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From the Editor's Desk

"Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies..." - Isaiah 28:17 by: PJ. Pazucha

This has been an interesting two months. Let's talk about some recent items of interest. Has any American citizen not heard of Judge Clarence Thomas? After the Supreme Court confirmation hearings and the salacious media coverage it is hard to image that there could be.

Justice

Many were impressed by the myth of justice in the U.S. legal system. Confirmation testimonies were admittedly coached. Senatorial questions portrayed a court more interested in perpetuating a certain kind of partisan legal system than injustice.

So called "rights" held center stage. Does the right of privacy exist? Does a woman have a right to decide what happens to her body? What about abortion? What about homosexuals? Where, it may be asked, were countering concerns for responsibility? Was any attention paid to punishing wrong doers?

It seems appointments are now made upon the limits of confirmability. This nominee shared certain judicial ideals with the President, and he looked like he could distance himself from his own views so as to gain confirmation. There was no ideological discussion here. Politics was the name of the game. This is not God's kind of justice.

Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay (James 5:12). James obviously didn't anticipate a Christian standing for confirmation by the United States Senate, and the confirmation pointed out why we still pray for God's kingdom to come upon earth.

Congressional Fairness

The confirmation hearings ended on a chord of unfairness, slander, and innuendo. Sexual harassment is a terrible thing -- with this all would agree, but so also is false accusation. The timing of such damaging claims to occur just before the scheduled vote can hardly be considered

accidental, moreover, ten years is a long time to wait to accuse a man of a crime on which the statute of limitations expired after thirty days.

Both sides accused the other of terrible things and the only thing sure is that no one won anything in the weekend of hearings that followed. This is not a world in which brother cares for brother, nor a world in which righteousness prevails. The harassment charges effectively moved the focus of the confirmation away from their center.

Christian brothers and sisters sometimes don't behave much better. We don't frequently hear such claims and counter claims as these, yet brethren too have been known to divert attention from the weakness of their ideas and to confuse controversy with irrelevance. Partisanship and sectarianism are to be guarded against inside the fellowship and outside. Read *Evidence of Sonship* and raise higher standards for your own behavior, those of the Son of Man and of his righteous character.

The Coming Kingdom

If you believe that God promises to establish his kingdom upon this earth, then some eagerness, some longing for that kingdom is appropriate. Is it presumptuous to talk about a near kingdom when men have dreamt about it for nearly two thousand years? We think not. The Apostle Peter warned us that one reason men would offer for giving up on the hope of the *glorious return* of Jesus Christ would be that nothing changes (2 Pet. 3:3-4).

Some new readers might be confused by our Journal's title, wondering what kingdom we are talking about. *Isaiah's Messianic Vision*, looks at that kingdom of Jesus Christ. We hope new readers will find it helpful and that longtime readers will be reminded of what the Christmas season means for all.

Read those promises about Jesus' Advent with the vigor and enthusiasm that faith compels. From them, learn to spend time with God in *Early Morning Devotions*, and to enjoy *Fellowship's Breadth*. There you will find *Sacred Rest*.

Europe

France and Germany recently proposed an European Economic Community (EEC) military power.

Many Bible students have been looking at the development of the EEC. Some suggest that it will one day become the power from the North prophesied to come upon Israel. Is it? or Is it not? Let's eagerly wait to see what develops. It is an area of intense interest. a

So, in this issue we print a Herald classic on the only solution for the world's problems. *In Like Manner* a discussion about the Second Advent of Jesus.

Evidence of Sonship

"Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did." - 1 John 2:6

What does it mean to "live in him?" This phrase implies an entering into Christ, and this is in keeping with scriptural teaching. The picture being referred to is that of the human body, and Scripture teaches that the church is the *"body of Christ. [God] hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church"* (Eph. 1:22). *"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ"* (Eph. 4:15). *"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence"* (Col. 1:18).

God has invited some persons to join this "body" of Christ during the Gospel Age. This body can only be entered in one way. That way is the path of sacrifice spoken of as "baptism" into Christ's death. Believers are accepted as part of that body only by surrendering their will and submitting to the will of God. We pledge ourselves to walk in Jesus' footsteps, thus becoming his disciples, his followers, Christians. Having surrendered our wills we are figuratively "buried" with him in death. By submitting to the will of God, we rise to walk in newness of life.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:1-4).

"How does a believer know that they are doing the right thing? By looking at the life of Jesus! ... We are not to trust our impressions of what is right. The Word of the Lord is to dwell in us and govern our lives."

Our responsibility only begins with this procedure. It seems strange to say, but more is necessary than just to be influenced by the holy Spirit and to be accepted by God. To be a Christian, one must abide, or remain, in Christ. Ask yourself, "Am I having experiences which are common with all who associate with Jesus? Do I still love him? Am I still in harmony with God and his Word? Do I have no other will but to do what God wants of me? Have I his peace in my heart as the controlling influence of my life?" The answer to these questions, in part, provides you with the evidence of whether you are in Christ.

Profession Insufficient

It is necessary for Christians to display evidence that they are in him. That is the statement of our theme text, those who profess to be in Christ ought to live their lives ("walk") in the same way that he lived his life. How did the Master walk? He abode in continual harmony with God, and he submitted to God's will even when submission meant his own death -- the cruel, sacrificial death of the cross.

Whoever is lead by the Lord's spirit, being controlled by his will, is a member of that body. They will live lives of holiness, of devotion, and of opposition to sin. To live in this manner, always doing the will of God, will have consequences.

To be dedicated or "consecrated" to God is to be opposed to every sinful thing. Sin is always antagonistic to God. Sin violates righteousness (I John 3:4). *How* does a believer know that he is doing the right thing? By looking at the life of Jesus! Whoever lives as Jesus lived is in harmony with God. We are not to trust our impressions of what is right. The Word of the Lord is to dwell in us and govern our lives. Jesus himself set this pattern: *"My food is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work"* (John 4:34, NIV). That will was fully described in the Word of God, Scripture. We must be similarly moved. We have to continue in him, walk in him, and willingly perform what has been written in the Bible -- not merely forcing ourselves, but delighting in his will. *"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"* (Psa. 40:7,8).

Proofs of Sonship

Claiming to be a son of God does not make a person a son of God. Many make such a claim. Statistics tell us there are four hundred million professing Christians. We cannot perceive all of these to be true children of the Almighty. The Apostle Paul says that because we cannot read the hearts of men, we must take into consideration their professions and their conduct. Note that professions alone are not our final judgment. We know that those who are the sons of God will be led by his spirit. *"As many as are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God"* (Rom. 8:14).

