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Example Better than Argument

See to it, brethren, that you keep the channels of your heart clear so that the flow of God's spirit may continue full and unabated. Let no mud from the world, no blockages of sin nor subtler accumulation of small negligences choke them. Above all, by simple earnest prayer, keep your hearts opened wide to the Sun of Righteousness. His light will shine on you; his grace will nurture fruitage through you; and his spirit will work in you mightily.

Our remarks presuppose an important point. We live in a time of diffused unbelief. To counter this unbelief, the Christian needs a heart that has been enlivened to live a spiritual life.

We suggest that the antidote to widespread skepticism [short of the establishment of Christ's kingdom upon this earth] is an enlivened church. We may indeed desire to meet the enemy in other ways on this point (1 Pet. 5:8). To this end we ought to pray that God would send forth defenders of truth; that he would establish his church in the firm belief in disputed truths; that he would sway the thoughts and tendencies of men in myriad ways.

We should attach secondary importance to controversial defenses of faith. They have their place. Doctrinal defenses may confirm a waverer, or establish a believer. They show onlookers that the Christian position is tenable. In rare cases they may prevent heresies from spreading and descending upon another generation. Unfortunately, most often they are barren, bearing no wholesome fruitage. Where the power of argument succeeds to change the mind there may still remain a heart just as void of God's law. A mind encased in the chain mail of denial may void all the good the power of logic thought to do.

You may hammer ice on an anvil, or bray it in a mortar. It is still ice, except for the portion melted by the heat of percussion, which will soon congeal again. Melt it in the sun, and it flows as sweet water, mirroring that light which melted it. In just this way, hammer away at unbelief with the sledgehammer of logic. You may change its shape but it is still unbelief, though you have ground it to powder. A mightier agent must melt the ice of unbelief -- the fire of God's love, brought close by a will ablaze with the sacred glow. Therefore, while giving due honor to other forms of Christian opposition to prevailing unbelief, I urge the cultivation of a quickened spiritual life as by far the most potent. Does not history bear this out? Depend upon it; we shall do more for Christ by catching and exhibiting more of his spirit than by arguments -- more through words of prayer to God than by words of reasoning with men.

A higher tone of spiritual life would prove that the gospel was mighty to mold and ennoble character. If our hearts were gleaming with the glory of God, men would believe that we had met more than the shadow of our own personality in the secret place. If the fire of faith were bright in us, it would communicate itself to others, for nothing is so contagious as earnestness. If we believed, and therefore spoke, the accent of conviction in our tones would carry them deep into some hearts. If we would trust Christ's cross to stand firm without frequently trying to prop, it, and more often try to point to it as the answer, we could accomplish more. Then, Christ's cross would draw men to it. When the power and reality of Scripture as a revelation of God are questioned, the best answer in the long -- run will be a church which can offer itself as a witness. Detractors may listen when we can say: "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes" (John 9:25, NIV). Brethren, are you actively witnessing to the fact that you have heard his voice?

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Troubled Waters

"For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." -- John 5:4-8

This account may be divided into three features: the healing, the waters of the pool, and the man healed. Jesus had come to Jerusalem to celebrate one of the great annual feasts. In the course of his trip he arrived at the Pool of Bethesda, where he saw a terrible sight.

Scattered among the five porches adjoining the pool were numerous suffering and sick people, rather like today's hospitals. Imagine the sympathy which the Master must have felt towards these poor suffering people who lay before him. If we, in our hardened and fallen minds, can be touched by such scenes of sorrow, how much more must he have been struck by them. How his heart must have yearned for these upon whom ruthless Satan had brought the agonies of sin and death.

Only One Healed

The record indicates that only one among them was healed. This was not atypical: either of the Lord or of prophets of previous days. When Elijah went to the widow of Zarephath there were many widows in Israel. There were also many lepers in the days of Elisha, but that prophet healed only Naaman the Syrian.

The Lord's First Advent was not, primarily, for the purpose of healing the sick. He came, rather, to lay down his life as a ransom for Adam, and through him all mankind, so that all could be raised from the dead. Any healing of the sick, any raising from the dead pictured his Millennial work of healing.

Secondly, Jesus' miracles demonstrated the power which he would exercise on this earth in the age when Eden blooms and dead men live again.

Foreshadowing Coming Glory

The Scriptures tell us that our Lord's miracles foretold his future glory. They illustrated the work of restitution from *sin*, from sickness, and from death which our great Redeemer is to accomplish. In this work he shall grant his church a share. Just as his followers share with him the sufferings of this life, so are they to share in dispensing blessings to a world under the New Covenant in the coming age.

Why did Jesus select this man for the demonstration of his power? The Scriptures do not say. Nothing in the account suggests any greater faith in him than in the others present at the porticos of the Pool of Bethesda. In fact there is nothing to suggest that he had any faith in Jesus at all. He did not know who Jesus was, and did not learn about him until after the miracle.

"Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, "Take up thy bed, and walk?" And he that was healed wist not who it was; for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place" (John 5:12-13).

Perhaps this man who had suffered for thirty -- eight years with his affliction had become penitent. Whatever pride he once had it is likely that it had been dissolved by the length of this bitter experience.

Essential Humility

Humility is an essential to the Christian -- though never stated in such clear terms. During this Gospel Age we find that it is. the humble, who have also demonstrated true repentance, to whom divine favor has been shown. To such Jesus said, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my father." Have these words been fulfilled? Yes. During the intervening years it has been a greater work to open the eyes and ears of understanding than to restore seeing and hearing to natural ears; it has been a greater work to cure "sin -- sickness" than to cure its symbolic representation -- the disease of leprosy. These works shall also have a fulfillment in the coming age. Then, with the church associated with Jesus, the entire race of Adam's children will be cleansed and healed.

How was this man healed? There at the Pool of Bethesda Jesus asked the man a question. "Wilt thou be made whole?" Jesus did not try to force healing upon him. He did not try to coerce the man. At no time has man's will ever been coerced by God, for man was made a free moral agent. Any attempt to do so is a violation of Jehovah's own law, which he laid down for man: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Note, that the words do not advise one to choose whom their brother or sister will serve! He or she have an equal right, as do we, to choose -- freely.

A storm arose on the Sea of Galilee. Thunder rolled and lightning flashed. The gale swept the frail ship from billow to billow. And in the ship's hold there lay one asleep. It was Jesus. Was he anxious? Was he fearful? Was he concerned over the outcome? No, he slept. Was he not ready to still the tempest and calm his anxious and troubled disciples. Certainly he was, but there was a prerequisite, and he waited for it. For what was the master waiting?

