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A New Year Meditation Going to the Father

Life is a journey. Each New Year another milestone is passed. Journey's end for us, as it was for Jesus, is the going to the Father. Our Lord said, no less than five times, "I go to the Father" (John 14:12,28; 16:10, 16, 28). He also tells us, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1-3), so that we knew that we too are also going to the Father. The going of Jesus to the Father was a crisis at the end of a long process. Because of sin he had left the Father. His entire earthly life was a part of the journey back to God. "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; again I leave the world to go to the Father" (John 16:28).

God's prodigal world is, as it were, in a "far country," separated from him because of sin. Redeemed by Christ, God has provided them two ways of return. Now it is the Narrow Way (Matt. 7:14) and in the age to come it will be the Highway (Isa. 35:8). In this age those who are like the prodigal son and say, "...I will arise and go to my father" are directed to the path that Jesus himself took. That way is illustrated in Israel's tabernacle in the wilderness. There we find a progression from outside the camp, through the camp of Israel and the court into the Holy and finally into the Most Holy. The consummation in the Most Holy can only be attained by the experiences represented in the previous stages.

We read concerning Jesus that he learned obedience through the experiences which he suffered, being perfected by them (Heb 5:8; Heb. 2:11). Should this not be truer of his followers? Our distance from God is not measured in miles or hours but in our likeness to him. Our Lord summarizes his Sermon on the Mount with this idea, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). God's plan for his church is that they will live in proximity to him as his divine family. To this end he oversees our training as children so that we might be prepared to occupy such positions. If we would make an earthly comparison, how much training in culture, education, and etiquette would be necessary to fit a beggar for the elite circles of human society. How much more, then, should the sinful sons of God need training to be prepared to dwell in the Father's holy presence. God's standard is that we be conformed to the likeness of his Son.

"God is love" (1 John 4:16). The journey to God, then, is measured in terms of our development in love. Not only is our going to the father a process, so is his coming to us. The prodigal son did not have to wait until he reached his father's house before he met his father. "When he was yet a long way off, his father saw him, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him." The eternal Father comes to us in the same way. "...he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him" (1 John 4:16). Growth in love means developing the indwelling presence of God, just as we sing the words of the familiar hymn:

Nearer, my God to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be
A cross that raiseth me.

Process and Crisis

A new year may be one of many. But the crisis of passing to the Father is only an instant in time.

Behold, I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Cor. 15:51,52).

We cross the threshold of another year accompanied by ominous signs. That the Bible teaches a severe time of trouble which must precede the kingdom of Christ is clear. It is generally accepted that the church will escape, to some degree, the final deluge upon the earth. What if this escape should occur this coming year? We cannot say if this is possible-but it would seem that the flashpoint in human events could be reached at any moment. Indeed, our Lord says that we will not know beforehand when the end of the church's course will come. Those who have been readers of the HERALD will remember the various dates during the past century at which some thought that their collective end would come. We should not remember these disillusionments with regret: for thus has the Lord enabled successive generations to have the same inspiration of the hope of the Lord's coming for them in their day.

I once received a letter which read, "Mom and I have been busy planning our summer holiday and we are now fixed up for two weeks in Norway in June. We are thrilled and have been pouring over travel books." Is this not suggestive of our spiritual situation? "All fixed up, thrilled: pouring over travel books." These people had never been to Norway but had you asked them questions you would have received a glowing account of what they expected to see. Are we all fixed up and waiting to go to the Father? We are thrilled at the prospect. And if a sympathetic friend who knows of our hopes should ask about them, I wonder if we would be found to have studied sufficiently so that we could convey our expectations to them?

Where do we find heavenly "travel books?" Paul was caught away to the third heaven. He heard unspeakable words which it was not possible to speak (cf. 2 Cor. 12:4, *Diaglott*). Why? How difficult it would be for a sighted person to explain to one born blind what a world of light and color is like. In a simple example we see Paul's difficulty.

The Apostle does not leave the matter there. He employs another line of reason. We might call it spiritual clairvoyance, a means to see what is unseen through the means of what can be seen.

"For our light afflictions which are but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:17,18, author's emphasis).

In this paradox Paul tells us that the temporal can be a means to reveal the eternal: a window not *at* but *through* which we look: a mirror into which we gaze, not to see what is inherent in *it*, but what it *reflects*. This principle is recognized in the often quoted lines,

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God.

Natures Distinct

I remember my thrill when I read for the first time the chapter on "Natures Distinct" in the first volume of Scripture Studies. God has his family on different levels of being. The highest is the divine and the lowest the human, with angels somewhere above the human. We have no knowledge about other planes of being between the angelic and the divine. These are left unspecified.

Man was God's youngest child and what a birthday present he inherited in a body so fearfully and wonderfully made, so perfectly fitted for the world of wonders represented in Eden. Considering the perfection of all of God's gifts it is impossible to imagine anything better than a perfect body in perfect earthly surroundings. Made in God's image the earthly creation reflected the heavenly glory of God. But, for those called to a change of nature through the High Calling (Phil. 3:14) in Christ Jesus, it is impossible to consider heaven-except in terms of earth.

An illustration may help us to understand differences in nature. Various planes of being may be represented by a four-story apartment building. In order for any building to stand against the elements, it must conform on all its levels to the design of the foundation. The walls must be carried through all the floors to the top. In God's building, of course, the foundation is set in the heavens and the principle operates in reverse. However, the principle has not changed, just as God said to Moses: *"See thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount"* (Heb. 8:5).

The divine is the pattern for all floor levels. God designs to give to all his family, on whatever "floor" they reside, as much of his character as it is possible for them to contain. It is not that beings on lower planes cannot imagine anything better than each possesses; it is that nothing better is possible. Their capacity to experience is filled and they experience heaven, as it were, where they are. When restored to perfection, mankind will have paradise on earth.

Parallel Natures

Accepting the idea that God wants to share with his creation as much of himself as the creature has capacity to enjoy, it follows that the various natures would be parallel to the divine. This is illustrated by a building with foundation walls running through all the floors. This illustrates the common possession of the mental and moral image of God. Angels and men possess similar qualities of heart and mind, reason, memory, and will. It would be reasonable to infer that there would also be a parallel in body and environment but this is beyond the appreciation of the lower nature except by analogy.

Will we know each other beyond the veil as we do in this life? Today we recognized each other by bodily appearance. The answer lies in the inseparability of body and personality. Our bodies are as peculiarly our own as are our personalities. This is so literally true that among the billions of humans there are no records of any two of them having the same fingerprint. In the resurrection both body and personality will appear simultaneously on whatever plane of existence they are to be found. The Apostles James, John, Paul, and Peter will be recognized as they were on the earth. It will be the same with all generations to our day.

The angels illustrate the indivisibility of the ego or personality and the body. In Old Testament times some angels materialized. Our Lord Jesus Christ also materialized during the days between his crucifixion and his ascension. The angel Gabriel would look like Gabriel, just as our Lord looked like himself when he appeared to the disciples in the upper room. Because planes of nature are parallel, like the floors *in* our fictitious building, angels who materialized (such as Gabriel and the three who appeared to Abraham) all appeared quite at home in earthly surroundings.

At Home On Any Plane of Being

Turn again to the apartment illustration. Suppose that the first floor family were factory workers; the second floor family were managers; the third floor family were professionals, and the fourth floor family were government officials who associated with society circles. Doubtless, each family would keep somewhat to themselves. Each apartment would be furnished according to the means they possessed varying in taste and expense.

When one family was invited to visit another family there would be no confusion in getting around because they all knew the general layout of the apartments. But, the first floor family would have much to see and admire in the luxurious surroundings on the floors above them. The church in her resurrection change will be in much the same situation. The angels, in their materializations, appeared quite at home, even though they, were figuratively descending a couple "floors" to visit the human family.

Another illustration might help. Water is a combination of hydrogen and oxygen. It exists in three forms: a liquid, a solid (ice), and a vapor (steam). All three forms are still "water," being composed of the same substances. The transition from one form of "water" to another is affected by changing its temperature. Raising it the substance turns to steam. Lowering its temperature results in the solidification into ice. Our change of nature will be much like this: personality and body will be raised from one level (or nature) to another.

Resurrection - A Birth

Not only are there parallels in the birthday present of God to man (his body), in the world of wonders (his home), but there are also parallels in the society of human life, in which man moves. The Bible speaks of the resurrection as a "new birth." Jesus is called the "firstborn" from the dead (Rev. 1:5), and Paul speaks of himself as seeing the Lord as one "born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:8). If we use the human life as a medium by which to understand the unseen, we note that humans revolve in three comprehensive circles. There is (1) the circle of family, (2) the circle or religious life, (3) the circle of social contacts outside family and church. Space requires only the briefest of comments upon these three, but *your* sanctified minds will be able to fill each with expanded detail.

The Circle of Family

Human experience begins with the child's earliest impressions of his environment: his wonder at all he sees and hears and endless questions that accompany everything new. As a child grows and learns to read, the right to enter the enchanted land of books is gained. Gradually the child matures and both parents and child experience the sweetness of its development. Even in old age it is common to reflect upon the happiness and simplicity of one's earlier days.

This stage *will* always remain for the divine family. We will always be comparative children to the heavenly Father. How could we possibly lose the sense of wonder in the presence of him who answers all our questions, who cares for us tenderly, ever extending the frontier of our knowledge of him and encompassing more of his illimitable unknown. *"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God..."* (John 17:3).