What is the spirit of God? Primarily, it is the spirit of truth, holiness, justice, and love. A child of God, being motivated by God's spirit, will live in harmony with these characteristics. If we see professing children of God practicing unrighteousness without attempting to reform their tendency to sin, then their fruits condemn them. God stands for truth, the truth that was exemplified in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The spirit of God urges believers to sacrifice themselves in the service of God and truth. Under God's spirit's influence, believers learn to prefer truth over error and demonstrate that preference through loving zeal. Satan personifies sin, envy, hatred, malice, and strife. The fruit of the holy Spirit is righteousness, love, joy, and peace. Wherever we see the works of the Adversary, we have reason to question that the performer of such works is a child of God. The spirit of envy, hatred, malice, of opposition to truth, and the spirit of unrighteousness are to be repudiated by all of God's children.

We are still members of the fallen human race. Despite one's best efforts, they will still find tendencies to sin. The Scriptures assure us that the Lord looks at the heart of his professing children. Just as God mercifully judges us, we should mercifully judge others considering their attempts and their intentions, not merely their performance. The spirit of love prevails wherever the spirit of God is at work. This is a disposition which will make reparation wherever possible, if one has done wrong or been in error. To attempt to correct one's errors shows that he did not intend to do wrong, it was not his spirit, but that he was entrapped for a time. Conversely, one who continues following natural inclinations, evidencing no change in direction, nor any service of truth, has reason to doubt his adoption into the family of God.

How to Walk as He Walked

What is the Apostle's point in our theme text? Whoever professes to be a child of God should see to it that his life agrees with his profession. Christ must not only be our Redeemer, he must also be our pattern and our instructor in the glories that the Father has invited us to share. If we say we are in him this profession should be verified by our lives: we should walk as he walked.

However, we are not perfect -- how can this be done? The answer is simple. We are told that God no longer looks upon us from the viewpoint of our flesh. We are seen by God in the spirit. As new creatures in Christ we are not fleshly beings, but spiritual. *"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). In our theme text, the apostle is describing the Master's life following his consecration. He lived this life for three and a half years, not heeding the desires or preferences of his flesh, but being directed by God's spirit. So it is with us. We are no longer to live according to the flesh. We are to live according to the new creature. We should consider our flesh dead, just as does God. If we are dead to the flesh, let us not live according to the flesh.

Walk as your Lord walked. Follow his example. Love what is good; avoid all that is evil. Follow in the steps of your exemplar. You can walk in the same path as Jesus walked, going in the same direction, towards the same goal. In so doing, faithfully each day, you shall by his grace attain the same exceeding great reward. *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."* (Matt. 25:21).

Isaiah's Messianic Vision

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" - Matthew 1:21

The story of Jesus' birth is not new; it is "the old, old, story of gracious heavenly love." We hear in carol and hymn the glad tidings of great joy announced centuries ago by an angel of the Lord to shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night. Although more than nineteen centuries have passed since the announcement of the message, the good news concerning the coming of the "Christ child" continues to inspire hope in all who put their trust in God and whose thankful hearts echo the praise of the heavenly host: *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"* (Luke 2:14).

Isaiah (whose name means "the salvation of Jehovah") has been styled the evangelical prophet. His prophecies are replete in graphic descriptions of Christ's. It is remarkable that the significance of the Prophet's name so completely coincides with the mighty work of restoration to be performed by Messiah: the recovery of the human family from the blight of sin and death.

The great prophet saw Messiah in a vision. Speaking as he was moved by the holy Spirit, he said,

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

As the vision unfolded, Isaiah described Messiah's work by appropriate names he would bear. This prophetic vision was one of changing scenes which panned before the gaze of the seer and progressively pictured the birth, life, death, exaltation and glorious millennial reign of Christ. He was to be a prophet, a priest, a king and would be acclaimed as *"Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."*

But now a ray of hope shone; the long awaited Messiah was born...

What great joy must have filled the prophet as he beheld the promised seed of Abraham dispensing the blessings of health, security, life, and peace to all the families of the earth. In order to share his joy we must also share his vision. So let us turn the pages of the Sacred Word to the scenes of his narration and the future they envision.

"Unto Us Is Born"

The prophetic opening scene was fulfilled in the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. We find the record that

"[Mary] brought forth her firstborn Son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). This was the first step in God's great plan of redemption to restore to -- mankind the Edenic perfection. For over four thousand years the human family had been dying as a result of the just condemnation of Father Adam and his posterity. *"As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"* (Rom. 5:12). But now a ray of hope shone; the long awaited Messiah was born; for when the fullness of the time was come, *God sent forth his Son, made of a woman"* (Gal. 4:4), and *'the Word was made flesh"* (John 1:14). The Logos, the

firstborn of every creature, the beginning of the creation of God, *"though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich"* (2 Cor. 8:9).

"Unto Us Is Given"

We turn to the consecration scene in which Jesus approached John that he might be baptized in the Jordan. Picturing Jesus standing before John with head bowed in the attitude of complete submission to his heavenly Father, we recall the psalmist's words, *"Lo, I come 'I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea thy law is within my hear'"* (Psa. 40:7,8). *"For the son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"* (Matt. 20:28). *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

Jesus then symbolized his consecration by being baptized by John.

"And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:10-11).

This was he of whom the Baptist spoke, saying, *"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29).

In another of Isaiah's matchless prophecies, Jesus is depicted as faithfully carrying out his sacrifice even to the "pouring out" of his own life:

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:35).

Government Upon His Shoulder

Next is revealed Messiah in the glory of his kingdom. He is vested with power and authority, like the vision which Daniel, the beloved, saw in his vision of Messiah's dominion and kingdom.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Isa. 7:13,14).

The psalmist also prophesied concerning Messiah's worldwide kingdom, saying:

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him all nations shall serve him" (Psa. 72:8-11).

His Name Shall Be Wonderful

The word "wonderful" is derived from the verb, *palala*, "to separate, to distinguish, or to be great." "It is a word which expresses with surprising accuracy everything in relation to the Redeemer." Jesus was God's gift to man. He is the light of the world. He is the Logos, or Word of God, because he revealed God to men. He was the beginning of the creation, and thus, is the firstborn of every creature. All things are created by and for him. He left the glory formerly possessed during his spiritual existence with the father and was made flesh so as to dwell among us for the purpose of redeeming mankind. He was wonderful: in his birth, in his life, in his death, and in his resurrection. He will be wonderful, too, in the offices of prophet, priest, and king. This we know from the words of Paul:

"Therefore God raised him to the heights and bestowed on him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow -- in heaven, on earth, and in the depths -- and every tongue confess, 'Jesus Christ is Lord,' to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11, NAS).

