

The Letter to the Colossians

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." - Col. 1:1, 2.

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ARCHES, VAULTS, squared stones, broken pottery, and other vestiges of an ancient city are visible near Chonos, in western Asia Minor, reminders of the departed glory of the city that rose on the ruins of the village, Colosse, of Paul's day. Soon after the writing of his letter, the city, together with the neighboring cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis, was destroyed by an earthquake. Strabo tells us that this earlier community was merely a "small town," doubtless better soil for the increase of the Gospel than the later community that is spoken of "as among the most opulent of cities."

Written at the same time as those to Philemon and the Church at Ephesus, this letter bears a strong resemblance to the one to Ephesus in topics discussed, their order of consideration, and the method of connecting them. There is one very evident and important distinction, namely, that while the letter to the Ephesians dwells on the teaching that the Church is the Body of Christ, this letter has as its main theme the glorious Head of that Church.

The time of writing seems to have been less than thirty years after the Cross. But even at this early date errors had been introduced into the Church. Paul's method of counteracting error is worthy but difficult of emulation. It is not easy today to discover from a reading of this letter just what errors are being combated, for instead of a lengthy advertising of the fallacies, Paul's answer to all error is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It is not necessary to know the details of the "stranger" and his voice. All that is necessary is to be familiar with the "Good Shepherd" and His voice. "The sheep follow Him: for they **know His voice**. A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers."

The principal false teachings this letter is written to combat seem to be that salvation may be secured by the keeping of the law; by severe abstemiousness; by obedience to the traditions of men; or by Grecian, Oriental, or Jewish philosophies-to the speculations which, a few centuries later, came to be called Gnosticism, a system of religious philosophy which taught that "knowledge rather than faith was the key to salvation." In all this there was evident a failure to "hold the Head" as also in the prevalent "worshiping of angels." Of this latter doctrine at the period of this letter Drumelow writes:

"This doctrine had received a great development in the centuries immediately preceding the birth of Christ. The world was imagined to be full of angels and demons, who presided over all the operations of nature and entered into the closest relations with the life of man. Every blade of grass had its angel, much more the mightier forces and elements of nature. Each nation had its angel, who guided its destiny and fought its battles. The common view that the angels are sinless was unknown, and even the best were not regarded as free from moral imperfections. Owing to the distance which later Jewish theology set between God and the world, it was natural that many should turn for help to the angels, who were ever close at hand and were the actual controllers of the ordinary course of nature and human affairs."

The doctrine of "angel worship" is not likely to prove a serious menace to the "brethren" today; however, the dangerous doctrine of salvation "by works," by severe abstemiousness, by asceticism, has always attracted some in the Church, as has also the gnostic idea; and it is against these snares that inspiration has provided in this letter the best of material for the guidance and protection of the Church today. A careful study of it we believe will be of great benefit to all. And may we here suggest that we begin our study with Bible in hand, that we lose none of the inspired words fraught with deep meaning and valuable lessons for the consecrated heart.

Greetings to the Brethren in Colosse

From internal evidence we conclude that the Apostle has not yet visited the Church which he addresses. (Col. 2:1.) It is particularly appropriate therefore that he should open the letter with the customary introduction recommending himself, not, however as a great scholar, a deep thinker, a prominent Jew, but as "an apostle [one sent] of Jesus Christ."

During His earthly ministry frequent assurance was given His disciples by Jesus that He and the Father were completely one in purpose. He has left for our inspiration and example expressions such as, "The word which I speak is not Mine, but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works" "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do"; "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me"; "I can of Mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge, and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me"; "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that **I do nothing** of Myself"; "Though He were a Son [perfect, and, always and under all circumstances obedient], yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered," is the testimony of one who knew Him when the Father's work in Him had been completed. - Heb. 5:6.

Having finished the last lesson in obedience, and having been given "all power in heaven and in earth" we might have expected Him to desire to do and be permitted to do some works and make some plans of His own. Instead, Paul's greetings in the opening of this letter assure us that he is "an ambassador of Jesus Christ, by the will of God." Jesus has learned obedience not to exercise it merely during the brief period of His earthly ministry, but that for all eternity He might be "subject unto the Father."

It is not surprising that it should take a long and, to us, tedious process to find and develop a company sufficiently humble and submissive to be worthy to share with such an obedient One in His future work of establishing the Father's will in the earth. Those having less degree of obedience might be unwilling to "bind kings with chains, and princes with fetters of iron, executing upon them [merely] the judgments written," the will of God; and there would be the danger that they might not, at the end of the Millennium, share in the joy of their Head in that the time had come to "turn the Kingdom over to the Father." It is evident how important it is to examine every minor detail of our present lives with the utmost care that we may be assured we have made "**no** provision for the flesh to satisfy the desires thereof," but that in all things His will is our will. "Even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should **follow His** steps." (1 Pet. 2:21.) Doubtless only "through much tribulation" (Acts 14:22; John 16:33; Rom. 5:3-4; 8:17) can the proud and stubborn flesh be forced to yield so completely that "**whatsoever** we do, whether we eat or whether we drink, we do all to the glory of God." One who today, even in some trifle, either of the conduct of the flesh or of the study of the Scriptures, prefers his own thought, which can be only of the flesh, earthly, to Jehovah's thoughts, which are "as high as the heavens, would be unsafe to trust with the execution of "the judgments written." "This honor [will] have [only] His saints," "all" those holy

ones who during the reign of sin and Satan have demonstrated that their will is wholly the Father's; those that, faithful even to the hour of death, can say: "Thy will, not mine be done."

Saints and Faithful

"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." - Col. 1:2.

"In his earlier letters Paul addresses himself to 'the Church'; in his later, beginning with the Epistle to the Romans, and including the three great epistles from his captivity, namely, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, he drops the word Church, and uses expressions which regard the individuals composing the community rather than the community which they compose. The slight change thus indicated in the Apostle's point of view is interesting, however it may be accounted for." We suggest that perhaps by this time conditions were evidencing that not all "called out ones" were "faithful and holy." Within that circle of "called out" ones, there has always been, nevertheless, a closely knit brotherhood of "faithful" ones. "Faith weaves the bond that unites men in the brotherhood of the Church, for it brings all who share it into a common relation to the Father. He who is faithful, that is, believing, will be faithful in the sense of being worthy of confidence and true to his duty, his profession, and his Lord." -

A faithful one according to Thayer's Lexicon, is "one who has kept his plighted faith," as the betrothed bride to her intended; one "believing, confiding, trusting;" one who is "easily persuaded." These are therefore those who, drawn by "the mercies of God," are proving themselves worthy to be members of the Bride class. But note that their holiness, their trustworthiness, and their trusting are traceable to their being "in Christ Jesus." Thus only those who are "saints **in Christ Jesus**" are Christians. Such, wherever they live, it may be in Colosse or London, or some unknown village in the "new world," or in whatever part of the Age, the year 60 or 1941, may have fulfilled for them Paul's all-inclusive prayer for "grace and peace." "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus," and that is "grace sufficient for every time of need." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God," and that faith continuing to control in every detail, peace in the sylvan retreat or amid the din of battle,, perpetual peace, and every other grace, is the heritage of one wholly devoted to the Lord (a proper definition of holiness), and will be eternally his if he continue to the end of the earthly trial "loyal to his plighted faith." Such have abandoned the misery that comes from pleasing self, for the peace that results from devotion to God; for the "work of righteousness is peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." - Isa. 32:17.

The greatest test as to the enduring quality of this peace, however, is to come, not when physical dangers threaten, but in the peculiar "perils of the **last days**," our days -- tests from "false apostles," appearing as "angels of light," deceptions that "if possible would deceive the very elect," for "they will show signs and wonders" for the very purpose of "seducing even the elect" (Mark 13:22), "for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is **transformed into an angel of light**. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the **ministers of righteousness**; whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Cor. 11:13-15.) Such are used of the Lord to test the quality of our peace. Even though they shall surely succeed in "drawing away followers, after them," as has been the case in the past, God will grant to those who are faithful to their Bridegroom, those who "love peace and pursue it," an experience of outward peace, and inward peace at all times.-See also Mark 9:50; 1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:2; Jude 2; Luke 1:79; John 14:27; Rom. 14:19.

The grace of a peace of sterling quality can be secured from only one source, "the God of peace." "Be perfect [complete, wholly God's], be of good comfort, be of one mind [the mind of Christ], **live in peace**; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (2 Cor. 13:11; Rom. 16:20; see also Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:2; 1 Tim.

1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 3; 2 John 3.) Peace may be, should be, ours-enduring peace such as theirs-peace upon which the intense jealousies and hatreds of the disintegrating Roman world could not intrude. What grace it was that Jew and Gentile should unite the incense of their prayers, the Greek and barbarian mutually edify one another in their search for the supreme wisdom; slave and master both be humbled at the feet of one Lord, eating now at one table, His table, all "one in Christ Jesus." Brethren, Paul calls them, but the term originally meant more than just "friends." It implied peace between them under adverse conditions. It meant common possession, common love, a common father, a common mother. Literally it is, "from the same womb." Resemblance, sympathy, cooperation are in that word. All previous differences of race or culture or fame or fortune can be obliterated when the phrase "brethren in Christ" is sincerely spoken. That is a power beyond the human. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.

For a fuller exposition of the relationship of these "saints in Christ, in their coordination as members of one Body see all of the Epistle to the Ephesians and 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. The Apostle John also dwells at great length upon this theme in his letters, making it as Paul does his chief theme next to that of Christ Himself.

Strictly none are in Christ Jesus except those who figuratively eat His flesh and drink His blood (John 6:56); only these bear the perfect spiritual fruit. (John 15:5.) Only "in Him" are any "made the righteousness of God." (2 Cor. 5:21.) Though "weak in Him, we shall live with Him." (2 Cor. 13:4.) We were "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." (Eph. 1:4.) We are "rooted in Him," "built up in Him," and "we walk in Him." (Col. 2:6, 7.) "Ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2:10), and "in the dispensation of the fulness of times our Father will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." (Eph. 1:10.) No wonder Paul was willing to go to any length that he might "win Christ and be found in Him." (Phil. 3:8, 9.) "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (1 John 2:6.) "Walk in love, as Christ also path loved us, and hath given Himself for us." (Eph. 5:2.) How evident it is that all of these blessings, even the confession of our weakness, are ours because we are "in Christ." Many nameless slabs in the catacombs bear the inscription, "In Christo."

Grace and Peace

In closing his salutation Paul blends the Greek salutation, "Grace" with the Hebrew "Peace." In the word grace are comprehended the two thoughts of the gifts and of the love which condescendingly bestows them patiently and forgivingly on the suppliant. A love and gentleness that we must emulate are in it. "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." - John 1:16.

Our wilderness journey is not more safe today than when Paul's mind turned to the greeting of the traveler of the desert, "Peace be unto you." This was the assurance given that the stranger was no enemy. That was a base deception if grace was not also evident. When grace reigns in our hearts, ours will be both by word and act the message of "peace on earth, good will toward men." Like Paul we will not merely wish our brethren "grace and peace," but will be willing to devote our all to the work of enriching their lives with every heavenly grace in Christ. Paul could not give these graces, but he could teach the brethren to accept the headship of Him who said, "My grace is sufficient for thee," "My peace I give unto you." - 2 Cor. 12:9; John 14:27.

- P. E. Thomson

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"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." - Col. 1:12.

USING A word that means unceasingly, unintermittingly, Paul, after two verses of greeting, assures the brethren of Colosse that, in the proper spirit of gratitude for favors already enjoyed by them, he is "praying always for them." He says, verses 3 and 4, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints." Paul prays for them not "since" Epaphras, their elder, who is with him in Rome, has brought an unfavorable report of their condition, but, "since" he heard of their "faith in Christ Jesus and **love** to all the saints." Some might be found thus faithfully praying for their brethren when reports had been received of their "going out of the truth," or falling into some other hopeless condition. Paul frequently uses such an expression as this regarding his praying for his brethren. It is never, however, because evil reports have been brought him, but for some such reason as the one given in this case: "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints." Paul could pray for them "with joy," knowing that (though there were doctrinal differences among them, as all commentators agree) they were escaping the direful state depicted in 1 John 3:14 -- a permanent dwelling place in death because of a love that is "in word" and not "in deed." (1 John 3:18.) Merely talking of love is not enough. A "faithful" Christian lives "the love of Christ." "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren" not because we talk about loving them. Whether or not we have that love should be easy to discover, for "the love of Christ holds us together." (2 Cor. 5:14, Young.) Could a healthy member of the Body of Christ be separated from **any** other member of the Body except on orders from the Head?

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel." - Col. 1:5.

The basis of Paul's thankfulness is "the hope" which was being laid up for them. (See Diaglott.) It takes a lifetime to lay up that hope; but one is not justified in thinking it is "being laid up" except on such evidence as Paul says he has "faith in Christ Jesus and love to all the saints." Perhaps the presence of even these qualities would not have been convincing evidence for the Apostle had he not known of the severe tests they had endured. The hope of these brethren was a safe one on two counts: It was being laid up in heaven; and it was based on the "true word of the **Gospel**" -- as this phrase, a Hebraism, may be translated.

"Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth." - Col. 1:6.

The Diaglott translation properly says this Gospel "is present among" them, the verb being from the same root as "parousia." This Gospel, present among them and also in all the known world, almost entirely by his own activity, was a fruit-bearing message. Evidently the report of Epaphras had been a very good one since the fruit-bearing had been "since the day" they heard and "personally knew [Rotherham] the true grace of God." This is true "grace," not to merely know of or even to talk fluently about the truth, but to "personally know"-to live the truth. The making of this statement was as high a testimonial for Epaphras as for the Class of which he was an elder.

Most assuredly Paul would not have accredited the brother's appraisal of the brethren at Colosse had he not been fully convinced by personal observation that Epaphras was qualified to speak, because he also "personally" knew not only the truth, but also its great Giver.

"As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit." - Col. 1:7-8.

It is probable Paul had not known Epaphras long, but better than mere words his faithful service to the Apostle in his prison-home had "manifested" (Darby), not merely "declared" their "love in the spirit." This dear fellow-servant had evidently "kept his plighted faith" with his Lord, as he had with the Class.

Paul's Petition

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." - Col. 1:9.

Paul continues the prayer, but to his thanksgiving he now adds his plea that further attainments may be theirs. Appreciation of present blessings must never lessen the endeavor to reach higher goals. In fact a failure to strive for higher attainments proves unreal the professed appreciation. From the day the writer was told of the love and faith of the Class at Colosse, he has never ceased (the aorist here used would imply) to pray for them and to "earnestly ask" that they might be filled to the flood stage (Greek) with the exact, personal, full, clear, precise, and correct knowledge of God's will. Not in the "wisdom of this world" is this to be found, but in "spiritual wisdom and understanding." Paul prays (Thayer says that the thought of demanding is prominent in the word)- that they may have "all spiritual wisdom and understanding."

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." - Col. 1:10.

It is not surprising to find the Apostle praying that the Colossian brethren might be filled with the exact knowledge of our Heavenly Father's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, when we note that his hope for them is that they "might walk **worthy of the Lord** unto all pleasing" -- the loftiest possible of purposes. It is manifest that this is not a walk according to the flesh, and that the works alluded to as part of the fruitfulness of this walk are not dependent on fleshly ability for their acceptableness. Nor is it surprising that the Apostle should in this connection exhort to an endless increasing of their exact, personal knowledge of God. No true Christian will cease his striving for a more nearly complete knowledge of God as long as God is willing to reveal more of Himself. As long as there is one verse not yet fully understood in that blessed Book that reveals Him, that Christian will be a true Bible Student, willing to make unlimited sacrifices that he may discover the key to that verse. It is of the utmost importance that all be made aware of the weight the Apostle places on this matter of knowledge of God -one of the fruitages of a worthy walk based on a complete filling with the knowledge of His will. But note that the knowledge of His will comes first, before the works are accepted as good, before the walk can be worthy, and before we can really have a precise knowledge of God.

Pinnacle of the Apostle's Aspiration

The prayers of the Apostle Paul in his various epistles carry us to the very pinnacle of his aspiration for his brethren. In this one, we have an example of his great ability for concise and complete expression. In few words he gives us in most inspiring language, the goal toward which all must strive, and a petition which -we may *offer* for all our brethren with the assurance that its answer will bring them the greatest that can possibly be attained.

The Apostle makes no effort to nicely weigh the proportionate values of character growth, Christian activity, and doctrinal development. Each is too important to be relegated to a second place. If his statement here is to be taken, however, as a chronological outline of the Christian life, and so it would seem to us, doctrinal attainment comes first; but he does not overlook cautioning that he does not have reference to an intellectual perception merely, but one that embraces also the moral and spiritual sides of man's complex nature. Out of this there must grow as a stem from the root a "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," which the Apostle defines as being both fruitful in every good work and continuously adding to one's knowledge of God.

One might have expected the Apostle to end here, for this ideal seems far beyond possibility of attainment in this life. His ambition for these dear brethren would surely have left us doubting whether they or any other brethren could ever realize the fulfillment of it, if the strength sufficient had not also been revealed. When we remember how far into the depths of heathen degradation most of the early Christians had fallen before the Lord laid hold upon them, we recognize that in them there was the greatest demonstration both of need and of the overcoming power of God's spirit.

It is in the following verse, the 11th, the Apostle reveals why he can hope for so much: "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness." He prays that they might be "strengthened with **all** might." If their eyes could have been opened, as those of the servant of the Prophet of old, to see the angel hosts standing ready at all times to fulfill God's will for them, this might indeed have seemed a sufficient basis for absolute trust. The Apostle, however, does not content himself with a prayer that they might be strengthened with the might of all the angel band, but calls upon a willing Father for the bestowing of all power-a revealing of His mighty arm. Their walk is to be according -to "His glorious power." The literal Greek of this passage is, "according to the power of His glory." Rotherham renders it, "the grasp of His glory." Whether we take this to mean the grasp which Christians may have, the realization they may have of God's glory, or the grasp that that glory has upon them when they do have a glimpse of it, we are probably in neither case far astray from the Apostle's real intent. Every Christian who has found himself increasing in his knowledge of God and approximating more nearly to a precise understanding of His glorious character has always found in this a great source of power.

Is it a heathen world to be conquered, or mountains to be moved, that call for the bestowing of such might -- the perfection of His strength manifesting itself in our weakness? Is it the understanding of the profound secrets of the universe? It is none of these, nor any spectacular attainment. It is merely a manifestation of the Christian walk "unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." Perhaps all who have endured tests of patience and long-suffering will feel that the Apostle was not amiss in asking such preparation for these trials. In the Greek, however, there is a still deeper thought in each word than the English translation gives. One of the lexicons says that the difference of meaning between these words is best seen in their opposites. The word rendered patience is opposed to the spirit of cowardice or despondency, discouragement. Long-suffering has a meaning the opposite of wrath or revenge. Patience is that quality that does not

easily succumb under suffering, while long-suffering is the self restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong Both qualities are not only possible, but are surely the possession of every saint before his entering upon the work that will require one hundred years' patience in dealing with repentant sinners and even a thousand years of consideration for sinners who give outward obedience. Nor need one think that he has learned the necessary lesson until his patient continuance in well doing, his uncomplainingly bearing of evil is manifest "with joyfulness."

The Central Feature of Thanksgiving

Such an attitude toward evil would be unworthy and unprofitable except as the evil is accepted as if it were from the hand of a loving Father. Clouds though rimmed with gold would soon lose their beauty if we did not surely know of the showers of blessing they bear for us. The injuries that men are permitted to inflict, the misunderstandings, the misrepresentations, the injustices, all are accepted joyfully as polishing tools guided by the hand of One who cannot err either as to our need or our endurance. Jewels given the treatment suited to the shaping of chalk would never shine in a coronet. The worthy Christian is to rejoice in being counted worthy to "suffer with Christ," not to complain of "these light afflictions which are but for a moment." "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:2-4.) He is not to specify the nature or the severity of the trials through which he is to pass while demonstrating that cheerful endurance necessary to the overcomer. If "our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. 3:5), victory with rejoicing is just as sure for us as is miserable defeat for those who attempt the meeting of these trials in the strength of the human arm. Let us lay our poor selves, "our bodies, a living sacrifice" at His feet to be in Him "acceptable" sacrifices of thanksgiving. "With such sacrifices God is well pleased."

With the 12th verse of this chapter the Apostle is on the very verge of the central theme of the epistle. Here, as elsewhere, the Apostle bases all present privilege and future hope of heavenly inheritance upon "Christ Jesus and Him crucified."

The mere thought of Him brings thanksgiving to the lips of the Apostle, and the central feature of that thanksgiving is the Christian's acceptableness in the Beloved, the One "which bath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." This spirit of thankfulness is one of the essential features of the worthy walk which Paul has been discussing. The Apostle's thankfulness is not based on his undoubted talents, or his unusual education, nor even upon the "visions more abundant than they all." In Christ Jesus he has been made acceptable because he is repentant, is humbled to a willingness to accept the proffered mercy, and is strong in the faith that no weakness is of such degree but that God's power and strength may be made manifest in it. (2 Cor. 12:9.) The phrase, "bath made us meet," being in the present tense, indicates that Paul is not looking down to the time of a future inheritance, when we will be presented "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," but he is talking of our present blessings, and of the marvelous favor that is ours of now being "acceptable in the Beloved."