Large families sometimes see a great gap in the ages of the children. The eldest may even be old enough to have fathered the youngest. It is just so with our elder brother, the Lord Jesus. But he is not ashamed, as some human siblings are, to own us as brethren (Heb. 2:11). The Lord was the only begotten of the Father. He abode with God from the beginning and will always be infinitely above us. As he walked and talked with the disciples of old as they trod the Galilean hills or walked by the lake telling them stories of the kingdom, so will he walk and talk with us. He will unfold the secrets of things done by him before the eons of history, bringing into existence heaven and earth.

The intimacy of our relationship to our Lord is illustrated by the picture of the bridegroom and the bride. We are so like children in comparison to him that not only does he call us such, but it also requires more than one picture to illustrate the relationship between him and his church. Love stories and fairy tales have universal appeal. But the best of them is nothing compared to his love story. All love stories climax with marriage and living happily ever after. But the fulfillment of this story of Christ and the church in glory is as far above those human tales as the sun at noonday is to the light of a candle.

The Circle of Church Life

How sweet is the fellowship of like minds and how representative of the fellowship with God. When we have met in convention or study groups we may even have felt like we were virtually in heaven on earth. But in this life bodies tire, our minds grow weary, and our memory proves to be only a leaky pot. But what it must be in the General Assembly of the firstborns and all their subsequent and glorious gatherings! Think of being addressed by the apostles and outstanding saints from their day onward. Consider listening to our Father himself and to our Lord! As for the praise, what sounds must emanate from the grand hallelujah choruses of heaven!

Those are all collective fellowships. What of the individual? At earthly conventions we may wander off to a corner where we can speak to a brother from far away, comparing our experiences. But think how in the heavenlies we shall be gathered together with brethren from every nation and language. Then we have the present experience of fellowship together in the Lord's service. This too will have its parallel because the promise to those who are overcomers is that they will sit with the Lord in his throne. God does not exalt persons for their honor. God exalts for service. For a thousand years the church will serve in the work of restitution. What a prospect that is! The service of the heavenly bride with her groom will continue into the ages to come as the focus shifts beyond this earth to affairs of the universe, and of universes...

The Circle of Outside Social Contact

Beyond our family and church we all have social contacts. The Bible introduces us to various angels, Gabriel, those who appeared to Abraham and to Daniel, the bright throng who attended at our Lord's birth, and those who appeared at his resurrection. We learn that angels numbering ten thousand times ten thousand angels (one hundred million) and thousands of thousands assemble before the throne (Rev. 5:11). Additionally there are the guardian angels which scripture seems to indicate care for the child of God. How wonderful to make the acquaintance of those who have known us so well. How wonderful to get to know the entire family of God in heaven. How wonderful to become acquainted with billions of humans who shall return from the grave. If a thing of beauty is a joy forever, what shall we say of the priceless treasure of the love of a friend and a brother. How cumulative and incalculably rich we shall *be* in love and friendship as we come to know the family of God in heaven and earth throughout the years of eternity.

Conclusion

Passing the threshold of another year: how thrilling the prospect! We don't know if this year will mark the completion of the church of God. We don't know if it will see our personal crisis of passing to him-in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We do know the Lord's warning to be always watchful. We know that moment will arrive when we do not expect it. So, shall we not march forward expectantly? Indeed, may the hope of the church's completion on earth be our inspiration!

- A.D. Kirkwood, *Scotland*

To Look Within

To look within, and see no stain
Abroad, no curse to trace
To shed no tears, to feel no pain,
But see thee face to face.
To find each hope of glory gained
Fulfilled each precious word
And fully all to have attained
The image of our Lord.
For this we're pressing onward still,
And in this hope would be
More subject to the Father's will,
E'en now, much more like thee.

The Memorial Supper

"For as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."
According to our usual method of reckoning, the Memorial celebration this year should be held after sundown, Sunday, April 8, 1990.

This, according to the Jewish calendar, is the 14th of Nisan, and the appropriate time for the brethren to meet "in remembrance" of the Lamb who was slain.

"This do in remembrance of Me."

Guidelines for Decorum in Meetings

Our meetings and fellowship should be something to which we look forward. They should be a haven from the trials, pressures, frustrations and pettiness which we often encounter in the world.

In order to make our fellowship sweeter and the time together more blessed, certain principles and guidelines are suggested for consideration and mutual welfare. Additionally, we should conduct ourselves in such a manner that visitors would feel comfortable and happy in our midst. Hopefully, the same will be true of us as was said of Peter and John: "*And they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus*" (Acts 4:13). We should not be ashamed of our witness to others nor should we hesitate to invite them to our meetings for fear of what might happen during their presence.

The psalmist wrote: "*I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go unto the house of the Lord'*" (Psalms 122:1). This will be true if we "*make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace*" (Eph 4:3, NIV).

Paul's admonition to the church at Thessalonica seems most appropriate and relevant today. He said:

"Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard of love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else" (1 Thess. 5:12-15, NIV).

It is the responsibility of leaders to allow as many as possible an opportunity to participate. No individual or a minority should dominate the discussion or monopolize the time.

Leaders should attempt to achieve a balance during the meetings. If a person has already spoken, that person might be overlooked in favor of someone who has not spoken, even though the former may have raised a hand first.

Those who speak should make their comments brief and not repeat what has already been said. Everyone should speak clearly so as to be heard by all. We must be "*speaking the truth in love*" (Eph. 4:15).

However, conversing should be confined to addressing the entire group. Private conversations between two or among three or more persons should not occur.

A leader must exercise his best judgment in these matters. Patience, understanding and cooperation from the participants are necessary. We should be "*kindly affectioned to one another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another*" (Rom. 1:10).

The Bible commands us to love one another. This applies to everyone. The characteristics of love are described by the Apostle Paul in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. May we attempt more earnestly to apply these principles to our lives and to our fellowship in the ecclesia.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres (1 Cor. 13:4-7, NIV)

- T. M. Thomassen

Importunate Prayer

When down hearted and discouraged
At the trend of life's affairs,
Seek, alone, the quiet places;
Give yourself to earnest prayers.

There's a hint for us, emphatic,
In the way our Savior walked;
In the open, solitary,
Oh, how oft with God he talked.

For *all* troubles that infest the
Pilgrim's tortuous, earthly way,
Holy Writ sets forth the antidote --
Importunately pray.

I rejoice that God has told us
Always, how to overcome;
How the victory is realized,
The finished fight is won.

We may often feel dejected,
But we never need despair,
If we seek, with Christ, the mountain,
There to wrestle long in prayer.

Pray until the heavens' open,
And the earth recedes from view;
Till in all our fiery trials,
God's grand purposes shine through.

- L. Hatcher

Uzziah's Pride and Punishment

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 16:18

Uzziah was a great king in Jerusalem, or at least he started off as a great king. He was reverential towards God. He put the capital city and the remainder of his kingdom into good condition for defense against its enemies.

We must remember, in any consideration of the wars of Israel, that for a period of time this nation represented God's rule among men in a way which has not been equaled by any other nation before or since. The kings of Israel were anointed by divine commission as were no others. They were said to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord as no other kings before or since have held dominion. Theirs was not, however, the kingdom of God for which we were taught by our Master to pray, *"Thy kingdom come."* Instead they were interim rulerships, conducted with the typical People of God, the Israelites.

God's kingdom will really come to earth after Messiah shall establish it. He will reign for a thousand years to uplift the humble, bless those who seek righteousness, punish and correct all others, and finally destroy the incorrigible in what the Scriptures call "second death." Because this national kingdom was an interim arrangement, it was reasonable that Israel and Judah should arm themselves and strengthen their borders so as to defend the land which Jehovah had given to them.

Uzziah's two predecessors, Joash and Amaziah, were poor examples of true worship and obedience to God. The lives of these kings were summarized nicely by one Bible commentator. Speaking of Joash, he says:

"On the death of the good old high priest, Jehoiada, the mentor of King Joash from his youth, Joash fell from his standard of thought and conduct. He was led astray by the nobles of Judah, who fawned upon him and persuaded him to allow a return of the idolatries that had such a hold upon the people. Jehoiada's son Zechariah was then high priest. Seized with prophetic fervor, he raised his voice in the midst of a throng in the *court* of the temple, and prophesied dire misfortune to come upon the nation as the result of this apostasy. Thereupon Joash ordered Zechariah executed in that very court, and not far from the altar of burnt offerings. This is probably the Zechariah to whom our Lord refers (cf. Matt. 23:35). There is a tradition that for many years the blood of the martyr continued *to* bubble up through the pavement where he fell and did not cease until the capture of Jerusalem fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy of ruin."

How often history repeats itself, staining the pages of history with bloodshed at the hands of those whose pride, selfishness, jealousy, and bigotry have been aroused when the message of the Lord has been announced by his servants. It was so with our Lord Jesus, who said, *"the darkness hateth the light,"* and so it has ever been with his true followers. The commentator continues:

"Zechariah's prophecy began at once to be fulfilled. King Hazael of Syria, having wrought much evil upon Israel to the north, next attacked Gath in Philistia. He was victorious, and turned upon Jerusalem. Joash met him, was badly beaten, and was forced to buy him off with the gold and silver and other treasures of his palace and of Solomon's temple. King Asa had stripped them to buy off another Syrian King, Ben-hadad, but new stores had since accumulated. Now these were gone, and in his distress and humiliation King Joash fell ill in the castle of Millo, where some of

his own attendants slew him on his bed, thus punishing the king for the killing of Zechariah. Joash had reigned for forty years..."

"Joash was succeeded by his oldest son, Amaziah, a pious prince at first, who exercised what was for the times great kindness in executing his father's murderers and not putting their sons to death with them..."