His Name Shall Be Counselor

"The name Counselor here denotes one of honorable rank; one who is fitted to stand near princes and kings as their advisor. It is expressive of great wisdom and of qualifications to guide and direct the human race." During the great reconstruction period -- the Times of Restitution -- the Messiah will guide the redeemed over the highway of holiness, and "a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench" (Isa. 42:3). Directed by the wise Counselor,

"...the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

It shall then be said, "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way" (Psa. 25:9).

His Name Shall Be Mighty God This vision shall see its fulfillment when Messiah comes in the glory of his kingdom to judge the earth. Yes,

"he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he, judge the world, and the people with equity [truth]" (Psa. 98:9). Then the *'times of refreshing shall come out from the face of Jehovah'"* (Acts 3:19, author's trans.). Then shall Christ, as Immanuel [meaning "God with us"], be acclaimed the "Mighty God." Of this day Paul spoke saying,

"He [God] hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

To this may be added the testimony of Jesus: *"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son"* (John 5:22).

Once again the evangelical prophet pictures another view of Messiah as the "Mighty God":

"And in this mountain [kingdom] shall the Lord of hosts [through our Lord Jesus Christ] make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of

wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. 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 Lord" (Isa. 25:6-9).

And again, *"The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God"* (Isa. 52:10).

His Name Shall Be Everlasting Father

The *Vulgate* renders the Everlasting Father as "the Father of the future Age." Literally, it is "the Father of eternity." Both are correct. The title "the Everlasting Father" will be ascribed to Christ in his thousand year kingdom when the blessing of everlasting life will be offered to all of the mankind who "heed that prophet" and take of the water of life provided by the precious sacrifice of Jesus. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

His Name Shall Be Prince Of Peace

Isaiah's vision closes with a revelation of Messiah as the Prince of Peace. In this role, he shall cause war to end -- unto the end of the earth. He shall break in pieces the oppressors and shall usher in an era of eternal peace among men. Then shall the desire of all nations come. The God of heaven shall set his king (that is, Christ) on his holy hill (kingdom) of Zion so that it shall be said,

"... he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it" (Micah 4:3-4).

"He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish" (Psa. 72:4-7).

We have seen the vision and have shared in Isaiah's joy as we heard the New Testament prophets blend their voices with those holy men of old who told the "message of salvation from God's own holy Word."

As we reflect upon the season, it is particularly fitting that we steal away in the spirit from the world. Away from its cares and distractions, in the quietness of our own hearts, we can again tune our heart to the heavenly message

"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

Then let us join with the heavenly host in praising God, and saying, *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."*

Accepted

I had been sitting alone in the little chapel for some time, busy at the organ preparing for a meeting. I was about to leave when an old man who had been in the adjoining reading room came slowly toward me. He lifted his face to mine and said, "I like music, Won't you stay and play a little more for me?"

He was eighty four years old, as he told me later. His body was bent under the burden of years, and as I seated myself again at the organ, he came and stood beside me, fully ripe, as it seemed, for heaven. He was alive -- to only one great thought -- Jesus, the Savior and the Master!

He turned the pages of the hymnal while my fingers ran over the keyboard. Presently, he laid the book before me saying, "Play that slowly, and I'll try to sing it for you."

Softly, and very slowly I followed him, as with a broken voice, often scarcely audible, he tried to sing:

"Take the name of Jesus with you,
Child of sorrow and of woe;
It will joy and comfort give you;
Take it, then, where'er you go."

It was little more than a whisper song; but as he took up the words of the chorus a glad smile spread over his face, and his voice seemed to gather strength from his heart as he *looked* rather than sang:

"Precious Name! O, how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of heaven."

It was true worship: the simple, glad expression of a loyal, loving heart. Truly, I sat alone with a saint that day, for as the other verses of the hymn were sung, their wondrous meaning was interpreted by the face of the singer. The veil almost seemed to fall away, revealing to me the things unseen.

I had never seen the old man before. It is not likely I shall ever seem him again in the flesh, yet his life touched mine with blessing that day. He had unconsciously brought my Master very near.

God's work in the world calls loudly for consecrated talent, vigorous minds, songful voices, physical strength, business tact, enterprise money, and time. We realize this, and perhaps finding that we have none of these, think that we have nothing that would be "acceptable in God's sight." He wants the very best we have, it is true; but if the best is very poor, it is acceptable to the Father who cares more for the love which prompts our service than for the service itself.

There was no music in the old man's voice. Indeed, it could truthfully be said that he almost had no voice. Yet, he drew a heart a little nearer to its Savior with what voice he had. God owned and blessed his weakness. *"If there be first a willing mind, it is counted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."*

Early Morning Devotion

There is no time like early morning for communion with Christ and pondering his words. Once lose that, and the charm is broken by the intrusion of many things, however useful and necessary they may be. You cannot remake the broken reflections of a lake swept by wind. How different is that day from all others, the early prime of which is surrendered to fellowship with Christ! Nor is it possible to live today on the gathered spoils of yesterday. Each man needs all that a new day can yield him of God's grace and comfort. It must be *daily* bread.

True prayer has a transfiguring influence. It brings us into the presence of God. The holy of holies in the ancient temple, where dwelt the *Shekinah*, was no holier than where you bow every time you pray. You look up into the face of Christ, himself. John was not nearer to him, lying on his breast, than you are in prayer. One cannot thus look up into the face of Christ and without having transfiguration worked out in him.

Prayer is the reaching up of the soul toward God. It lifts your life for its duration into the highest and holiest frame. A prayerful spirit is full of aspirations for God. Its longings press upward to God. It is the transfiguring of the spirit which purifies these dull earthly lives of our, and changes them, little by little, into the image of God.

Rise earlier to be alone with Christ in the morning. Let neither the pressure of business, nor the allurements of pleasure, nor the tendencies of the flesh, nor the drowsiness of spirit, keep you from your morning interview and conversation with the King of kings.

Fellowship's Breadth

"Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye."

Romans 14:1 by: P. E. Thomson

Aquila and Priscilla had recently come from Rome. Paul probably learned of the conditions among the brethren in Rome from them. This report led him to offer the advice found in the fourteenth chapter because they could not receive the blessings God planned for them unless they accepted the fellowship God's wisdom had provided.

Thus chapters fourteen and fifteen indicate that there was misunderstanding between gentile and Jewish Christians at Rome. The one laid great stress on ancient customs, and the other disregarded them. The Jew, because of his "orthodoxy," might tend to feel superior to the gentile. The gentile, because of his stand for "liberty," might feel superior to the Jew. Both were developing a pride that if uncurbed would prove fatal. Both allowed nonessentials to disrupt the fellowship that, if available, is essential to spiritual well being.