From the relationship of this passage to the message that first came to Paul on the road to Damascus, when he lay on the ground completely and finally humbled, it seems that those words must still be ringing in his ears: "I send thee to the Gentiles, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God that they might receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them which are sanctified." Each phrase of that first message is re-echoed here. The "inheritance" of which Paul is here speaking is prefigured by the land of Canaan, which his ancestors had been delivered from Egypt to inherit. This inheritance is not merely a future thing, but the present possession of those who have forsaken the realms of darkness to walk in the

way of light. Jesus is represented as the Apostle Paul saw Him on that first day of his acquaintance, and as the direct opposite in every particular of the Prince of Darkness.

The word "inheritance" does not have the meaning of a possession that came through the death of a predecessor, but implies possession by lot. Israel did not receive Canaan because of their own qualities, but because of God's favor; not their swords, but His might had won it for them—a fitting figure of the inheritance of the saints in light. One of the primary lessons for the Christian to learn is this one of his own weakness and God's power, his own unworthiness and Christ's merit. Jesus promised, "Because I live ye shall live also"; "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they made be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me. . . . Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given ME, be with Me where I am." (John 14:19; 17:22-24. His Kingdom is always the Kingdom of light and life; and He the great Life and Light-Giver: "The life was the light of men." "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 1:4, 9; 8:12.) All this is from His hand, not from our worth: though it is true that it is only "if we endure [patiently with Him], we shall also reign with Him." - 2 Tim. 2:12.

He does not teach us how to deliver ourselves from the power of darkness, but He does teach us to pray: "Deliver us from the evil one"; and here (ver. 13) Paul assures us that it is He that hath delivered us from the power of darkness. The word "delivered" is one that would be used to describe the rescuing of a man from drowning, or the saving of one from illness; but it means, properly, to draw to oneself; and this is definitely the process by which He hath delivered us from the power of darkness. Nor are there any exceptions. All who come to Him were "born in sin and shapen in iniquity." However much any may boast of their righteousness and high standards, all have fallen short of the glory of God and therefore cannot be of His Kingdom except as He has made us meet to be partakers of its light. The process is a familiar one, as illustrated in the common practice of that day, as well as of our own, when a conquered nation was moved bodily from its own land to the one the conqueror had chosen for it.

"He [by the sacrifice on Calvary] hath delivered us [who believed] from the power of darkness and hath transplanted us into the Kingdom of His dear Son."

In all such pilgrimages, in the natural warfare, only a small proportion of those who start on the journey survive to enter the land prepared for them. Perhaps this is another reason for the choosing of this figure. All who are now transplanted into the Kingdom of Light must prove themselves worthy of that light by walking in it, seeking to conform themselves fully to it, walking, so much as in them lieth, "**worthy** of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in **every** good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Only the spirit of thankfulness that is in the Apostle's heart in this prayer can keep one faithful in the testings of this journey—testings that would allure one to the glorifying of the flesh by doing its works, and to the gaining of knowledge for the sake of knowledge, instead of for its intended purpose—that we might walk worthy of our Heavenly Father, He who lives not to receive but to give. To the completion of the journey these must remember their sins, His forgiveness, the blood through which forgiveness is made possible, and the great price which He provided for our redemption.

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 1:15-18

"That in all things He might have the pre-eminence." - Col. 1:18.

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - October, 1941)

THE GROSSER forms of error with which the Church at Colosse was afflicted, we judge were temporary, but the truths set forth by the writer of this letter for the correcting of those errors are eternal, and therefore as valuable for the Church today as they were the day of their writing. Our anointed Lord in His relation to our heavenly Father and all creation, and His triumphant supremacy over the latter in every particular, is the theme of our present study. Paul would set Christ in the heavens, a brilliant light, to obliterate by His shining all the flickering light philosophers had supplied by their feeble groping after truth; not because all so-called "light" was darkness, but because "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part must be done away." It was especially necessary that there be eradicated the teaching that all creation came from a company of beings, half human, half spirit, who must be appeased by the worship of the creatures they governed. Paul's teaching was equally antagonistic to the associate thought prevalent at the time that all matter was of itself evil and that therefore the seat of sin was in material things.

How Jesus Revealed the Father

The existence of a kingdom of evil was undeniable, for all at one time had been more or less under its sway. Paul was writing to a little company of those who had been delivered from that bondage and had been "translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His love." (R. V.) This Son he now describes, in a phrase familiar at the time, as "the image of the invisible God." (Col. 1:15; 1 Cor. 11:7; 2 Cor. 4:4; Heb. 1:3.) Alexandrian Judaism had much in its teaching about the "Word," the "Logos," described as "the image of God"; but the Judaistic vision of the "image" was as befogged as was that of the God who from eternity had "dwelt in darkness" (1 Kings 8:12; Job 9:11; 23:8, 9; Psa. 10:1; 89:46; Isa. 45:15; Exod. 33:20; John 1:18; 5:37; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16) so thick that "no man hath seen God at any time nor can see Him," even though He Himself is "the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." (James 1:17, R. V.) Jesus as the "Word" (John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; 5:7; Rev. 19:13), made audible the divine mind. As the "Image" He made visible the divine attributes. In the title, "Son of God," both of these are comprehended, for when the Son is described, as in Hebrews 1; Proverbs 8:22, 30, 31, or His life recounted, as in the Gospels, the Father is being revealed. Jesus was not a "shadow" (Heb. 10:1), "a rough outline such as a carpenter would draw with a piece of chalk, or such as an artist delineates when he is about to make a picture," but "the very image" of His Father, as one would speak, referring "to a painting or statue which is finished, where every part is an exact copy of the original."

It is manifest that Satan hates not only the Original, but also the Image. "If our good tidings is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the good tidings of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them." (2 Cor. 4:3, 4, R. V., see margin.) He will hate us too in proportion as, though having "borne the image of the earthy, we bear the image of the heavenly." While the Apostle in this last text is speaking of our resurrection change, yet he elsewhere exhorts that this work be in progress, and that even now we are to be "change I into the same image," "for whom He [the Father] did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed

to the image of His Son." (1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29.) And to whatever extent we bear the likeness of our Father, to that extent we will have the hatred of Satan.

He who during His earthly ministry never once mentioned the "name" of His Father, most effectively "declared," or "interpreted" (Rotherham) that name (John 1:18; 17:26) by manifesting the Father's graces. For those who recognized this revelation, the speculations and philosophizings of centuries lost all interest. The reality had taken the place of unprofitable guesses and reasonings. "Peradventures, whether of hope or fear, are not knowledge. What we poor men need, is a certitude of a God who loves us and cares for us, has an arm that can help us, and a heart that will. The god of 'pure theism' is little better than a phantom, so unsubstantial that you can see the stars shining through the pale form, and when a man tries to lean on him for support, it is like leaning on a wreath of mist. There is nothing. There is no certitude firm enough for us to find sustaining power against life's trials in resting upon it, but in Christ. There is no warmth of love enough for us to thaw our frozen limbs by, apart from Christ. In Him, and in Him alone, the far off, awful, doubtful God becomes a God very near, of whom we are sure, and sure that He loves and is ready to help and cleanse and save." "My soul crieth out for the living God."

Five times in one sentence (Col. 1:15-17) Jesus, Himself the Creator of all else except the Father, is set in a class by Himself in contrast with the entire creation, "all things." The Greek word translated "first" (Col. 1:15), used to distinguish Jesus from all the rest of creation, carries the thought of supremacy as well as priority, though the latter is the primary meaning of the word. All expositors are clear that the real meaning of the expression is that He preceded all others. Paul leaves no room for argument on the matter when in the next verse (Col. 1:16) he gives as proof that Jesus was "first," the fact that "all things" were created "by Him"- "in Him," (R. V.) etc. That His existence had a beginning, none can deny. Much space is saved us in that we have not the necessity of laboring, as all Trinitarian commentators must do, to explain away the implication that Jesus Himself was a creature -- a created being. That truth is further averred by the phrase, "first born."

Jesus-Pre-eminent of All Creation

Among the Hebrews the first-born son had preeminence in the household as to the estate and title, and in the absence of his father was the officiating priest; thus in every respect representing the father. "Without Him (the First-born as the Father's representative) was not anything made that was made." Things heavenly and things earthly, things visible and things invisible, even to the highest of these, "thrones, dominions, principalities, all things were created by Him and for Him."

The first statement of this verse is stronger than the second, "all things were created by ["through," R. V.] Him," for the first asserts that "all things were created **in** Him." When the Father brought into existence His "only begotten Son," all creation was planned, as also their future existence as a natural sequence of the creation of this "First born of all creation." This arrangement, the following verse (Col. 1:17) asserts, is continuous, and, by inference, to be eternal, saying: "**In** Him all things consist" (Barnes: "are sustained"; Rotherham, and Revised Version margin: "hold together"; Diaglott: "have been permanently placed.") Present day men of science devote years of study that they may determine the size of the largest star and the smallest particle of matter, at the same time seeking to discover the laws of nature by which they operate and hold together in their course. The true, the Bible science, simply states "All things were created in Him and through Him and for Him, and in Him all things [regardless of size or distance] are held together." Visit the farthest star within range of the most powerful telescope, and, not hesitating there, send your imagination beyond into regions as yet unexplored by the human mind; then, returning, take up the microscope to marvel at its revelations; but not content

with its meager scope pass on again into imagination's unlimited realm. Nowhere will you have found a body too large or a speck too small to be included in these "all things." When He was created, all these were **in** Him in the sense that He is the second Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), "in Him [the First born of every creature] was life" (John 1:4), and God's purposes for Him would not have been complete if that life had not been bestowed on others; all were through Him in that though He was the Creator, He was merely acting as the representative of the Father; all are for Him that for eternity His power might guide their course and use, His righteousness taking pleasure in them - they were created for His pleasure. It may as truly be said of the Son as of the Father: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." - Rev. 4:11.

Col. 1:18 -- "And He [this One regarding whom greater things could not be said without making Him equal with God (John 10:29;14:28) **He**] is the Head of the Body, the Church" -- our Head. And during the two thousand years of our history, individually and collectively, oh, how often, we have indicated, not by word so much as by act, that we doubted His power and His wisdom to manage our little affairs. How often we have felt that matters were "too hard," too intricate, for Him to overrule -- He who can "work all things after the counsel of His own will." Have we not often heard the Lord say to us, "Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" "And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end ["no boundary" a Moravian Version reads], upon the throne of David and upon His Kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this." (Isa. 9:6, 7, R. V.; Dan. 7:14; Zech. 9:10; Matt. 8:27; Mark 1:27; John 3:35; Eph. 1:22; 1 Pet. 3:22.) "The whole course of human affairs and of natural processes is directed by Him who died upon the cross! The helm of the universe is held by the hands which were pierced for us. The Lord of Nature and the Mover of all things is that Savior on whose love we may pillow our aching heads." "In the world but not of it," with our antitypical Joseph over both us and it, there shall surely be corn in our sacks and a Goshen to dwell in. Though the darkness of night covers all about us, can we not see the form of our Beloved drawing nearer in the darkness of the sea? He is saying, "It is I; be not afraid."

Jesus-Our Head

Under various figures, the Vine and branches, Chief Corner-stone and temple stones, etc. (John 15; Isa. 28:16; 1 Pet. 2:5), the relationship of Jesus and the Church is shown, each symbol giving its particular lesson. We should not let the dictum regarding the mixing of metaphors deter us from fully profiting by each picture. Among them all, none is more beautiful, more profitable, more necessary, than the one Paul uses here -- that of headship over a body, representing one phase of that "all power in heaven and earth" that is His. (Matt. 28:18.) By experience we know, however, that His absolute authority is exercised in gentleness and with consideration, the same gentleness that will continue to characterize His dealings, as well as those of all associated with Him, throughout the next Age. The Greek of Revelation 2:27 equally well permits the rendering by Rotherham: "He shall shepherd them with a scepter of iron," shepherding with all the kindness their condition will permit, and all the iron firmness that is needed. In headship is implied absolute power and authority, His interest in us, our complete submergence in His will, our insufficiency, uselessness, without Him, and His humility and graciousness in being willing to express His perfection through our weakness. He is the seat of life and the center of unity.

The members of the Body would not perform their mutual services (Eph. 4:15, 16) without the free functioning of a head. He who creates and governs all must precede all else. As the vine is before the branches, He who is our Life must be first-"He is before all things, . . . the beginning

[Greek: "first and source"], the first born from the dead [the awakening of sleeping Lazarus and others falling far short of the "birth" to full life] that among all He might have the pre-eminence." There would be no beautiful vine if the life of the parent stalk did not flow through it -- no tendril would lay hold upon the supporting trellis, no grape ripen to royal fruitage. But ours is the case of no ordinary vine, no ordinary body. Dead in trespasses and sins, we must have a life giving Savior, and not only that -- He who died that we might live must also be the "first born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence."

Jesus-the Sustaining Power of the Universe

Throughout this passage there is an emphasis at each reference to our Lord that is impossible of reproduction in the English. As an illustration: In the phrase, "He is," the pronoun "He" is emphatic -- the rendering, "He Himself" approximates it-and the verb "is" emphasizes not only pre-existence, but also absolute existence. "'He was before all things' would not have said so much as 'He is before all things.' We are reminded of His own words, 'Before Abraham was, I am.'" Even with the assistance the emphasized versions, the Diaglott and Rotherham translations, give us, it is to be feared we who do not know the Greek can never grasp all the forcefulness of the language Paul uses in his endeavor to establish the pre-eminence of our Lord, He who is, eternally established preeminent, the creating, ruling, sustaining power of every particle of matter and every law regulating every feature of an eternal universe. The ages without end will see no flaw in that rulership to mar the "pleasure" of the Father who has entrusted it to Him. It is not to be wondered at that "they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful," called by One who is all-wise in His judgment and who has absolute foreknowledge, and chosen because they have made their calling and election secure by being faithful though "tested in all points." Surely one point of that testing will be as to whether Jesus actually, not merely theoretically, is supreme in their lives, as He will eventually be acknowledged by all in all the universe.

The eighteenth verse is paralleled by Ephesians 1 :22, .which according to the Diaglott and Moffatt translations should read: God hath "subjected all things under His feet; and constituted Him a Head over all things for the Church." (See also Winer's "Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament," pages 210, 211.) There are too many stars and too many specks of dust in the universe for our intelligence to grasp how each is regulated for the benefit of the Church, either as to their present or their future inheritance; but we can have the faith to grasp this as truth -- as another of our unnumbered reasons for gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Romans 8:28 can be true only in a universe governed, shepherded, by a loving and all-powerful Head. Can we have the grace to live a life that will bear testimony to an enduring faith in the assurance that because Christ is Head over all things for the Church, therefore "all things do work together for good to the called"? "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3:21; 1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Pet. 1:3.) Surely it pleases us as it pleases the Father "that in Him should all fulness dwell."

CHRIST, ALL IN ALL

"In Christ all fulness dwells: from Him proceeds
All fallen man, poor, wretched, guilty, needs.
In Him the contrite, bruised in spirit, find
Whate'er can heal the sorrows of the mind --
Forgiving love, that saves from blank despair,
Rich grace, that banishes each anxious care,
Soft pity, that relieves the bursting sigh,
And truth, revealing joys that never die.
Thrice happy they, who to His Word attend,
His favor seek, and on His strength depend.
'Tis theirs to know His heart-consoling voice,
To share His smile, and in His name rejoice.
To them, reclaimed in mercy from the fall
And heav'nward marching, Christ is all in all:
In want, their treasure-in distress, their stay
In gloom, their day-spring-vigor, in decay
'Mid foes, their guard-in solitude, their guest
In storms, their hiding place-in toils, their rest
In bonds, their freedom-their relief, in pain
In life, their glory-and in all things, gain."

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 1:19-22

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - November, 1941)

"For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross." - Col. 1:19, 20, R. V.

THE RELATIONSHIP of Christ to God, the universe, and the Church having been considered (Col. 1:15-18), Paul turns to a discussion of Jesus' work of reconciliation in its relation to these three -- to God, to the universe, and to the Church. Elsewhere he informs us that "the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." (Rom. 8:20, 21, R. V.) Here in verse 19 (Col. 1:19) he tells us that it was the good pleasure of this same One who subjected all creation in the hope of an ultimate deliverance, that "all fulness" should dwell in Christ. By this we understand that it was God's pleasure that Christ should possess the fulness of His character, and that as His agent Christ should execute every feature of His Plan, even to the reconciling of sinners and the reclaiming of a corrupted creation. We note that this reconciling work was to include "all things"- "things in earth, and things in heaven." It was the divine pleasure that this "fulness of God" should be found in Christ not for a time merely, but that it should "dwell" there, that is take up its permanent abode in Christ.

There can be no doubt but that His life of faithfulness, one feature of this "fulness of God" dwelling in Him, taught many a fallen angel the folly of giving allegiance to Satan; but even though the message of that life had been made clear to every angel and to every man, "a spectacle to men and to angels," that would never have constituted the fulness of God dwelling in Him, so far as the work of reconciliation is concerned. The righteousness of His life, another feature of this fulness of God, could and did convict of sin. It may have induced conversion on the part of some of the less fallen of the angelic host; it might have meant a restoration to God's favor for some at the end of the period of their condemnation (theirs was not an eternal sentence), but not one of Adam's race could have been rescued by that process. They were all under the sentence of eternal death, and unless an exact substitute who would die for man should be found, the human family must go into death to dwell there eternally. The Jewish nation was under the additional curse of the Law, and for their rescue, the further ignominy of dying "on a tree" was required.*

* For a full consideration of this, see "The Atonement Between God and Man," pp. 383 to 487.

Two Features of Reconciliation

Various translations give the thought that in the passage we are considering, all that is referred to is the fact that for man's release the providing of such a substitute was a legal necessity. But remembering that though the death of some of the angelic hosts has been prophesied, yet death was not the curse or punishment pronounced upon them for disobedience, but rather that they should be bound in "chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day," we can see that not even the death of a perfect angel, much less the death of a man, though it be the most ignominious of deaths, could redeem one of them from the sentence upon them. While the ransom sacrifice of Jesus, the perfect man, is the basis of the "peace" established for the human family, which was tinder the sentence of death, it is clear from the Apostle's words here, that the providing of the ransom is but one part of the reconciling work. It lays a foundation for the

reconciling work to be accomplished, but the two are different features -- the reconciling following as a result of the ransom. "**Having made** peace by the blood," He proceeds to the reconciling.

Bearing in mind this distinction, and remembering the penalty imposed on the fallen angels, will do much toward clearing up the difficulties of this passage. Without carefully examining it and its context, and without considering related Scriptures it might be used to substantiate a theory that eventually every creature will attain perfection and the blessing of life eternal.

The Greek word translated "reconcile" in this twentieth verse is used in only one other passage in the New Testament -- Ephesians 2:16; and therefore were it not for other literature or an ancient dictionary we could surmise almost nothing as to its meaning. Definitions of words of the ancient languages are arrived at only by the study of hundreds of instances of their use, or by referring to the works of those who have so studied them. Consulting Thayer's Lexicon we find this verb, as used with the phrase "to himself," as meaning, "to draw to himself by reconciliation, or so to reconcile that they should be devoted to himself." Were it not for the following statements we would be forced to decide on the former of these as the only meaning in this passage; for while it is undoubtedly true, the magnetic power of the love that went even to the cross for the purpose of establishing "peace" was far reaching enough to touch the bounds of creation, it is not true, in the light of other Scriptures, that every individual will by this drawing power of the cross be led to be devoted to the Redeemer. That point will be substantiated and still stronger proof found that this passage cannot be used justly to teach a universal reclamation, when considering the twenty-third verse. The point referred to there is that Paul uses the vehement form of "if" instead of the mild one, though even that one would have said that "all" will be made followers "if," indicating failure for some.

It "pleased" the Father, because of His love for His Son and for the world, that this magnetic power should proceed from Christ as one of the features of "all fulness" permanently abiding in Him--"through Him, I say, [to exert this drawing power on all things] whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever **believeth into Him** should not be destroyed but obtain everlasting life." (John 3:16, see Diaglott.) Such love could do no less in the way of offering restoration to the fallen, than give the opportunity eventually to be accepted by "whosoever will."