"Lord, Save us, We Perish"

The Lord Jesus Christ was waiting for his disciples to realize their danger and to admit their helplessness. They needed to depend upon him for salvation. When they prayed he acted. He rebuked the storm, the winds, and the waves. No coercion was necessary, because the disciples followed the proper course: they acknowledged their need. The attitude was why they had been chosen as disciples in the first place, not because their lives were perfect. And today he is waiting and ready to hear our call. He is an "ever present help in time of trouble" -- a present refuge in time of storm.

What a contemporary lesson this is! How are we to present the gospel to men? Are we to force our message upon them -- , grand, true, and sublime though it be? No. Though the, unbelieving world abides in its comfortable skepticism, there must be no coercion, no threats, and no fears instilled by the words of men. We can wait just as Jesus waited. In time we too will hear above the noise of the tumult the agonized cry, "...save us, we perish." Then we may speak to the world [Grk.: *kosmos*, "world order"], and then may we be heard.

Satan, as the god of this world, has had his effect upon men. But however evil this age has been, it has worked good to Jehovah's people. Neither the dead forces of the past nor the destroying power of the present can touch his people or their message. It has been so from age to age. God's own can wait, for the future belongs to them. Ah! What a heritage hath the people of God! It is more valuable than the gold of Ophir or the cattle upon a thousand hills. This heritage is independent of the blowing winds, for God's own are not built up upon the shifting sands of time but upon the solid rock of the Eternal.

Who are included in the people of God? Those who offer a positive answer to the Master's question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" And for the benefit of such we are to expend our energy, just as Jesus expended his. And for the rest, those who answer "No," we shall wait. Before long the age of favor will have passed, having accomplished its goal of developing the last member of the Gospel Age church. Then there will be a "house of mercy," not merely for the few elect, but it will be a "house of mercy," a "Pool of Bethesda" for all men.

In the days of the Judges there was a man named Othniel. There was also, at that time, a city named Kirjath -- Sepher. As a general of his commander, Caleb, Othniel besieged this city. He succeeded and the city fell. The name of that place was changed to be Debir.

The meaning of these three names is significant to our story about the troubled waters. "Othniel" in Hebrew means "strength, power, spirit of God"; "Kirjath Sepher" means "city of the book"; and "Debir" means the "word of God."

Don't you suppose that when Othniel marched into Kirjath Sepher, taking control, that its citizens were upset -- or stirred? Wouldn't there have been great agitation among them? But Othniel's success was so complete and the city was so revolutionized that its name was changed. Is this not a wonderful illustration of the complete success that Jehovah's mighty Arm shall have during his kingdom?

To many in this age the Bible has become a mere book, mere literature, having no power, strength, or spirit.. It is like the pool of Bethesda before the stirring of its waters. To many today the healing power of the Bible has been removed -- and the peoples of this age cannot find it. When this happens those to whom the Word of God has shown as a beacon, a light -- bearer, there are inevitable results. Defeat, disaster, humiliation, swiftly come. And if the Word of God is ever again to regain its position of power and authority among the people then a spiritual "Othniel" must come -- the Messiah. Like in the days of Othniel, the spirit, the strength, the power of God must again appear on the scene to stir up the people and infuse his spirit into their reading of his book.

When God's spirit takes hold upon those who read the book it is no longer a mere collection of words. To them the pages form their meeting place with God -- the Word, the expression of God.

From the depths of its meaning comes power to stir hearts and change lives. And it becomes a living, potent, vitalizing power in the children of God. The Word takes over the rule and control of thought, action, and life.

"For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had" (John 5:4).

The Pool of Bethesda was spring -- fed by reservoirs in which gases were entrapped. When the gases accumulated sufficient pressure they would force out varying amounts of water. The flow of water would then also become charged with these gases. The pool, as a result, developed a reputation for healing the sick.

Many thought that an angel was responsible for these seeming miracles. It was thought that the angel agitated the pool and that people were healed by spiritual power. While we feel certain that such was not the case, yet this interpolation would do no harm to the picture which is portrayed by the Evangelist. The Pool of Bethesda pictures life -- giving spirit and truth, the saving truth of God revealed through and pictured in Jesus Christ. Throughout the Gospel Age the Bible has been on earth, yet without movement, without agitation. This water of truth cannot yet, wash away that sin -- sickness for which it was given to men by God.

Remember the Day of Pentecost! What a stirring occurred on that day! What an agitation there was as Peter, that great messenger, stood upon his feet quoting from Joel and David, stirring the waters of truth until men's hearts were stirred and troubled as never before, and in that one day three thousand were healed of the leprosy of sin.

"The footsteps of Jesus no longer echoed at the Pool of Bethesda. But her antitypical waters were troubled and stirred upon that day of Pentecost. How the study of the Acts of the Apostles stirs the heart as they read of the apostle's journeys through the land, and of their ministry which daily added lives to the church. Ah, what a moment took place in the spiritual "Pool of Bethesda" in those glorious days before the apostles fell asleep in death, when everywhere voices were heard asking, 'What must I do to be saved?'"

The movement gradually subsided. For a while the waters were quiet, until at last they stagnated. Stagnant the spiritual waters might have remained had it not been for faithful "angels" or "messengers" who during the Gospel Age, each in their turn, stepped into the Pool of Bethesda. These brave and faithful men stirred up the waters of the life giving waters of truth. They were controlled by a superior "Othniel" -- by the true power and spirit of God -- and they turned a figurative "Kirjath -- Sepher" into a "Debir." Yes, they transformed a book, that is the Bible, into the Word of God.

Living waters -- in the nature of these they must be moving, flowing, pulsating with life. Else they are thick lazy streams without waves, without ripple, like the sluggish waters of the Dead Sea. Self-seeking men have started their own movements. Yea, they have produced some minor ripples on the surface of mankind by their labor and exertions. But such have not been lasting. Some spiritually nearsighted ones may even have stepped into their pools of self-exaltation without noticing what brought about the agitation of these supposed pools of healing water. Such might have come expecting spiritual health, only to be disappointed and lose faith in the water itself.

When men of arrogance, ego, and self-will stir up movements and agitations of "spiritual water" there is sure to follow unrest and confusion. The exaltation of leaders brings corruption, disappointment, and heartaches among those whom the leaders deceive. This has happened so often among men that the Lord's people do well to be consciously on their guard, and not to think that such things could not happen to them!