Their dispute was principally over eating meats and regarding days. The Jew, properly retaining a veneration for the Law of Moses, considered it still in force for the Christian. Boasting of their faithfulness, they continued to depend for salvation upon observing certain days and abstaining from proscribed meats. The gentile, recognizing that such restrictions had been placed only on the Jew under that Law, regarded neither days nor meats and felt a superiority to the Jew who remained under that bondage. Thus mutual censure and uncharitable judgment prevailed among them. Disputes over nonessentials soon had them destitute of the love and forbearance that make Christian fellowship a possibility and a blessing. We can sympathize with them, for we have learned by experience that one brother with a pet idea can make fellowship (that which should be one of our greatest pleasures) a thing to be almost dreaded.

There is no reason to suspect dishonesty on the part of either Jew or gentile. They were alike short sighted, unwisely risking the loss of the "fellowship of kindred minds like to that above" -- a fellowship based on a thousand agreements being frustrated by a few minor differences. Even an unconsecrated brain should work better than that. Anyone would call such conduct foolish if seen among unbelievers. The modern counterpart is the thought actually expressed by some brethren: "If one does not see the covenants, sin-offering, and presence as they were taught by Brother Russell, he does not have any truth." We hope that such do not really mean what they are saying, for that is to accuse the hard working author of two thousand nine hundred seventy one pages of *The Studies in the Scriptures*, and of thousands of sermons and of the six thousand four hundred fifty one pages of the *Reprints* of having succeeded in teaching his readers only three doctrines in his lifelong labor with consecrated pen. Certainly there could be no fellowship with brethren who have "no truth." Such as share this view deceive themselves into a state of mind that is difficult for us to attribute to even unbelievers. A careful appraisal of the relative values of the hundreds of individual truths which came forth from his pen ought to give one a sounder judgment than that.

The Strong Ought to Bear the Infirmities of the Weak

The sincere devotion of those Jewish and gentile Christians in Rome was probably as evident to others of their day as in the attitude of those whose hearts share the attitude referred to above. What was lacking in Rome was the soundness of judgment which looks to the Lord and his Word as our only safe guide. To trust the workings of the imperfect brain, when he who never errs or changes has provided for us through the inspired apostles and prophets all that is necessary to guide our feeble footsteps, is to invite sure disaster.

To cut off from fellowship one whom the Lord instructs us to receive is not the least of errors. The Roman brethren, likewise, probably thought that they were not making a difference in their fellowship towards the one who was weak in his faith. But the fact was that if he was received at all, it was with a coldness that would soon drive him away unless he was a Christian of sterling quality determined to have the fullest measure of blessing possible, whatever the cost.

Christian forbearance -- which the apostle enjoined -- would have perpetuated for them the assistance which the heavenly Father intended they should have in each other's company. The brother who thinks himself strong eventually learns that he too is weak. While the weakest among us must bear the weaknesses of those who suppose themselves strong.

Every child of God is under the Father's care. If such be true, it is incumbent upon us that we accept that those who love his Will shall be kept from falling. How great will be the confusion -- some day -- of any who have caused a degree of embarrassment to a fellow member of the Body of Christ by carelessly overlooking their privilege of laying down their life for his brother. Some, feeling that they are honoring the Lord by their course of action, are dishonoring him by their failure to demonstrate that oneness of the Body which the New Testament tells us will be the sign of recognition among those who are his own.

There is no more practical way of laying down our lives for our brethren than by allowing them the privilege of deciding for themselves which of the various interpretations of scripture they shall accept. Often we can state our view of a certain point in a few sentences. If this can be done meekly and if it can be received in the same spirit, our fellowship can continue in that broad sense for which the Lord prayed. When we feel we must rebut each point of opposition, or when one statement of our argument is not enough to satisfy our state of mind that we have stood firm for "the truth," then a continuance of real fellowship cannot exist.

Zwingli could not cooperate with the Roman Catholic system because it taught an open denial of the ransom, the doctrine which is the foundation of Christianity. Calvin had no such reason for not working with Zwingli. Perhaps there was more cooperation than we know of at this late date; but Calvin's followers soon formed into a group which apparently had no fellowship with those who had gathered around various reformers and adhered to their teachings.

These attitudes have repeated themselves to this day: slight doctrinal differences labeling the dissenters as those "weak in the faith" and not to be actually received into fellowship. Doubtless many in that day said they were willing to receive to fellowship the doctrinally weak ones -- that is, willing if the other brother saw fit and had the courage to make all the advances. How lenient our heavenly Father has been toward those who participate in divisions that disgraced his name through the centuries none can know. We hope that among the thousands involved there is at least a handful qualified for a place in the glorified church. The only safe course today is as it was then, *"Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye." "It must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh"* (Matt. 18:7; cf. Mark 14:21) Dean Farrar has said:

"It is one of our trials that the Bible, with its tender and hallowed bearing upon all that is sweet and noble in our lives -- with its words so stately and full of wonder, and full of music, like the voice of an archangel should have been made in these days the wrangling ground for sectarian differences: if we are striving with our whole hearts to live according to its spirit, we need but little fear that we shall trip in a right pronunciation of the shibboleths [a test word or pet phrase of a party or a sect] of its letter. Surely it is deplorable that, because of mere questions of authorship, of historical accuracy, of verbal criticism, having for the most part little or no bearing on the spiritual or moral life, party should be denouncing party, and Christian excommunicating Christian, and so many hands tearing in anger the seamless robe of Christ. It is, alas, the due punishment for our lack of charity, our Pharisaism, our foolishness, that while we have been so eager about such controversies the love of many should have waxed cold."

The Apostle does not limit his wish for the brethren to fellowship. It is profitable fellowship that he would see them enjoy. He urges them to receive the weak in faith, but not to doubtful disputations. In this case, the more literal translations (e.g., *Diaglott*, *Englishman's Greek New Testament*, *Rotherham*) render the Apostle's thought more clearly than the *Authorized Version*. The *Diaglott* says, "Receive ... not for differences of reasonings"; and "Receive ... not, however, for doubtful reasonings." *Rotherham* renders it, "Receive ... not for disputing opinions."

There were, in Corinth, a variety of brethren. Some had a mind of their own. Some had as much confidence in their own opinions as they did in the scriptures -- or more. And of course, no two of them agreed exactly, because they were depending upon native intelligence to decide between shades of thought. Since those days of the early church and up to our own day, there have been Christians who have lacked the ability to think straight, due in large part to their reliance upon the mind of the flesh. Doubtless, the Corinthians had more than their share of ecclesia meetings that were deprived of all spiritual uplift because of disputes that reigned between brethren. Such things happen today, too. Brethren seem compelled to drag out their repetitious arguments just as soon as someone who disagrees with their opinion comes into sight. Old arguments are reiterated so many times that it seems at times that their only motivation in study is to find scriptures that disprove brother so and so. One must almost wonder if persons of this mind have ever heard of the sanctifying power of the Word.