"Things" to be Reconciled

Literally, the Apostle has said that it is "all material things" "in heaven and in earth" that are to be reconciled. This literal rendering, taken together with the fact that the next statement unmistakably refers to a portion of mankind as if they were not included in the previous statement, has led at least one commentator to the conclusion that only "things" are meant, holding to a view which is the opposite extreme to that of those who have concluded that a complete restoration to favor with God for every creature in the universe is meant. The one overlooks the thought of "drawing" that is in "reconcile," and the "if" of verse twenty-three; the other overlooks the use of exactly the same phrase in describing Jesus' work of creation (ver. 16), where he undoubtedly uses the neuter form in order that both material things and living creatures may be included. Now, using the same expression he tells us that the Love that planned it all entrusted the work of creation to One who could be counted upon to send forth the magnetic power of love into every quarter of the universe that all the courses of nature, animate and inanimate, that had been thrown out of their order by the entrance of sin, might be restored to the perfection with which they had come from His creative fingers, if they would but respond to love's drawing power.

The offer of restoration is for all. Since the inanimate portion of creation has no will and therefore will not resist His drawing, a complete restoration of it is certain. This is the "hope" under which the "whole creation was made subject to frailty." (Rom. 8:20, Diaglott.) It is a hope for not merely the lakes and the rivers that run red with blood, but for every delicate tracery and every living creature that came from the all-powerful creative Hand. The blight of sin has fallen on all, proclaiming the hideousness of sin. Nothing has escaped. "Fading is stamped on all below." But sun, moon, and stars move on undisturbed in their course. The literal heavens have not been touched by sin's pollution. It is the metaphorical "heavens and earth that now [because contaminated and unworthy of continuance] are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment" (2 Pet. 3:7), not a literal fire, but "the fire of His jealousy" (Zeph. 1:18), which will utterly destroy the "heavens," the present evil religious and spirit rulership, as well as all earthly rulership. - 2 Pet. 3:10; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; Hag. 2:6, 7; Isa. 51:6; 65:17.

The Glories of Restitution

The language of the foregoing Scriptures and that of many others that portray this coming "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation" (note that though individuals will suffer, it is a trouble on nations*) would fill us with unspeakable dread were it not for the more than compensating inspiration of the passages which briefly but unmistakably prophecy "times of restitution of all things," times too beautiful, too wonderful, for our fallen imaginations, with their commercial bias, their depraved tendencies, to fully comprehend. The fallen human mind thinks that life consists of the "abundance of things which one possesseth." In that Age material blessing, though without defect, and lavishly supplied for every need, will take second place to the privilege of knowing God and being in His likeness. Nothing short of these three things—possessing material blessings, knowing God, and being in His likeness—would be "restitution." - Acts 3:19-21.

No portion of the Bible is richer in pictures of the subduing and restoring of the earth than Isaiah. See especially the 11th, 35th, and 65th chapters, also Genesis 1:28. We cannot hope that all will have the faith to even reservedly accept these promises until their natural eyes have seen the wolf and the lamb dwelling together -- a spectacle emblematic of the joys and peace of that time to be shared by "all that are now in their graves." (John 5:28.) By the false teachings he disseminated during the Dark Ages regarding the state of the dead * * * and the nature of the work to be done during the Judgment Day, * * * (1 Chron. 16:31-34; Psa. 96:11-13; 98:7-9) Satan has, for almost all, effectively blocked the way to an acceptance of the numberless Scriptures telling of the time when the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth. Our so called enlightened era still prefers his false teachings to the sanctifying truths of the divinely inspired Word. When at last the instigator of the many misrepresentations of our glorious God, the God of Love, has been destroyed and the last stain of sin erased from the universe, then "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, will be heard saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him, that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever." - Rev. 5:13.

* See discussion of this in "Herald" of August, 1940, and also the free tract, "Has Judgment Day Begun?"

* * See our special issue of the "Herald," "Food for Thinking Christians," for a full discussion of this subject—five cents per copy; fifty cents per dozen; free to those unable to pay.

* For the consideration of many additional Scriptures, see "The Divine Plan of the Ages," Chap. VIII.

No Flesh to Glory in His Presence

As we have indicated, the neuter "all things" seems to have been used in an all-comprehensive sense, including in its blessing all creation, animate and inanimate. The following verse (Col. 1:21), then opens with a repetition (which is not a Pauline practice) unless we substitute for the first word, "and," the word, "even," a translation that is often given the Greek word, "kai." The Diaglott so gives it in the word-for-word translation.

Bearing in mind the depths of the darkness into which these Colossian Christians seem to have fallen before their deliverance (Col. 1:13; 2:13; 3:5-9), who can doubt but that the force of this passage to them would be that the God who, in order that "no flesh should glory in His presence" had "called not many great, not many wise," had indeed called "**even**" them. Is it any less true, however, of any one whom the Lord has called? Can we not all say from the depths of our hearts, "Even me? Ah, the blood-red cords that some day will bind the universe in one, have drawn even me, yes, even me; and the great purpose of such condescension on His part is in order that, for all eternity, no creature should glory in His presence."

Regarding the Colossians Paul writes: "Even you [has He drawn by reconciliation, you] who were alienated, estranged from God and hostile [this is hatred in action] in your mind." This is a description of those who instead of opposing the evil tendencies of a fallen body actually found pleasure in "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications, lies" (Col. 3:8, 9), and also the sins listed in chapter- three, verse five, that even the heathen world recognized as unbecoming in any man, and therefore to be at least kept hidden. But were they of those who while secretly rejoicing in these base iniquities, for decency's sake restrained them? No, they had imposed little check on the evil propensities, and this was publicly manifested "by wicked works." "Yet [even you] now bath He reconciled [drawn by the power of the cross]."

Redemption-the Supreme Drawing Power Making the Universe One

Doubtless the angelic hosts were impressed by such love for mankind, and by Jesus' devotion to God. The "delights [of the Chief of the angelic host] were in the children of men," in spite of these disgraceful facts, as also His "delight" was to do God's will. Thus the Logos was led to leave the perfections of the heavenly courts to spend thirty-three years in the midst of a "crooked and perverse generation," there to be "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Such humility, such devotion, must have greatly impressed every angel in whom was left any degree of appreciation for righteousness, and it should greatly impress all of us.

But this was not the power of redemption, and therefore not the great drawing power that was to reach throughout the universe to finally make it one, all creation turning as one about the one center, God-a true universe: uni, one; verse, turning. That redemption, that supreme drawing power, was "through death," the death of "the body of His flesh" (Col. 1:22), the perfect flesh of the One whose will and whose performance as well was perfect. Of Him alone it could be said "Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." - Rev. 5:9, 10.

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 1:22, 23

"To present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight; if ye continue in the faith founded [Diaglott] and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." - Col. 1:22, 23.

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - January, 1942)

THE VERSES introductory to our present study sketch in outline the past, present, and future of the universe, mentioning in particular the place God's only begotten Son, in whom all fulness dwells, has in it. The words of our text, in bare outline, tell of the future state of those who for eternity are to work side by side with their exalted Lord for the carrying out of the Plan the all-wise Father has made. The divinely appointed conditions upon which this exalted station may be attained are stated-"if ye **continue** in the faith founded and settled, and be **not moved away** from the hope of the Gospel" -- a faithful abiding in the "hope of the good tidings," the Gospel "which shall be to **all** people."

The words we are considering are the closing ones of a long passage which began with the 9th verse (Col. 1:9); and grammatically there are two phrases in it with either one of which the opening words of our text may be directly connected. The meaning may thus be either: "You now hath He reconciled" (Col. 1:21) in order "to present you holy"; or, "It was the good pleasure of the Father" (Col. 1:19) "to present you holy." Though accepting the former as the more natural thought and probably the one the Apostle had in mind, we recognize the other as also true -- that not one will be presented before the Father except in accordance with His good pleasure.

Presented Holy-Blameless-Unreprouvable

The perfection of those to be presented, "holy and without blemish and unreprouvable," leads one to believe that the Scriptural accounts of Satan's presence in heaven since his fall must be not literal but figurative. Every creature in the universe at all times, in one sense, must be in the presence of the One whose eyes are in every place, "beholding the evil and the good," and this, we take it, is the only sense in which Satan has ever been in the presence of Jehovah since his fall. (Luke 10:18.) The presenting of these holy ones, saints indeed, is a literal entrance into Jehovah's actual presence.

The three words used to describe this company are all interesting. The word translated "holy," Thayer defines as "properly reverend, worthy of veneration . . . set apart for God to be exclusively His . . . [said] of sacrifices and offerings; prepared for God with solemn rite, pure, clean," etc.

"Blameless," the same authority defines as "without blemish, free from faultiness, as a victim without spot or blemish."

"Unreprouvable" means: "that [which] cannot be called to account, unreprouvable, unaccused, blameless." (1 Pet. 1:19.) Every critic will be silenced.

Strange that they who are to stand in the Supreme Court of the Universe "unaccused" should have had so many accusers among those who pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

Sad indeed that even for a moment the spirit of the great Accuser should have been that of their own brethren. Lamentable that a great multitude shall fail to appear in that august presence, or appearing, do so only after their robes have been cleansed of the pollution their falling in with the course of the Adversary and of the world he rules has left upon them. And, undoubtedly, this very spirit of condemnation -will for many be the explanation of their failure. Called to develop the mind of Christ-the love that "covers all sins" (Prov. 10:12) -- heedless of the injunction to "judge nothing before the time," "judge not that ye be not condemned," they have instead unleashed the blood-thirsty hounds of Satan against their own brethren. Witness the havoc that has been wrought through the centuries by these fiends, "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy." (Col. 3:8.) For many lurid miles, hideous monuments stretch down the highways of history, eternally condemning the traitor whose hate the ones guilty of these murders have emulated.

The three words the Apostle Paul has used to describe the glorified saints, are in natural sequence: "holy"--the inward grace of consecration, devotion to the Lord, is followed by "blameless" purity of character and conduct, resulting finally in "unreprovable" -- a stainless reputation before the all-wise, and altogether righteous One. When that state has been attained, no sacrifice will be needed for their recommendation. No one that appears there will have attained actually that perfection required in "acceptable sacrifices" until his sacrifice made acceptable in the Beloved is consummated in death and he is born of the spirit. In this present life, righteousness is theirs by imputation of the merit of the spotless Lamb, the worthy sacrifice. It will be theirs in that day actually. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." "Who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." - Rom. 8:33, 34, R.V.; Isa. 50:9; John 3:18; 5:24; Rom. 8:1; 1 John 3:21.

Presented "Directly Before His Face"

The phrase translated "before Him," also rendered, "in His presence," "in His sight," is, literally, "directly before His face." Have any of us thought that on that great day, in a far off corner of "the congregation of the saints," we, still failing; of perfection in some one or more of the saintly qualities, might remain hidden? It cannot be. Every one must then be "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing," for **each** individually is to appear "directly before His face." "Let patience do her perfect work [and even be thankful to the world and the brethren that are testing that patience, for that only will be the perfect work of patience] that ye may be perfect ["no grace merely in its weak imperfect beginnings, but all have reached a certain ripeness and maturity"], and entire ["no grace which ought to be in a Christian man deficient"], lacking nothing": every grace that is God's, will, in that blessed state, be the possession of each; for then they will be "filled with all the fulness of God." (James 1:4; Eph. 3:19.) The privilege of that day is as far beyond our comprehension as the privilege of the present is beyond our desert.

'The effort of man to minimize the hideousness and the reality of sin in our mortal members is foolish, futile. God's Word, taking the contrary course, frankly acknowledges the worst; and then in contrast to it presents the perfect ideal, assuring of the possibility of its attainment "not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord." "Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power," "I [the new creature with a human body] can do all things [that the Lord requires such a creature to do]." One of those things -- a thing made most prominent in the Scriptures -- is to overcome. "The crown of life," the very highest form of life that will ever, can ever be given, awaits the overcomer, the one who faithfully lays hold of, and daily, hourly, uses the strength. Freely, graciously, generously, the Father gives victory -- assuring power; for, "It pleased the Father . . . to present you holy, spotless, blameless" in the presence of His own eternal

perfection. Since this is His pleasure, His assistance that perfection may be attained is assured, and nothing less than His might can prepare us for such an exalted station.

"If Ye Continue in the Faith"

The responsibility is ours of accepting and cherishing the Father's proffered aid. Therefore the next sentence begins with an "if"; and it is not, "If it is **His** good pleasure"; not "If **He** wills it," but:

"If so be that **ye** continue in the faith, Founded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel." (Col. 1:23, R.V.) He "is able to do exceeding abundantly **above** all that we **ask** or **think**," but only "according to the power that worketh in us." (Eph. 3:20.) In other words, we must accept the power, lay hold on it, and maintain that hold by faith. This faith in turn will inspire hope, which acts "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil." - Heb. 6:19, R.V.

"If so be that," the first four words of the Revised Version rendering of verse 23, is an effort of the translators to put into English the force of one Greek word. For the same purpose other translators have used such phrases as, "If indeed," "That is, if," and "If, at least." Probably none of these gives all the force of the Greek word. The Greeks had an ordinary, mild "if," ("ei") but that was not sufficient for Paul to use in stating a fact on which so much depends. In addition to this simple "if" there were two others. One of these ("can"), if used, would have given the thought that the Apostle had reason to doubt. their ability to "hold fast the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end." (See the Greek of John 3:12; 13:17; Acts 5:38, 39 for a contrasting use of these two ifs.) He avoids that one and uses the third form, a combination of the simple form, "ei," with "ge," a syllable that adds emphasis to any word in connection with which it is used. He has hope for the Colossian brethren, but not the hope of one who believes that God has foreordained, predestinated that without possibility of failure, they shall be made ready for His presence. There is no doubt in the Apostle's mind but that they can be made ready; but he states with positiveness the certainty that the only condition on which the work begun in them will be completed is "if so be that ye continue in the faith." - Heb. 3:6, 14; 10:23, 26, 27; Rev. 3:3, 5; John 15:6; Matt. 10:22; 3:10; 24:13.

Apparently without warrant some have taken the word "faith" here to refer to a system of doctrines, understood to be the teachings of God's Word. The word is never used objectively in classic Greek literature, and there are less than a dozen instances of its use in the New Testament which reputable Greek scholars think of as possibly having this meaning: Jude 3; 1 Tim. 1:4, 19; 2:7; 3:9; 4:1, 6; 5:8; 6:10, 21. Only the first of these is accepted by Thayer, and that one is as easily understood with the thought of trust or confidence -- the true primary meaning of the Greek word -- and the resultant thought loses nothing. It is certain that if we "strive earnestly to hold fast our confidence" in God, we will hold fast our confidence in the teachings of His Word. (The definite article used with the word "pistis," translated "faith," confuses those who are not familiar with the Greek practice of using a definite article with abstract nouns.)

To quote again from a recognized authority:

"'If ye continue in the faith,' means, I suppose, if ye continue to live in the **exercise** of your faith. The word here has its ordinary subjective sense, expressing the act of the believing man, and there is no need to suppose that it has the later ecclesiastical objective sense, expressing **the believer's creed, a meaning in which it may be questioned whether the word is ever employed in the New Testament.**"

Faith should be most evident in those who have had revived for them in these "latter times" a clear understanding of the Gospel, the "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people," even the unclean." (Isa. 35:8.) "It shall be for those," "the residue of men," those remaining after God has taken "out a people" to share His name as the "Bride, the Lamb's Wife." After the Church has been taken from among the Gentiles, and before the residue of men receive the Millennial blessings at their hands, the Jewish polity, "the tabernacle of David, will be rebuilt, thus verifying the promise that this "good news" "shall be unto all people." (Acts 15:14-17.) In the Age to come as in this Age, none will attain the final goal, life, except those who have and maintain faith on the solid foundation of that Gospel hope. The difference for them will be that while ours is a "narrow way" of sacrifice theirs will be a "highway" cleared of all difficulties, and their reward in proportion, "everlasting joy" in the appropriating of the blessings promised to the first Adam, and secured for them by the Second Adam, "our Lord from heaven." - Matt. 7:14; Isa. 35:8-10; 1 Cor. 15:45-47; Rom. 14:9; Gen. 3:15; Rom. 16:20.

Importance of Being "Founded and Settled"

In order that faith in this "hope of the Gospel" may prove effective in a Christian's life, he must be "founded [Greek] and settled" there, established as upon a rock foundation from which he can be moved not even the smallest fraction of an inch. (Col. 1:23.) Many other gospels were offered the early Church, but none could be a substitute for the one Paul had preached, the only Gospel which is "to every creature," preached not only to Jews, as it had been since Abraham's day, but "in all creation." Both these translations, "to every creature," and "in all creation" are possible. "Whereof I Paul am made a minister," further defines this Gospel. The Apostle did not preach to every creature nor in all creation, but he did preach the Gospel announced to Abraham, "In thee shall all nations be blessed," the Gospel that "in due time" is to be heard "in all creation," by "every creature." This is the Gospel which is "for" every creature, which is another possible translation. "The Greek word here is 'en,' and although its strict meaning is **in**, yet it is frequently used in the sense of **for**, being so translated six times in the New Testament. Instances: 'If ye be reproached **for** the name of Christ.' (1 Pet. 4:14.) 'Well reported of **for** good works.' (1 Tim. 5:10.) 'Think they shall be heard for their much speaking.' (Matt. 6:7), etc." - Z-Aug. 15, 1899, p. 218.

Even so glorious a hope as this Gospel for every creature will, however, be but a bubble upon which only "castles in the air" might be built, except as one thinks upon it in the spirit of gratitude until it has woven into his being the love that begot it. Ordinarily Paul would speak of our being founded on the Rock Christ Jesus. Here he has added one more stone to the foundation --a "hope" made firm by being itself founded on that solid Rock. Winds of doctrine, storms of passion, whirl winds of trouble, none of these can shake the structure founded on these rocks. But it is in great danger from the steady pressure of worldly, fleshly mindedness, both within and without the Church. By such a process continents have been engulfed in the past.

Our rock fortress, though mighty, must be garrisoned to keep at a distance every enemy. We must have the peace of God to garrison our hope. (See Col. 3:15.) Let us beware of any propaganda that would instill fear of the enemy in our hearts and lead to surrender. (Prov. 29:25; Isa. 51 :12; John 7:13; 12:42; Gal. 2:12.) Familiarity, an essential ally, may turn to be one of our most insidious of traitors. For the "Gospel which ye have heard," it advocates the substitution of something new, an up-to-date gospel. There is an infatuation in connection with this thing of learning something new that can easily lead to the blithe acceptance of very "strange doctrine," unless it is accompanied by a time-resisting determination that nothing shall be: accepted' as truth until it has been proved true under every possible Scriptural "test." This infatuation, associated

with "the fear of man," would seem to explain the strange conduct of many otherwise excellent brethren. They have forgotten that it is only because of this one true Gospel that we can all say, "One thing I know, whereas I -was blind, now I see." Why look elsewhere for light? Without doubt we will be presented, holy, unblamable, unprovable, directly before His face, if we continue in the exercise of faith, founded and settled, and not moved away from the **hope of the Gospel**, the God-given Gospel, which is "for every creature under heaven."

"O glorious hope of heavenly love!
It lifts me up to things above;
It bears on eagle wings;
It gives my joyful soul a taste,
And makes roe, even here, to feast
With Jesus' priests and kings.

"Rejoicing now in earnest hope,
I stand, and from the mountain top
See all the land below:
Rivers of milk and honey rise,
And all the fruits of Paradise
In endless plenty grow.

"O that I might at once go up!
No more on this side Jordan stop,
But now the land possess!
There dwells the Lord, our righteousness,
He'll keep His own in perfect peace
And everlasting rest."

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 1:24-27

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - February, 1942)

"I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake." - Col. 1:24, R. V.

THE NATURE and the scarcity of Paul's references to himself and to the brethren there, have led many to infer that he had never visited Colosse. Even the passage now to be considered may be viewed more as an allusion to his office than to himself. The mention of his apostolic sufferings is forced from him not by a desire for recognition, but by a consuming desire that the brethren of this little Class may continue faithful to the Gospel which they have heard. Neither his greater sufferings nor his higher office are alluded to by Paul as an evidence of superiority. But having been introduced as an incentive to greater faithfulness on the part of the Colossians, they inflame the Apostle's mind with the usual rapturous enthusiasm regarding the precious message entrusted to him. Suffering suggests service, and the thought of his divine commission to serve leads his mind to the "mystery" for which he is suffering in order that he might serve those who have part in it.

"Suffering for His Body's Sake"

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is "the Church." (Col. 1:24, R.V.) The critical versions, faithfully following the Greek text, omit the "who" found in the King James Version, thus beginning the new sentence and thought with the important word, "now." It is an Apostle in chains that uses it, not to complain, but to assure them that the bird in the darkened cage **can** sing as cheerfully as the one in his native bower. The iron on his wrist, the iron entering his soul, could not lessen the ardor of one who had learned "both how to be abased and how to abound." (Phil. 4:12.) It is for their sake, because of his faithfulness to his commission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, that he is in prison; and he rejoices in this privilege of bearing affliction that they may be enlightened.