"The first great act of Amaziah was the war against Edom, a region south of the Dead Sea populated by descendants of Esau who constantly harassed southern Judah. Carefully organizing an army of three hundred thousand, Amaziah added another one hundred thousand mercenaries whom he hired from the Northern Kingdom. These he let go when a prophet protested his getting aid from an idolatrous nation. When Amaziah objected on the ground of the cost of hiring these foreign soldiers, which would be wasted if he dismissed them, the prophet nobly answered, 'The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.' The saying was justified, for Edom was decisively conquered and its many iniquities were terribly punished..."

"With this success, however, Amaziah's failure began. Puffed up with pride, he sought other conquests, and sent a challenge to King Joash of Israel, who promptly accepted. The battle was fought at Bethshemesh, in Judah to the west of Jerusalem, and Amaziah was terribly beaten. Joash tore down two hundred yards of the wall of Jerusalem and entered the city through the gap in the wall. He took everything of value in the temple and palace, and carried away hostages as he returned in triumph to the Northern Kingdom."

"Amaziah reigned for another fifteen years after this defeat but did nothing of note. He was foolish enough to worship idols which he had taken from Edom, and received the rebuke of a prophet, who shamed him for falling down before gods that had been unable to save their own people. Finally a conspiracy was formed against the king. Almost alone, he fled to Lachish in the south, where he was caught and killed." - Peloubet's Select Notes.

Kingly Presumption

King Uzziah illustrates the truth of our theme text. When his fame spread he began to feel his greatness and pride arose. He forgot that he was merely a representative of the Lord and that his first duty was to listen to and obey the commands of Jehovah.

After great military and political accomplishments he thought to bring about some degree of religious distinction also. Evidently, he felt that God was proud of him and of his success. He must have reasoned further that God would be pleased to have him enter the Temple (which was the job of the priesthood) and offer incense at the Golden Altar. He knew the rules and regulations concerning the Temple and its service. But he considered himself above them. He would go directly to God -- bypassing the priest.

Many successful people make the same mistake. They suppose that success in business or in politics, their brilliance of intellect or their polish of education is the only requisite for acceptance in the sight of Jehovah God. Using their human reasoning they figure that if they go to church and acknowledge God that he should be very proud to have them there and, of course, that he should give them first place in everything as a reward. This is a mistake. The great King Eternal, *"the lofty One that inhabiteth eternity"* (Isa. 57:15), has regulations governing all attempts to approach him. There is just the one way of approach, and no other (cf. John 14:6).

The Melchizedek Priest

Some might suppose that this position is taken to force those who are called the "laity" to come to God through what men call the "clergy." King Uzziah's need to approach God through the High Priest of Israel was distinctly different. The "clergy," or at least those who are so called, are no more than any other mortal men.

Those who are successful by worldly standards may feel that the "clergy" are not as intellectual as they, that they have no sense of business, and that they, upon the basis of their superior understanding, stand in a better position to please God. But such are likely to repeat with the hypocritical Pharisee: *"O Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men"* (Luke 18:11).

This is not the point at all: and it is especially not a point taken scripturally. First, we note that search as one may there is no scriptural authority for the distinction of any clerical class in the Church of Christ unless it be specifically that of the Twelve Apostles. Scripturally those twelve rank as an hierarchy-the special mouthpiece of Jesus.

We do not advocate that the person who would approach God must come through the clergy of any denomination. We emphasize, however, that there is still but one way of approaching God: by and through the Advocate whom God appointed for us *"Jesus Christ, the righteous"* (1 John 2:1) -- *"A priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"* (Heb. 5:6). *"No man cometh unto the Father but by me..."* was his message. *"There is none other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

Incense At the Golden Altar

God is understanding of ignorance. Those who have never come to an appreciation of Jesus, as the divine appointee for the reconciliation of the world may be excused if they attempt to approach God aside from him. Their prayers may be answered, to some degree, if offered sincerely. St. Paul makes this suggestion, describing how God "winked at" certain ignorance of his arrangements (Acts 17:30).

But Uzziah knew of God's arrangements. He was not ignorant. He understood that only the priest could offer incense to the Almighty at the Golden Altar. Similarly, those who come to recognize that Jesus is the great antitypical priest through whom communication with God is to be conducted, would be guilty if they intrude into the presence of the Almighty in ways other than authorized by the Creator. It was for such arrogance and pride that Uzziah was struck with leprosy.

Leprosy frequently represents sin. Uzziah's experiences may be said to illustrate the condition of any who bypass the divinely ordained Priest in their attempt to approach God. As it was in the case of Uzziah, the penalty would be in proportion to the understanding of the sinner.

Eighty Valiant Priests

When the king entered the Temple to offer incense at the Golden Altar he was met by the high priest and eighty of the underpriests. These priests followed Uzziah, protesting his sacrilege. As priests this was only their duty, but it marked these men as valiant and courageous because of the great power possessed by any king and the risk they took in opposing him. Uzziah felt the power of his greatness and he was likely to resent their interference with his kingly prerogatives.

Their protests reinforced what the king knew to be God's rules governing the service of the Temple. Well did they add words of warning, however, *"Go out, for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah God."* True honor, true blessing, true prosperity cannot be found in opposition to God. The king's course must bring him dishonor. Had he hastened to glorify God we cannot doubt that he would have received a blessing. But instead, violating God's law, he brought upon himself a curse.

The lesson in these verses is so plain and simply taught. Our Lord's words verify that lesson: *"he that humbleth himself shall be exalted: he that exalteth himself shall be abased."* (Luke 14:11). Good intentions were not enough -- even had it been good, instead of pride, which prompted him. Good intentions should have lead him to examine the divine regulations and promises. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. Hence the Apostle warns: *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* (2 Tim. 2:15).

Humility is very important: for the church and for the world. Some are born humble-minded, others are born self-conceited. The latter are handicapped as respects this grace of character even if they are in a better equipped to battle the present world of adversity. On the whole though, few are so handicapped by any imperfection of the flesh as to make it appreciably more difficult for them to enter into the kingdom under the call of this Gospel Age. Where much is given much is required. Where little is given little is required. The judgment of the Lord takes into consideration the extenuating circumstances of the heart, the will, the intentions, the effort.

Humility is important. It is important for its own benefit. It is also important because the other graces of the spirit cannot be developed without it. Meekness heads the list of these spiritual graces. How could one be gentle, for example, if they were not meek? How could one be patient toward all if they were not meek? How could one exercise brotherly kindness except through meekness. All who constitute apart of the church will be tested along these lines (Gal. 5:22,23-26; Mic. 6:6-9). Meekness and humility must grow and abound in the heart in order to cultivate the other fruits of the holy Spirit.

The Place

There is a place where thou canst touch the eyes
Of blinded men to instant, perfect sight;

There is a place where thou canst say, 'Arise!'
To dying captives, bound in chains of night;

There is a place where thou canst reach the store
Of hoarded gold and free it for the Lord;

There is a place upon some distant shore --
Where thou canst send the worker or the Word.

There is a place where Heaven's resistless power
Responsive moves to thine insistent plea;

There is a place -- a silent, trusting hour --
Where God Himself descends and fights for thee.

Where is that blessed place -- dost thou ask
'Where?' O, Soul, it is the secret place of prayer.

The Anglican Mind

... *It is an attempt to nullify one of God's righteous acts in the earth...*

A recent report reaches us that deserves comment. Seldom is there good to be gained just by looking at our differences with others. But this report concerns a resolution passed by an assembly of the *Anglican Consultative Council* of which the Archbishop of Canterbury is President. It speaks to the present state and progress of God's plan in this earth.

The Council met in Singapore and forged out a six-part resolution dealing with affairs in the Middle East. The purpose of the council was to express the "Anglican mind" on issues of importance today. This resolution shows that this church regards the Middle East as a "great issue."

But, what have they to say about this "great issue"? We quote the entire resolution:

This Council:

- a. affirms the importance of the Church in the exercise of its prophetic role by standing on the side of the oppressed in their struggle for justice, and by promoting justice, peace and reconciliation for all peoples in the region;
- b. affirms the existence of the State of Israel and its right to recognized and secure borders, as well as the civic and human rights of all those who live within its borders.
- c. rejects the interpretation of Holy Scripture which affirms the special place of the present State of Israel in the light of biblical prophecy, finds it detrimental to peace and justice, and damaging to Jews, Christians and Muslims;
- d. calls attention to the injustice done to the Palestinians in consequence of the creation of the State of Israel, and therefore affirms the right of the Palestinians to determination, including consideration of the possibility of the establishment of their own state;
- e. supports the convening of an international conference over Palestine/Israel under the auspices of the UN and based upon all the UN resolutions in relation to this conflict, to which all parties of the conflict be invited including the PLO;
- f. commits itself to continued prayer for Israelis and Palestinians, for Muslim, Jew and Christian, for the achievement of justice, peace and reconciliation for all. [Editor's emphasis]

Forty years have passed since the present State of Israel was created out of the abyss of inhumanity which displayed itself under the name "*holocaust*" in Christian Europe. Israel's creation was among the first rays of hope to Zion, then still waiting in exile and persecution for the fulfillment of their two-thousand year hope.

Here is the Anglican Church -- the "official" custodian of biblical interpretation in England-which recognizes Israel, but denies that it's existence has *any* prophetic significance. Going further, it views this State as *detrimental* to both peace and justice! And still further, it is *damaging* to Jews, Christians, and Muslims!

Forty years have passed since the establishment of the present Israeli State. Justice, Divine and unseen, has been evaluating the reaction of the world during the past forty years to God's handiwork. Would man receive and bless the Chosen People of God? Would they welcome them into the Land of Promise? Judgment awaits both the individuals of the world and the churches. They have had their opportunity to look with favor on the stately outworking of God's promises. But, alas, the Churches seem to have missed the importance of current events.