Equal periods of study devoted between learning and applying Bible truths to their lives would accomplish a great deal. Those truths which work out our sanctification would have added faith and necessary fortitude to their characters so that they could learn to sit silently after having made their point. After all, in many cases the "other" brother is just as zealous to make his point, to have his argument proven right. No matter how precious the weight of our conviction, we all need sanctification.

These characteristics are best developed by sitting at the feet of Jesus, the lowly Nazarene. From him, we may learn "*in meekness [how] to instruct those that oppose themselves,*" and "*in meekness correcting the opposers*" (2 Tim. 2:25, *Diaglott*).

While we may wait in patience at the feet of Jesus, struggling to learn these lessons, it seems most often that the opposers talk on. But when one has learned to appreciate true spiritual fellowship above the fleshly pleasure of argument, he will not even consider disrupting fellowship just to make a point; nor will he be offended just because a brother must wait to do his agreeing, when beyond the veil he knows "even as he is known." Over there, all of us will change our minds on some things.

Judging, A Sign of Ignorance

Have you ever judged another brother to be spiritually lacking because he disagreed with you? Have you considered that to do so is to display your own ignorance: ignorance of your deficiencies, ignorance of God's will. To refuse fellowship to a brother on any but scriptural grounds is to judge him with human judgment. Jesus instructs,

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7:1).

"Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves," is the warning of Brother James (James 1:22). A day will come when we shall understand. But until God reveals the basis of his judgment, all of our attempts at judging are a display of ignorance.

Would the eleventh chapter of Hebrews have read the same if you were writing it? There we have a list of those *who "...obtained a good report through faith."* Many might have excluded Jacob because of his treachery, Rahab for her reputation, David because of his heinous sin, and Samuel because he failed to *"...rule well his own household."* If we would have failed so miserably in selecting the Ancient Worthies, what a joke it is for us to pass judgment on one for whom the "better thing" has been provided.

Note a subtle distinction. The church has a duty to judge certain matters (I Cor. 4:5). We are warned, however, that we are not to become individual judges "before the time," and thus to bring ourselves into condemnation. *"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself"* (Rom. 2:1).

"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law: but if thou judge the Law, thou art not a doer of the Law, but a judge" (James 4:11).

Judgment can only be made upon some basis. Since our heavenly Father has not disclosed his standard, we have to invent our own if we insist upon judging others. Anyone conceited enough to do this would not provide a standard that would exclude himself. It is natural to judge others by a standard that leaves the judge approved. Intuitively, persons recognize their imperfections and moral shortcomings. They make adjustments to their standard along every other area of consideration until coming to the subject of doctrinal purity. Here, to such as would establish their own standards for judgment, there are measuring rods to give the self assuming judges the score they think they need to be assured an *"abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom."* Such a person believes nothing except that which his head tells him is truth. Therefore, any one who disagrees with his creed cannot have the truth that sanctifies and, therefore, can have no hope of the kingdom. His flesh assures him that to fellowship with such an one will be a sinful waste of time -- thus excusing himself from laying down his life for this particular brother, for that would be very painful for a person of this temperament. Giving way to this fleshly weakness, another division among students of the Bible results.

It is encouraging that there are not so many of these disasters, but that a few can still honestly sing, "We are not divided; all one body we." Each division, however, represents a rebellion against the Lord's arrangement.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one

Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph. 4:27).

The surprising thing is not that there are divisions, but that in this day of final test on the church, that there should be so many who are willing to meet regularly with some who disagree with them on some precious point. This is not a new experience for the church. Throughout the age, all have had the privilege of proving their love for their Lord by a practical love for each other. At the beginning of the church's pilgrimage, her Lord and Head gave the Apostle both a warning and an explanation: "*There must be heresies [margin: sects] among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you*" (1 Cor. 11:19).

Sects Reveal Selfishness

Jesus, our wise head, chose an apt word to foretell the spirit which would manifest itself among the church. The spirit was that which Paul described as claiming, "*I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos.*" Even during the days of Peter, Paul, and John, it was manifest. The apt word is "heresies," in the *Authorized Version*. E. P. Gould, writing in the *American Commentary*, says

"Heresies' is a transliteration [the Greek word, spelled with English letters], but not a translation of the Greek word, which has come over into English with a different meaning from its ordinary Greek, or New Testament, meaning. It means, originally, 'a taking,' then introducing the idea of selection, 'the taking what one desires and leaving the rest,' election, choice; then a chosen way of living or thinking; then a body of men choosing the same way of thinking or living; and finally, dissensions between different bodies of this kind. Its use in the New Testament is divided between the last two meanings -- sects and their dissensions. In this sense, it is classed by Paul among the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:20)."

The writer gives, what we believe to be, a correct explanation of the last clause of this text, "that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." He writes:

"Those who stand the test and receive the divine approval (here those who show a nonpartisan and loving spirit) '...may be made manifest,' namely, by the contrast between them and the dissident."

How simply and how skillfully the heavenly Judge shows up the selfishness, the willfulness, the lovelessness of the unfaithful!

Fellowship Defined

By what fellowship do the faithful show allegiance to their Lord? The English word appears fifteen times in the *Authorized Version*. In all, save one, the Greek word is the same. Between these two Greek words, however, there is a similarity of meaning. The word used fourteen times is defined by Strong's as meaning "partnership, i.e., (literally) participation."

This word is also translated "communion" (1 Cor. 10:16), bringing this "partnership" into the most sacred of the Church's relationships:

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [partnership] of the blood of Christ? The bread we break, is it not the communion [partnership] of the body of Christ?"

Rotherham translates this passage,

"The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the sharing together of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break is it not a sharing together of the body of Christ?"

Rotherham, here evidently losing some of the depth of the thought, emphasizes instead the breadth of fellowship which the Apostle commends to those in the closest of partnerships: to those who go, as one body, to him without the camp.

Fellowship is more intimate than meeting in the same room.. The Corinthians did that -- and there existed carnality among them: envy, strife, division, a walking as men (1Cor. 3:3). There is no fellowship in these surroundings. To quote again, this time from A. Hovey:

"Fellowship' with another is something more than union, however intimate. It is a sharing together with a common partnership or participation of certain possessions, gifts, or blessings. Those who are in fellowship are partakers in common of certain things."