Let's draw the circle of prophetic fulfillment one step closer. In the healing we saw first a picture of the healing from sin of the Lord's true followers during this age and the work of the coming age. Next we noticed in the water of the pool a picture of the movements in the church of the

Gospel Age which result from divinely commissioned messengers. Now we will look at the sick man himself.

This man was one of many who lay in the porticoes of the Pool of Bethesda. He had been sick for thirty eight years. We know that he had been unable to step first into the pool after the troubling of the waters. Jesus seeing him there knew that he had been sick a long time..."Do you wish to be healed?," he asked, "Wilt thou be made whole?" What a pitiful response the Lord received, when the man replied that he had no one to put him into the pool. Others, obviously, crowded ahead of him. Perhaps the other sick people had friends with them, who would assist them to be quicker into the water. But this man had no one. Why did Jesus select this man? It may be that he provided an illustration of his power that no one of the others would have offered.

The man had been sick thirty eight years. Is this detail without significance? We might suggest that the man represents the fleshly People of God, Israel, who are soon to be healed of their spiritual sickness and restored to full favor with God. From the time of their bondage after Joseph's death until the Berlin congress of nations approximately thirty eight centuries had elapsed -- thirty -- eight centuries during which the sickness of Israel had worsened; thirty eight centuries during which Israel waited for the coming of Messiah; thirty eight centuries waiting for the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise. But they had no one...

Miracle of Centuries

What had Israel done for that long period? In symbolic language a "bed" frequently pictures a condition of faith. Thus, during her waiting, Israel had been resting upon the bed of their faith in God: in the Abrahamic promise, in Moses, in his promise to them, in their faith in the Law, and in their faith in the coming Messiah.

Israel still rests upon the comforting bed of faith even though for centuries they have been pursued by persecution. But she has never been destroyed. What a miracle she has been for these hundreds of years. Just as the bush which Moses saw in the wilderness, burning but not being consumed, so Israel has been through centuries of affliction but she also has not been consumed. As that desert bush continued to burn because God was "in" that bush, so has Israel continued to burn through all these centuries because God has been "in" her and "with" her.

The awakenings sent by God among gentile Christians have been much like the man at the Pool of Bethesda. The gentile believers enter into the waters by the assistance of God's messengers, but the Jew, unaided, has lain *by* the side of the pool, unable to enter. How truly have the Jewish people been shackled by the bed of their own faith. They have been unable to respond to the quickenings of the spirit of God. Yea, even the Reformation of a few centuries ago shook the world but passed by poor little Israel. The ecclesiastical heavens and the political world of that day were torn apart by the Reformation, but Israel passed through unscarred.

Now Jesus, with staid and steady steps, comes to Israel. We hear him say, *in* majestic. tone, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." So shall the nation of Israel be healed; will they arise; in like manner will they walk. This man may take his bed with him. Yes, he was to take up his bed -- not to forget it, nor to leave it -- he is to go his way with it. Can -- these words be insignificant, words from the lips of him whose command controlled the winds, the waves, yea the spirits bowed?

If the man is cured, why must he take his bed with him? Obviously, he could still use his bed in the same way that others used theirs. They lie down at night and take their rest upon them. But this man is no longer shackled to his bed. He takes it with him.

Likewise Israel, when they are healed, are not to renounce their Jewishness: their faith or their customs. They are not to cease being Jews, for when all Israel is healed there will be no gentile church for them to join. The church of the Gospel Age will be gone from this earth. Israel will no longer be shackled to the Law, for they will have found freedom in Christ. To them the Law will be magnified. Its limitations will be broken. Their sabbath will have become the age of Christ's kingdom and it *will* be in that day that they take their rightful place in it.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

The scribes and Pharisees denied the man who had been healed his newly won freedom. In their opinion his cure had come at the wrong time, too soon. This man should still be on his bed. He should still be suffering, still shackled to his bed. Thirty -- eight years was not enough. Theology says, "No, Israel, it is not time for you to be healed. But if you must be healed now, then you must join some organization, some sect, some group, but on no account must you carry your bed around with you. You must break with all things Jewish, and with your customs. You must renounce all this."

What is the response of Israel? "The same who made me whole said unto me, 'take up thy bed, and walk,'" and this was *as* much a command as was his command for me to arise. You must admit that I should obey the command of the One who gave me life and health. That is what I intend to do."

The scribes and Pharisees asked the healed man, Who told you to take up your bed? Today, figuratively speaking, religionists ask the same question. By whom were you cured? Was it by Catholicism? Was it by Protestantism, or was it by this group, or was it by that group? Which group do you intend to join? It must be one of them, for you most surely cannot stand aloof. It may be that you will have to leave *those* with whom you are associating, but you should know that there is none other, under heaven or among men with whom you can be saved than by associating with our organization.

Israel *will* not understand such questions. They may not even care to be bothered by them. They will likely reply as Jews have in other ages, "Denomination? organization? group? We don't know what that means because we did not ask who it was that healed us. Instead of joining anything, Isaiah words the reply of Israel very succinctly,

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the word; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

There was born in 1948 a new nation in the land of Palestine. The name she chose for herself was the glorious name of "Israel." She has seen troubles in the past forty years, but nothing compared to the trouble yet to come upon her. But Israel she is, and when God rises to the prey, when he performs for her his act, even his strange act, her troubles will come to an end, as Jehovah has promised. God promised that "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed ... and it shall stand forever." Soon there shall arise a *cry* of contrition from Israel. For centuries she has been an alien in the gentile nations. She wandered far from her Palestinian homeland. She wandered the gentile mountains and to her they have been hard and cruel. Soon, however, God will restore her to his fold in Palestine. And as we strain our ears we *will* soon hear her agonizing plea from, out of the midst of her trouble:

Thou wilt not spurn contrition's broken sigh,
Come, great Messiah, come;
Oh hear my prayer, and heed my humble cry,
Come, great Messiah come.
I've wandered far away o'er mountains cold,
I've wandered far away from home.
Oh take me now and bring me to thy fold
Come, great Messiah, come.

Jesus asked the man "...wilt thou be made whole?" The impotent man answered, 'Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.' Jesus saith unto him, 'Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.'

-- H.V. Warren

Audio Version of the Herald

Circumstances are finally such that the production of an audio version of the Herald magazine is a possibility. Before we

make final production commitments we need to know how many brethren would subscribe.