"It is to constitute an important part of the New Creatures' testing that as respects earthly things (hey . . . must suffer persecution, must practise self-denial, must be as deceivers, and yet true; as having nothing, though really (by faith) possessing all things; as unwise, though really wise toward God. So much so that the prophetic description of the Master must be in large measure applicable to all who follow closely in His steps, viz., 'We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.' The Prophet declares, 'The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we [as sinners] were healed.' Let us not forget that our healing, or justification, preceded our acceptance as members of the Body of Christ -members of the New Creation; and that our acceptance to this higher plane of sonship and joint heirship was upon the special condition that '**we suffer with Him.**'" - "Studies in the Scriptures," Vol. VI. pp. F531, F632.

"That Which is Lacking"

"I fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ." (R.V.) These are startling words. "It is not surprising that many explanations of these words have tried to soften down their boldness; as, for instance, 'afflictions borne for Christ,' or 'imposed by Him,' or 'like His.' But it seems very clear that the startling meaning is the plain meaning, and that 'the sufferings of Christ' here, as everywhere else, are 'the sufferings borne by Christ.' "--"Expositor's Bible."

But what sufferings "borne by -Christ" are lacking, incomplete? "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . 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. . . . And the Lord hath laid on Him **the iniquity of us all.**" The ransom is here described as complete. Manifestly, therefore, the Church must look elsewhere for their privilege of filling up "that which is lacking of the afflictions" "borne by Christ."

So far as the Greek indicates "the Christ" may be considered equally well to mean either our Lord or the anointed company that is His Body. Whichever interpretation is accepted, the same conclusion is reached. The sufferings of Paul and all members of that Body are necessary that each may be fully qualified for his place. Through much tribulation each must enter into the Kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22; 1 Pet. 5:10; James 5:10.) These tribulations must be brought upon us because of faithfulness or through sharing with those who are similarly faithful. (1 Pet. 2:20; 3:14; 4:12-16; Matt. 5:11; 10:22, 39; Luke 6:22; 2 Cor. 4:11; Heb 13:13; 10:32-34.) "In so far as ye are taking fellowship in the Christ's sufferings rejoice!" (1 Pet, 4:13, Rotherham.) The Church suffers as He suffered, but only in part for the same reason' as He suffered. He alone died to expiate the penalty that was on the race because of Father Adam's sin. We do "'stiffer with Him that we may reign with Him"; and that we, as He, may "learn obedience." (Heb. 5:8.) The Church, now that she is His, has no sufferings peculiarly her own. Jesus suffered when the reproaches of them that reproached Jehovah fell on Him. (Psa. 69:9.) She suffers as He suffered-for faithfulness to her Father and her Lord; and therefore for faithfulness to the Word of God. In all that she suffers, her Head participates as the head of a natural body suffers, however remote the member may be that is afflicted. "In all our afflictions, He is afflicted." (Isa. 63:9.) He inspired the statement: "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye." Doubtless as Paul writes there rings in his ears the voice that hailed him on the Damascus road: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" The principle, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Matt. 25:40), does not await the end of the Millennium to become operative. While spared having gone to the lengths to which Saul's zeal drove him, can there be less of true contrition than his on the part of any one who becomes aware that the same Voice still warns that every trifling injury or injustice done to any member of His Body through envy, hatred, or even carelessness, is done to Him. Contrition must fill the heart of each one who hears that Voice.

Paul in the prison cell has forgotten neither the voice of reproof nor the commission given Ananias, sent to minister to him: "I will show him how great things he must suffer **for** My name's sake." (Acts 9:16.) For the last member of the Body, whatever his sufferings, this will still be his consolation-that his filling up that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ is "for His sake," though it is the result of activity that is in large measure, if not almost altogether, service toward our brethren, our lips and our hands thus "giving thanks to His name."

As compared with the sacrifices of "bulls and goats," these are "better sacrifices," faithfully performed with one principal motive-the desire that the "heavenly things" may be "purified." (Heb. 9:23.) So insignificant a thing as "a cup of cold water" is transmuted into a "better -sacrifice" if given to "one of the least of these" "in the name of a disciple." - Matt. 10:42; 1 Cor. 16:15, 16; Matt. 21:28; Mark 13:34; 2 Tim. 4:5; Matt. 25:22, 23; Mark 14:8; Luke 12:48; 1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Cor. 3:9 2 Cor. 8:2, 3; Mark 10:43, 44; John 13:14.

But we must not pass by the expression, "Fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ," without a careful examination of the original. Perhaps this is merely a mistranslation. Having considered all the versions at hand and finding them giving the same

thought, we turn to the Greek text to learn whether or not the definition of some one or more words might not permit the choice of a less startling rendering.

The phrase, "I fill up," represents a verb composed of two Greek words, the first of which "refers to what lacked as yet" (Darby); and the second, "to fill to the brim." (Thayer) (Matt. 13:48, Phil. 4:18 "full"; Phil. 4:19 "supply"; Phil 1:11, Eph. 5:18 "filled"; Phil. 1:9 "abound.") This last mentioned authority gives as the definition of the complete word thus formed: "to fill up in turn." Regarding the whole verse he comments:

"The meaning is, 'what is wanting [lacking] of the afflictions of Christ to be borne by me, that I supply in order to repay the benefits which Christ conferred on me by filling up the measure of the afflictions laid upon Him.'"

Clearly, the sufferings which the Apostle bore in his fleshly body were for the sake of Jesus' spiritual Body of many members, which Body is "the Christ" of Galatians 3:16, 29.

But we have not yet considered all the Greek that bears on this point. There is another word in this text which means, "lacking, yet," though that thought is included in the Greek word just considered. Paul makes doubly sure by this repetition that this thought is not missed. Manifestly, it is a very important one. Christ had "suffered, the just for the unjust"; but we must "suffer with Him" if we would reign with Him. Until the last member has "through much tribulation" been made ready to "enter into the Kingdom," some of the "sufferings of Christ" will be "lacking yet."

"No Man Liveth to Himself"

Paul suffered not merely for the sake of those members of the Christ Body that lived in his day. He was ministering to the Age in more ways than one, not the least of which was the writing of the "prison epistles" in which every Christian has shared to some extent. No one is a lone beneficiary of his own sorrow. Prison cells can never keep within their confines the "song of Moses and the Lamb." How much we owe to the dismal cells from whose darkness have risen hymns of light and inspiration in which the saints of generations to come have united their voices -- the prison epistles of Paul, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," the hymns of Madame Guyon we love to sing ("Hymns of Dawn," 180) -- and how joyfully we each would do our little part in filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ if we could always realize that, though as unknown to us as to our beloved Paul and these others, our sufferings "for Christ's sake," too, are in some mysterious way ministering blessing to other members of His Body. If we realize that Christ is with us in every experience, and that every trial is borne that His Body may be complete, we cannot fail to "in **everything** give thanks."

"Be our trials great or small, be they minute and every-day-like gnats that hum about us in clouds, and may be swept away by the hand, and irritate rather than hurt where they sting -- or be they huge and formidable, like the viper that clings to the wrist and poisons the life blood, they are meant to give us good gifts, which we may transmit to the narrow circle of our homes, and in ever widening rings of influence to all around us. Have we never known a household, where some chronic invalid, lying helpless perhaps on a sofa, was a source of the highest blessing and the center of holy influence, that made every member of the family gentler, more self-denying and loving? We shall never understand our sorrows, unless we try to answer the question, What good to others is meant to come through me by this? Alas, that grief should so often be self-absorbed, even more than joy is! The heart sometimes opens to unselfish sharing of its gladness with others; but it too often shuts tight over its sorrow, and seeks solitary indulgence in the luxury of woe. Let us learn that our brethren claim benefit from our trials, as well as from our good things, and seek to ennoble our griefs by bearing them for 'His Body's sake, which is the Church.'

"He Trod the Wine-press Alone"

"Christ's sufferings on His cross are the satisfaction for a world's sins, and in that view can have no supplement, and stand alone in kind. But His 'afflictions'-a word which would not naturally be applied to His death-do operate also to set the pattern of holy endurance, and to teach many a lesson; and in that view every suffering borne for Him and with Him may be regarded as associated with His, and helping to bless the Church and the world. God makes the rough iron of our natures into shining, flexible, sharp steel, by heavy hammers and hot furnaces, that He may shape us as His instruments to help and heal." - "Expositor's Bible."

Let us learn from Paul's example of rejoicing in affliction. It was in, not after, his prison experience that he wrote, "I now rejoice." It is easy to look back and see how afflictions, now "light" because of the influence of time, did work out for us a little of that character-likeness to Him necessary to our sharing in the "eternal weight of glory"; but how much more effectively they might have "worked" if we had then accepted them as "light afflictions," faith transmuting them into blessings for ourselves, our brethren, and all about us-yes, even for the world in the next Age, who are to profit by the tenderness, the patience, the longsuffering, the charity, wrought out in us by these divinely permitted privileges of "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ."

"Whereof I am made a minister ["servant" Diaglott] ["one who executes the commands of another"] according to the stewardship [margin] [the office of chief servant for the managing of a household or state] which is given to me for you to fulfill the word of God." (Col. 1:25.) He who, according to the statement he makes in Col. 1:23, is a servant of the Gospel, here proclaims himself a servant of the entire Church, but here again the thought is especially that he has a particular mission "to you" Gentiles, who, that the Word of God may be fulfilled, must have the Gospel preached to them "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the same Body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel." (Eph. 3:6, R.V.) For Paul, or any other servant, to use less than all his powers in his Master's service, would be to waste his Master's goods. This does not mean the ceasing of physical employments, but that, by His grace, we may, "whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God." The greater the possessions of the householder, the greater the responsibility of the servant. Since "all things" are His, we, His servants, are responsible to Him for all things, even the eeriest trifle. And this is of course too particular a life for any except those who can truthfully say, "How love I Thy law; it is my meditation all the day." It is one thing to meditate on His Word that we may prove we are right in our doctrinal position, and another to meditate on it to discover wherein we might be wrong; one thing to search for evidence against our brethren, and another humbly to seek guidance for our own lives; one thing to seek merely that we may know certain facts, and another to search that we may know God.

The responsibility of one who is of this Church of which Paul proclaimed himself a "servant," like the Apostle's, does not end with his personal Christian life. Like all physical symbols of spiritual realities, the one of the Householder fails to cover all details. The servants in this "house" (Heb. 3:2), who are also sons of the Master of the house, are therefore brethren, and so closely interwoven are their lives and interests that every servant serves every other servant on every contact. Having accepted from the Master the commission of servant, that individual is from henceforth serving. There is no leave of absence. All are under command to "forsake not the assembling of themselves together," whether they occupy the chair at the front or the back of the room, whether the Master's will for them is to add much or little to the meeting. The command for all is, "Be thou faithful in that which is least." They have a duty to their Master and to every

fellow-servant in this wonderful household, sand "to all men as they have opportunity." The possessions, tangible and intangible, are the householder's, not theirs. They must be ever alert to know His will regarding their use. Under His guidance one will be delivered from the folly of "Eyes high -- tongues false and hands shedding innocent blood -- a heart devising thoughts of vanity-feet hasting to run to evil -- a false witness who doth breathe out lies-and one sending forth contentions between brethren," for "These six hath Jehovah hated, yea, seven are abominations to His soul." (Prov. 6:17-19, 16, Young's Literal Translation.) To learn those things, one must take service under another master. The rule in this household is, "Love one another as I have loved you"-I who served even to the ignominy of hanging on the cross for you.

We are not, however, the servants of all in the sense that we are to take instructions from all. "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." (Matt. 23:8.) It is the Master that tells us what to do with our five barley loaves and two small fishes. It is always, simply, "Give." And the one who had the loaves and fishes, wondering, sat down with the five thousand and was fed.

But in the passage we are considering, Paul is speaking of a particular feature of his stewardship, "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations; but now is made manifest to His saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Ver. 26, 27.) A second allusion to this mystery (4:3) similarly links it with the Gentiles, for it was not for preaching the Gospel to Jews but to Gentiles that he was imprisoned. Note also Romans 16:25: "Now to Him that is of power to establish you [Gentiles] according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began [therefore not the Gospel to the Jews], but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations [most frequently translated "Gentiles"]."

A "mystery" in New Testament usage is not an incomprehensible thing, but one that up to a certain time was not comprehended but is now understood. Paul was made a steward of this mystery to "make it known to all nations. (Rom. 16:26.) Now that the due time had come, it was to be proclaimed from the housetops. This, figuratively, is the Master's method of instruction. Not many Jews were found who could be given that commission. The "middle wall of partition" [Centenary translates: "party wall of partition"; Weymouth: "hostile dividing wall"] was more precious to them than the people on the other side the wall. Jesus is the end of that spirit of division only "to every one that believeth." It is love burning in the Apostle's heart that inflames his speech at the mere thought of the commission given him to do this great work of uniting all in one Body; and love that warns against divisions and those "that cause divisions." "Avoid them."

Just one thing the Apostle alludes to here as their present share in the hoped-for blessings "which shall be unto all people"; "Christ in you [Gentiles], the hope of glory." Nothing short of the sacrificial love of Calvary can have brought that Jewish heart to the point of exulting in the privilege of sharing that supreme favor with the despised- heathen. For the heart in which Christ dwells, hope always grows broader and more beautiful-broad enough to include all His creatures, and beautiful enough to enrich eternity. What missionary zeal should fire our hearts, too, at the thought that we might in one little lifetime instill this blessed hope in one whom God has called out from this great mass of mankind "without God and without hope in the world." But first, if one would be used of God, there must be a rich indwelling of the spirit of Christ "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

- P. E. Thomson

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 1:28, 29

*"Whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every **man** perfect in Christ; whereunto I labor also, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily." - Col. 1:28, 29, R. V.*

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - March, 1942)

IN THE verses preceding the ones we are to consider, Paul alludes to "sacred secrets," as Rotherham renders the word which the King James Version less exactly translates "mysteries." Religious societies and celebrations, called "musterion" in the Greek language, seem to have been common in many nations of his time, and were certainly "celebrated in every considerable city of Greece. . . . Lobeck opposes the common notion that the mysteries were revelations of a profound religious secret: they certainly were always secret, but all Greeks without distinction of rank or education, nay, perhaps even slaves, might be initiated, and in later times foreigners." (Liddell and Scott.) At one time Paul, as other Jews, had taken joy in the thought that his nation's possession of certain "sacred secrets" made them a people peculiarly the Lord's. How ineffably greater was his joy now to "publicly proclaim" the "sacred secrets" (musteria) of the new secret society -- heralded from Mars Hill, in the synagogues, by river sides; but still sacred secrets "made manifest [only] to His saints."

"The false teachers at Colosse had a great deal to say about a higher wisdom reserved for the initiated. They apparently treated the Apostolic teaching as trivial rudiments, which might be good for the vulgar crowd, but were known by the possessors of this higher truth to be only a veil for it. They had their initiated class, to whom their mysteries were entrusted in whispers.

"Such absurdities excited Paul's special abhorrence. His whole soul rejoiced in a gospel for all men. He had broken with Judaism on the very ground that it sought to enforce a ceremonial exclusiveness, and demanded circumcision and ritual observances along with faith. That was, in Paul's estimate, to destroy the Gospel. These Eastern dreamers at Colosse were trying to enforce an intellectual exclusiveness quite as much opposed to the Gospel. Paul fights with all his might against that error. Its presence in the Church colors this context, where he uses the very phrases of the false teachers in order to assert the great principles which he opposes to their teaching. 'Mystery,' 'perfect' or initiated, 'wisdom'-these are the keywords of the system which he is combating; and here he presses them into the service of the principle that the Gospel is for all men, and the most recondite secrets of its deepest truth the property of every single soul that wills to receive them," the "saints and faithful brethren in Christ" (Col. 1:2), "to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles." - Col. 1:27, R. V.

Royally Commissioned Priests

The new secret society has no whispered teachings; no sanctum closed to all except the initiated; no muttering priests seeking to mystify the ignorant with impressive ceremonies and phrases; no sacred secrets that cannot be publicly proclaimed. The teaching of these: secrets to the newly initiated is not a privilege reserved to somber-robed priests; but every worshiper introduced to these secrets may join in publicly proclaiming even the most profound, the most precious of their

secrets-the central figure of all, the One "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," "even Christ," "whom we preach," Paul says.

The "we" of this verse is not the editorial "we," for it is used in contrast with the "I" of the next verse. Everywhere and at all times Christ was Paul's message, as the message of all true teachers. (Acts 4:2; 8:5, 35; 9:20; 10:36; 17:3; 1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Cor. 4:5.) This is the true knowledge that God has commissioned the shepherds of the flock to proclaim in this Age. Only by the proclaiming of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified can the flock be fed (John 21:17; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2); and then only because there is a chief Shepherd super wising the feeding of the lambs and sheep and making effective this dispensing of food. (Ezek. 34:23.) Since Jesus "gave Himself a ransom **for all**," those who are divinely commissioned to preach Christ can now at last have as their message "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same Body [with the Jews] and partakers [Diaglott: co-partners] of His promise in Christ by the Gospel." (Eph. 3:6.) But it is not possession of the oratory of Apollos nor the logic of Paul that commissions one to preach Christ; but (Eph. 3:7) "the gift of the grace of God, given . . . by the effectual working of **His power**." (Psa. 62:11, 12; 115:3; 135:6; Matt. 10:5-7, 27; Mark .16:15; Luke 9:2, 60; Acts 5:20; Rom. 16:25-27; 2 Tim. 2:4.) By no other arrangement Could this secret society be a company in which every member is a priest, commissioned to sound forth the sacred secret.

There is this characteristic of the teaching of Jesus in which it is different from that of all others -- one cannot separate the teachings from the teacher, taking the one and leaving the other. Any other teacher one may have as a friend without accepting his teachings; or his teachings may be accepted without making a friend of the teacher.

Not so with Jesus. He and His teachings are indissolubly associated. If we would show ourselves a friend to Him in any way (for instance, seek to serve Him), it can be only by following His teachings. If one accepts His teachings, he will find that He alone is "the Way, the Truth, the Life" (John 14:6), and that He therefore must be "followed" in the sense that His thoughts, His mind, His works, His ways, His spirit, will become ours. Truly, "if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is-a **new** creature." (2 Cor. 5:17.) The failures of many, doubtless, will be explained by this fact. Though the desire to serve should consume all of one's time and talent, though all his energy go into that service, all that he has being given to the preaching of a theory or a system, or even of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," unless that individual has learned that the primary requirement of service to this Master is, "If any man [will] serve Me, let him follow Me," the only verdict possible will be, "I never knew you." - John 12:26; Matt. 7:23.

"He that Hath Seen Me Hath Seen the Father"

"Whom we preach" does not limit Paul's teaching to the person and work of Jesus. Even the stronger statement of the companion passage in his letter to the Corinthian brethren (2:2) need suggest no narrower limits to his preaching than that he is determined not to be drawn into the discussion of traditions and theories, philosophizings of which the Greeks were fond. Architecture that has never since been rivaled, poetry whose beauty is still the model of what we style perfection, could have served as inspiration for many discourses, but not for Paul. The Christian's difficulty is never in finding something worth while to talk about or some suitable occupation for consecrated time; but to determine which of the many things from which he has to choose will please His heavenly Father most. Traditions? Who would presume to claim for them any large percentage of reliability? Theories and philosophies of the so called "wise" -- shall he preach those? Probably long ago he had learned how dogmatic error can be, how unreliable is mere conviction. Nothing in which was even the possibility of error could give full satisfaction to one whose love is for truth. Great peace had come from turning from the traditions of the elders

to the "sure Word of prophecy," finding there One whose perfection and faithfulness made Him the delight of the Father, the express image of whose person He now was. Here is a safe theme that will mean no disappointments, no retractions. Of Jesus' pre-eminence Paul has told us in Col. 1:16-20; of the completeness of His work, even reaching out and laying hold of the Gentiles, he tells in the verses that follow. What folly to descend to lesser themes in view of the fact that he has been "made a servant, according to the -dispensation of God" of this very secret, "Christ in you, the hope of glory," -- the Christ "whom we preach."

Glancing through the first letter to the Corinthians, in which Paul says he is determined to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified, one is surprised at the variety of subjects discussed, from the loftiest to one so common as a Grecian race. With consummate mastery, however, Paul uses all this as contributory to his lifework of preaching Christ. This mastery comes not so much from having sat at the feet of Gamaliel as from having enthroned Christ in his heart. Paul's "college education." contributed to the success of his great work, but it might have kept him out of the Kingdom. Instead, having consecrated his all to the great work of living and preaching Christ, all the training he had received was consecrated to this supreme mission of preaching Christ. No one knew better than Paul both the folly and the danger of lesser themes, too often appropriated by the flesh as an excuse for boasting. "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool [disassociating himself from this world and its wisdom], that he may be wise. (1 Cor. 3:18; 8:2; Gal. 6:3; Rom. 12:16.) "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? bath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.." - 1 Cor. 1:19-25, R. V.