This period has doubtless been a period of testing for Israel. But one must not be one-sided in their evaluation of events, for God himself is no respecter of persons. Being the great economizer, one period has been a test both to the Chosen People and to her neighbors: the nations of the world and those who regard themselves as keepers of God's word to man, Christian believers and teachers.

It is significant that the Vatican refuses to recognize Israel yet meets with the leader of the Soviet State. If the Lambeth Conference confirmed the Singapore resolution as an official policy of the Anglican Church it would have placed the Church of England on the same "side" of this issue as the Vatican.

What a momentous decision to make: to distance yourself from prophetic truth and to reject the Word of God! Considering that Messiah's prophesied throne is to be set in Zion (Psa. 2), this is a decision which must have future repercussions.

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God (1 Peter 4:17)?

Should this resolution be regarded merely as a negative statement about something? We think not. It is a positive act. It is an attempt to nullify one of God's righteous acts in the earth. As such, it stands with the prophesied gentile rebellion which the Second Psalm predicted.

Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed ... He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

Does Israel have cause for fear? Certainly not. The Lord is on her side. Do the Churches have aught to fear? The answer must be the same as it has ever been for any who set themselves at odds with God. Those who manifest rebellion against God are doomed to decline and the consequences of judgment. Perhaps, as in the past the decline is not immediate. But God is the righteous judge, and his word does not return unto him void. And what a sad day it is when the Church which assumes the power to crown the British Sovereign sets itself in opposition to God and his Messiah! That land has been an exemplar of "Christianity," offering a history of faithful men and women who have been inspirational to many.

If this resolution is indeed the "Anglican mind" what hope can lay dormant that it will yet obey the Lord's command to *"learn a parable of the fig tree"*? Without the sign of a fruit-bearing fig-tree, that is Israel, the Gospel of the "kingdom come on earth" cannot be preached in its fulness. And the great apostle to the gentiles offers for our strengthening the reminder that the whole world is groaning in its travail, awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God, preeminently Christ Jesus himself.

And what word can be offered those individual believers who seek haven in such Churches? Is there anything left but to dissociate themselves from such blindness and to "save [themselves] from this unto-ward generation"?

If your eyes have been opened to see the return of favor to Zion then rejoice and pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof. So the nations shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory (Ps. 102:13-16).

Jesus offered us Israel as the sign to this generation. Some, in arrogance and pride, have overlooked this sign. What shame and confusion awaits those who mislead their flocks! The warning of Paul has been ignored and we can only wonder, what he would have said today in response to those who declare: "We reject any special place for the State of Israel in the light of biblical prophecy."

- P. J. Pazucha -- with acknowledgment an article by the same title in *Jerusalem*.

A Tribute to the Bible

Born in the East and clothed in Oriental form and imagery, the Bible walks the ways of all the world with familiar feet and enters land after land to find its own everywhere. It has learned to speak hundreds of languages to the heart of man. It comes into the palace to tell the monarch that he is a servant of the Most High and into the cottage to assure the peasant that he is a son of God.

Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight and wise men ponder them as parables of life. It has a word for the time of peril, a word of comfort for the time of calamity, a word of light for the hour of darkness. Its oracles are repeated in the assembly of the people and its counsels whispered in the ear of the lonely.

The wicked and the proud tremble at its warnings, but to the wounded and penitent it has a mother's voice. The wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad by it, and the fire on the hearth has lit the reading of its well-worn page. It has woven itself into our dearest dreams; so that love, friendship, sympathy, and devotion, memory and hope put on the beautiful garments of its treasured speech, breathing of frankincense and myrrh.

No man is poor or desolate who has this treasure for his own. When the landscape darkens and the trembling pilgrim comes to the valley of the shadow, he is not afraid to enter; he takes the rod and the staff of Scripture in his hand, he says to his friend and comrade: "Goodbye, we shall meet again," and comforted by that support, he goes toward the lonely pass as one who walks through darkness into light.

- Henry Van Dyke, *Words of Life*

Love to the Uttermost

"Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end".- John 13:1

The Gospel of John contains two parts. The first consists of a record of the Lord's public ministry over a period of three and a half years, and includes the first twelve chapters. The second section, comprising the remaining chapters (except for the last which was added later), relates to the last days of our Lord's earthly life. They largely account for his trial and death, but also include the parting words of encouragement left to his "friends."

Our text is the first verse in this second section of the Gospel. John is writing from near the close of his life. Many years had passed from the washing of feet by the Master in the upper room. Now he appreciates what was not evident at the time those actions took place. And the works set forth in the following verses are explainable only upon the basis of the Master's matchless love. So John prefaces his remarks with these words: *"having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."*

How closely the apostles had been associated with the Master. They saw works of healing, and even the raising from the dead. They heard the Lord confound the arguments of those who sought to trick him into an appearance of sedition. They enjoyed quiet hours of fellowship with him. They had heard the marvelous teachings of the Sermon on the Mount and others. But in spite of these when they entered that upper room so long ago their state of mind was not conducive to the intimacy which was to characterize these last hours of fellowship with the Lord upon earth.

John must have remembered their attitude. He must have been conscious of how filled they were with ambition and of how their jealousies one of the other pushed aside their finer feelings. None had been in the frame of mind to wash the dusty feet of the others. They had come together with pride and perhaps resentment towards one another as they prepared to celebrate the age-old custom of their fathers which commemorated the birth of their nation. They were more concerned with their emancipation from the yoke of Roman bondage than they were about their slavery to sin and selfishness. Was not this state of mind evidenced by the wish of the mother of James and John, who sought that her children be granted the right and left flanking seats next to the Master in his kingdom? It was that kingdom that they expected shortly to be established. And we marvel at his simple answer. *"Ye know not what ye ask."*

How little they understood the bitter cup which they would shortly drink, or the baptism with which they would soon be baptized. They saw but little significance in the Master's words to them:

"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25-28).

Results Of the Quiet Hour

The disciples had been no better prepared to appreciate the spiritual things of God than had their fathers been prepared to sing the songs of Zion in a strange land. But when they left the upper room a change had taken place in them. His love penetrated their selfishness and their spirits had changed, because the Master had prayed for them. He had not prayed for the world-but for those whom the Father had given him. *"All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them."* What words from the savior of the world! How they have extended beyond those few to touch each and every one who would believe in him through their word. *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."* It is this love which binds them as close to him as the branches are to a vine. This love promises them a comforter and assures them that he will not leave them. He has promised to remain with them to the end of the age.

That quiet hour drew these men, from whom he would so soon be separated, into a lasting union with him. Here they had in a few brief hours learned to say, *"Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God"* (John 16:30). There were no more doubts. There was no more envy. Their pride had been swept away by the greater understanding into which he had ushered them. They had been prepared, somewhat, for the coming of the spirit at Pentecost and they had learned about the new commandment which he had given them: *"...love one another: even as I have loved you."*

The Master's followers had learned something brand new. They had formerly been taught by the Mosaic Law to love their neighbors, their enemies, even those who despitefully used them. But now he commands them to love one another: and to do so to the extent that he had loved them. Here is introduced a personal tie between all those who name the name of Christ. Here is a real separation from the world. The world would be able to recognize them as his disciples because of their love for each other. Their mutual love was to be the badge of recognition of their fellowship with him.

This new commandment did not invalidate the older, *"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."* It does, however, introduce a new idea: that there are different "kinds" or "phases" of love. We quote from a well known writer on this new teaching:

"How many kinds, measures, and tones of meaning are comprehended in the word "Love"! It is so in common language even when one specific use of it has been excluded. It is also true in Scripture. There is a difference in the love of God as God, of Jesus Christ as Savior, of our friends and relations, of our neighbors, of our enemies, of our nation, of our race. All are forms of love. But what combinations of ideas and measures of feeling are conveyed! So on the divine side, the Father loved the Son: God loved the world: Jesus loved his own (in that common character): he loved them as individuals: he loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus, and there was one disciple whom Jesus loved specially. We are aware of the differences of impression conveyed in these connections even though it would be futile to try to describe them."

How Jesus Loved His Own

If this truly is a new commandment, how should we apply? How did Jesus love his own? They were in the world then, and they are in the world today. There is no doubt that he loved them, even to the end; but why did he love them so dearly?

In his high priestly prayer Jesus intimates that his disciples were given to him by God. He owns their sensitivity to his being the true and living way. He acknowledges that there is bond of

sympathetic understanding between him and them which unites them. At that time he had kept all except the son of perdition, and in them he finds the raw material for the founding of a new order. Under the guidance of the holy Spirit these would give a start to a movement which would accomplish all that he came to do through the giving of his flesh as the ransom price.

There was an immediate need, however. He must make of these individuals a group: a special class of prospective joint heirs. It becomes clear, then, why he gave them this new commandment, and why he loved them to the end.

To be followers of the Lord his disciples must be ruled by the same spirit that governed him, and they must eliminate self as he had done. *"I do nothing of myself, whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."* To teach self-abnegation he taught them humility. As he had loved them, they should love each other. As he ministered to them they should minister to each other. None were separated as apostles until they had first been chosen. There was no body of Christians until Pentecost. There had, thus, been no precedent for this special love. This was a new commandment.

How carefully these last hours with the Master bring forth this distinction in love. They must prefer each other -- in honor. And as a result we find that the early church displayed this virtue as a prominent trait. Peter evidently understood this when he described the Christian virtues, and finished his list saying, add to your brotherly love, love as the Revised Version marginal reading puts it.

Transforming Love

The washing of their feet was an incident to illustrate a principle. As he served them, they should serve each other. As he laid down his life, they should lay down their lives -- not necessarily to die for one another (although that has been done) -- but to live a life of sacrifice for the benefit of others.