The Audio Version of the Herald will be produced bimonthly, just like the printed version.

You will receive a cassette every other month. The cassettes will be shipped by first class mail, in their own hard plastic storage container, just like cassettes you might purchase from the store.

A full year's subscription to the Audio Herald will run \$17.50.

If you would like to receive the Herald on cassette please send us your name now. Do not send any money. We will bill you after production begins.

'The LORD will rise up as he did in Mount Perazim, he will rouse himself as in the valley of Gibeon -- to do his work, his strange work, and perform his task, even his alien task.'

Isaiah 28:21, NIV

The Question Box

Give your response to this question: "Are you going to attend that Bible study group again .to hear those people lie to each other some more?"

What constitutes the "lying" the questioner thinks the Bible study group to be guilty of is unclear. Are their thoughts on Scripture untrue and therefore a "lie" or does he believe that they are dishonest in their every day relationships with each other -- rife with the spirit of accusation and evil speaking?

Paul praises the nobility of the Bereans for receiving "the word with all readiness of mind" (Acts 17:11) and searching the Scriptures daily to see whether the things they were told were so.

Again, the church is admonished to "despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:20-21). If one does not hear a contrary thought, one cannot test it for its accuracy. Hopefully, if provably wrong, those at the study would also have the grace to see the error of their views and modify them accordingly.

If on the other hand the lying referred to is dishonesty in interpersonal relationships, the solution is far different. Jesus describes the proper procedure for ascertaining the truth of such conflicts (Matt. 18:15-18).

He who is willing to make such bald accusations of "lying" without first following the scriptural guidelines runs the danger of himself being accused of falsity. These words are too frequently true: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Rom. 2:1).

-- Carl Hagensick.

This is the first time that I have heard differences in the congregation referred to in this way. Truth and error will always coexist in our present fellowship. How do we react to this dilemma? One can leave the fellowship or one can recognize that within the body of Christ there can be unity in diversity.

We would have very few books in the New Testament if Paul had taken this negative attitude. The Corinthians, the Galatians, the Thessalonians; all of these had moral and doctrinal problems. Paul's letters to them are evidence that he wanted to help them solve their problems, not just write them off.

The perfect scriptural response to this question is found in Titus:

For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach -- and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith... (Titus 1:10-13).

-- Andrew Jarmola

Children of the Consecrated

"Lo, Children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." - Psalm 127:3

The opening words of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1 NIV) might be viewed as the description of a father preparing a home for his children, earth being the dwelling place and the heavens being the atmosphere of that home.

God created earth and man to reveal the facets of his own power, *glory* and perfection. Made in the image and likeness of his Creator (Gen. 1:26) man was given dominion over the earth (vs. 26) thereby reflecting the power of God as King and Ruler of the universe. In his moral power man reflected the righteousness and holiness of God. But an even higher, greater, aspect of God's likeness was instilled within the first human parent -- "God is love." (1 John 4:8). As infinite love, God lives not for himself alone but imparts his life and shares it with others.

God created man in his own image, male and female. In the earthly home, that is in the love that exists between husband and wife and between parent and child, the love and blessedness of God's home in heaven was meant to be reflected.

As we know, sin has marred that reflection and has brought a fearful ruin to almost every home on earth. Through their human fathers every child on earth has become partaker of a sinful nature. And fathers, often discouraged by the besetting sins of their own flesh, feel themselves incapable of blessing their children. What results? Instead of the home becoming a natural pathway to the unseen reality of heavenly things it often becomes a way leading to misery and destruction.

As God brought forth Adam in his own likeness, fallen man, *in* the person of Adam brought forth sons in his own likeness. By one act of disobedience (Rom. 5:19) sin conquered Adam and the whole human race still unborn within him. Adam ate the proverbial "sour grape" and his child's teeth were set on edge. In a fit of jealous rage Cain rose up and slew his brother; and Cain was only one step outside the paradise of Eden, only one generation *from* the perfection of Eden. How somber a light this first view of family life casts on our homes. How easily parents can trace the sins and evil tempers of their children to their own shortcomings and transgressions.

But, thank God, what sin has destroyed grace restores. God's revelation points back to the original fatherhood and motherhood of earth. Consecrated parents may take heart. The creator of the original family has also redeemed it -- and he creates it anew.

"In thee, and in thy seed, shall I bless all the families of the earth" (Gen. 24:18). Once, through the law, God cursed families. Now, through grace, he proposes to bless families. And the most natural starting place is in the homes of the consecrated. God watches over these homes with tender interest. He adds his love and lends his power to every parent who desires to be the minister of his holy purpose.

Long before Christ, even before Abraham, God marked the beginning of his purpose to bless all families. Consider Noah: "And the Lord said unto Noah, 'Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee I have seen righteous before me in this generation'" (Gen. 7:1).

By faith Noah prepared an ark and saved his household from destruction (1 Peter 3:20). In this he witnessed to generations to come that the faith of a believing parent obtains a blessing both for

himself and his children. Noah's deliverance from the flood introduced a new dispensation and was the first clear revelation of God's principle of faith as a means of deliverance.

Through Noah and his sons God revealed a great truth. The family arrangement was the means through which redemption would be accomplished.

Because of heredity the family had become sin's strongest ally. Heredity was the chief instrument through which sin acquired universal dominion. Now (after the flood) the family was to be delivered from sin, adopted into the coming covenant of grace, and ultimately become the instrument by which God's kingdom would be established universally on earth. Formerly the relationship of parent and children merely transmitted sin from one generation to another. Now that same relationship began to transmit the kingdom and power of God's grace. Many centuries would pass before the promised seed of the woman would be born and ultimately fulfill God's objective to restore the race. Nevertheless, in the strength of Noah's faith, the children of righteous Noah were blessed with their father.

"Come thou and thy house into the ark" (Gen. 7:1). Here God assures Noah that the ark in which the parent was to be delivered from death was intended for his children also. Noah had faith and its strength was sufficient to hold his family together; and together they built the ark. Scripture does not say that Noah's children had faith. But, they voluntarily assisted their believing father in the work. Needless to say, when the flood came and destroyed the race, Noah's children became as faithful in believing God as Noah was before the flood.

How does a parent bring salvation to his house? "By faith Noah prepared an ark for the saving of his house." By living in faith; by acting on the providences of God in faith; by praying for, and with, your children can rest assured that God's power will work on your behalf.