In commenting on the forty second verse of Acts the second chapter regarding the early church continuing steadfast in the Apostle's teaching and fellowship, Brother Barnes says,

"The word rendered fellowship is often rendered communion. It denotes having things in common, or participation, society, friendship. It may apply to anything which may be possessed in common, or in which all may partake. Thus all Christians. have the same hope of heaven; the same joys; the same hatred of sin; the same enemies to contend with. Thus they have the same subjects of conversation, of feeling, and of prayer; or they have communion in these things. And thus the early Christians had their property in common. The word here may apply to either or to all, to their conversation, their prayers, their dangers, or their property; and means that they were united to the Apostles, and participated with them in whatever befell them. It may be added that the effect of a revival of religion is to unite Christians more and more, and to bring those who were before separated to union and to love. Christians feel that they are a band of brethren, and that however much they were separated before they became Christians, now they have great and important interests in common; united in feelings, in interest, in dangers, in conflicts, in opinions, and in the hopes of a blessed immortality."

The fellowship each Christian experiences with our Lord is portrayed in the parable of the vine and the branches (John 15:1-8). To get a picture of the interrelation of those who are pictured as "branches" to the one who is pictured as the "vine," we must appreciate the allusion. Every individual is dependent upon the vine and also upon the other branches. The vine is the source of nourishment and direction. The branches grow only as they are provided nourishment (sap) from the vine. But the branches also grow unselfishly on behalf of the other branches! In their pruning they are taught to cling to the arbor which aids in supporting the entire vine.

"Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his son" (1 John 1:3), and through them with each other regardless of geographical boundaries, complications of language, differences in the shapes of our heads. Let ours be the spirit of our heavenly Head who for a period of three years associated with him who was to betray him. Let ours be the spirit of the Ephesian church that *"tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and bore' [with them] and had patience"* (Rev. 2:2) With that spirit today's fellowship can be maintained. We can look at one another broadly enough to include those in our fellowship whose faith is in the Lord and in his sacrifice and find blessings so precious in that fellowship that the smoothest tongued orator in the world will not induce us to swerve from the Lord's generous arrangement for enriching us through *"that which every joint supplieth"* (Eph. 4:16).

"Beloved let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth, is begotten of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7).

Sacred Rest

There is a place of sacred rest,
Far, far beyond the skies,
Where life is nothing but the best
And nothing ever dies.
Would God that I with wings were blessed,
Away then I would fly
To this great place of sacred rest,
Far, far beyond the skies.

This is an everlasting place
Which shall not pass away,
Where everything is full of grace
And righteousness holds sway;
The angels have a dwelling there,
There are no homeless ones,
We know the goodly place is fair
Where life's pure river runs.

The ruler of this kingdom fair
Is beauty, joy, and light,
And we shall all behold him there,
A wonder and a sight;
His raiments are of purest gold,
His face like gold does shine,
No human eye can now behold
His glories so sublime.
We'll be there, we'll be there,
We will join the pure and blest,
We will join him so fair
And forever be at rest.

- Charles Destro, 1937

What is the "High Calling" and When Will It Cease to be Offered?

by: Fred Binns, England

The high calling is a "mystery," a mystery which Paul *described as "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).*

Nothing less than the presence of the Lord will explain or fully describe this calling to be *"strengthened by might in the inner man that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3:16).*

Note the use of the future tense. This portion of the letter to Ephesus is a prayer for knowledge and experience to which many of his readers had not reached. Paul also aspired to this understanding; for he acknowledged that *"I count not myself to have apprehended"* (Phil. 3:13). If this was true of Paul and of the Ephesian church, what of the rest of the household of faith? What of ourselves? Even Paul admitted that he himself had not *"...apprehended that for which he had been apprehended of Christ"* (Phil. 3:13).

The household of faith, including ourselves, has been "apprehended of Christ." This blessed condition will eventually grant us a position before the throne. But to be seated with him in his throne is a blessing reserved for those who *"press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling"*; who apprehend that for which they are apprehended.

When will the high calling cease to be offered? Perhaps this is not the best way to look at the matter. Quoted Scriptures have shown that this mystery is only revealed by the Spirit and more can only be attained by the working of the Spirit. That leaves no doubt as to God's part in the calling. Unless he intervenes in the life of a believer this knowledge and essential power will not be available. Many Christian faiths claim this as part of their experience, but this does not mean God has exercised his choice in the matter.

We take these Scriptures to ourselves. So did the Ephesian believers, and as far as we can tell from the internal evidence of the New Testament, the Ephesian brethren had been some years in Christ. Yet, Apostle Paul was careful to bring them to an understanding of this calling.

The Hebrews' writer desired that his readers, would go on to perfection, to reach forward in greater faith. But there was a proviso: *"If God permits"* (Hebrews 6:3). God knows who will reach that quality of faith. That is why in his foreknowledge he could predestinate. I suggest that God needs close no door to the high calling. He foreknew the falling away of faith at the end of the age, and will end up with the number of believers who will produce the last member of the overcoming class. His management of world affairs in the last days and his permission of our affluent society and its indifference to spiritual values creates the lukewarmness which we know from Revelation to be the Laodicean period ensuring that there will be no further candidates for the high calling.

In Like Manner

"...The *Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*"

James 1:17 by: H.E. Hollister

The student of the Divine Word who today seeks to arrive at its deepest meaning through the study of English translations is faced with many difficulties. Not the least of these are the peculiarities of Greek and English idioms.

Idiomatic language uses word meanings other than those provided in ordinary dictionary definitions. Idiom is defined as:

"An expression, the meaning of which as a whole cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements; thus, 'Monday week' is an idiom signifying 'the Monday a week after next Monday'; 'How are you?' is equivalent to 'What is the state of your health or feelings?'"

The New Testament was written in the Greek language of nineteen hundred years ago and contains idiomatic expressions peculiar to that language and period. The common English translation is in idiomatic English of three hundred and fifty years ago -- which is ample time for changes in the common speech -- the vernacular. Furthermore, the Scriptures are written in a metaphorical language of their own -- "The tongue of men and of angels" which is the *lingua franca* of communication between the worlds of the flesh and the spirit and it employs many idiomatic expressions of its own.

Bible students familiar with the plan of the ages have a tremendous advantage in understanding the meaning of scriptural metaphor -- of type, prophecy, similitude, and parable. Most Bible commentators, even the most learned in Hebrew and Greek, do not have this advantage. Wearing colored glasses of "creed" and "tradition" they are hindered in their attempts to understand.

The best -- in fact the only -- way to learn the meaning of an idiomatic expression in a foreign language is to become familiar with as many instances of its use as possible. Thus, if a student of English came upon the expression "Monday week," he might be unable to learn its meaning from the dictionary. But eventually, in perusing English literature, he would find a usage of the phrase in which its meaning was somehow defined. It might be by the mention of the number of intervening days which would give him the needed clue. Accordingly, an exhaustive concordance which enables a student to locate all the various Bible passages in which any given Greek or Hebrew word occurs is of great assistance in determining from the contexts the idiomatic meaning of any word.