The Master changed the ambitious hearts of these men into hearts filled with faith in him. That upper room was to them a vision of higher things, implanted in their memories as a measure of the legacy of peace which was theirs. No one possessed such a peace as he and only from him could they receive it. His peace resulted from harmony with the heavenly Father, which came from his complete immersion in the holy Spirit. It was evidenced by his enduring love to the end. It was to be evidenced in them by their love for one another -- to the end. That kind of love all men would recognize, and they would recognize [hem to be his disciples. By recognizing his all-embracing love, the pride and ambition which formerly had ruled in their hearts was purged.

Consider the thoughts that must have flooded their minds when the Master stooped at their feet. How many similar examples of his serving love had they witnessed in the preceding years? In that simple act they must have recognized that he put aside his own importance. His love and devotion showed through so strongly that later it is written, *"He loved us and gave himself for us."* Yes, to the individual whose feet have been bathed with the water of the Master's providing, and touched by his hands, the words are changed indeed: *"he loves me and gives himself for me."*

The meaning of sacrifice is clearly seen in its beauty and grandeur. How can one be proud or ambitious in the face of such service? He who loves the Master sees at last how he must love the household of faith in order to fulfill the Master's expectations of him!

The love of Christ for the world was the love of mankind in general. He loved them so much that he gave himself as their ransom. He came into this world for that reason, taking on himself the nature of perfect, human man. Thus he could be a corresponding price for the life lost in Adam. Thus he could meet the requirement of justice and offer everlasting life to those who believe in him. This was the love of God and of the blessed Savior of the world.

There were (and are) those who are in the world but not part of it. He has shown a different kind of love to these. This can be seen in the lives of a limited number of persons. They have been attracted to God through Christ Jesus from the condition of unbelief (as represented in the camp condition of ancient natural Israel) into the condition of being justified by faith (as pictured in the court condition of the levites in ancient natural Israel). There they have:

"...peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we [the consecrated] have access by faith into this grace wherein we [the consecrated] stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Spirit which is given unto us."

This is the transformation and growth which the love of Christ produces in his own: whom he loves to the uttermost.

These must love as he loved. Moreover, these must love as he loves them still. He does not love them to the end of their lives, but rather to the end of his love, and his love we know has no limits. " *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.*" Love carried him victoriously from that upper room across the Brook Kedron and into the bitter experiences of the Garden of Gethsemane. Love also carried him through the humiliation and suffering of his arrest by the mob, his trial before the Jewish council and before Pilate. Love supported him on the cross. Love triumphed in his resurrection, and in his ascension.

How could one consider the experience of the upper room without feeling gratitude to him? How great was the cost the personal cost to him-of his sacrifice. He put away all the things of the flesh and submitted himself to a cleansing from all the carnal things of the mind. The value of things in this life is largely governed by the cost to us -- in effort, suffering, or sacrifice -- to attain or purchase them. How great must be the love of our Lord for his own, for how greatly he did pay to secure them! Even a consecrated mind cannot appreciate the cost to him, but it should raise up our sincere gratitude. How circumspect we should learn to be so that we do not dishonor the name of him who endured so much for us and under whose banner we are enlisted.

Dear brethren, those who name the name of Christ, let us examine ourselves to see if there is any evil in us. Let us cry with the Psalmist: "*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" May we be so filled with love for one another that we can say in truth and comfort: "*O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.*" May we be able to add, We love as thou dost love, even to the uttermost.

The Shadow and the Substance

On Doctrine

"Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."

"For since the law has but a shadow of the good... to come instead of the true form of these realities [literally, "practices"], it can never... make perfect those who draw near." - Colossians 2:16, 17, RSV; Hebrews 10:1, RSV

[Most of the citations in this article are taken from the American Standard Version. Citations from other translations will be so indicated]

The schisms that for nineteen hundred years have rent the church of Jesus Christ into differing and often antagonistic factions have been almost invariably over opinions and interpretations of Holy Writ. They have not concerned the essentials: namely, the salvation which is in Christ Jesus; the high calling; and holy living.

In the early (largely Jewish) Christian church differences arose mainly from questions of Jewish Law. It was the traditions and practices of men which caused dispute, as evidenced by our Colossians theme text. In this end of the Age, in a more sophisticated society which revels in abstract thought the "bones of contention" are commonly matters of philosophy, not of behavior or procedure. They concern what believers *think*, not what they *do*.

Those who are responsible for the quarrels and divisions in the church are almost always the "angels" (that is, according to the meaning of the word in the Greek, the "messengers" or "leaders") whom the flock mistakenly "worship" and follow in their divisive course. The Apostle indicates this in the context of the Colossians text (cf. Col. 2:18-23). Paul explains how serious the consequences of this at

itude can be to the believer who is attempting to *"make his calling and election sure"* (II Pet. 1:10): *"Let no man rob you of your prize"* (Col. 2:18), he says. Such a disastrous possibility gives us reason to reflect on our position. *"Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith"* (2 Cor. 13:5, RSV). The Apostle is telling us all: Do not be too sure that you are right!

The True Faith: What Is It?

Is "the faith a code of doctrines? Or any doctrine? Nowhere in the Scriptures is it so presented. "Faith" translates the Greek word *pistis*, and no reliable dictionary of New Testament Greek defines this word as meaning a creed or belief. Nor does any lexicon of quotations from ancient Greek writers include any such usage. Professor James Strong gives this definition:

"Pistis, (from peitho, to convince) persuasion, i.e. credence; morally, conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly, confidence in such profession... by extension, the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself." [author's emphasis]

This definition, except the last phrase, agrees with the inspired definition of Hebrews: *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (11:1)*. In this sense faith is wholly a mental attitude. It is based on and involves belief, but is never the thing believed. Those

persons cited in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews as examples of heroes of faith certainly had no common code of doctrinal belief, but they did have great confidence in and reliance upon God.

Dr. Strong says *pistis*, faith, has been extended to mean the "system of religious (Gospel) truth itself." That is not what it means in New Testament Greek, however. Its "extension" to include the thing believed has been made by creed-makers and sectarians to give the appearance of biblical authority to their opinions and interpretations. To the Roman Catholic "the Faith" is the sum of Roman Catholic dogmas; to each Protestant sect it is its own particular creed. It behooves the seeker of truth to gain a clear concept of the meaning of "the faith" in the New Testament.

What does Jude mean (Jude 1, 3) when he urges *"them that are called ...and kept for Jesus Christ"* to *"...contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints?"* The scriptural answer to this can be only, to fight against the subversive tendencies of the world, the flesh, and the devil, which would rob the believer of his hope and confidence in the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and his own high calling. A careful examination of every text in the New Testament in which "faith" appears as a translation of *pistis*, will assist the student to examine whether he is in "the faith."

Fundamental Definitions

It is strange that Christian teachers have complicated the subjects of true faith and sound doctrine for such a long time. The Scriptures are simple and explicit in defining their essentials. Only a few scriptural definitions are needed to leave the creed-maker, the sectarian, and the exclusivist without a leg to stand on. For example:

1. What is the true faith? *"Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen"* (Hebrews 11:1).

2. What is true religion? *"Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world"* (James 1:27).

3. What is the kingdom of God? *"for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the holy Spirit"* (Rom. 14:17).

4. "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" *"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent"* (John 6:28, 29).

5. What must be believed in order to come to God? *"...he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him"* (Heb. 11:6). *"And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment"* (1 John 3:23). *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6).

6. What is God's will for you? *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification..."* (1 Thess. 4:3).

7. What are God's requirements for entering his kingdom? *"...adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue ... knowledge... self-control... patience ... godliness ... brotherly kindness... love... For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor*

unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ... for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-8,11).

8. What will admit the believer to a share in Christ's throne? *"for if we died with him, we shall also live with him: if we endure, we shall also reign with him: if we shall deny him, he also will deny us..." (2 Tim. 2:11-12). "But ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me" (Luke 22:28-29). "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).*

9. What things will debar an inheritance in the kingdom? *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and suchlike; if which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).*

10. How can we know that we are of the truth? *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth. Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before him..." (1 John 3:18,19).*

The Scriptures quoted in this unofficial catechism are not the only ones answering these fundamental and comprehensive questions. But no one can deny that they contain a statement of the essentials of salvation and the divine preference which has been promised to the successful runner of the Christian race. Nor can any deny the plain warning of the consequences of non-conformity to these standards. They are binding provisions; parts of a solemn covenant of marriage extended by the heavenly Father to the prospective members of his Son's bride. Compliance with these standards are all that is required for membership in that body by the Father and the Son.

Does anyone who claims the Bible to be their only creed dare to add other requirements to these as a basis of fellowship and joint service with other Christians? The Apostle substantially answers this question: *"Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void, or addeth thereto" (Gal. 3:15).*

If By Any Means...

If these fundamentals include all that is necessary to salvation, why did the God record so much additional information in *the* Scriptures? What do the types, shadows, prophecies, promises, and admonitions have to with the essential doctrine of Christ? All of these other things seem not to simplify but to complicate the plan of salvation. How should we regard them if *not* as essentials?

The Scriptures answer these questions, either specifically or by implication. The non-essential teaching (doctrine) of Scripture is designed to accomplish *at least* four purposes.

1. The Breadth Of the Plan

That is, to explain and adorn the essentials of God's plan, so as to make it attractive to and assimilable to the various temperaments and mentalities ("tribes") of men.

The Scriptures are like the physical world. God provided a variety of food to satisfy every healthy appetite and need. No man requires (nor can he eat) even a small portion of every different kind

of food in the world. (Although some foolish men are said to have tried this feat.) Similarly, no student of Scripture can comprehend -nor needs to comprehend-every teaching of the Bible. It is impossible to do so in one short lifetime.