How do you get your children into the ark? The answer is simple and clear: go into the ark and live there yourself. Your children will grow up with the consciousness that living with their parents is living in the ark. Live in the ark raising your little ones wholly separate from the world. Abide in Christ and your children will realize that being near you is being near Christ.

Speaking of Abraham God said: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18:19).

The Lord said Abraham would become a mighty nation and through him and his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. Here we see how high a premium God placed not only on Abraham's faith, demonstrated by offering up Isaac in sacrifice, but also in Abraham's parental determination to command his children to keep the ways of the Lord. Abraham's parental determination was part of the faith that finally secured from God that great covenant agreement. Afterward Abraham is spoken of as "...the father of the faithful."

In Genesis 17:11 we read: "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." Here we are taught that circumcision was a "seal of the righteousness of faith. A "seal" is a confirmation of something that has been settled, transacted, and secured. Abraham believed God and God counted his faith as righteousness and received him into a covenant of friendship. Circumcision was a divine seal; the assurance of this covenant. Circumcision was also a sign of that purity and holiness which marks God's people, setting them apart from all others.

Sin and unholiness also, have a sign. When Satan took possession of the human family through sin the very first sign of sin's possession was Adam and Eve's consciousness of their nakedness. They were ashamed. They covered themselves with leaves. They hid their reproductive organs because they were ashamed of them. Instinctively Adam and Even knew that the fountain of life had been polluted. Circumcision, cutting off of this part of a child's anatomy, therefore stands for the removal of that shame causing sin.

As consecrated believers brothers represent our Lord as the head of their homes while sisters represent the chaste bride of Christ. Together they picture the "second" Adam and the "second" Eve and the great work that lies just ahead of restoring all the families of earth back to atonement with God. We believe the spirit of that great work should now be in progress in the homes of consecrated believers. Children of the consecrated are sanctified and stand in the same position as the world in the Messianic Age. Their home environment should therefore reflect Millennial Age conditions where holiness and righteousness hold sway and where the world, the flesh and the devil are cut off.

It isn't wrong to teach your children that you and they are different from others in this world. God approved of and blessed Abraham because he commanded his household after him to keep the way of the Lord. The humanist spirit of modern society has deeply penetrated into family life and many parents have no use for the word "command" as it was used of Abraham. Many present day parents feel that the "healthy" development of a child's mental and moral powers will be suppressed by demanding submission to their parents will. But true liberty of mind and character, as seen from the scriptural viewpoint, consists of having command over one's own will. The first act of mastering the will is submission to parental authority. Yielding to parental control is the path to self-control. Self-control is the only true liberty.

"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." (Exod. 20:12). The child who is taught to honor and accept his parents superior understanding will acquire, as he surrenders his own way, power over his own will. This power remains undeveloped in a child who is taught that he need do nothing unless the parent has first convinced him of the propriety of the act and has obtained his consent.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." (Eph. 6:1). Those who fear the word "command" have not seen the heavenly harmony between authority and love, between obedience and liberty. Parents are more than friends and advisors. They have been clothed by God with a holy authority to be exercised in leading their children in the way of the Lord. We speak here of "command" and "authority" in the sense of our heavenly Father's rule over us. His rule is loving and affectionate but possesses an authority not to be despised. So should humans exercise parenthood over their children.

The heart of the matter concerning consecrated parents and their children comes from Jesus words. "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).

What deep significance is found in the command to "suffer," or allow the children to come unto me. Those mothers who brought their children to Jesus had undoubtedly heard the earlier words of that chapter and they brought their little ones to be blessed by this wonderful teacher (cf. Matt. 19:16). But Jesus saw his disciples rebuking these women. The disciples sometimes found Jesus' words hard to understand, so how could these children understand him? What could these little children have to do with him? Jesus hears them and says, "Forbid them not, allow them to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

"Allow them to come..." Dimly we begin to understand that Jesus and little children are especially suited for each other. When consecrated parents reflect the rebuking attitude of the disciples they quench their children's youthful grace and expose them to the smothering effects of systematic religion.

Child faith consists of the very first step of God's requirement for entering his kingdom -- coming to Jesus. This simple gospel is just what a child needs. His childlike faith is ready to trust and believe one so kind and loving. His humility has no difficulty in confessing the need of help. And nothing appears more simple and natural than to follow and obey this loving savior. But above all the child at once grasps what older people often fail to apprehend; faith and salvation center in a living person, in Jesus, and not in a religious system.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me" (Matt. 18:4,5). A part of this incident was a question posed by the disciples of Jesus. "...Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:1)? Jesus often spoke of the kingdom. To the disciples it suggested the idea of power and glory. How utterly strange and incomprehensible must have seemed Jesus' answer to their question. He called a little child and set him in their midst. He said that as long as they were thinking of who would be the greatest they could not even enter the kingdom. They must first become as little children; in God's kingdom the most childlike would be the greatest.

The deeper our sympathy with the child nature, recognizing Jesus in it, the closer and more complete our understanding of Jesus. How wonderfully applicable this is to parents. In creating a family God sets a little child in the midst of a father and mother and through their child he opens to them visions of the kingdom of heaven. Through the child nature he reveals the qualifications for its highest place.

The beauty of childlikeness is the absence of self. True childlikeness loses itself in everything around it. The curse of sin makes every man his own center. Even when he seeks the kingdom of heaven he still thinks of being the greatest in that kingdom. The true child nature lives and rests outside itself, in the parent. It loves and rejoices in being loved. Jesus said this naturalness and simplicity is something heavenly.

The spirit of the world is very opposite. Its crushing competitiveness and arrogant ambition seeks only excitement, possessions and power. It destroys all the child's natural beauty and sensitivity while nurturing stubborn pride and self-centeredness.

Christian parents who have the means to gratify the tastes and pleasures of their children are especially in danger of destroying the simplicity and tenderness of the child life by permitting and stimulating worldly desires. In the midst of much Bible teaching the heart of true religion may be eaten out by the caustic spirit of the world entering the home.

Consecrated parents should clearly understand what Jesus meant when he spoke so strongly of being childlike. Value the childlikeness and simplicity of your little ones. Realize that in their tender susceptibility to impressions they are all alive to what surrounds them; both to the fostering influence of the heavenly life, or withering effects of worldliness. Believe that between God's spirit and childlikeness there exists a wonderful affinity for each other.