To preach the Christ that lived or the Christ that died, or even Him that "died for our sins" -- these are "the word of the beginning of Christ" (Heb. 6:1, margin)-is not to preach Christ in the fulness in which Paul preached Him, the Christ in whoa all truth converged, the Creator of all things and therefore the One, some traces of whom may yet be found even in imperfect things. Skilfully, subtle reasonings of the flesh lay hold on such a truth as that as an excuse to preach the creature instead of the Creator. Purity of thought is not to be arrived at by thinking on the things that are imperfect, impure; or perfection by meditating on imperfection; therefore we preach Christ, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

Paul clearly implies that he permits no schisms in the Church he serves. His warning is for "every man"; his teaching for "every man." "Admonishing," or even "exhorting," the words that several translators use instead of the "warning" of the King James Version, probably' nearly express the thought the Apostle wished to convey by using this word that means literally, "putting in mind." His great ambition was not that he might always come before them with something new, but rather he was content to "put them in remembrance." The thought is not that of warning against evil, but of exhorting to that which is good. But this great exhorter did at times find it advisable to give warnings to his hearers even as his Master before him had done, and with the same objective, to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

"Be Ye Perfect"

The first stage of the perfection sought is a reckoned one-justification. The primary lesson therefore that Paul teaches "every man" is his need, convincing him that he is a sinner, and that there is salvation in "none other name." Next is the lesson of consecration, the privilege of all the "called." This, together with the hope for the world, is "the simplicity of the Gospel." But how many things there are "hard to be understood" for those who, having taken these steps, would "go on to perfection." Paul stands ready to be the teacher for all who are interested enough in the subject to apply themselves diligently to his instruction until they are ready for the final presentation, actually "perfect."

Not long since, a father, desiring that his son should become a minister in his denomination, inquired of the heads of several theological seminaries and of many prominent ministers as to the advisability of recommending that life mission to his son. He was astounded at the unanimity of the replies. All of whom he inquired assured him that his son would be honored in his community, get a good education free, make a good living, and have a life of ease. Not one word of even "doing good unto all men," nor a hint of service pleasing to his Master. What a contrast with Paul's "preaching, . . . exhorting, . . . teaching, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily."

If the pupils in the school of Christ had perfect brains, repetition would be unnecessary. Paul well knew that he as well as those who learned of him must "give earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Heb. 2:1.) But in this very necessity there is temptation to dereliction on the part of both teacher and pupil. The work of "the teacher is to teach, and perhaps even help the pupil some with his "review work; but never to forsake his teaching to do the pupil's work for him. Without review work probably every pupil in the school would fail; but the result will be identical if they and the teacher content themselves with the indolence of continual repetition of familiar phrases. To attain the perfection for which Paul strives, God hath set various members in the Body, who, if they would work effectively must advise as intelligently as he: "dismissing the elementary discourse concerning the Christ unto maturity let us be tending" (Rotherham), or "Having left the word of the beginning of the Christ, unto the perfection we may advance." (Young.) - Heb. 6:1; Job 17:9; Psa. 84:7; 92:12; Prov. 4:18; Matt. 5:48; 19:21; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15; Col. 1:28; 3:14; 1 Tim. 4:15; 2 Tim. 3:17; Heb. 13:21 James 1:4; 1 Pet. 2:2; 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:5-8; 3:14, 18; 1 John 2:5; 4:12; 2 Thess. 1:3.

"That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" does not have reference to physical or mental completion, as is evidenced by the fuller explanation of verse twenty-two. There he explains in detail his purpose that they may be presented "holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight." Whether we think of this as our present standing in the sight of our Father or as applying to that day when we shall stand "directly before His face," evidently the point of paramount importance is that truth shall do its sanctifying work. This does not mean mere passivity. Those who stand in His presence must actively build with "gold and silver and precious stones," laid on the one foundation. Let no teacher forget that it is to these things he must inspire his hearers, or confess' his labor a failure. Let no pupil accept as a teacher any one merely because he is "sound in the doctrine." Neither teacher nor scholar can afford to forget this great essential: the "end of the commandment [near message], love out- of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an undissembled faith." - 1 Tim. 1:5.

"Present You Holy"

Perfection implies the entire removal of all defects, or their being considered as removed because covered by the merit of Christ. It also implies the possession of all virtues, or their imputation. To be satisfied to continue eternally, or longer than necessary, even in such a blessed state as that of imputed righteousness would indicate an absence of true love for righteousness. Those who do appreciate the holiness of our God, and truly reverence Him, can never be satisfied until they awake in His likeness. Therefore they can never be contented with a one-sided growth, but will "be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." (Psa. 1:3.) A life of separation gives room for a full rounding out of the tree to perfection, and there is no lopping off of branches to meet human requirements. There is fruitage there as well as leaves of profession. He "bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither." "No branch broken or twisted, no leaf worm-eaten or wind torn, no fruit blighted or fallen, no gap in the clouds of foliage, no bend in the straight stem -- a green and growing completeness. This absolute completeness is attainable 'in Christ,' by union with Him of that vital sort brought about by faith, which will pour His Spirit into our spirits. The preaching of Christ is therefore plainly the direct way to bring about this perfecting. That is the Christian . . . way."

"Wherefore, Giving All Diligence"

"To this end, like an earnest wrestler, I exert all my strength in reliance upon the power of Him who is mightily at work within me." This translation which Weymouth offers may not be technically exact, but it does forcefully convey an idea of the zeal of the Apostle in his endeavor and his realization at all times that it was not his ability but God's power that gave the increase. - 1 Cor. 3:6, 7.

The figure Paul uses, that of a contestant in the games, is a favorite one with him. As one striving for an immortal wreath, he allowed nothing to take his attention from the struggle in which he was engaged. Nor dust, nor heat, nor jeering crowds could turn him aside. Our word "agonize" comes from the same root as the word he uses. And its thought could well be incorporated in our earnest striving to help our brethren. This would really be laying down our lives for our brethren, loving even as He loved.

By only one means can this high state of usefulness be attained. In each faithful servant there is a manifestation of the power of God in fulfillment of Paul's prayer of Ephesians 3:16, "that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man." This is the all-important consideration for every Christian-that the God of all power shall be "working in me mightily. This is what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ and therefore, under the guidance of our divine Head, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." These alone are commissioned to "preach the Word," for they alone can "preach the Gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Nothing of themselves, as the organ pipe is of no use without the wind that blows through it; filled with the Holy Spirit they become the mighty chorus of Revelation 1.4: the little handful on this side the veil having their part in it just as acceptably as those on the other side. What wonders can be wrought by His Spirit if permitted to work in us mightily, our speech "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the **Spirit and of power.**" (1 Cor. 2:4.) This means not only to **use the Holy Spirit** in all we do and think and say; but to be so given over to the service of the Father that the Holy Spirit can, without interference on the part of our wills, **use us.**

But is there some way by which we may know that it is the Holy Spirit that is working in us? Jesus has given us a simple test. "It shall testify of Me." (John 15:26.) If He and those things that

relate to Him are not our message, we may well wonder whether the Holy Spirit is our guide. Only when that Spirit is within, is it proper for the preacher to say: "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." (1 Thess. 1:5.) Of course only those who are "dead with Him," "crucified with Him," can preach a crucified Lord "in a crucified style," not seeking self praise, but His glory; not desiring applause, but that the Word may be received with the "joy of the Holy Spirit." (1 Thess. 1:6.) There can be no holding back of anything for self. But he who would have the all powerful God working in Him mightily must, like the Apostle, "like an earnest wrestler," exert all his strength in whatever the Father gives him to do.

Have we drunk in "the rain which cometh oft upon" us, without "bringing forth herbs meet for" the blessing of those He would have us serve? "Do with thy might whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," and though it is only a rod in our hand, or five small stones from the brook, a handful of meal and a little oil, or a cloud the size of a man's hand, let us "also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in us mightily," that there may be a hastening of the day when the last member of the little company shall be presented perfect in the heavenly courts. "Let your endurance have mature work."-James 1:4, Rotherham.

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 2:1-3

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - May, 1942)

"I would have you know how greatly I strive . . . that their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love, . . . that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ." - Col. 2:1, 2, R V.

PAUL'S LETTERS are never the cold reasoning of a mere theorist. The zeal that sent him without wavering into the face of danger is the spirit of every epistle. His religion and the privilege of sharing it with others meant more to him than all else. In fact, no hint of other interests crept into any of his letters. Imagine the shock it would have been to any of his friends, or to us, to have received a letter from him about the politics of the day or some social uplift scheme. It was not a lack of interest in people that kept him from delving into these things, but his sound judgment in preferring the best and only way of approach to their problems -- God's way. Just- as his Master before him had done, he "made straight paths for his feet." There was one way, and only one way by which the blessing he sought for himself, the brethren, and the world, could be secured, and his motto through life therefore was, "This one thing I do." To the ministry of the "power of God unto salvation" his whole life was devoted. He felt deeply about it, and he was not ashamed to show his feelings.

To express his earnestness, Paul, in the opening phrase of this chapter, as in many other places, uses as an illustration the supreme effort put forth by contestants in the games of the day. The translators have had difficulty conveying in full the vividness of this symbol. Rotherham renders it "For I desire you to know, how great a contest I am having in behalf of you." Darby, in his excellent translation, uses the still stronger word, "combat." The thought of the contest was introduced in the last verse of the previous chapter by the word rendered "striving"; which is, literally, "compete for the prize." How encouraging it must have been to all the brethren of proper heart attitude to know that a man such as the Apostle Paul was willing to devote all his powers to making secure for them the blessing promised. Paul in Rome, nine hundred miles from Colosse, of course could strike no literal blows on behalf of the brethren in that distant Church, but he could struggle side by side with them in the spiritual contest which was theirs. Herein is one of the great advantages of the Christian. His allies are not dependent on location for their effectiveness. Every saint on earth and every angel in heaven is his efficient confederate. This very epistle was an arsenal of ammunition, an unfailing source of supply, from which the Colossian brethren drew throughout their warfare. In their servant, Epaphras, they had another faithful ally who also refused to permit that nine hundred miles to slacken his zeal on their behalf.

In Service Forgetting Self

The average person in 'a prison cell would have thought he had burdens enough without taking the burden of the Colossian friends on his heart. But by sharing in their trials Paul blessed both himself and them; for one of the essentials in transforming a prison cell into a palace is this very thing of forgetting self and becoming greatly burdened with a desire that others may be blessed; and that, if it be the Lord's will, we may be used in some way in the conveying of that blessing.

In the Apostle Paul a bountiful providence had furnished an especially sympathetic champion for the Colossian brethren, assailed as they were by Jewish and Grecian errors, philosophies so-called. He well knew their danger, for sympathy with Jewish error had led him to the most

horrible of crimes-persecution of his brethren even to the death. No one could know better than he the trap that Satan was setting for their feet. No one could be more ruthless with the error or more tender with the threatened ones. And no one but he could know the depth of the anguish he felt for his brethren in peril. It is a fact that often there is more agony in the heart of the one who waits with tear-stained cheek at home than in that of the loved one who faces the bayonet on the distant battle field. Justly the ancient law of Israel was, "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff. They shall part alike." When the contest ends in which we have enlisted, there will be an "exceeding great reward" for all who have faithfully endured to the end. Some will have proved faithful amid the din of battle under the glare of the noonday sun, and others in the quiet agony of their prayer-closet-with Satan ceaselessly endeavoring to coax them from their knees.

The question as to whether all the brethren of Colosse and Laodicea were of those who had not seen the Apostle's face, need not concern us. By that phrase he may refer to those of Colosse who had joined their group since his visit to them. He may wish to tell of a zeal that reaches to all his brethren in every quarter. There is nothing either in this letter or in any other portion of the New Testament to prove that the Apostle had ever visited either city, or that he had not.

It would not have been surprising if these brethren had concluded that he had a deeper affection for that more accessible group at Ephesus on the seashore than for them far away in their upland valley. Then there was the likelihood that his words would have less weight with them, especially if they had never met him face to face, than would the theorizing of the philosophers who were in their midst either as visitors or as members of their Ecclesia. Their influence might be even greater than that of their faithful Brother, Epaphras, now taken from them in the time of their direst need. It would seem that the Apostle is adroitly using this fact, of his not having personal contact with them, and his bridging the miles between, as an evidence, implied, but not boldly mentioned, that the love he has for them is of a more dependable sort than that of the teachers of error, who by their actual presence have the advantage of personal magnetism in their effort to deceive. There might be some question as to the motive of the local teachers, but surely there could be none as to his.

The Apostolic Method of Comforting

But perhaps he is just another of those wishing to build up a following-gather a little group of those who will subscribe to his theology. Designing traducers in all probability would try to make them believe this very thing. Nothing, however, could be more evident than the fact that the Apostle states here-that the great end he is agonizing to attain is their "comfort." But was not this also the object or one of the objects of the founder of every group of theorists-that every one in their group might enjoy the comfort, the assurance, that as long as they held to their teachers, all disagreements and unpleasant arguments would be avoided? How often, oh how often, that has been tried, only to end in utter failure when some one head finally worked a little differently from the others!

Paul contemplates no such foolish scheme. As always, he would build his structure of truth on the solid foundation of love. He has already told them the breadth of the love to which he refers -- "the word of the true Gospel," "the true grace of God" which is for "every man." (John 1:9.) This is "the hope of the Gospel," the blessing for "all the families of the earth," the very "mystery" of which he has been writing. Those with a love narrower than that are very apt promptly to sever their connections with the group when they hear some one proclaiming a doctrine with which they cannot agree. The deceitfulness of the human heart is revealed in the fact that the disagreement may be known of for years, but the separation comes only when it is made public.

The figure the Apostle uses is that of the most substantial structures of his day: "Your hearts being fastened together as our most solid buildings are made sure against the blasts of our worst tempests by mortise and pin"-a very efficient piece of primitive construction, but only a feeble illustration of the power of love to hold hearts together, intertwined in every activity and interest so that though many, they are "one." Truly, only "the love of Christ holds -\us together." (Young's.) This thought of unity is in the word translated "comforted," but the English is not able to crowd into one word all the thought -of the original. The fundamental meaning of the word is "to call to one's side, call for, summon": and from this comes the thought of "to encourage, strengthen, comfort." From the figure of the mortise pins the Apostle associates with this, it is evident (he is writing the Colossians not merely that they may have peace of mind, but that they may present a strong front to the enemy, not a coward in the ranks, but every "heart strengthened"; not as beams strewn about a lumber-yard, but each in its place, and all so firmly joined that the building seems as if it were made in one piece. How Satan longs to remove that mortise pin -- and how often any flimsy pretext will serve to accomplish his purpose!

Our Oneness in Him

The enemy must be met, but what hope can there be of victory if every soldier is suspicious of every other one enlisted in the same service? On the other hand, what courage one faithful heart by one's side lends! When two are under one burden, each feels that the other is bearing almost all.

In great part the strength the Father imparts is made ours through the unity our oneness of spirit gives, and it is love that works this miracle. The separate twigs of the bundle have no strength until they are tightly bound together. Lone grains of sand may be blown about by any zephyr, **but together** they become a mighty bulwark holding back the vast ocean. Can we wonder at God's hatred for separations? and Satan's for unity?

Manuscripts differ considerably as to the ending of the second verse. Some end it, "the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ"; and others, "the mystery of God and of Christ"; and still others merely "the mystery of God," etc. By most interpreters the third verse is understood as referring either to the Father or to the Son as the One in whom the treasures of wisdom* are hid, while others have translated it "in which," thus referring to the mystery. All these differences change matters little for us, for the wisdom hid in that secret and that hid in Christ, when made known, are found to be a revelation of our God. The Apostle's ambition is that the Colossian friends shall not be doubting worldlings or doubting Christians; but trusting babes. - Matt. 11 :25.

* "These four words, 'treasures,' 'wisdom,' 'knowledge,' 'hidden,' are all familiar on the lips of the latter Gnostics, and were so, no doubt, in the mouths of the false teachers at Colosse. . . . He puts special emphasis on the predicate 'hidden' by throwing it to the end of the sentence -- a peculiarity which is reproduced with advantage in the Revised Version." - Expositor's Bible.

The "mystery [secret] of God" has no allusion to the mystery of His existence. There is no effort made to explain that. If these brethren were to have "full assurance" only after they could clearly explain how our Heavenly Father's existence could be from eternity, and how He could be self-existent, full assurance would never be theirs in this life. The mystery to which Paul alludes in the previous chapter, is there made clear-"Christ in you-the hope of glory." It was the mystery, the revelation of which had established confidence in the Gentile breast, and doubtless this was Paul's main reason for reminding them of it.

How Jesus, who instructed His disciples to "go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter not," could be an exemplification of that particular "sacred secret," would not have been understandable to them if they had not had the revelation that teaches that "He gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified **in due time.**" It was three and one half years after the cross that the first demonstration of the working of this sacred secret was given, when the divinely appointed vision of the sheet with its unclean animals instructed Peter that now was the due time to "go unto all nations, disciplining [from among] all peoples. Already the Colossians had begun to experience some of- that blessing, the bestowing of the Holy Spirit and its gifts upon Gentiles, proving beyond controversy that God was dealing with them as with the sons called from among the Jews. But this is not the end. It is a personal knowledge, exact and full, that Paul wishes them to have. By one means only can this be had. It is not obtainable by human reasonings, Gentile or Jewish, but rather, bear in mind that this full knowledge of the mystery of God is to be the portion of those who are knit together in love. In the ninth verse of the first chapter the Apostle Paul tells of his prayer that they might be filled with the knowledge of the Master's will for them. In the verse we are considering is it not reasonable to suppose he goes a step further, desiring that they might have a personal knowledge of the Father and the Son themselves, "an exact knowledge of the secret of God." (Diaglott.) Manifestly there are many things those who are not knit together in love may know, but only those who love can know Him who is love. Note the millions who have known that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs with the Jews, the "mystery" of chapter one; and the "little flock" who know Him who is love, the "mystery" of chapter two.

Perfect Love Casteth out Fear

There is no fear in the heart of the one whose eyes are fixed on Jesus. All a doubting Christian needs is a larger vision of Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. With eyes fixed on the world's allurements, on self, on a brother's defects, or even on a human leader, however sincere he may be, one cannot see Jesus as Paul would have Him seen. Every Christian must know the experience of fading stars, fading because of the greater light of the rising Sun of Righteousness-not because darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. Rather, the greater that dankness, the brighter will shine our Morning Star. A truth regarding Jesus or our Heavenly Father as revealed in His Plan need not be introduced with "perhaps," but rather with the oft reiterated Scriptural, "verily." This full assurance brings true "riches"-peace that floods the entire life, and a life that floods even the neighborhood with benedictions. "This wealth of conviction is attained by lying in the love of God. Of course, there is an intellectual discipline which is also needed. But no intellectual process will lead to an assured grasp of spiritual truth, unless it be accompanied by love. As soon may we lay hold of truth with our hands, gas of God in Christ with our understandings alone. This is the constant teaching of Scripture -- that, if we would know God and have assurance of Him, we must love Him. 'In order to love human beings, it is necessary to know them. In order to know divine things, it is necessary to love them.' When we are rooted and grounded in love, we shall be able to know-for what we have most need to know and what the Gospel has mainly to teach us is love, and 'unless the eye with which we look is love, how shall we know love?' If we love, we shall possess an experience which verifies the truth for us, will give us an irrefragable demonstration which will bring certitude to ourselves, however little it may avail to convince others. Rich in the possession of this confirmation of the Gospel by the blessings which have come to us from it, and which witness of their source, as the stream that dots some barren plain with a line of green along its source is revealed thereby, we shall have the right to oppose to many a doubt the full assurance born of love, and while others are disputing whether there be any God, or any living Christ, or any forgiveness of sins, or any guiding providence, we shall know that they are, and are ours, because we have felt the power and wealth which they have brought into our lives."

Knowledge Progressive

It was easier for a Jew to learn to say, Jesus "died for **our** sins," than to say, "and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2.) A Messiah hanging on a cross was a strange spectacle for Jew or Gentile, a convincing evidence of failure to the infidel. The Gentile who could see that by means of the cross Jesus had become the Messiah, was on the way to become a Jewish proselyte. The one who could see that He had thus become a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world," was beginning to understand the "sacred secret." The friends to whom Paul was writing in Colosse had come this far, but there was a possibility of further progress. They even knew something of "Christ in you, the hope of glory"; but daily their comprehension of that mystery must enlarge as they drew nearer to Him. The largest star in the universe is but a point to our earthly vision. If we could travel toward it until as close to it as we now are to our sun, it would fill our vision, just as He, who is the revelation of the Father, now does fill the life of those who have spent their years in drawing nearer to Him, and in earnest endeavor to know "the mystery of the Father and of Christ." - John 1:17, 18; 17:6; Col. 1:19.