The Father opens his hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing (Ps. 145:16). The son, as the Father's appointed representative to mankind, proved his right to this primacy by becoming the servant of all (cf. Mark 10: 42-45). This attitude is mimicked by the Apostle when he speaks of his own ministry:

And to the Jews I became as a Jew ... to them that are under the law, as under the law... to them that are without the law, as without the law ... To the weak I became weak... I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some (1 Cor. 9:20-22).

Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will... What then? Only that in every way, whether *in* pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice (Phil. 1:15, 18).

Only the Lord could be the ultimate servant of all. Few could hope to emulate the Apostle by becoming all things to all men. We must recognize then that in the church,

"...there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal."

These words might be paraphrased saying,

"The same spirit gives
Different gifts,
For different services,
For different works of God,
But each one is to profit all the brethren" (1 Cor. 12:4-7).

How free these words are from partisan narrowness or exclusivism. So were Jesus' words to his disciples when they saw a person doing miracles in Jesus' name who was not one of the Master's followers, "*Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us*" (Luke 9:50). It is difficult to recognize the sound doctrine of God and the Lord Jesus Christ if it is spoken by those who are not "following with us." It is important, then, that we heed the Apostle's words, giving special heed to the word "any":

"If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind ... in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself, not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (Phil. 2:1-4).

"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building" (1 Cor. 3:8,9).

2. An Exercise In Discrimination

The variety of scriptural teaching is designed to exercise the disciple in discrimination so that he may distinguish the essential from the non-essential teachings in their applications to his own peculiar needs, to his fellowship with the brethren, and so perfect a mature, Christ-like character.

King Solomon said that the way which seems proper to man ends in death (Prov. 14:12). The Christian disciple who confuses essential and non-essential teachings because he is unable to discriminate between them is in danger of becoming such a man as Solomon describes. Hearty food is for mature men, those who have, by exercise, learned to distinguish between good and evil (Heb. 5:14). This has been a difficult lesson to master and Satan has taken advantage of its difficulty. *"And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness"* (2 Cor. 11:14,15). *"By their fruits ye shall know them..."* (Matt. 7:16).

3. A Course in Independent Study

A variety of instruction in the Holy Writ is given to prepare each successful candidate for the high calling. And each is being prepared for his own particular work in the Body of Christ during the future kingdom. All disciples do not need the same training. Hence, all will not use the Scriptures equally *in* their development.

As the stars in heaven differ from each other, so is the resurrection from the dead. That was Paul's explanation to the Corinthian brethren for this variety (1 Cor. 15:41). Jesus explained to the doting mother (who sought to secure places of honor for her sons in the kingdom of the Master) that those honors were not his to bestow. *"...but to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father"* (Matt. 20:23; cf. Matt. 20:20-25). Paul borrowed from these words when he wrote to Timothy (2 Tim. 2:20), explaining that a great house has various kinds of utensils, some of which are common for everyday use and others of which are gold or silver for special occasions. Even John the Revelator spoke of those who would die "in the Lord" and who subsequently would rest from their labors being followed by their own works (Rev. 14:13).

All of these are indications of service which is directly under the supervision of God. They are educational assignments under an infinitely more liberal and comprehensive "G. I. Bill of Rights" (this one "God Issued" not "Government Issued") than that of which we so often hear. The possibilities for advancement in the service of the King of kings-when properly considered -- fire the imagination and challenge the aspirations of the noblest men. The rewards of earth pale when compared with those offered in the service of God. Hence, Paul speaks freely of *"...our light affliction, which is for the moment, [which] worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory"* (2 Cor. 4:17).

4. Excuses For Divisions

The non-essential portions of scriptural teaching are intended as excuses for divisions. The attitude of the individual Christian in the presence of such divisions manifests the righteousness of the Lord's judgment as to a candidate's fitness for membership in his mystic body because *"many are called but few chosen"* (Matt. 22:14).

There was a necessity for divisions in the church. *"I hear that divisions exist among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you"* (1 Cor. 11:18,19).

Do not misunderstand. God has not been unjust in this matter. In issuing a general invitation for believers who would strive to participate in the heavenly kingdom God did not state any of the qualifications in words that could be misunderstood! But on the other hand, that great volume of supplemental and contributory teachings affords ample room for differences of opinion, "parties, divisions, factions," which have often been fanned into "wraths, jealousies, strife, and enmities." Some of these have culminated in persecution, murder, heretic-burning, and bitter war. But we may be certain of one thing. None of these has been practiced (the word in Gal. 5:21 means "performed repeatedly or habitually") by those who would be members of the Body of Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact the Apostle warns us that such cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Unity and tolerance are indispensable. They can only be acquired by associating with those with whom we do not agree. They must be practiced in spite of differences of opinion which will arise. They are the ripe fruit of love, while divisions and exclusivism are always the evidence of the lack of brotherly love -- whatever doctrinal excuse may be made. There is no test in being united to those with whom we agree. There is also no opportunity there to develop tolerance. The fellowship of congenial brethren is valuable: they are strong and honorable and we do well to copy those traits in them. But we cannot neglect all others. The apostle admonishes us:

"Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary [to the proper development of the others]: and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable [valuable], upon these [if we heed the Apostle] we bestow the more abundant honor [value]; and *our* uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; whereas our comely parts have no need: but God tempered abundance honor [value] to that part which lacked [comeliness]; that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another" (1 Cor. 12:22-25)

Christian unity is perfected on the basis of the essentials of doctrine and character development in adherence to the seven "unities" found in Ephesians (Eph. 4:3). Non-essentials, which have been the ostensible reason for divisions among the consecrated brethren of the present harvest time are, as always, convictions that are precious and important to those who have participated in the controversies and separations. To hold as secondary these personal convictions in order to maintain unity on the essentials as urged in the Scriptures is indeed a searching test of Christian character.

Shadows Or Substance?

These controversial conclusions to which we have referred involve the shadows of scriptural teaching. They are not concerned with the substance of the Scriptures. The substance of the "doctrine of Christ" is contained in the New Testament. The shadows of "the good things to come" are represented in the types, symbols, and similarities of the Old Testament.

The Book of Hebrews declares that only the substance (the reality) can perfect those who approach it. The reason is clear. The shadow is never the reality. It approaches it. It may touch it. But the shadow and the reality are not the same. Yet Christian teachers insist on dogmatic acceptance *of* the shadow as a basis for full recognition of fellow Christians -- even though they have accepted the reality (the substance) of the New Testament and have acted upon that acceptance by a change of life.

Let us take an example. Bible students agree that the Jewish day of Atonement (under the Law) was a shadow of the Gospel Age. Many brethren differ as to their understanding of what significance certain animal sacrifices had, particularly the Lord's Goat. Some say it represented the sacrifice of the church, others say no.

The actuality of the church's sacrifice must be accepted by all. It is stated in the New Testament. Jesus said that without bearing a cross there could be no discipleship (Luke 14:27) and that certain kingdom honors were connected with having "continued" with him in his temptations (22:28-30). John writes about laying down our lives for the brethren (1John 3:16). Paul encourages the presentation of living sacrifices by the brethren (Rom. 12:1), connecting our enduring in these with our reigning with Christ (2 Tim. 2:12). Elsewhere he speaks of becoming conformed to the death of Christ (cf. Phil. 3:10,11,21) so that he might share in his superior resurrection. Finally there is the Revelator. In the vision of the glorified church he sees those who followed the lamb wherever he went (Rev. 14:1-5). There is no disputing the words of these verses. They furnish a basis for intimate Christian fellowship. They are the substance (or "form of sound words") of the church's sacrifice which believers accept. Having accepted the reality shall we make the shadow a separating dogma? Shall we deny fellowship to some brethren -- including the service of eldership -- if they are qualified?

Let us take another example of artificial terms of separation. Many have disagreements about the language which is used in describing the covenant or arrangement through which the Lord has been accepting and blessing the followers of Jesus during this age. Some hold, essentially, that this arrangement is the first part or "paragraph" (speaking metaphorically) of the New Covenant of which Jeremiah spoke (Jer. 31:31-34). These say that the second part of the Covenant becomes operative in the next or Millennial Age. There are others who disagree, saying that these two arrangements are two separate covenants. One, they say, operates in the Gospel Age. The other operates in the Millennial Age. Such also say that only the latter arrangement should "properly" be called the New Covenant.

Both sides agree as to what is being accomplished in both ages. The substance is indisputable and admitted. The shadow is the basis of controversy and division. When we achieve that unclouded vision beyond the veil will not these differences appear to be just as childish as they truly are!

The Parousia

The doctrine of the secret *parousia* or presence of the Lord in the end of the Gospel Age (before he takes to himself his power and reigns as king of earth) is illuminating and stimulating to those who believe it. But it is a deduction based on interpretations of scriptural chronology and prophesied signs concerning which it is quite possible to have a reasonable difference of opinion. It is therefore not set forth in the Scriptures as a criterion of orthodoxy -- that is, a valid reason for division in the church. Nor is its belief a scriptural qualification for eldership.

Our Lord promised to be with his church "*always, even unto the end of the [age]*" (Matt. 28:20) and "*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*" (Matt. 18:20). He declared that "*...apart from me ye can do nothing*" (John 15:5). At various times during the entire Gospel Age earnest saints have encouraged their brethren to "practice the presence of Christ." This presents an interesting thought. The sincerest believer in the invisible

presence of Christ as a matter of "Present Truth" would be hard pressed to explain the practical difference to a Christian between his Lord being "with him" throughout the age and his being "present" in the end of the Age. To draw this distinction it is necessary to be technical and theoretical.