Consider another vital factor in raising up a child. Parents must serve as a conscience to their children. The moral training of a child aims specifically at training him to refuse the evil and

choose the good, even when no parent is near to help. In conscience every man possesses a guardian and helper of inestimable value. A wise training can establish the authority of this inner rule, leading the child to look on the indwelling guest, the conscience, not as a spy or reproachful enemy but as his truest friend and best companion. The authority of his parent and the child's conscience must be linked together. In the parents absence the weight of these influences will be strongly felt.

The success of all true education consists in aiding the pupil to teach himself. The aim and success of moral training must of necessity consist in forming the habit of a child ruling himself and always listening to the inward monitor. Cultivate in the child the power of self-control, of recollection, of quiet thoughtfulness, that he may always wait to listen for the gentle inner whisper that tells him to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Conscience, however, while it always urges what is right, does not always know what is right. If the mind is wrong in its views of good and evil faithfulness to conscience leads to choosing the evil and refusing the good. The inner life of conscience is generally reliable but only the light from above is flawlessly reliable.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). Important to a child's Christian education is an exposure to all that the Bible contains. Equally important is the child's heartfelt acceptance of God's Word as the final authority on the full spectrum of life's choices.

The authority of the parent, the child's conscience, and God's Word: these form a threefold cord that cannot easily be broken. It is a cord that will bind the child to the throne and will of God teaching him to refuse the evil and choose the good.

So far nothing has been said concerning the doctrines of God's plan. We would not diminish the importance of doctrinal teaching in a child's training. It is good that a parent bring before the child's mind the scriptural teachings concerning the "*ransom for all*," restitution, chronology, and other subjects, while the spirit of Christ always leads on to doctrinal truth, the reverse is not automatic. Doctrinal truth does not always lead on to Christ. The knowledge of Bible truths often results in headiness and high mindedness, as the Apostle Paul wrote, "knowledge without love is puffed up" (cp., 1 Cor. 13). Let an affectionate love for God and Christ be your children's foundation because within that love is a passion for all truth.

We urge you consecrated parents to fully trust God to be the author and power of your family life. In faith work with him to create, here and now, a reflection of the heavenly home you yourselves hope one day to inhabit.

-- Ronald M. Proskan

The more we live by our intellect, the less we understand.

-- W. James

Character Development, Conformity to Christ

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication" - 1 Thessalonians 4:3

[Christian writers of the past have erred regarding some the items of truth on which clear light has been shed in the harvest of this age. But, some of these writers were unusually perceptive of the nature of sanctification and submission to the divine will. The following extracts from Fenelon are good examples of such insight.]

Deprivations are for strong men. What forms may deprivations take? They may be as varied as the characters of men; each suffers according to his necessity or the designs of God. How is it possible to know what is to be taken off if we know not what we have on?

Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer (Ps. 19:12-14).

We cling to an infinity of things which we never suspect; we only come to realize that they were a part of us when they are snatched away. Since you felt the blow, it is evident that it fell upon the sore spot in your heart: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3); "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

External objects are not now so much the subject of the Spirit's indwelling: God is removing from us the "I" which is the center of self love; he pursues it without cessation. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." (1 Thess. 5:24)

To deprive a man of his clothing seems harsh, but it is nothing compared with the discipline which strips off his skin and muscles and reduces him to a skeleton of bones. Cut off the branches of a tree, and far from killing it, you add to its vigor; it shoots out on every side; but attack the root and it languishes and dies. Thus the grace of God makes us to die to self. All is to be taken away within us but our will to surrender all to God that he might work within us without reservation. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13).

The spirit's method of operation is not always the kind of experience that we anticipate; that which we expect finds us prepared, but God surprises us in the most unexpected quarters.

"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job. 23:10-12).

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24);

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things 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. 4:16-18).

Happy is he who esteeming himself nothing, does not put God to the necessity of sparing him "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not" (Heb. 12:7)? Happy is he who never hesitates, who fears only that he follows with too little readiness. Blessed is he who, when asked for a sample of self denial and devotion, boldly presents his entire stock and suffers God to cut from the whole cloth; this indeed is true victory. Thou only, O heavenly Father, can give such liberty and peace of mind as is then enjoyed.

God never leaves the willing soul of his truly consecrated child until he has rendered it supple and pliable, by putting it to every needed test.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy (1 Pet. 4:12,13)

At one time the person is to speak frankly, at another be still; he must be praised, then blamed, then forgotten, then examined anew; he must be low, he must be high; he must suffer condemnation without uttering a word in self defense. He must be willing to find himself weak, restless, irresolute, in the merest trifles, not surprised nor discouraged at the discovery of his own weakness.

Blessed is he who thus gives himself to God; he is delivered from his passions, from the opinions of men, from their malice, their hatred, their maxims, from himself. He has obtained a simple, pliable will, which is no longer divided between God and any earthly thing; a pliable state of the will which desires what God desires, rejects nothing but what he rejects. In this state of mind all things are lawful for me and his commandments are not grievous.

"Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee" (Psa. 63:3). "Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name" (Psa. 63:4).

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead (Phil. 3:8-11).

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample (Phil. 3:15-17).

-- Extracts from Fenelon (17th Century)

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool; shun him.

He who knows not, and knows that he knows not, is a child; teach him.

He who knows, and knows not that he knows, is asleep; wake him.

He who knows, and knows that he knows, is wise; follow him.

Of One Heart and Mind

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." - 1 Peter 3:8

On the last night of our Lord's earthly life he gathered his apostles together and following the meal he left his closest disciples with special words designed to strengthen them for his soon departure.

After three and a half years of teaching the apostles by precept and example, what last words would you imagine Jesus to leave them with? What truths contained such compelling value to the Master as to merit inclusion among his last instructions? Well, Jesus' last discourse is recorded in John (John 13:31 - John 17). They are words spoken to the faithful few, beginning when Judas had left the upper room.

He began his remarks by giving them a new commandment to love one another and ended it with a prayer that we might be one. Of all the truths related by Jesus on that night, perhaps none were more significant than the love and oneness which he illustrated in washing their feet and which he conveyed to them by precept and prayer.

What an ideal the Master left for us; important and exceptionally difficult to follow! Important because humans need support and growth. Difficult because the body of Christ is diverse.

All men are not naturally compatible, not even Christian men. Great effort needs be expended in pursuing ideal Christian love and unity, given our differences and our imperfections. How can imperfect beings live up to a perfect standard? The ways of the flesh are defined in the New Testament, and among them are contention, strife, evil speaking, etc. All such characteristics must be fought against if we are to reach our ideal *in* Christian fellowship.

