Christ in their own way, but must forbid others. It is not to be allowed if one is not of our church, or of our school of interpretation, etc.; it matters nothing that devils should be cast out -- so long as he is not one of us.

If this spirit ever could have been right, it would have been in the case of the apostles. They had been called and sent forth by Christ Jesus himself. If ever any group of men could have been justified in deciding that truth was not to be found outside of their group, it was the apostles. They thought so too. Yet, they were wrong. Jesus said, "*Forbid him not...*" (Luke 9:39). Let us demonstrate Jesus' spirit.

The angel of the Lord came to Philip (Acts 8:26-40). Go down to Gaza, which is desert, said the Spirit. Why should Philip be called to leave a successful work for the Lord, we wonder? But Philip does not question the Lord. Leaving Samaria, he went with sealed orders.

We remember the Ethiopian steward (Acts 8:27) who was reading the prophecy of Isaiah while seated in his chariot. The man read aloud, struggling with the meaning of the prophecies. Philip knew (Acts 8:26) what the Lord wanted of him, and so he joined with the man in the chariot and preached Jesus, explaining Isaiah's many references to Christ.

How much do we love to tell the story of Jesus? Does it matter whether we tell the story to many Samaritans or to one Ethiopian? It did not matter to Philip. Doing the Father's will was his purpose and he was faithful to the privileges he was given.

With no apparent reason, Philip's public ministry seems to end. He preached the Gospel to all the cities he entered until he came to Caesarea (Acts 8:40). Apparently he settled there, for we hear no more about him for about twenty years. During this time the church grew, but Philip was left in obscurity. The privilege of carrying the message to Asia and Europe was given to Paul, for reasons known only to God.

Being human, we might wonder why Cornelius was not told to send for Philip. They lived in the same city. Why was it necessary to bring Peter all the way from Joppa? Why did Barnabas, at Antioch, never think of going south to search for Philip instead of going north to Tarsus? Paul (with whom Barnabas *was to associate himself*) was at that time much younger and less tried than Philip. Moreover, Paul was still looked upon with suspicion and fear by the church.

*Philip*, however, leaves no record of resentment or bitterness at being set aside. His Lord knew best. And does he not still! We have another glimpse of *Philip* (Acts 21:8) when Luke describes him as the "evangelist." He was still the preacher, having four daughters who were "prophetesses" (Acts 21:9). Let us learn the lesson of Philip:

Willing should he not require us,  
In silence to wait on him still.

Our last picture of Philip is at home. He is old now. Paul and his companions were enroute to Jerusalem for the feast. Recognizing that they have a few days to share, they stop at Caesarea knowing that Philip's love and experience would be helpful. How they could talk together! How much Philip could share with Paul of his early experiences! One of Paul's companions heard these stories, and perhaps from these were gathered the grounds for the first chapters of The Acts of the Apostles. Philip would, perhaps, never guess that the beloved physician, Luke, was recording his patient, unnoticed, pioneer work among the Samaritans for all who would read the account down through the Gospel age.

When the bride of Christ is gathered  
In that city pure and fair,  
May I be among the number  
To meet my friend and brother there.

## The Pilgrim

Still onward through this land of foes  
I pass in pilgrim guise;  
I may not stop to seek repose  
Where cool the shadow lies;  
I may not stoop amid the grass  
To pluck earth's fairest flowers,  
Nor by her springing fountains pass  
The sultry noontide hours.

Yet flowers I wear upon my breast  
That no earth-garden knows --  
White lilies of immortal peace,  
And love's deep-tinted rose;  
And there's the blue-eyed flowers of faith  
And hope's bright buds of gold,  
As lone I tread the upward path,  
In richest hues unfold.

I keep mine armor ever on,  
For foes beset my way;  
I watch, lest passing on alone  
I fall a helpless prey.  
No earthly love have I --  
I lean Upon no mortal breast;  
But my beloved, though unseen,  
Walks near and gives me rest.

Painful and dark the pathway seems  
To distant earthly eyes;  
They only see the hedging thorns  
On either side that rise;  
They cannot know how soft between  
The flowers of love are strewn,  
The sunny ways, the pastures green,  
Where Jesus leads his own;

They cannot see, as darkening clouds  
Behind the pilgrim close,  
How far adown the western glade  
The golden glory flows;  
They cannot hear' id earthly din  
The song to pilgrims known,  
Still blending with the angel's hymn  
Around the wondrous throne.

So I thy bounteous token-flowers  
Still on my bosom wear;  
While me the fleeing love-winged hours  
To thee still nearer bear;  
So from my lips the song shall flow,  
My sweetest music be;  
So on mine eyes -- glory grow,  
Till all is lost in thee.



## True Beauty

Beautiful hands are they that do  
The work of the noble, good and true,  
Busy for them the long day through;  
Beautiful faces - they that wear  
The light of a pleasing spirit there,  
It matters little of dark or fair,  
And truly beautiful in God's sight,  
Are the precious souls who love the right

Tis prayer that brings true comfort from above:  
Forgiveness and his spirit to refresh!  
Yet all the springs of his eternal love  
Are freed to serve and then to freely bless!  
Then we can say, arrayed with faith and power:  
"We shall not harbor e'en the slightest care;  
Nor shall we dread the dark foreboding hour,  
For pleased is God to hear and answer prayer!"

- F. Lardent

## **New Subscription Price**

Effective January 1, 1987 the price for the HERALD is \$5.00 per year.

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Renewals which have been received for the year 1987 are paid in full.

Hereafter, subscriptions will expire October 31.

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It is with regret that we take this action. We have not raised the original subscription of \$1.00 since 1918. Voluntary gifts have historically met the continuing shortfall between printing price and subscription price. We are thankful for the past consideration of our brethren who have remembered our work -- both during their lifetimes and after -- through bequests.

Increasing costs have changed this delicate balance. For several years outlay has exceeded income. Our journal is small but there are continuing costs such as printing, mailing, personnel, rent, utilities, etc., which are associated with the more important work of spreading the gospel.

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