Perhaps one of the most important subjects in the Bible obscured by the idiomatic use of words is that of our Lord's Return -- his Second Advent. It is said variously that he will come "in the clouds" and "upon a cloud"; he will "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel" and "with the trump of God"; that he will "come as a thief in the night," and yet "every eye shall see him"; that he "shall so come in like manner as his disciples saw him going."

Reconciling such statements is a problem. It has been so great a problem that violent differences of opinion upon the subject have existed for nineteen hundred years among Christians whose sincerity and ability cannot be doubted. Expositors today are no closer to agreement than at the beginning.

The key to understanding and reconciling the seeming conflict lies in the Divine plan of the ages - - 'the *eternal purpose* [age plan] which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11). If the student is familiar with the ramifications of this fundamental "plan" of God's dealings with men, he is able to separate the figurative from the literal expressions in the holy Word and to translate symbolic biblical phrases into plain statements. Thus all statements dealing with the Second Advent can be reconciled into a harmonious sequence of events.

Perhaps the most simple, literal, and authoritative statement in Scripture concerning our Lord's return is that of the angels to the group of wondering disciples. They were standing, awestruck, at the place from which they had seen their risen Lord disappear into heaven. The angels said, "*Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come In like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven* (Acts 1:11).

Alternate Interpretations

This simple statement has been the subject of much misunderstanding due to the bias of the readers and their failure to consider idiomatic usage. The crucial point in this verse is the "manner" defined by the angel's words. At least three different views of its meaning are held by expositors.

The first is that Christ's return "in like manner" means that when he comes he will drop quietly and visibly from the sky -- to be seen by those who happen to be at the spot where he descends. Presumably, this is to be the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4) outside of Jerusalem and accounts for the colonies of Christians who have at various times awaited the great event on that spot. This view would appear to be contradicted by the Apostle's declaration that he would "descend from heaven with a shout," since he did not shout and there was no sound of a trumpet when he ascended. It is also contrary to the Lord's own statement that he would come in the clouds and that every eye should see him. It would seem that this view is untenable if we believe at the Scriptures are inspired and harmonious.

The second view of the angel's message is that his coming will be "in like manner" in that it will be known only to comparatively few of earth's inhabitants -- -- to believers who are looking for him. Thus, his coming would be without splendor, demonstration, or noise. This view limits the angel's comparison between his departure and his return to a narrow scope -- to the opening features of his return -- his *parousia* or presence, prior to the *apocalupsis*, or unveiling; and to a mental or spiritual perception of his presence, which in reality is quite different from the physical appearance of his ascension, vouchsafed to the prepentecostal disciples. On the contrary, the angel's message was unlimited in scope: "*This same Jesus shall so come In like manner as ye have seen him go*" [author's emphasis]. In the particular manner signified by the angels, the "coming" was to be entirely the same as the "taking." As will be seen, this view does not conform to the idiomatic meaning of the Greek word *τροπος* here translated "manner."

A Greek -- English dictionary defines *τροπος* as "a turn, that is, a revolution." This does not help much. The substitution of this definition for the translation in the text (making it read "shall so come in like turn") does not make sense, and indicates that the word must have an idiomatic meaning quite different from its literal or root definition.

What are the other ways in which the word *τροπος* is translated? The concordance shows the following renderings: "as," "conversation," "means," and "way." Only when we analyze the contexts in which the word appears does a pattern of its idiomatic meaning gradually emerge.

The Lord uses the word *tropos*, translated "as," in his lament over Jerusalem: *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto Thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not"* (Matt. 23:37)! Does the Lord here compare his desire to comfort the children of Jerusalem, to the place of gathering of the chickens, or to the wings and Feathers of the hen? No; the comparison is to the maternal, protective instinct of the hen; to the comfort and protective instinct of the hen; to the comfort and protection afforded the little chicks by her wings and feathers. It has reference to the disposition and habitual behavior of the hen, not to the details and circumstances of her actions. *tropos* is a comparison of internals, not externals.

Another usage illustrates not only the Greek idiomatic usage of this word but also the changing meaning of English words as at the time of the translation of the Authorized Version: *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he that said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Heb. 13:5). One of the meanings of "conversation" is given by Webster as "manner of living; conduct; behavior" -- but this definition is marked "Archaic." When the Authorized Version was translated this verse meant, "let your manner of living, your habitual behavior, be without covetousness." In the American Revised Version of 1881 this verse reads, "Be ye free from the love of money" -- a very free and condensed rendering; but this version gives a marginal reading which is nearly literal Greek, and at the same time modern idiomatic English: "Let your turn [of mind] be free from the love of money." If one's "turn" or "bent" is in a particular direction his habitual behavior is quite likely to conform to this disposition.

This word *tropos* is combined with a word meaning "endured" in this verse: "And about the time of forty years suffered he their mariners in the wilderness" (Acts 13:18). This rendering also exhibits this three hundred year old English idiom. "Suffer" then meant "to permit, to allow," and of the eight different meanings of "manners" listed in Webster's Dictionary, the one that fits is: "A characteristic or customary way of acting; natural or normal behavior; habit, usage, custom." This is an excellent definition of the idiomatic Greek *tropos*; and in this passage the Apostle is saying that God permitted for forty years the habitual (mis --)behavior of Israel in their wilderness journey to Canaan, thus showing his great patience and forbearance toward them.

One more illustration of this word's idiomatic meaning is *trope*, from the same root as *tropos*, of practically the same meaning, that is, "a turning." James assures the believer that God is eternally constant and faithful: *"Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"* (James 1:17). The American Revised Version renders the last phrase: *"...neither shadow that is cast by turning"* both thus adhering to the literal sense of the word. The word here translated "shadow" is a combined word, its meaning accurately expressed by the American Revised Version rendering "shadow cast." This is not a wholly satisfactory translation, because it does not follow the New Testament Greek idiomatic usage. Literally speaking, a turning in itself does not cast a shadow. And what light exterior to God could shine upon him and cause him to cast a shadow, since he is the Father [originator] of lights? It is apparent that both the turning and the shadow are figurative. Shadow is used in Greek much as in English, to represent gloom, or the danger or fear of death, or the death state. The Apostle's idea here is that of the Almighty turning away from his attributes of wisdom, justice, love, and power. What a shadow would be cast over the whole universe if the Creator were ever seen to turn or vary in the slightest degree from his course characterized by these principles! What consternation would ensue were the Father of lights to exhibit any indications of folly, injustice, hatefulness, or weakness! It would mean that he had abandoned his great plan of

the ages and his intention to restore all the willing and obedient of the race to life and happiness. The shadow of death would fall on all his thinking creation.