There is a scriptural test which is not a belief in a technicality. This test is a true measure of loyalty and devotion to our Head. Paul states it as a very practical matter: he said that *"henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness [a righteous crown], which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day..."*

Then he extends that idea to others, *"...and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing"* (2 Tim. 4:8). All who have been Jesus' followers have been *"looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of the Lord"* (2 Pet. 3:12).

This is a searching test; one that is proper to apply to ourselves. Do I look forward to the end of my earthly life? Am I eager to meet my Lord? Can I submit my life and my attitude toward my brethren to his gaze with confidence of his approval? This is the scriptural test. Nowhere do the Scriptures justify a requirement that others believe the dogma of the *Parousia* as a qualification either for fellowship or for eldership in the church.

In ancient times it was an offense to draw a sword in the presence of a king-except by his direct command. Offenders were subject to arrest and imprisonment "at the pleasure of the king." If we profess to believe in the presence of our King, how much more serious it would be for us to draw the sword against our brother because we think him partially blind!

How embarrassed we would be if, when we enter into the presence of our King beyond the veil, we find that through neglect or disregard of the "signs" we have failed to recognize our King's presence during the harvest time -- particularly if we have been critical of those who did not profess to believe it!

The whole-hearted plea of those who accept this view should be that they might through loving, patient, and (if necessary) long-continued fellowship with those who disagree with them be used by the Lord to enlighten others on the subject. On the other hand, those who have not accepted this view as an established fact should also pray to God. If he is gathering his saints they should ardently wish to be enabled to recognize that fact. And neither side should express a settled conviction on such an important subject until he has carefully examined all twenty-odd occurrences of the word *parousia* in their contexts in the New Testament. Even when this has been done we should *all* heed Paul's warning that *"Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know"* (1 Cor. 8:2,3), because *"...the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"* (2 Cor. 3:6).

Sad Conditions

It is lamentable that Bible students of this antitypical Laodicean (the present stage of the church, we think) period are re-enacting the folly of the entire Age. They are exchanging the substance of "the faith" for the shadow of dogma; their birthright for a "mess of pottage." The latter is good to eat, but it is hardly a bargain at the price. Who *will* be held by the Head as being the most responsible for his own sad condition? Let the Prophet of the Lord reply:

Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto them: Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because ye thrust with side and with shoulder, and push all the diseased

with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up one shepherd over them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd ... And they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have broken the bars of their yoke, and have delivered them out of the hand of those that made bondmen of them ... And ye my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, Saith the Lord Jehovah (Ezek. 34:20-23,27,31).

Let all who are tempted to disparage a brother's spiritual gift, his spiritual attainments or activities (assuming their own superiority) prayerfully consider this warning from the Lord. No earthly success, accomplishments, or signs will be of any value if when the great Shepherd appears (fulfilling the prophecy) he disavows those who claim to have performed great works in his name. Such will be denied the crown of *glory* (1 Pet. 5:4) which they thought to attain because they attempted to rule over his heritage as over the strong and fat sheep of the earthly flock.

- Condensed from H.E. Hollister

The Question Box

What is a true Christian?

Christians are:

a) Disciples of Christ -- (meaning pupils)

- taking no thought for their life, what they shall eat; neither for the body, what they shall put on (Luke 12:22).
- forsaking all else they take up the cross and follow Jesus (Luke 14:26,27).
- continuing in the Word and loving one another and
- bearing much fruit (John 8:31; 13:35; 15:8).

b) Believers-having faith by the hearing of the word of God (Rom. 10:16,17).

- being an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity (1 Tim. 4:12).
- taking no thought for their life (Luke 12:22,23,27).

c) Witnesses for the good news, "light" in the world.

- witnessing unto the utter most part of the earth (Luke 12:27).
- not casting pearls before swine (Matt. 5:14; 7:6).
- believing on Jesus; not abiding in darkness; doing good; seeking peace (John 12:46; 1 Peter 3:11).

d) As "little children," and "good soldiers."

- converting and becoming as little children; loving one another, as they have been loved (Matt. 18:2, 3; John 13:33, 34).
- traveling in birth until Christ be formed in them; loving not the world, neither the things in it; loving in deed and in truth; knowing that God hears us (Gal. 4:19; 1 John 2:13, 14, 15, 18; 4:6).
- enduring hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (II Tim. 2:3).

e) The "body of Christ."

- having the spirit of life because of righteousness (1 Cor. 12:17; Rom. 8:10; Col. 1:24).

f) A "peculiar people" (people for a purpose).

- being conformed to the image of the son, called, justified (Rom. 8:29,30).
- having been chosen and called out of darkness into his marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).
- being purified as a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14).

g) Learning to be "judges," "sympathetic priests," and "kings."

- so that they can judge the world, the angels (1 Cor. 6:2,3,11).
- being made unto our God kings and priests: to reign on the earth (Rev. 5:10).

h) Called to be saints" (1 Cor. 1:2).

i) The "temple of God" and "lively stones" (Eph. 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5).

j) Called to do the "will of the Father."

- presenting their bodies as a living sacrifice, not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their mind, holy and acceptable unto God (Rom. 12:1,2).
- coming out from among them, and being separate, touching no unclean things... abounding in everything, in faith, utterance and knowledge, and in grace; proving the sincerity of their love (2 Cor. 6:17; 7:1, 2; 8:8).
- having become a son of God by adoption, born of God, being a worshiper of God, through his Son, Jesus Christ. A servant of God, filled with the holy Spirit, keeper of his word, who asking of the Father in the name of the Son and believing that it will be given; being taught all things of God by the holy Spirit (John 1:12,13; 9:3 1; 12:26; 14:16, 21, 23, 26; 16:23, 24; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5).
- Forgiving men of their trespasses against them
- Obeying their parents, honoring them, provoking not their their children to wrath;
- not pleasing men but serving Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, forbearing one another;
- being strong in the Lord, standing perfect and complete in all the will of God;
- being sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, the helmet of salvation;
- comforting and edifying one another, laboring among the brethren, esteeming them very highly in love for their work's sake;
- being at peace among them, comforting them, supporting the weak with patience toward all;
- rendering not evil for evil but following that which is good to all men;
- rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, quenching not the spirit, despising not prophesyings, proving all things, abstaining from all appearance of evil, submitting unto God, resisting the devil;
- patiently suffering for well doing, keeping their soul to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator;
- doing the will of God so that he that overcometh might inherit all things (Matt. 6:14; Eph. 6:1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10; Col. 4:12; 1 John 2:17; Rev. 21:7).

k) Those who study to show themselves approved of God.

- rightly dividing the word of truth;
- being blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of being riotous or unruly;
- being vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach;
- ruling their children and their own house well;
- being stewards of God, not self-willed, not soon to anger, not given to wine, not strikers, not given to filthy lucre;
- holding fast the faithful word as it has been taught;
- holding the mystery of the faith in pure conscience;
- having great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus;
- having wives that are grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things (2 Tim. 2:15; Titus 1:6, 7, 8, 9; 1 Tim. 3:2, 8, 9, 11, 12).

- Francis L. Earl

What is Basic Christianity?

That Christ's death has somehow given us a fresh start.

If he did that for me, and if I am at all possessed of a spirit of appreciation I should respond in kind.

God's Loving Plan

The time of earth's trouble has come
And the darkness 'round us grows deeper,
But our faith is sure
And our hope secure
In God, our guide and keeper.
So We'll hold the truth
Be we man or youth,
And reproaches gladly we'll bear;
For this light that's ours
With its many powers,
Will brighten and lighten care.

We know that our God has a plan
That will bring rich blessings to all,
For the thing they need
Is the promised "seed"
To rescue them from Adam's fall.
Then the wars will cease
Through a reign of peace
And the truth will be learned by all men;
For the Word of God
Will be spread abroad
And will fill the whole earth then.

We know that the Lord's plan will be
More complete than man can devise,
And each heart will sing
Of the joy 'twill bring
When those who "sleep" will all arise
As a gift from One
Who is God's dear Son,
And they'll learn his love for all men;
For the way will be
Very plain to see
So they'll not need stumble then.

As God has now opened our eyes
To perceive his wonderful plan,
In our gratitude For this hope embued,
We'll let our light shine as we can,
In the hope that some May desire to come
And to seek the light that is true;
Then an honest heart May be set apart
To love him and serve him, too!

- Laura E. Kelsey

Some Thoughts on Discipleship

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." - Luke 9:23

Discipleship! How little consideration this subject has had amid all the great doctrinal disputes which have marred the history of the visible, professing church! It has been orthodoxy, measured by the strictness of adherence to a creed or system of interpretation established by man or men, upon which the church's history has focused. Unfortunately there are many standards of orthodoxy. And it follows that no matter how correct a person's views may be simply holding the correct set of opinions does not make one a follower of Jesus-it is not discipleship.

The New Testament word for disciple is not an exact synonym for "pupil," "student," or "scholar." It always implies a personal attachment to Jesus along with the other ideas of adhering to his teachings. Being students of the Bible in no way implies discipleship. The word carries with it the idea of being disciplined; being trained; of being developed by instructions and exercised in godliness. Thus we read:

"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls (Matt. 11:27-29)."

Of the various scriptural illustrations of the relationship between Christ and the church it is that of discipleship which is the scale by which our lives are judged by God and those whom we contact each and every day.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see -your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-15). As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world (John 9:5)."

Jesus could make such statements when he walked upon this earth. But we have no light emanating from ourselves. Whatever light we may display is the result of the reflected grace and glory of Christ Jesus in us.

There is always a tendency to allow activity to displace the inward work of grace, transformation of life (Rom. 12:2) and sanctification. As he closed his sermon on the mount, Jesus warned us concerning this tendency:

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"

Many would come to Jesus presenting their works as proof of their status, to whom he will say *"I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"* (Matt. 7:21-23). Can you imagine their astonishment? Workers of iniquity? What was wrong with preaching in your name? Casting out

demons? Doing wonderful works? Ah! They were doing this on their own, having their own program and activities, disregarding the divine instructions; not being "co-laborers with God."