The Purpose of Our Fellowship

The Apostle Peter expresses the purpose of our fellowship: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having fellow feeling [the Greek means "to enter into, to share one another's sorrows and joys"], loving as brethren, tenderhearted and humble -- minded towards one another" (1 Peter 3:8, author's transl.). The word translated "finally" means "the ultimate purpose or goal." The ultimate purpose of Christian fellowship is, essentially, the condition of Christ's body "being of one heart and of one mind."

Early in our Christian walk it is difficult to grasp the reason for the diversity of attitudes among brethren towards their consecrations. We enjoyed illusions as to what "being of one mind" meant. But we came to see that likeness in thinking and temperament were not the goal, but rather that much used and little -- (practically) -- understood phrase of "unity with diversity." Though it seems a contradiction in terms, it is true that oneness of mind is an impossibility without appreciating our differences in thought and temperament. Rather than being frustrated by these differences, we must work with them and grow by them. To do this we must be students: of human nature and of the new creation. We are exhorted to this in the Scriptures. "Consider one another to provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). Considering one another does not mean a passive reflection upon the niceties of our brethren's characters. The Greek word rendered

"consider" means to "observe fully." This means that we observe our brethren's character, their strengths and their weaknesses.

What a challenge this is! Can we see our brethren's weaknesses without judging harshly? Are we as compassionate and understanding as we are towards ourselves?

It is easy to judge our brethren harshly when we see their weaknesses and failures. This often results in our rebuking them or withdrawing our fellowship from them. Both of these courses of action may be right in their respective places, but our Lord has shown us a more excellent way.

Our Lord's Example

The scene is the last night of the Lord's earthly life. In the upper room there arose a dissention among the disciples. Who would be the greatest? How this must have pained the Lord to hear. He himself had such great need of comfort and encouragement, yet this clamoring was all he found among those closest to him. And yet, unto the end he loved his own. Not by a mere verbal reproof but by a singularly profound act he taught them a nobler lesson, a lesson which teaches all who ever love him. He arose from the meal and washed their feet.

In the act of washing the feet of the disciples Jesus looked beyond their unrighteousness and appealed to their love of righteousness. By illustrating ideal fellowship, he tapped their love of righteousness and drew them away from unrighteous conduct. Jesus' act demonstrated that he believed in their love of righteousness even though their actions betrayed it. What a lesson for us in our relationships with our brethren!

We need expressions of confidence from one another. Our failings and the trials of the way are difficult enough. If we must cope with them alone, without the understanding and compassion of our brethren, they become harder.

We need expressions of confidence because of the influence we have upon each other. It is natural to be influenced by others. We may even act the way others make us feel: Some people may accept us warmly and openly and we feel comfortable and unguarded while with them. Others may convey a measure of rejection, dislike, or disapproval. With these we may feel intimidated, ill at ease, or guarded in our fellowship.

How do we make brethren feel when they are near us? Do we accept one another warmly and openly? Are we demanding of each other, measuring brethren by what they are not rather than by what they are?

If Christian fellowship means anything at all, it means more than putting up with each other. It constitutes accepting and understanding our brethren for what they are and encouraging them to be all they can be, encouraging them to the greatest possible growth in the spirit's fruit and grace.

A lovely ideal this is. But it is impossible, unless we build upon a scriptural foundation. "The harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those that make peace" (James 3:18, RSV). A climate of peace between us [a true peace, not one based on false conceptions or the peace of indifference] will foster the development of a rich fruitage or harvest of righteousness.

We do not always need external adversity to develop spiritually. We can develop amid the strife which arises among us. It is the power of God that brings such growth about. God wills that peace develop among us.

We cannot share what we do not possess. There can be little peace, little real absence of conflict, unless we are at peace within ourselves. Our attitudes towards others are largely based in our own self-composure. Harshness and touchiness are often borne of personal frustration at our own failures and foolishness. Personal composure is the frequent source of a stability which cannot be easily irritated or frustrated by others.

Challenges lie between us and Christlikeness. But few can handicap us as much as fear and insecurity, that is, the lack of self composure. Fear and insecurity restrain our fellowship. Many never experience deep fellowship because they fear being misunderstood, being unappreciated, rejected, etc. Some see us as weak and foolish while others find us strong and wise. We are neither -- exclusively -- but a combination of these and many more elements. We need feel no intimidation or threats from others.

Fear and insecurity handicap our fellowship. How? Because men are generally less at ease and less able to have meaningful interchange with the insecure and the ill-composed.

What happens if we are not experiencing peace, composure in our lives? If we are unable to allay our fears and insecurities we become preoccupied with our troubles. When this happens we are unable to show more than superficial interest in others. Insecurity leads us to endless striving for human approval, instead of divine approval.

Our composure must not be subjected to human approval. It must center in our relationship with the Lord. So, the sum of all this is simply that the closer we are to the Lord and the more fully we experience his peace, the greater will grow our capacity to reach our ideal in fellowship.

Doctrinal Differences

Another challenge faces us. This challenge is hardly unique to our day. But it threatens us with devastating strife and division unless it is mastered. We speak of doctrinal controversy.

Peace between brethren is sometimes a rare commodity amid today's doctrinal conflicts.

Whatever our position on a particular point let us not allow a contentious spirit to disrupt either our fellowship or our personal equilibrium.

In Paul's days the controversy which raged concerned the Law. It was a matter of life and death (Gal. 5:1-4). But Paul said elsewhere "avoid foolish questions and genealogies and contentions and strivings about the Law: for they are unprofitable and vain" (Titus 3:9). The word translated "contentions" means "quarreling and wrangling." And the word for "striving" means "a battle." Paul warned Titus against battling over the Law. Titus was not to become preoccupied with the contentious spirit caused by such battles. Why? Because they are unprofitable, vain, useless, and empty.

Paul did not encourage an anything goes attitude. Nor do we. His actions towards the leaders of the Judaizers (Acts 15, Gal. 2) demonstrate this. Coupling his words and his actions we arrive at the time -- tested maxim: Contend for the faith without being contentious.

What of students of the Bible today? Sometimes bitter contention arises over lesser matters. How useless and empty this is. Something has gone wrong.

Yet, in saying this the author in no way diminishes the value of the harvest message. I support the writings of C. T. Russell. I believe strongly, brethren, in the importance of personal study, particularly in the six volumes of Studies in the Scriptures. It is not good enough to be spoon -- fed by elders in an ecclesia. It is not enough to think that we "know" a matter without studying it ourselves. Truth sanctifies. Study edifies. We are stewards of the Lord's truth and as such we are responsible to him for our actions and understanding.