"The ordinary type of Christian life is contented with a superficial acquaintance with Christ. Many understand no more of Him and of His Gospel than they did when first they learned to love Him. So completely has the very idea of a progressive knowledge of Jesus Christ faded from the horizon of the average Christian that 'edification,' which ought to mean the progressive building up of the character course by course, in knowledge and grace, has come to mean little more than the sense of comfort derived from the reiteration of old and familiar words which fall on the ear with a pleasant murmur. There is sadly too little first-hand and growing knowledge of their Lord, among Christian people, too little belief that fresh treasures may be found hidden in that field which, to each soul . . . would be cheaply bought by selling all. . . . The condition of growth for the branch is abiding in the vine. If our hearts are knit together with Christ's heart in that love which is the parent of communion, both as delighted contemplation and as glad -obedience, then we shall daily dig deeper into the mine of wealth which is hid in Him **that it may be found**, and draw forth an unfailling supply of things new and old."

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 2:4-7.

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - August, 1942)

"This I say that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech." - Col. 2:4, R. V.

WITH CONSUMMATE skill, from the apostolic greeting of verse one to the warnings that begin with the verses which we are about to consider, every word has been used to prepare the minds of these far away brethren for the advice their dangers make necessary. The Apostle realizes he must use great care, for warnings may easily be mistaken for scoldings. He has the interests of his brethren at heart, and his words are apt to take on such a solemn tone that they will feel he is at least exaggerating their danger. In fact they are not aware that they are in any danger; and they will not be safe until made aware of it.

Even the false teachers were doubtless ignorant of the fallacies in their reasonings; for with imperfect brains they could not reason perfectly. On the other hand, if the Colossians had had perfect brains, they would have been quite safe in listening to these philosophers, accepting the truths they taught, and discarding the errors. The question is not raised as to the honesty of either the teachers or the hearers; but, though he does not directly say here what he has said in other places, his politely phrased warning is directly implying that neither they nor their teachers are able to "reason anything" of themselves. - 2 Cor. 3:5, Diaglott.

The danger which had come upon our brethren of this Colossian ecclesia was not peculiar to their day. There are at all times philosophies so-called offering themselves as a substitute for the true philosophy to be found no where except in God's Word. Our being able to discover some of the errors in the world's philosophizings is no safeguard, but rather a danger; for if we become convinced of our ability to "reason anything" of ourselves, the errors which our imperfect brains do not discover will be gladly accepted and stored away as precious truths. Apparently Paul's warning is as much needed today as when given, for one still hears of teachers who are accepted and blindly followed because of their "great brains." Such expressions are heard as, "one of the greatest minds in the truth," "deep thinker," etc. Fine brains are good, just as "persuasiveness of speech" (R. V.) is, when used by an Apostle Paul, or any one who is under the influence of the Spirit of God; but the greater the brain and the more powerful the "persuasiveness," the greater the, danger; especially when error is bated, as it always is, with a thousand truths.

Must we then reject all teachers, since we have never found one who did not sometime in his life teach some error? Even the Apostles would have taught a mixture of truth and error without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God in His Word, answers that it is He who has set the teachers in the Body. Manifestly a teacher cannot be accepted as "good" merely because he teaches only what we already believe (he would then have nothing to teach us), nor because he teaches some truth. Neither can he be rejected as "bad" because he makes some mistakes. What then shall be our rule to safeguard ourselves and the brethren against false teachers? Not only through the great logician, the one we would have selected for giving the answer, but also through the loving John (1 John 3:23-4:8) we are told what the final test on the teachers must be. It is presupposed that they must have something to teach us and some ability in teaching. Then, Brother John says, "Try the **spirits**, whether they are of God." The first evidence he gives that they are led of the spirit is their belief in the ransom, confessing that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." Next, if they are "of God" they will be guided by the teachings of the Apostles, God's messengers. Lastly, "He that

loveth not, knoweth not God," and therefore can never teach us to know Him; and this is the knowledge through which everlasting life is gained. If with persuasiveness of speech some one, even one in whom we have great confidence, offers some other standard, in that teaching he is not being guided of the Spirit of the Lord and to that degree must be rejected. But especially "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." (Matt. 7:15, 16.) This is our Master's warning.

"There Must be Heresies Among You"

Truth is actually more fascinating than error; but error must be to some degree fascinating in order to deceive. The natural mind is attracted by natural reasonings; the spiritual mind by sanctifying truths. Therefore the process of introducing error is usually quite simple. The truth-loving mind with some trace of the human still left in it is first attracted and left bewildered by the suggestion of apparently deep and unanswerable questions, made to sound very important even though there would not be a grain of sanctifying power in the answer if ever it were discovered. Then they are induced to accept the teacher's answer because of its speciousness, without seeing all its bearings, or even knowing its real meaning. "So error ever creeps into the Church. Men are caught by something fascinating in some popular teaching, and follow it without knowing where it will lead them. By slow degrees its tendencies are disclosed, and at last the followers of the heresiarch wake to find that everything which they once believed and prized" has been dropped.

It was not human wisdom that taught the Apostle his method of safe-guarding the brethren of Colosse. The human method is to exalt human reasonings with the resulting partial or even total eclipse of the Scriptures; but the one who is being deceived will go away saying, "He had Scripture for it" - for of course Scriptures, some of them misapplied, were intertwined with the human reasoning. "Paul knows that he can best fortify these disciples against all harmful teaching by exalting his Master and urging the inexhaustible significance of His person and message. To learn the full meaning and preciousness of Christ is to be armed against error. The positive truth concerning Him, by preoccupying mind and heart, guards beforehand against the most specious teachings. If you fill the coffer with gold, nobody will lack, and there will be no room for pinchbeck [anything spurious or pretentious]. A living grasp of Christ will keep us from being swept away by the current of prevailing popular opinion, which is always much more likely to be wrong than right, and is sure to be exaggerated and one-sided at the best. A personal consciousness of His power and sweetness will give an instinctive repugnance to teaching that would lower His dignity and debase His work. If He be the center and anchorage of all our thoughts, we shall not be tempted to go elsewhere in search of the 'treasures of wisdom and knowledge' which 'are hid in Him.' He who has found the priceless One, needs no more to go seeking, but only day by day more completely to lose self, and give up all else, that he may win more and more of Christ, his All. If we keep our hearts and minds in communion with our Lord, and have experience of His preciousness, that will preserve us from many a snare, will give us a wisdom beyond human logic, will solve for us many of the questions fervently debated today, and will show us that many more are unimportant and uninteresting to us" as new creatures.

"For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ Jesus." (Col. 2:5.) For many years Paul had served the Church through the length and breadth of the known world. If now in his prison cell his shoulders were bowed and his hair gray, it was not because of the burden he had borne. These were the toll of years, not of worry. His habit had been one of "joying and beholding." Note that the joy is first. It is for that reason that Paul can see much that is good in these brethren of Colosse. He knew of the errors that were being taught and believed, but with a heart filled with

joy he could look beyond their errors and see much in which to rejoice in their "order" and "steadfastness."

Without exception the prison epistles are masterpieces of "rejoicing in the Lord." He who would sympathize with this prisoner of the Lord must draw on his imagination to discover any mournful prospect for him, for he looked not on barren walls but on, a vision of his glorified Lord ever with him. It is not the damp air of a prison cell he breathes, but heaven's own atmosphere. And not only his Lord is with him there, but into that little square is crowded every saint, living and dead, known and unknown; for Paul is ever rejoicing with those who have gone to their rest to await the victor's crown, and struggling side by side with those who are valiantly stretching forth toward the mark of the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

If Paul's preference had been to know his brethren "after the flesh," his astute mind would probably have been able to uncover more unlovely things in his brethren than the less active brains would. He, however, does not find pleasure in talking about the failings of which he has of necessity been made aware that he may write the Colossians this epistle for their blessing and for ours. He who counseled others to think on things that are lovely, gives little more than bare mention to these weaknesses, in his haste to take up the theme of which he never wearies—the beauties of true holiness as exemplified in his Lord.

It is a military figure the Apostle uses to portray the thing of worth in the Colossian ecclesia which he mentions first -- "your order." Paul was living in a Pretorian camp and if he could not so much as see the soldiers from between the bars of his little window, he could hear the feet in perfect accord, a proof that heads that differ and hearts that once were set on widely differing ideals need not interfere with the beautiful oneness that makes effective soldiers, and that can make the soldiers of the cross move as one man under the direction of the Captain of their salvation.

The translation which Weymouth gives the next phrase is also a military metaphor: "the solid front presented by your faith in Christ" -- your closed phalanx, in other words. This designation should perhaps be taken as referring to the inward condition, and the former to the outward discipline of the Church in Colosse. This is an excellent ideal for every congregation to have set before it: military precision in the orderly array of their activities; and, within, a steadfast, unwavering faith. Paul, it must be borne in mind, is not recommending discipline merely for display; but precision resulting from a faith in our Captain so great that, at His command, following where He has gone before, any foe however numerous, and any danger however great, will be faced shoulder to shoulder and without a suspicion of wavering. It was another, well acquainted with the requirements of a good soldier, who centuries earlier wrote of the company that came to make their captain king in Israel: "All these, men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel." (1 Chron. 12:38.) May it not be that a, test more subtle than many suspect is, in this day of divisions, determining who are worthy of heart to be present at the crowning of the King of kings, and Lord of lords? How foolish to be making a great to-do over the fact that some people are hard to keep step with, when the discipline preparatory to our great battle and victory depends much on our accommodating ourselves to our comrade's stride. Not in the sense of making missteps with him, but in bearing with his "infirmities" to his "edification."

Courage, devotion to the cause and to our Captain, and whole-hearted enthusiasm are needed to make a "good soldier" even in the days of training. It is better that "Faint heart" have his weakness revealed in the dust and heat of the drill-field than be exposed to humiliating defeat when the battle is on. Let us ask ourselves whether through the dust of the drill-field we can see

the face of our Captain ' joying and beholding" **our** orderly rank and steadfast faith in Him? If there is any disorder in our ranks, is the whole company out of step with me, or am I out of step with them?

The Christian's Walk

"As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, (a) rooted and (b) builded up in Him, and (c) stablished in your faith, even as ye were taught, (d) abounding in thanksgiving." - R. V.

A truth so important as this cannot be too often reiterated: knowledge is imparted only that it may be put into practice-in view of the fact that you have taken Jesus, the **Man** who died for us, and who was anointed as the long expected Messiah, the Christ, as your **Lord**, your exalted Head, of course you must mold your life, down to the smallest detail, to His will. This is the life, the walk, of faith which will be manifested in the four ways outlined by the Apostle.

(a) "Rooted . . . in Him," the oft repeated "in Him" of this epistle and the one to the Ephesians reveals the never-failing source of life from which the Christian may draw nourishment, the antitype of the Rock that followed the children of Israel through all their wilderness journey with its refreshing, life-sustaining water. The figure forcefully represents the real, the vital indwelling of the believer in Christ. But "Paul drives his fiery chariot through rhetorical proprieties, and never shrinks from 'mixed metaphors' if they more vigorously express his thought. Here we have three incongruous ones close to each other's heels. The Christian is to walk, to be rooted like a tree, to be built up like a house. What does the incongruity matter to Paul as the stream of thought and feeling hurries him along?

"The tenses of the verbs, too, are studiously and significantly varied. Fully rendered they would be 'having been rooted and being builded up.' The one is a past act done once for all, the effects of which are permanent; the -other is a continuous re= suiting process which is going on now. The Chris= tian has been rooted in Jesus Christ at the beginning of his Christian course. His faith has brought him into living contact with the Savior, who has become as the fruitful soil into which the believer sends his roots, and both feeds and anchors there. The familiar image of the First Psalm may have been in the writer's mind, and naturally recurs to ours. If we draw nourishment and stability from Christ, round whom the roots of our being twine and cling, we shall flourish and grow and bear fruit. No man can do without some person beyond himself on whom to repose, nor can any of us find in ourselves or on earth the sufficient soil for our growth. We are seedlings dropped on some great rock, which send their rootlets down the hard stone and are stunted till they reach the rich leaf-mold at its base. We blindly feel through all the barrenness of the world for something into which our roots may plunge that we may be nourished and firm. In Christ we may be 'like a tree planted by the river of water'; out of Him we are 'as the chaff,' rootless, lifeless, profitless, and swept at last by the wind from the threshing floor. The choice is before every man -- either to be rooted in Christ by faith, or to be rootless."

(b) " 'Being built up in Him.' The gradual, continuous building up of the structure of a Christian character is doubly expressed in this word by the present tense which points to a process, and by the prefixed preposition represented by 'up,' which points to the successive laying of masonry course upon course. We are the architects of our own characters. If our lives are based on Jesus Christ as their foundation, and every deed is in vital connection with Him, as at once its motive, its pattern, its power, its aim, and its reward, then we shall build holy and fair lives, which will be temples. Men do not merely grow as a leaf which 'grows green and broad, and takes no care.' The other metaphor of a building needs to be taken into account, to complete the former. Effort,

patient continuous labor must be put forth. More than 'forty and six years is this temple in building.' A stone at a time is fitted into place, and so after much toil and many years, as in the case of some medieval cathedral unfinished for centuries, the topstone is brought forth at last. This choice, too, is before all men-to build on Christ and so to build for eternity, or on sand and so to be crushed below the ruins of their fallen houses."

(c) The Greek of the following phrase is, literally, "being established, and may be paraphrased either: "being stablished by your faith," or "being stablished as to your faith." "A progressive increase of our faith is the condition of all Christian progress. The faith which is already the firmest, and by its firmness may gladden an Apostle, is still capable of and needs strengthening. Its range can be enlarged, its tenacity increased, its power over heart and life reinforced. The eye of faith is never so keen but that it may become more Ion'-sighted; its grasp never so close but that it may be tightened; its realization never so solid but that it may be more substantial; its authority never so great but that it may be made more absolute. This continual strengthening of faith is the most essential form of a Christian's effort at self-improvement. Strengthen faith and you strengthen all graces; for it measures our conception of divine help.

"And the furthest development which faith can attain should ever be sedulously kept in harmony with the initial teaching -- 'even as ye were taught.' Progress does not consist in dropping the early truths of Jesus Christ the Lord for newer wisdom and more speculative religion, but in discovering ever deeper lessons and larger powers in these rudiments' which are likewise the last and highest lessons which men can learn."

(d) "Further, as the daily effort of the believing soul ought to be to strengthen the quality of his faith, so it should be to increase its amount -- abounding in it with thanksgiving.' . . . The main idea of the clause is that thanksgiving is an inseparable accompaniment of vigorous Christian life. It is to be called forth, of course, mainly by the great gift of Christ, in whom we are rooted and builded, and, in Paul's judgment it is the very spring of Christian progress."

The abounding in thanksgiving implies a habitual dwelling of the mind on the great mercies of God as expressed in His "unspeakable gift," a continual glow of heart as we look on Him, a continual laying hold of that gift for our very own, and a continual pouring of our heart's love to the One who was the embodiment of immortal love. Gratitude on this basis will bind us to glad obedience, will give swiftness to the messenger, and eagerness to the running in the way of God's commandments. It is this genial sunshine that imparts sweet perfume to the spiritual flower, lusciousness to the spiritual fruit. It is the coal that kindles the sacrificial fire from which arise the fragrant incense clouds, an acceptable offering to our God, the highest and noblest service to which we can here aspire.

The life which flows out of the fount of thanksgiving is first pure, and it will be therefore a life acceptable to Him who is its inspiration, an "acceptable sacrifice" "of sweet perfume," a life of joyful surrender. "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually."

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 2:8-10

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - November, 1942)

"Ye are complete in Him." - Col. 2:10.

IN THE preceding verses Paul has exhorted to faithfulness to Christ. In the verses now being considered the same points are covered, but more forcefully. A note of warning is sounded. The brethren are in danger, and he states clearly (a) the nature of the noxious influences threatening them, and (b) their one means of safety. "Beware lest any man spoil you [a] through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after [b] Christ." He mentions no names, not caring to specify the opponents to whom he alludes, although they were doubtless well known both to him and to the friends in Colosse to whom he wrote. "Beware lest **any** man make a spoil of you." Other instances of this expression may be seen in the following passages: 1 Cor. 11:16; 15:12; 2 Cor. 3:1; 10:2; 11:20, 21; Gal. 1:7, 9; 2 Thess. 3:10, 11; 1 Tim. 1:3, 6; 6:3, 21.

It is not some imaginary ill, some "straw man" that he combats, not a vague and uncertain threat of future invasion, illustrated by conditions in some distant ecclesia, but a menace to their spiritual welfare that is present with them at the very moment of his writing. This "any man," this "**somebody**" unnamed, without a doubt would be talking of his lofty ideals, his noble motives, his eagerness to deliver them from the bondage of ignorance, leading them into the freedom of refreshingly new theories, or perhaps only into flowering fields of rhetoric. And indeed this "somebody" may sincerely feel that he has been sent to be their deliverer, divinely appointed to instruct them in the truths that had been revealed only to himself. No deception is more insidious than self-deception. (2 Tim. 3:13, R. V.) "In vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines, the precepts of men [either self-invented or borrowed]." - Matt. 15:9, Diaglott; - Isa. 29:13-16.

If this teacher really believes in himself, the danger is many times greater. It is not our province, nor the Apostle's, to pass judgment on him, either excusing or condemning. But even if that were the Apostle's privilege or duty, at this moment another matter engages his attention. However much his words may wound the "somebody" who would lead them astray, however much that one may plead innocence and sincerity of motive, never, if the Apostle can prevent- it, will those dear brethren of Colosse be led into captivity with cords about their necks like a band of Assyrian slaves-for that is the picture brought to our mind by Paul's language, made realistic to us by the monuments that providence has preserved for us.

"Philosophy" is a word to conjur with. Its mesmeric influence has lulled to sleep many an unwary Christian. The many truths that have been taught by the numerous systems, offered under that title by those who like Pythagoras, the first of the Greeks to call himself a philosopher, are "lovers of knowledge for its own sake," are no excuse for forgetting that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." "The Lord knoweth the seasonings of the wise, [even the wisest] that they are vain [in the final outcome]. Wherefore let no one glory in men. For all things are yours." Why seek counsel elsewhere? (1 Cor. 3:19, 20. R.V.) "Beware of the leaven of the -Pharisees and of the Sadducees"-and of all who like them supplement the divine Word with human reasonings. - Matt. 16:11.

"From **among yourselves** shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." (Acts 20:30. R.V.) "False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs

and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect." (Mark 13:22.) "Do not forget your former leaders, the men who brought you God's message. Remember how they ended their lives and imitate their faith." "You must not be carried away with strange varieties of teaching. The true way to steadfastness of heart is through God's mercy." (Heb. 13:7, 9 - Goodspeed.) "There must be also heresies [margin, "sects"] among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. 11:19.) "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To whom be the glory both now and for ever. Amen." - 2 Pet. 3:17, 18, R.V.; see also 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

It is manifest from the Scriptures just quoted and from others of similar import that the sacred writers are not opposing a love of wisdom and knowledge, but the pursuit of knowledge merely that one may have knowledge-a useless pampering of fleshly pride. Much worse, however, is the case when both the purpose and the object of the search are vain, empty, when one seeks only self-glory and acquires only the "profane, empty sounds, and contradictions of that falsely-named knowledge." -(1 Tim. 6:20, Diaglott.) There were few of his day who were willing to accept Paul's appraisal of their philosophical systems, but time has vindicated his charge of "vain [empty] deceit." All philosophers recognize the fallacies of the systems of the past, but how few even suspect that their own reasonings will soon join all those of the past as only interesting evidence that men are "riot able to think anything of themselves."

"As the term philosophy stood in high repute among the Gentiles, the Jews of this time affected it, and both Philo and Josephus use the word to express the whole of the Mosaic institutions. . . . The Jewish philosophy, such as is found in the Cabala, Midrashim, and other works, deserves the character of vain deceit, in the fullest sense and meaning of the words."

That there is truth to be had outside the Bible, no one can deny. Every bird, every tree, every flower, every star, every cloud in the heavens has something to tell of God's wisdom. But we learn of His glory not from man's speculations regarding these but from the few facts that may be known. Herein lies the secret of the emptiness of Grecian, Jewish, and present-day philosophies. Like the Pharisees, one must leave the commandment of God, "holding fast the tradition of men," if he would wind through all the labyrinth of their so called reasonings. This expression of our Master (Mark 7:8) gives us reason to believe that Paul in using this same phrase has reference especially to Jewish "traditions"; and probably there was a similar limitation in his mind when speaking of the "rudiments of this kosmos," for his use of the phrase in Galatians 4:3 seems definitely to refer only to the rituals of the Jewish religious, services of which the new dispensation is a far-surpassing antitype. The "A B C's" (rudiments) -of this present evil world have no more allurements for the seeker after saving truth who has once heard and fully appreciated the voice of "Him that speaketh from heaven," than have those out-moded types.

Love of the Truth the Touch-stone

"In order that all those may be judged who believed not the truth, but approved the iniquity" (2 Thess. 2:12, Diaglott), a false system began to be formed in the Apostle's day and has grown into the mighty system that has been the envy of and model for all false systems. The victims caught in these modern snares, evidently "admitted not the **love of the** truth in order that they might be saved." (2 Thess. 2:10, Diaglott.) What clearer evidence could there be of not being willing to cultivate a love of truth than to devote one's time to what is admittedly error? or has an unreliable foundation? or to accept a system of teaching without even testing its foundation? or to substitute a religion of form and doctrine for the devotion of a heart truly consecrated to God and His righteousness?