"But this, thank God, is unthinkable. The Apostle rightly says: in him *"there can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning."* He himself declares: *"I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed"* (Mal. 3:6, ARV).

This is substantially the comforting assurance given the anxious disciples by the angels at the ascension of Jesus Christ. *'This same Jesus, which is taken up from you in heaven, shall so come in like manner'* The word "manner" cannot mean the outward appearance or circumstances of his return; as we have seen, τροπος, the word translated "manner," always refers to internals -- never to externals. Externally there will be a vast difference between the lowly Nazarene, Jesus, and the One who is *"coming in his glory, with all his holy angels, "to be "seated upon the throne of his glory."*

The angels' message does not deal with differences, but with the "sameness." The risen Christ had used every means to convince the disciples that, despite his change of nature, he was the same kind Master and friend and benefactor whom they had known and loved so well. Now they -- and we -- are assured that in every way the coming one will be "this same Jesus." In every way his "manners" -- his disposition -- will be the same. He will come to *"bless and not curse,"* as manifested in his departure in the act of blessing (Luke 24:50,51); he will have the same habits of *"going about doing good,"* the same mission of bestowing *"beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."* He will indeed return *"in power and great glory,"* as he said, but with the same character of kindness and helpfulness that you, disciples, have known and loved in him as a man. The announcement of his Second Advent will be as truly *"glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people,"* as it was at his First Advent as the Babe of Bethlehem. *'This same Jesus will come with like turn of mind as ye have seen him go.'* For he is *"the same yesterday, today, and forever."*

The Peaceableness After Purity

"First pure, then peaceable."

James 3:17 Selected

There is a peaceableness which comes before purity; and it is not beautiful. It is the gentleness of a shallow nature.

There is all the difference in the world between the peace of an inland lake and the peace of the great sea. One *is* calm because it is sheltered from great storms and wind, the other because it has lulled the breeze to rest upon its bosom.

So are the passions of the human heart. There are some lives among us which are only inland lakes. They do not roll. They do not toss. Nor do we deem them beautiful because their peace has cost them no struggle. They are calm because they cannot help it. Do not prize the forgiveness of your sins by souls like these -- they do not have enough love to be angry.

There are other lives which are like the great sea. Theirs is not the peace of feelinglessness. Their peace is born of passion -- of that purity called love. When I do wrong, they forgive me for Christ's sake -- not because they are indifferent both to Christ and to my sin. They pardon me, not because they are ignorant of the flood of my sins, but because they see beyond me the rainbow of God's final work.

The shallow heart can pardon because does it not regret my yesterdays; the pure heart pardons because it sees my tomorrow.

Grant me, O Christ, the peacemaking that comes from purity. I would not want to learn forgiveness by becoming so hard that my brother's sins cannot affect me. I would rather learn to forgive by coming to know my brother's possibilities. Do not allow, dear Lord, that his night becomes less dark to me, because I would like to have a clearer view of the brilliance of his morning.

I feel that the pure in heart, just because they see God, have a great advantage when it comes to pardoning. They have a special vision of all eternity with its boundless possibilities. Give me that vision, O Lord -- allow me to see what the pure in heart see. Allow me to see the hopes that bloom in the many mansions of my Father.

Give me a view of the springs of hidden mercy which flow below the fields of paradise. When I, in impatience, am tempted to send a flood, let me see my brother's bow of promise. Let me see the flowers that will bloom in your garden. Let me hear the music which will sound on your harp. Let me esteem my brother in the light of your kindlier skies. Let me see him without graveclothes -- ignoring the decay of time, the ravages of age, and the heredity of sin. Let me envision him in a new environment -- unhampered by his old heredity -- his old upbringing no longer bracing him. Let me imagine him born again, of a new life of purer blood. Let me hope for him to be brought up in new surroundings -- in the presence of your glory.

Then, dear Lord, my forgiveness will be the fruit of fervor, not of coldness. I shall reach the blessing of the merciful when you shall have granted me the gracious vision of the pure in heart.

Our Riches In Christ

In Christ we have:

A love that can never be fathomed.

A life that can never die.

A peace that can never be understood.

A rest that can never be disturbed.

A joy that can never be diminished.

A hope that can never be disappointed.

A glory that can never be clouded.

A happiness that can never be interrupted.

A light that can never be extinguished.

A strength that can never be overcome.

A beauty that can never be marred.

A purity that can never be defiled.

Resources that can never be exhausted.

It is the devil's masterstroke to get us to accuse him.

-- George Meredith

More about Jesus I would know,
More of his graces to others show,,
More of his saving fullness see,
More of his love who died for me.

-- E.E. Hewitt

The distinction between a missionary properly so called, who abandons his secular calling and devotes himself wholly to the ministry of the word, and a disciple who abides in his calling and commends the gospel to his neighbors, although important, is a distinction of detail and not of principle. The Lord has need of both sorts; and the world has need of both.

-- William Amot, 1720

Saints are persons who make it easier for others to believe in God...

-- Nathan Soderblom

Biblical discernment involves an understanding of both good and evil. In I Kings 3:9, Solomon described biblical discernment in his prayer to the Lord as "an understanding heart to judge your people, that/ may discern between good and evil."

That is a simple description, but it contains some complex truths. It implies a biblical compassion and love that desires for one to be reconciled to God and growing in his truth. An understanding heart also encompasses the ability to bring the truth to bear in love, not shirking accountability but not withholding compassion either. The golden rule can be applied to apologetics too: Any tool or Scripture I use to confront you, I should be able to face also.

-- Bob Passantino

You can judge your age by the amount of pain you feel when you come in contact with a new idea.

Avatar

We cannot doubt that he will come
For whom the ages have made room.
We may not gaze upon the sky
And fear or question or deny.
And though we've watched through many years
A flood of human blood and tears;
And though ten thousand hopes shall die,
And songs be hushed, and long fears lie
Darkly upon the desperate earth;
At long last he shall have rebirth.
We who have seen the sons of men
Rise up and drain the cup again
We do not doubt, 'spite sight and sense,
The surety of his imminence!

-- Anonymous

Nothing more absurd can be imagined than wise, sublime, and heavenly prayers added to a life where neither labor nor diversions, neither time nor money, are under the direction of the wisdom and desire of our prayers. If we saw a man who acted wholly with regard to God in everything that he did and yet neglected all prayer -- public or private -- would we not be amazed? Yet this is as reasonable as for a person to strictly observe times and places of prayer while letting the rest of his life be spent without regard to the will of God. It is as great an absurdity to suppose holy prayers without holiness of life as to suppose a holy and divine life without prayers.

-- William Law

(from: A Serious call to a Devout and Holy Life, 1728)

Entered Into Rest

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