Another challenge to attaining Christian fellowship remains to be discussed. This is more threatening than those already discussed. There is an ingrained selfishness within our depraved human natures. Selfishness threatens us with an exaggerated self -- esteem. It threatens us with a lack of appreciation and concern for others. But rather we are told to esteem one another better than ourselves:

Let nothing be done as self seeking or vanity, but in humility of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man only on his own interests, but also the interests of one another (Phil. 2:3,4).

Selfishness magnifies both a man's supposed strengths as well as magnifying the failures of others. Paul calls us to see our brother's strengths and our own weaknesses. Appreciating the qualities in others which are superior to our own will help us to think humbly of ourselves. It will help us to look away from other's failings -- not to knock down others so as to elevate self -- as those who see themselves superior so often do. Have you never thought you were doing well in the "narrow way" because of something you do that others do more poorly?

Selfishness sows contention and discord. James speaks strongly about selfishness. To catch the impact of his thoughts we translate these verses more literally than does the Authorized Version. "Where there is jealousy and self seeking, there is anarchy and every evil work" (James 3:16,17, author's transl.).

Self seeking can lead to anarchy -- that condition in which every man is for himself -- wherein brothers pull apart rather than together. James encourages us to seek instead the wisdom which is from above. This is a wisdom which is first pure, then peaceable, reasonable or forbearing, compliant -- not determined to have its own way in everything -- and full of compassion and good fruits, without doubting -- believing and showing confidence in one another -- unfeigned or without pretense (James 3:17).

Imagine a fellowship in which nothing is done in selfishness but humbly with each one esteeming the other person's strengths. Imagine a fellowship in which each looks out for the other person's interests. It almost seems a utopia, does it not?

Our Need For Each Other

No one's spiritual growth is independent of their interaction with others. No man's spiritual vision is all embracing. Mature Christian strength lies in our convictions and ideals, but it embraces also an appreciation of other views, convictions, and the temperament and way of thinking of others. We need claim no infallibility; we need feel no threat from differing perspectives: they can add new dimensions to our thinking and offer checks and balances to our excesses.

We need to look out for one another's interests. But we need to do so with care. It is easy to see simplistic solutions to other people's problems while being scarcely able to cope with our own. Our viewpoints dare never become dictates or guidelines for another. When they do they can not

only be too self assertive but can also damage the other. "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions separate them like the bars of a castle" (Prov. 18:19).

Many times have we seen currents of tension and discord ruin brethren's fellowship. That the potential should go unrealized is tragic, there is so much we can gain from one another and so much we can share.

There are few more precious gifts in life than to need and to be needed. A writer once said of the human family, "we are all in the same boat, in a stormy sea, and we owe each other a terrible loyalty." I think those sentiments have a special application to Christians.

Today there are no persecutions to drive us together. But if we can learn and understand something of the trials endured and the crosses borne by our brethren we will have a greater sense of fellow -- feeling, a greater sense of the shared adversity and struggles of this Christian way. We can learn that we do owe each other a terrible loyalty. This is a oneness beyond mere friendship. The wise man tells us something of this in Proverbs, "At all times the true friend shows himself loving, and as a brother is he born for adversity" (Prov. 17:17). A true friend shows his love at all times, but he proves himself a brother by loving in the midst of adversity. Mutually shared adversities minimize our differences; they have a way of getting us back to basics.

The Christian's walk can be very lonely; we crave comfort and encouragement. How often have we failed to see our brethren's needs, how often have we been overly demanding of one another? It is little wonder that at times we have felt more comfortable with less demanding, worldly folks.

The Scriptures speak of the reality and the ideal of fellowship. Paul speaks of the reality saying that we should forebear, or put up with one another in love (Eph. 4:2). At times when we simply put up with one another -- in love.

This should not diminish our efforts to reach our ideals. Indeed, Paul says that love is forbearing, but more, forbearing and kind, or the proper thought is "constructive" (1 Cor. 13:4). True love forbears where it must. But it seeks to be constructive where it can, to build bridges between the gulfs that separate us.

We need incentive in our fellowship in order to strive to reach our ideal. It is easy to have social fellowship or intellectual exchange. Fellowship must be these, but it must be more than these alone. There is incentive in working together. Not works for work's sake. But activities and projects can unite us if we approach them maturely, without trying to get our own way in everything. Shared goals can resolve differences in perspective by forcing us to work together.

Few things build fellowship more than shared thoughts. Opening our hearts and minds by discussing our struggles and joys works wonders in building trust and understanding. Superficial fellowship exists without such sharing, and is not it true that most "fellowship" is superficial?

Oneness of heart and mind is impossible unless we share our hearts and minds. Sharing things of the heart can lift us beyond social or intellectual fellowship. Social and intellectual elements of our fellowship are important. But too often they become the "all" of fellowship.

There can be no illusions, no putting up false fronts, no foolish games between us, no place for superficial, self -- seeking fellowship, no place for harshness, indifference, intolerance. Ours is an ideal of understanding, compassion, and unity in love. It: is not mere oneness of purpose. We can-

not love only to receive love. Nor can we respond only to the love of another. Ours must be a love so overflowing that it finds expression in our words and deeds.

Jesus asks that we love one another as he loved us. This is an ideal as profound in its living as it is difficult in its perfecting. Will you reach beyond social or intellectual fellowship? Will you reach for fellowship so dynamic that it merited a place among the central theme of Jesus' last words to the disciples?

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one" (John 17:11).

Yes, "Finally, brethren, be ye all of one mind, having fellow -- feeling, loving the brethren, humble minded and tenderhearted. And may the Lord bless our efforts to reach after this ideal.

-- Brent Hislop, Canada

Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my father who is in heaven.

-- The Lord Jesus Christ

People submerged in a culture swarming with lies and malice feel like they are drowning in it: they can trust nothing they hear, depend on no one they meet. Such dissatisfaction with the world as it is preparation for traveling in the way of Christian discipleship. The dissatisfaction, coupled with a longing for peace and truth, can set us on a pilgrim path of wholeness in God.... A person has to get fed up with the *ways* of the world before he, before she, acquires an appetite for the world of grace.

-- Eugene Peterson

Entered Into Rest

William Smith Canada
Mae Pikula Illinois
Loin Crouches Canada

We encourage brethren to inform us of the names of deceased brethren for listing under this heading