"But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God chose you a first-fruit for salvation, in sanctification of spirit and belief of Truth: to which He called you by our glad tidings for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm, and retain the instructions you were taught." - 2 Thess. 2:13-15, Diaglott.

"And not after Christ" (Col. 2:8) - here is the unfailing test as to whether the "love of truth" is of the heart or of the head, of "this present order" or of "the world to come." ("Love of wisdom" [applied truth] is the literal meaning of the word philosophy.) The word "after" does not have the thought of following either at a distance or near by, but "in accordance with." The wisdom of the world and even the "first principles" must be left behind in order to "go on unto the perfection" of knowing and being in full accord with Christ. (Heb. 6:1-6.) There was nothing wrong with the rites and ceremonies that were given to the Jews, the "rudiments of this order," nor is there anything wrong with the "first principles" taught us of God, but the plan of God for those with whom He deals, at least in the present time, is one of progression -- the Christian therefore must "go on unto perfection," building "he superstructure of "gold, silver, and precious stones," a character likeness "after Christ," the "pattern showed **us**."

"Because in Him dwells all the fulness of the deity bodily." (Col. 2:9, Diaglott.) The King James and the Revised Versions use the word "godhead" instead of "deity" in their translations, and that would be just as satisfactory a translation if it were not that for most minds the word "godhead" has a mysticism suggestive of the trinity. Actually it means just what the Greek word does. The Century Dictionary, for its first definition gives: "The state of being God or a god; divine nature; deity; divinity." Thayer's definition of the Greek word is: "deity, i.e., the state of being God, godhead"; while Liddell and Scott give it: "Godhead, divinity, divine nature." Shakespeare, who was writing at the time the King James Version was being prepared, applies this title to Cupid. Evidently at that time no thought of the trinity had been injected into the Word.

Trinitarian Theory Disproved

The statement of this verse that in Jesus dwells all the fulness of divinity has been to careless thinkers ample proof of that portion of the trinitarian doctrine that makes the Father and the Son one individual. The idea of oneness in this sense would never have confused any one if our Lord's prayer that the Church might be one **even as** He and the Father are one, had been kept in mind. (John 17:22.) Similarly, remembering Paul's prayer (Eph. 3:19) that the Church may be "filled with all the fulness of God," should convince any one that there is no justification for using Colossians 2:9 to bolster the unscriptural trinitarian theory. Paul is assuring the brethren who have a sincere desire to be "rooted and built up in Him" that the world has absolutely nothing to offer them even in the best of its philosophies and traditions; because the little of good there is in these, if one could endure the "weariness .of the flesh" that a searching of the volumes of his day would entail, would not make one "complete, for completion is to be found only in Christ Jesus. "In Him [not in traditions and philosophies] dwelleth all the fulness of the divine nature bodily, and in Him ye are made full." Under the Mosaic arrangement Jehovah's glory and presence with Israel were feebly represented by a supernatural light in the Most Holy. In the one word "bodily" Paul tells that for the Christian the types and shadows have been superseded by the actuality. The body, long upon the horizon, casting its shadow "afar off," has after four thousand years of waiting revealed itself. (1 John 1:1-4.) "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." (Col. 1:19.) "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace [that is, His fulness is received gradually, day by day, not miraculously in a moment]." (John 1:16.) And the process is to be persisted in "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the personal [Rotherham] knowledge of the Son of God [in whom dwells all this fulness bodily], unto a

perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13.) Yea, "to know even that which surpasses knowledge-the **love** of the anointed One; **so that** [by having this surpassing knowledge] you may be filled with **all** the fulness of God." - Eph. 3:19, Diaglott.

Language is used so carelessly by people in general that "filled" and "fulness" may mean anything approaching that actual condition. This is not, however, the usage of the inspired writers. The word Paul uses means nothing less than "filled to the brim," as we found in considering Colossians 1:24. The use of this word implies that the emptying is as total as the filling. Herein is victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; and there is no other way, no other name under heaven given **amongst** men that can accomplish it. In all man-made philosophies and traditions the world and the Adversary have had their hand, and so add to our bondage instead of releasing from it. He who turns to these contaminated sources for his inspiration must know little of Him who is "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15); "In Him are hid **all** the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3.) "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

If one would have the fulness of the Vine, he must be grafted into the Vine. His life must be the life of the Vine. From thence must come all his strength. And to yield the richest fruitage possible, there must be an uninterrupted flow of that life into the branch. This is the thought in the figure of being "rooted in Him. But we are also "built up in Him"; and of this figure it may be explained: "If thou wert pure and upright, surely now He would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase." (Job 8:6, 7.) "So the Lord blessed the latter end of job more than his beginning." (Job 42:12.) "Enlarge the place of thy tent [dwelling] and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." - Isa. 54:2, 3.

To the mind that: knows Christ's fulness, the emptiness of all the traditions and philosophies the world has to offer is apparent with a vividness of which other minds can know nothing. The only way to know His fulness is to partake of it. "And ye are complete [filled to the brim] in Him." It is profitable to make frequent examination of our vessels to discover what we find in them: Are they filled with an assortment of things of more or less worth, or filled to the brim with that which is indisputably His filling out reasonings His, our plans His, our activities His? Are we in thought, word, and deed living Christ? Can we truly say:

"Not I, but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted;
Not I, but Christ, be seen, be known, be heard;
Not I, but Christ, in every look and action,
Not I, but Christ, in every thought and word."

How do our "traditions" compare with those of the Jews? Are we more faithful than they to our "circumcision"? (Rom. 2:29.) Are we more particular than they about our "washings" -- our personal cleanliness as new creatures, and our fastidiousness regarding the food that is served to us? Is it more important that the brethren who serve our food do so with the elegance of "men and of angels," than that they "be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord"? Are we any more careful than those Jews to bring all the sacrifice the Lord requires, to bring **all** our treasure into the storehouse -any more prompt in bringing in the first-fruit? Are we present at every feast in our Jerusalem? Are we more strict in observing the Sabbath rest in our hearts-that rest into which they were unable to enter because of "an evil heart of unbelief"? (Heb. 3:10-12) Are the words of the Lord so precious to us that they are prominently before us as "a sign upon our hand," as "frontlets between our eyes," so that we "talk of them in our homes," "by the way"-at all times the

absorbing theme? Do we "love the Lord with **all** our heart, mind, soul, and strength"? (Deut. 6:4-9.) "The law was but a shadow of good things to follow," but it is very profitable to trace its shadows to the reality which is ours and discover whether we do indeed have something more substantial and more prized than had they who devoted their lives to those shadows.

The One with whose fulness we are filled is "the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10), for "by Him all things are and were created," "by Him all things consist." Paul does not enlarge upon the point, nor explain why he mentions this phase of Christ's fulness in alluding to our filling. His treasures are infinite. Our finite **minds** can only cry out when contemplating Him and His fulness "Such knowledge is too great for me." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit: for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, **the deep** things of God." Would you know God? Let others turn to the broken and empty cisterns, but let us turn to Him, the Head of all principality and power, in whom all fulness dwells, and be found "complete in Him," -- "filled to the brim."

"All who were privileged to attend the convention in Milwaukee were richly blessed, for the Lord was with us. A spirit of love and good fellowship prevailed, and the brethren who ministered spoke on subjects of vital importance now, when so many trials are being experienced by the Lord's people.

"The discourse on John 17:21 brought to our attention our Lord's prayer that unity might exist among His brethren. All those who have His spirit of course have this same desire for unity and are more closely united to all who are His brethren. Jesus showed His unity with His Father by His 'delight to do His Father's will.' At the close of His life He prayed, 'Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.' He did not seek the glory for Himself, but that He in turn could revert the glory to God. When the Lord's followers catch this spirit of the Master, there will be a oneness, a unity, that will enable such to rejoice when the Gospel is preached, as did the Apostle, even though it be of envy and strife'-'notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.' May God reveal our hearts to us that we may not seek for unity with self, but for unity with the spirit of Christ. We are all partners of His grace; we have no more to bring to God than does our brother. We must all build upon the one foundation -- Christ.

"Another helpful discussion was on the great love of God as manifested in His condescending to notice us -- imperfect human beings, and call us to be His heirs -- joint-heirs with **His** Son. It is not because of works of righteousness or our worthiness, for 'not many noble are called,' but because of His great love. This should make us very humble. The various steps of progress in the Christian way were outlined, showing how after turning from evil and sin we learn the law of justice; going on, we are able to endure grief, suffering wrongfully, taking it patiently; then we learn to rejoice in suffering; to return good for evil; to 'love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us.' Surely the search-light of God's Word is turned on our own hearts as we meditate on such admonitions.

"The importance of being upright in life and having pure motives was impressed on our minds by a talk on Psalm 24, verses 3 and 4. This uprightness is to be inwrought, become a part of one's being -- loving righteousness for righteousness' sake-only such 'shall ascend into the hill of the Lord' or 'stand in His holy place.'

"Our share in the sufferings of Christ and how it is esteemed by the Lord was the subject of another helpful talk -- showing how the Church is identified with Christ in suffering and in glory 'bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus'--'planted in the likeness of His death,' 'raised in the likeness of His resurrection'; that the sacrifice of the Church, which is made holy and acceptable through Christ, gives her a share in the work of reclaiming the race, and in blessing all the families of the earth.

"The subject of 'The works of the law,' and 'the hearing of faith' (Gal. 3:2), brought us helpful lessons for our day. Even Peter, who had been with the Lord and was so greatly used by Him in upbuilding the saints and opening the door to the Gentiles--even he deflected for a time, impressing the thought that while the Lord has provided prophets, apostles, teachers, we must 'prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.' The members of Christ are bound together by 'that which every joint supplieth' -- each one is necessary -- yet Christ is the Head. Do we look to Him for our guidance, or do we look to some human agency?

"Three testimony meetings added to the enjoyment of the convention, as also the beautiful music rendered by those gifted in song and otherwise.

"The closing talk on 'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ' brought us all very close. Surely the hours spent together were most profitable and edifying, and our hearts responded to the Psalmist's words: 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.'"

The Letter to the Colossians

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the, faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." - Col. 2:11-13.

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IN THE verses previous to those now under discussion, there has been in the Apostle's mind the contrast between that fulness which is the precious lot of those who are in Christ Jesus, those *who* have the mind of Christ, and two will-o'-the-wisps prevailing in Colosse-the empty philosophies resulting from the reasonings, so called, of human minds; and the religion of vain formalism. Always there have been the two corrupting tendencies to influence religious thought, that of the intellect, and that of the senses -- the danger that the cultured few will place their trust in the superior workings of their mind, while the great mass will make the equally serious mistake of depending on feelings. With the one, speculation runs riot, and with the other religion becomes a mere display of feelings. Apparently both these false hopes held sway in the Colossian group, for Paul assailed both.

In the verses now before us, the Apostle is answering that company of formalists who would impose the Jewish circumcision on Gentile converts. This that was the seal of the Covenant with Abraham's seed (Gen. 17:9-14) and which must be maintained in order to retain their right, to the blessings promised to the Jews, either in that day or in this, could be of no avail to a Christian, whose seal is not the letter but - the spirit. (Rom. 2:29; 7:6; 2 Cor. 3:6; Matt. 23:23; Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:20; 2 Tim. 3:5; Rom. 14:17.) "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 5:6; 6:15.) But there is a circumcision for Christians-the circumcision of the heart, their seal of acceptance with God. For those who have this circumcision the ancient Jewish rite manifestly is obsolete.

CHRISTIAN CIRCUMCISION DEFINED

This true circumcision has three characteristics: It is "not made with hands"; it consists in "putting off the body of the flesh"; and above all it must be "of Christ."

Since it is "not made with hands," it is a God-given reality and not the work of the flesh. The Jewish circumcision was a ceremonial cleansing faintly suggestive of the Christian's purity of heart. Even the Old Testament points to this deeper meaning of circumcision, as in Deuteronomy 30:6: "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart . . . to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart." See also Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4.

The Christian circumcision is no such small matter as the Jewish symbol, for it is the "putting off the body of the flesh." The words, "the sins of," are evidently an interpolation, as indicated by the more reliable manuscripts; and we suspect Satan's hand in this addition. He would very much like to convince every saint that all there is to his circumcision is the putting off sins, whereas its real import is the "putting off *the body* of the flesh" -- the "making *no* provision for the flesh to satisfy the desires thereof." - Rom. 13:14.

The Apostle's expression is a strong one, for, the "putting off" is more literally a complete *stripping* off, as of the laying aside of *one's* clothing. How evident it is that this is not made with hands, even though it is a gradual work and embarrassingly partial for a time. Only our Heavenly Father can effect and complete *so* great a change as this "circumcision" of the heart. This must be circumcision "*in* the spirit." If it were only "in the letter," an obedience to the letter of the law, man might *work* that in a measure satisfactory to the human mind. "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born *of* water and *of* the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) "Not by works, of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing *of* the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:5.)

Even though there were an absence of allusions *in* Col. 2:11 to anything beyond the mere *putting* aside of sin, that would not indicate that higher attainments are not part of the work of the divine Spirit in us. Every one should know "this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," but "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." - Rom. 6:6; Heb. 12:28; 13:16; Psa. 34:14.

The Law required the circumcision of the flesh. Just as positively the Spirit dispensation requires the circumcision of the heart; and this is manifestly necessary that there may be the "new creature in Christ Jesus [for whom] old things have passed away [by heart circumcision]." (2 Cor. 5:17.) That individual has ceased to live after the flesh, though' *still in* the flesh. In another sense the Apostle says: "Ye are not in the flesh, but]In the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. 8:9.) He can speak thus truly because of his stronger expression just quoted above that the body of sin *is* "*destroyed*, that henceforth we should not serve sin." This destruction is of course not of the physical body but of the will that has controlled it until that time.

It is not surprising that Satan has been successful - in inducing the great mass of so-called Christians to be content because they have in a measure put off some of the sinful tendencies of the flesh, but there is no excuse for this error on the part of those who seek to do His will. One feature of the King James.

Translation that has assisted in this wrong viewpoint is the use of the word "lust" in translating a Greek word that does not necessarily mean anything stronger than the most innocent of desires. Evil desire should be implied only when the context so indicates. ("Lust" is, however, the correct translation of another word used in Col. 3:5 and Rom. 1:26.) This true thought is plainly enough taught in Paul's exhortation to live not after the flesh but after the spirit. The word translated "after" in Romans 8:13, in the construction there used, means "conforming to the standards of" the flesh. Following the least suggestion of the flesh, unsupported by the Spirit's guidance, therefore, constitutes one as living after the flesh. This is not a question of sinful lusts, but of seeking anything other than the will of God—a thing which faith can never do. When one follows his own will, he is just as definitely proving that his faith is in self as he proves his faith in God by following the divine will. It is for this reason that no Christian can pray for anything until he has first determined God's will in the matter, or in the absence of any means of knowing the Father's will, he will say, "If it be Thy will."

SPIRITUAL CIRCUMCISION "OF CHRIST"

Doubtless it is this completeness of submission to the divine Spirit that is indicated when we are told that our circumcision is "of Christ." "In Him" we not only have the justification that makes us acceptable in the presence of the Father though still bearing about this body of flesh, but in a still more important sense we are "in Him" as members of His Body. Here the thoughts of the flesh cease and the "mind of Christ" begins. But we cannot be "in Him" without "circumcision of

the heart." Any holding fast to the flesh and the works of the flesh marks us as carnal to that degree. We must not, however, permit Satan to deceive us into thinking that the works of the flesh must be sinful to place us in this category.

The circumcision is "of Christ" probably both because He submitted to it and because He instituted it. There were many noble men in Israel previous to the Spirit dispensation, who knew some measure of this heart-transformed condition, but we cannot suppose that any prior to Jesus' time could actually experience a condition so drastic as the entire putting off the mind of the flesh. This work could be possible only in a Spirit dispensation. And what need can these Gentile converts have of the Jewish ceremony when the reality is theirs? Later in his argument the Apostle alludes to a series of ceremonials which are likewise outmoded by the establishing of the reality.

The ceremony has had its place in that great pedagogic work of bringing its votaries to Christ, not that they might bring to Him something that the empty reasonings of their philosophers had evolved, but that laying aside all human thought they might receive the mind of Christ, "bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5.) Never has force imposed on-any creature bondage comparable to this. They *who* are in Christ Jesus; having learned the folly of all the workings of the flesh, even at its best, gladly share with the Apostle Paul in "dying daily" that the "*life of Christ*" might be manifested in them. That life- cannot fully manifest itself while the flesh has its way about anything.

Perhaps more than anything else in the Christian life this resigning of the will of the flesh separates us from the world and its spirit. We note in connection with the Apostle's definition of a new creature that he does not say that *all* "old things have passed away," but he does say that "*all* things are become new." Much that is "old in the life of the individual continues after he has given himself unreservedly to the guidance of the Heavenly Father; but every old practice is conducted on a new basis, so that it is literally true that "all things have *become* new." It would be very strange indeed, if the world would not notice this change and condemn us for being so contrary to their aims and principles. But this only adds to the Christian's joy, as thus he can "go to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." Undoubtedly Saul of Tarsus, as his own words testify, lived on as high a moral plane as was possible for- a human being, but it was an entirely new experience that came into his life when "dying daily he shared in the "sufferings of Christ," "filling up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ," "bearing *His* reproach."

BAPTISM, PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

This deeper experience is more definitely referred to by the other symbol, baptism, which the Apostle here associates with circumcision. We are told that the form of expression in the Greek, implies that the two things are "contemporaneous. In other words there can be no true spiritual baptism where there is lacking a genuine circumcision of the heart-the laying aside of the entire will of the flesh. Nor can there be any circumcision of the heart without a 'true spiritual baptism-burial into the will of Christ.

Only a ceremony which is in accord with the meaning of the word "baptizo" can have been in the Apostle's mind, and, only that can truly represent the Christian's actual experience. "All but entire unanimity prevails among commentators on this point. The burial and the resurrection spoken of point unmistakably to the primitive mode of baptism, as Bishop Lightfoot . . . puts it in his paraphrase: 'Ye were buried with, Christ to your old selves beneath the baptismal waters, and were raised with Him from these same waters, to a new and better life.'" - Manifestly the symbol cannot accomplish for us all that is ascribed to baptism in the New Testament, any more than

could a physical circumcision all that is ascribed to its antitype. Our hope is not in the work of some man who submerges and raises us again from the baptismal waters, but- "through faith in the working of God." - Col. 2:12. - R V.

Baptism is more than circumcision. It carries the picture one step further. Here, too, the death of the flesh is represented, but additionally a resurrection to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, "to walk with Him in newness of life," *"even as He walked."* (Eph. 2:6; Rom. 6:4; 8:1; 1 John 2:6.) Paul, in this same letter (Colossians 3:1), tells us how we may know whether this is our experience or not, for he says that such "seek those things which are above." It should be easy for each one to scrutinize his daily life and know whether treasure is being laid up on earth or laid up in heaven. "Where one's heart is, there will his treasure be also." (Matt. 6:19-21.) We may well ask ourselves, Which brings the greater distress into our life, the missing of some spiritual blessing, or the missing of some physical satisfaction? If the former, we have known the "power of His resurrection." Jesus' resurrection demonstrated the acceptableness of His sacrifice. The power of His resurrection manifest in us proves the acceptableness of our "living sacrifice." By His cross the world must be "crucified unto us [dead so far as we are concerned], and we unto the world [dead to its every allurements]."

"LIFE MORE ABUNDANT"

This would be a sad state in which to find ourselves if it were not followed by the resurrected life. "There is the actual communication of a, new life when we touch Christ by faith. The Prophet of old laid himself upon the dead child, the warm lip on the pallid mouth, the throbbing heart on the still one, and the contact rekindled the extinguished spark. So Christ lays His full life on our deadness, and does more than recall a departed glow of vitality. He communicates a new life kindred with His own."

Paul's next phrase, "having forgiven us all our trespasses," as the most trustworthy manuscripts render it, gives us one of his intimate, personal touches, introducing us into the depths of the Apostle's character. While all that he had spoken of before was part of his own experience as a Christian, both the circumcision and the baptism, his sharing in them is not alluded to; but he is too widely awake to the, realization of his own unworthiness to fail to mention his association with those who must have their trespasses forgiven. The manuscripts from the earlier centuries render the passage, "having forgiven us all trespasses." It is through Christ's death that this pardon is Paul's and. ours. Satan's eagerness to becloud this truth is matched by Paul's intense hatred of anything that would veil from our sight the crucified Christ.

The ordinance of baptism into literal water was given, not only that we might recognize our privileges, but also that we might the more clearly apprehend Him who first went down into the waters symbolic of death and resurrection. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the' keeping of the commandments of God." (1 Cor. 7:19.) Nor is baptism into water of avail for the washing away of sins or the consecrating of the individual; but burial into His will, accompanying true circumcision' of the heart, a stage of the true baptism, is absolutely essential that we may rise to walk with Him in newness of like the final stage of the Christian's baptism -for this walk, for those who are "faithful unto death," will lead to and beyond the "veil that but thinly intervenes." "For we are the circumcision, which worship God -in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." - Rev. 2:10; Phil. 3:3.