Paul beseeches his readers to present their bodies as living sacrifices. He urges them to be transformed (changed) not only to become informed about God's will and purposes, nor merely to yield to some moral reforms. They were to be transformed by the renewing of their minds in order to prove, or put to the test, that God's will is a good will, a perfect will, an acceptable will.

How often men dissociate the will of God from the idea of sacrifice, and conversely sacrifice from the expressed will of God. This is illustrated by the presumption of King Saul in presenting his own burnt offering. The Prophet was quick to rebuke him, however, reminding him that it was better to obey God than to offer sacrifices (1 Sam. 15:22).

As Matthew arranges the beatitudes our Master announced in the sermon on the mount, we see a series of qualities which characterize the followers of Jesus. Some have suggested that the sermon on the mount does not fit this world. Jesus never said that it did. It was not taught to the world, for we read,

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying... (Matt. 5:1,2)"

Others suggest that these beatitudes are for the kingdom age, being impractical now. But, *"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters"* (1 Cor. 6:2)? Certainly the saints could never teach the world the righteous laws of the kingdom if they had never applied these rules to themselves in this life. The teachings of Jesus are for disciples, now, even though their moral and spiritual excellency is not possible for, nor attractive to, the fallen human.

Consider the conditions of discipleship: forbidding even a word of contempt; having no impure desires; loving and praying for those who spitefully use you; rendering good for evil; warning against hypocrisy (play acting); warning against being overly concerned about daily sustenance; warning about judging, and at the same time showing the necessity of judging between a true and false prophet; exhorting to build on the Rock, and giving obedience to his teachings. The question arises, *"Who is sufficient for these things?"* Jesus foresees the difficulty and prescribes, *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"* (Matt. 7:7).

Many professed Christians have taken false comfort in these words, thinking that this is of general application, that here they have a blank check which only needs to be completed and presented for payment. We ourselves, who have the first fruit of the spirit, are often overtaken in this same fault, as James writes, *"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts"* (James 4:3). Self-interest dominates fallen man, even those now disciples.

The first requirement of a disciple is expressed simply, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt. 5:3). That is, blessed are the self renounced. This agrees with the words of Jesus that unless a man deny himself he could not be his disciple (cf. Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23). If God is to have his way in us, we must constantly be engaged in the battle against self and self-will. Two wills cannot coexist in one mind. And faith is necessary if it is to be the will of God which attains the ascendancy. The natural man can only understand natural things. The naturally unseen must become the most real to a person if they are to trust the teachings of Jesus. One must become absolutely convinced that Jesus is *"the son of the living*

God," the manifestation of God to man (cf. Heb. 1:1-2; John 1:1-18; 1 John 1:1-4). *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"* (Matt. 17:5).

There are three fundamental laws dealing with self:

- (1) self-preservation,
- (2) self-interest,
- (3) self-denial.

The first of these laws is good, for "self-preservation is the first law of nature." That is why God has woven the quality of fear into our nature. Fear, of itself, has some good qualities. Fear guards one against a discontinuation of existence: death. This law of self-preservation is evident even in the vegetable creation. Each blade of grass, each tree, each shrub seeks to maintain its existence as best it can.

The second of these laws, self-interest, characterizes all of Adam's posterity. It was introduced by him who first resisted the will of God. Self-interest elevates the individual self as more important than all else. Self-interest is what gives a person the sense that the world revolves around them. The more self-centered the individual the more miserable and loveless they are.

The third law is self-denial and it is basic to the kingdom and sovereignty of God. It was declared frequently by our Lord in such words as these: *"Except a man deny himself he cannot be my disciple."*

Self denial is not easy. We are not merely speaking here of denying ourselves of some thing, but of denying the very selfhood, the ego, the very way in which we think. Necessarily, there has to be an adequate motive to induce this submerging of self. That motive is declared to be *"the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."* Little is accomplished by laboring under our enslavement to sin other than making ourselves increasingly aware of just how entrapped we are. But the spirit directs our minds to the grace and mercy of God, to the *"gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation"* (Rom. 1:16).

It is the holy Spirit which convicts *"of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment"* (John 16:8). The one thus coming under conviction is already being dealt with by God for the purpose of leading them to repentance and eventual discipleship: *"...no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father"* (John 6:65). Even though one has heard and responded to the calling of God the response must be entirely voluntary. *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls"* (Matt. 11:29). *"He shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD"* (Lev. 1:3). There is no coercion on the part of God. Not even in the case of Jesus who was *"called of God"* (Heb. 5:4). His response was *"Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart"* (Ps 40:7,8). And again, *"As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep"* (John 10:15). *"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again"* (John 10:17).

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18),

in accordance with Hebrews 10:10. Even in Gethsemane he could have had twelve legions of angels to deliver him from the impending ordeal of trial, crucifixion, and death. Hear his prayer to the Father:

"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39).

Here we see Jesus crushing out of himself every possibility of his own will ever being exercised against the will of the Father.

Self-denial and cross-bearing must coexist. The idea of cross-bearing is misunderstood, being mostly thought of as referring to enduring that about which nothing can be done anyway. Although it is said of Jesus that he "*endured the cross, despising the shame,*" yet it is also written, "*What shall I say? Father, deliver me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour*" (John 12:27). No! It was not the enduring of what could not be escaped; it was his delight to be an instrument, the outworking of God's plan, and the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of himself (2 Cor. 5:21).

Jesus discussed cross-bearing with his disciples before he was taken to be crucified. There must have been some significance, therefore, which the disciples would have understood from their days, else Jesus would not have used it as a figure-of speech. What was its meaning? Crucifixion was the Roman method of execution for cases of extreme lawlessness. It was utilized both to show contempt for the condemned (by making him carry to the execution site the wooden beams to be used in his own execution) and to demonstrate the ruthlessness of their punishment. Thus, this custom had become the source of Jesus' figure of speech. It meant, as he used it and as the disciples would have understood it, that faithful obedience to God's will might lead to murderous hatred by the governments of earth and whoever was associated with them. So it is that we read in Revelation "*be thou faithful unto death [not "until"], and I will give thee a crown of life*" (Rev. 2:10), for it is the degree of faithfulness that is expressed. The object is obedience to the Father's will, as it becomes understood, and at whatever cost. Jesus exemplified such obedience. He not only made himself of "no reputation" but also obeyed "unto" death (cf. Phil. 2:5-11). It was by such obedience that he became the "*author of eternal salvation to all who obey him*" (Heb. 5:9)-following him as disciples and obeying him submissively.

Let us look at an illustration.

"Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper" (Luke 14:16-24).

One of the lessons here illustrated is reluctance to enter God's kingdom, reluctance to participate in the bountiful favors offered to faith and to fellowship with Christ in heavenly things. Whenever

there is an opportunity to do the will of God there is also a reason for doing something else. Such are the excuses given by the servant in the parable. But they are only excuses. The real reason for declining God's invitation is that a person's earthly interests-which are real and good-are given higher priority than the things of the spirit.

The natural mind is unable to understand the significance of the things of God given unto the believer (1 Cor. 2:14). This is well illustrated in Matthew's Gospel:

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be, it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:21-24).

It is intimated that Satan will always attempt to intervene in our self-denial and cross-bearing. He will do whatever is necessary to make the will of God appear to be offensive, rather than the joy and delight which it can be. That our self-denial must be complete, however, is repeatedly taught, as for example in this Revelation citation:

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (Rev. 14:4).

"There is no such thing as easy discipleship." Why should there be? Think of the magnitude of the reward for following Christ, if you can. To be confessed before the Father and all the holy angels; "to be like him and see him as he is"; to be a partaker of his glory; to sit with him in his throne and reign with him in bringing the covenanted blessings to all the families of the earth: these are the joys held out to the faithful footstep follower. It is still a difficult and narrow way, but it leads to life-eternal life.

A multitude had been following Jesus. Turning to them he said (Luke 14:25-35): if a man comes to me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brethren and sisters-yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his cross, following after me, cannot be my disciple.

Following these brief comments are recounted two parables that describe why such things could not be. But those very parables left ample room for misunderstanding. One was the parable of the tower builder who had insufficient funds for the project he planned and was unable to finish it. The other was of the king going out to war against another king with superior forces.

The point Jesus is making in both parables is that half-heartedness will not do. Nor will insincerity. Unless there is complete devotion to the will of God a compromise will eventually result. The intimation is clear (Luke 14:26) that opposition may come from your family, friends, household. If there is any compromise to be made, it must be on the part of the would-be disciple, because those of the world have nothing to compromise! "Count the cost" does not (or rather, should not) discourage any from discipleship. Instead, it is a warning that it must be sincere or there will be inevitable compromise, defeat, and confusion. Earthly relationships, fitting though they may be, will challenge our love and devotion to Christ.

Jesus next takes up the figure of salt, saying that if salt has lost its flavor, how shall that flavor be restored? The professed disciples shall have lost their "flavor" if they succumb to the prejudices of those who find the way of Christ objectionable. Such "flavorless" Christians are unable to bring conviction to the reality of eternal life and judgment.

Brethren,

"... seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1,2).

- F.A. Essler

Entered Into Rest

Ella Norman, IL

When we are faced with alternatives and a choice of ways confronts us the question is not: Is it good or evil? Is this helpful or hurtful?

No, the question we must ask ourselves is: Is it of this world, or of God? For since there is only this one conflict in the universe, then whenever two conflicting courses lie open of us, the choice at issue is never a lesser one than: God or Satan?