- P. E. Thomson

The Letter to the Colossians

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." - Col. 2:14, 15.

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - September, 1943)

COMMENTATORS IN general see in these verses an allusion to the two main errors that prevailed in Colosse: subjection to ordinances, and reverence of principalities and powers. In the previous verses the Apostle had referred to the dangers of "philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments (A B C's), of the world and not after Christ," who, according to verse 10 (Col. 2:10), is "the head of all principality and power."

The first figure, "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances," is an undoubted reference to the use of the Asiatic inks, made with burnt cork or ivory, which by the use merely of sponge and water might be erased without leaving a trace. What consolation there must have been in this allusion for those who for a lifetime had futilely labored to attain life by keeping a covenant that was beyond the power of any imperfect creature. However closely one might come to the keeping of it, it could be a source of life only if kept according to the letter, which St. Paul tells us (2 Cor. 3:6) "killeth" -- evidently because of man's weakness. According to the 7th, 11th, and 13th verses of this same chapter, that Law Covenant "is done away." In the 13th verse the thought is stressed by reiteration, not only speaking of its passing away, but also of its "end," "the limit at which a thing ceases to be." - *Thayer.*

The reason for the vanishing of the Mosaic Law is clearly stated in Heb. 7:18: "There is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness"-- unprofitable and weak so far as giving life is concerned, because fallen flesh could not keep it. Nor. could -any imperfect human being by his death have brought any measure of life to the human family. Even one who was so near the perfect ancestor as Abel, could not bring salvation to any other. But we are come "to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of -Abel." In fact, it is just as impossible for one of us to give life to others as "for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin." (Heb. 12:24; 10:4.) "Christ also once for all [time] was offered to bear the sins of many ... for the Law [Covenant], having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the- comers thereunto perfect." (Heb. 9:28; 10:1.) Of this "shadow" the Hebrew Christians were endeavoring to construct a door which should be the sole entrance to the Church for Gentiles. "Certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, saying, except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved." "There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the Law of Moses." (Acts 15:1, 5.) In opposing, this view Peter confessed that no Jew had ever been able to keep the Law Covenant, saving: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Instead of giving life, the Law Covenant proved to be a crushing burden, an impassable barrier.

"AND TOOK IT OUT OF THE WAY"

The Apostle, in this expression, "Took it out of the way," is not giving us a new thought, but by reiteration making more forceful his statement that Christ is the end of the Law Covenant, and that it is so far removed from the pathway of those seeking life that no one need give concern to the fact that at one time it had blocked the pathway.

"NAILING IT TO HIS CROSS"

There is lacking any definite historic evidence- as to the symbolism in the phrase "nailing it to His Cross," but we have no doubt that it tells the means by which there was a complete setting aside of the Law Covenant. Note also that the "handwriting of ordinances which was against us" is the thing nailed to the Cross. There is nothing in this phraseology to indicate that the Apostle is making any distinction between the moral and the ceremonial ordinances. Manifestly, one is just as much "against" the Jews as the other, since neither could be perfectly performed. Thayer in his lexicon has this note regarding "the handwriting": "A note of hand, or writing in which one acknowledges that money has either been deposited with him or lent to him by another, to be returned at an appointed time; metaphorically applied in Col. 2:14 to the Mosaic Law, which shows men to be chargeable with offenses for which they must pay the penalty."

The statement that "nailing it to His Cross" is an allusion to an ancient custom of cancelling legal documents by nailing them to a post in public view is denied by some. The form of expression does surely give weight to that tradition. If there was such a custom, it bore some resemblance to the present usage of banks, which return cancelled checks after having, similarly, pierced them. Since, however, the reality is the thing that is to us of most importance, we need not particularly concern ourselves as to the figure. Our assurance is that the same nails that hung our Lord on the cross fastened and cancelled there, every obligation that might be against us. This is a blessed assurance for those who have learned that though life was offered through the Law Covenant and would certainly have been the reward of any who kept it, to weakened flesh it was only a taskmaster, bidding them do but giving no ability for the performance- of its mandates. It was therefore an accuser, revealing unfulfilled duty and unfaithfulness to the God whom it in part revealed. The Law Covenant, nevertheless, was not a failure. One great and essential purpose was accomplished by it. "What things soever the Law [Covenant] saith, it saith to them that are under the Law [Covenant]; that every mouth [of those under it and those not under it] may be stopped, and all the; world [Jew and Gentile] may be brought under the judgment of God" -- the Apostle's preceding argument having demonstrated that all Gentiles were condemned "without the law." - Rom. 3:19. See R. V.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE RANSOM

All who are sons of Adam of necessity partake of his curse, but He who died, "the just for the unjust," was "made a curse for us," "made sin for us," by taking the place of the original sinner. Thus the perfect man, Jesus, could be a "corresponding price (anti-lutron) for all who were in Adam at the time of his sin; and the redemption of the original sinner would open the way for the giving of life to all his descendants.

A story comes to us from an ancient battlefield of a soldier that opened the way to victory by gathering to his breast as many enemy spear-points' as his arms could encircle, thus clearing an opening through which his fellow-soldiers could pass to victory. Not a few spear-points, but all "that was against us," Jesus "bare in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. 2:24.) It should always be

borne in mind, however, that it is not the understanding of this philosophy, but faith in the blood, that, gives life.

Having secured for all, Jew and Gentile, a means of release from the penalty of the sin of Adam and of the violation of the Law Covenant, Jesus has by the same act purchased for Himself 'the privilege of "bringing out the prisoners from the prison" -- the prison-house of death. "I the Lord have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thine hand, and will keep Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." - Isa. 42:6, 7.

There is a similar passage in Isa. 49:8, 9, which, to our astonishment, the Apostle Paul, for we presume he is the speaker, definitely applies to the Church, as recorded in Acts 13:47: "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." He makes a similar application of this passage in 2 Cor. 6:2.

THE CEREMONIAL LAW ENDED

Since sacrifice was the center of the Ceremonial Law, and since the Gospel Age introduced the day of the "better sacrifices" (Heb. 9:23), there is manifestly no advantage in continuing the symbolic ceremonies.

"When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part is, done away," is a principle which is as much in force in this connection as in that in which it is used. (1 Cor. 13:10.) "The Law [Covenant] hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But *now that faith is come*, we are no longer under a tutor." (Gal. 3:24, 25, R. V.) While it is agreed that the words "schoolmaster" and - "tutor" do not give the exact thought of the original, which rather refers to the slave who conducts the child to the school, the Law has also actually been our schoolmaster, for "by the Law is the knowledge of sin. - Rom. 3:20.

THE NEW TEMPLE

The human, the carnal mind, must have a visible temple and visible sacrifices in order to worship. For some it may be a temple on Mt. Gerizim or Mt. Moriah (these are the sacred heights where Abraham's sacrifice of his beloved son is by contradictory traditions said to have been offered) or for more modern minds it may be merely a human organization, small or large. For such, only faithfulness to something that the human senses can apprehend gives satisfaction. Faith, in the Faith Age, can be satisfied with nothing less, however, than the sacrifices and the temple of the Spirit.

The typical temple, therefore, ended its mission when the greater temples were established. The first of these greater temples was Jesus. He said, "The Father is in Me." (John 10:38; 14:10.) But, "Ye [also] are the temple of God. "The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." How holy is evident from our Lord's promise that "*the spirit* of truth shall be in you." Yea, even these imperfect bodies, counted perfect by the reckoning to us of His righteousness, are accepted as sufficiently holy for His indwelling by that spirit. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit." To what a high plane the life of such an individual rises is intimated by the Apostle's statement in Rom. 8:19: "Ye are in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwelleth in you." - 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19; John 14:17.

A NEW PRIESTHOOD

Jesus was not only the temple, but also the High Priest, "merciful and faithful, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," "a High Priest of good things to come," as well as "over 'the house of God." - Heb. 2:17; 7:26; 9:11; 10:21.

"The priesthood being *changed* [from the Levitical to the Melchisedec] there is made of necessity a change also of the law." (Heb. 7:12.) The change is a startling one, for, associated with our High Priest, there is a priesthood a large percentage of whose numbers are being chosen from among the Gentiles. "Ye are a holy priesthood," "a royal priesthood." (1 Pet. 2:5, 9.) That this is said of Gentiles is evident from the 10th verse which indicates it is addressed to those "which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God."

Jesus is also the great antitypical Sacrifice, the Lamb of God of John 1:29. This Age of "better; sacrifices" (Heb. 9:23) also associates with Him all who respond to the entreaty of His "tender compassions" (Rom. 12:1, Diaglott), and who gladly share with Him in His suffering (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:20; 2 Tim. 2:11, 12), though they neither can add to, nor have any desire to add to, His fully efficacious sacrifice. - Phil 4:18; Heb. 13:15, 16 1 Pet. 2:5.

THE MORAL CODE ENDED

As has been noted, there is nothing in any of the texts pointing to the ending of the Law that gives warrant to the supposition often advanced that only the Ceremonial Law is meant. The sponge that wiped clean for all, the condemnation of unobserved or imperfectly observed ordinances, just as effectively obliterated the condemnation of the moral code "to them that believe.

Jesus as a perfect man was able to, and as a Jew did, keep the entire Law. But it was not in this respect that inspiration points to Him- as our example. He is "the author and the prince-leader [Thayer] [not in 'the keeping of the Law, but] of our faith. "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked, might be mistakenly supposed to indicate that Christians are expected to keep the Law as perfectly as Jesus did; but we have the guidance of the Holy Spirit as to the true meaning of this text. The Apostle in the same letter explains our walk. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light." Our walk is in the light of the new dispensation which He began. (1 John 2:6; 1:7.) The "if" indicates that in the following phrases we have other blessings which are sure to follow, if we so walk. The first is one which we may safely use as a test as to whether we are walking in the light. It promises that "if" we are so walking, "we have fellowship one with another. It is still more startling to learn that "if we walk in the light,' as He is in the light . . . the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. Evidently the benefits of that blood will eventually be lost to those who do not walk in 'the light and manifest it by having "fellowship one with another. The Apostle Paul in Eph. 5:2 defines the walk as "in love as Christ also hath loved us." This can be only by the "laying down of our lives for our brethren" in the most absolute sense. As [in the same manner as] ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him," our great High Priest, "who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after *the Power of an endless life.*" - Heb. 7:16.

The introducing of this higher Law does not bring condemnation upon those who observe to the best of their ability any of the abrogated laws. On the contrary there is little in the old Law that would not be desirable in those who are under the direction of the new arrangement, but on a higher plane and from a higher motive. The old Law was- taken "out of the way" not that we might violate it, but that none should any longer *look to-it as a hope of life.* For the, new creature,

the main fault of the old' Law is in setting too low a standard. It was Jesus Himself who stated the new Law and the high plane upon which it operates. - See Matt. 5:27, 28; John 13:34; also 2 John 5.

The endeavor of the Jews to keep the old Law was largely because of its offer of life; but Jesus indirectly offers a higher motive for the keeping of, the new -- that we may prove our love for Him; that we may abide in His love; that we may have His friendship; and above all, that we may glorify our Father in the bearing of fruit. - John 14:15; 15:10, 14, 8.

THE CROSS TRIUMPHANT OVER THE POWERS OF EVIL

It will be of no advantage to us to concern ourselves with the learned discussions of the commentators as to just what limitations may be placed upon the phrase, "principalities and powers," in the 15th verse. We see no need of, placing any limitations. on the phrase, for our Lord has risen in might above every power in the universe save that of God Himself. - 1 Cor. 15:27.

There is also much diversity of opinion as to whether Jesus "spoiled" (Gr.: stripped) principalities and powers or whether He stripped these from Himself. We know that both are true The former, many commentators infer, is a picture that comes from military life and is that of a conqueror, whose first act is to strip from the conquered peoples every implement of warfare. There are other Scriptures quite in harmony with this suggestion. Jesus Himself said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." "And the prince of this world cometh: and hath nothing in common with me." (Fenton.) "The prince of this world hath been judged." (R.V.) "Thou hast led captivity captive." - John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.

Jesus, who conquered the Prince of Darkness in the temptation in the wilderness, was victor on the cross over *all* the powers of evil, and there could say, "It is finished." (John 19:30.) There He forged the last' link of the chain that would bind the "strong mall." (Matt. 12:28, 29; Luke 11:21, 22.) For His crown of thorns He was given the imperishable laurel of "the Crown of Gold. "More than conquerors," we,, His unworthy associates, may be sharers with Him in the laurels. To some it may seem strange that these crowns should be promised on a basis of love for "His appearing (Rom. 8:37; 2 Tim. 4:8), but surely he who does not look for it with intense longing, loves neither his Lord nor the groaning creation He comes to bless.

The Prophet assures us that the time of Jesus' treading of the winepress; is "the *day* of vengeance"; but there is a glorious period following of greater length, "the *year* of His redeemed." (Isa. 63:3.) This will be a triumphal procession, a conqueror's chariot such as the world has never seen, one that will dispense the bounties of heaven for the blessing of all the conquered.

A Diaglott footnote on the passage with which we close (2 Cor. 2:14) explains that it is "an allusion to the custom of victorious generals, who, in their triumphal procession, carried some of their relations with them in their chariot [though they had no part in gaining the victory]. The streets through which the processions passed were strewn with *flowers*, and as Plutarch tells us, the streets were full of *incense*."

"Now, thanks be to that God, who [thus] always leads us forth to triumph *with* the- Anointed One, and who diffuses by us the fragrance of the knowledge *o f Him*, in every place." - 2 Cor. 2:14.

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord, ' Jesus Christ." - 1 Cor. 15:57.

- P. E. Thomson.

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 2:16-19

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - October, 1943)

"Let no man therefore judge you." - Col. 2:16.

THE "THEREFORE" of verse 16 sends the reader back to the statements of the previous verses -- possibly as far back as verse nine of this chapter, but surely to the immediately preceding argument regarding the power of Christ's death to free Jew and Gentile from the laws and ordinances "that were against us." The verses before us are, an exhortation to claim and use that as a basis for deliverance from bondage to ordinances, to men, and to angels. Narrow Judaism and sentimental Orientalism, the two ever threatening antagonists of the Church, Paul claims, can be overcome by the one all-powerful means, the cross of Christ.

The question as to the relation of the Christian to circumcision had already been covered in verse eleven. The circumcision of the heart, always a necessity even to those who practice the circumcision of the flesh, he declared as the only essential circumcision to those made free in Christ. To the liberation from the fleshly ordinance is here added freedom from the Mosaic restrictions regarding food and festivals, which never, in God's plan, were the real objectives, but mere shadows pointing to the greater things which are the heritage of the Church. Numerous Scriptures of both Old and New Testament tell of the vanity of a religion that is in word and not in the heart, that is faithful to the "shadow" but never appropriates the "body." - Isa. 1:13; 29:13; Matt. 23:23; Gal. 4:10,11; 2 Tim. 3:5.

Young in his "Concise Critical Comments on the Bible" says regarding Paul's reference to Sabbaths in this 16th verse: "The observance of the 'first day of the week' cannot be justly included under the 'sabbaths' here referred to, as the primitive Christians, following -the example of the New Testament -writers, scrupulously avoided calling it a 'sabbath.'" Undoubtedly Paul's reference is to the Jewish days and years called rest, or Sabbath days and years, the observance of which the Judaizing teachers make of equal importance with faith in the shed blood of the antitypical Lamb. The ground on which all such questions are settled by the Apostle is that these are but "shadows of things to come," merely rough outlines of the great realities, such outlines as the sketches a carpenter would draw when planning a structure or some detail of it. The reality, "the body, in this instance, as in most instances, "is of Christ." He is the key to both Testaments. Scientific research into the Bible and the history associated with it, details beyond the carpenter's sketch, has brought forth much of undoubted value but "much learning, when it results in losing sight of Him, loses its benefits and becomes a menace.

A higher sense of purity than can be comprehended by the depraved carnal mind, since "to them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure (Titus 1:15), is taught in the symbolisms of "meats and drinks"; but the New Testament is the revelation of Him who is the personification of that purity, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.' -1 Pet. 2:22.

The yearly feasts instituted by Moses prophesy of times of refreshing, and the process by which Christ will bring in the antitypical rest -pictured in Israel's Sabbaths. In Christ, as revealed to us in the New Testament, we have the fulfillment of all the blessedness "darkly" pictured in these types. Paul's argument therefore in effect is, The King has arrived. Cease, ye heralds, to proclaim

His approach. The great Body that cast the shadow has appeared why longer give attention to the shadow?

"LET NO MAN THEREFORE, JUDGE YOU"

It cannot be the Apostle's thought that any one can have the power or the authority to so regulate matters that neither the world nor the brethren will any longer pass judgment upon him: On the contrary, as elsewhere indicated, those whose honest endeavor, is to be "pure even as He is pure," must expect to be misunderstood and condemned as was their Lord. - 1 John 3:3, .13; Matt. 10:22; 24:9; Luke 6:22; 21:17; John 15:19; 17:14; Rom 8:17, 36; 2 Cor. 1:7; 4:10; 2 Tim. 2:12 1 Pet. 2:20; 3:14; 4:-14-16.

What he evidently does mean is: "In view of the fact that 'He who is our life has appeared,' do not permit the opinion of those who still observe the customs of the Covenant whose bondage He came to deliver us from to sway you into expecting life by it, or even into subjecting yourself to that Covenant. Though they condemn you for not following with them, do not permit their condemnation to deprive you of your liberty in Christ Jesus. "Be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." (Gal. 5:1.) More forcefully even than by his words, Paul taught this in his conduct. When false brethren came into the Church for the very purpose of robbing them of their liberty in Christ, he "gave place to them *in the way of subjection*, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with" the Church. (Gal. 2:3-5.) The "truth of the Gospel," deliverance through Christ Jesus, must not be taken from the Church by Judaizing teachers if Paul can be used to prevent it.

On the other hand, the world must be considered, and if the exercising of that liberty proves a stumbling block to the world or to the brethren, Paul is prompt to forego his privileges. He does not turn back to become a Jew, but he does act "*as a Jew*, that he might gain Jews, to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, *not being himself under the Law*, that he might gain them that are under the Law." (1 Cor. 9:20:) He can observe the Law, that salvation may be acceptable to others, but not as a means of salvation.

Paul was not in these two methods of conduct making a distinction between the Church and the world, refusing to listen to the judging of brethren and forestalling the judging of the world; but he was distinguishing between faith in a dead covenant and life in Christ. Associated with brethren who *honestly* felt that the eating of meat that had been offered to idols might contaminate them, he was ready to deprive himself of meat for the rest of his days rather than stumble one of them. He could not descend to their level of thinking, but he could for their. sakes live as *though* he did.

When Paul ate with Gentile converts, "asking no questions for conscience sake," it was a witness that he was no longer bound by the Law. When in company of Jewish brethren, as a concession to honest ignorance, he "walked orderly and kept the Law," performing the rites of purification and joining in the temple worship. (Acts 21:26.) Thus does every good shepherd say, as Jacob: "I will lead on softly, according as the flock and the children be able to endure. (Gen. 33:14; 1 Cor. 8:8-13; 10:31; Rom. 14:1, 2, 15; 15:1.) This is the "faith that worketh by love." - Gal. 5:6.

The observance of a weekly rest day, not as a means of salvation, but as a day of worship and of physical rest for the restoration of body and spirit, had also - the sanction of the Apostle's example. In view of his great care lest he stumble either a brother or one of the world, we doubt if Paul would have done any of his shopping or would have engaged in any other unnecessary pursuits on that rest day; though the only violation to his conscience would have been that he

might thus have stumbled some one. He who is our rest has appeared. As a commandment 'the day therefore is obsolete, whether the seventh or the first day of the week; but as a grace it may always be accepted with appreciation.

Opinions vary greatly as to the proper rendering of the eighteenth verse, but its first few words, "Let no man beguile you of your reward, without dispute are picturing the Christian as contesting in a game for a prize which may be lost if some adroit reasoner can induce the contestant to strive unlawfully. Tindal renders it: "Let no man make you shoot at a wrong mark." It is not necessary to suppose that the robber (See R. V.) was intending to deprive the contestant of his crown. Four things are told us about the unnamed robber:

(1) He is "delighting in humility of mind and a religious worship of the messengers." (Literal rendering) This is not true humility, for that quality takes no pleasure in itself, but rather is covered with confusion at falling so far, short of the high standard it has accepted as its goal. Anything contrary to this is pride, an arch-enemy of the spirit. - Phil. 2:3-5; Psa. 73:6; 119:21; Prov. 6:17; 11:2; 13:10; 16:18; 21:4; 28:25; Luke 18:11; John 9:41; 1 John 2:16; Rev. 3:17; Rom. 12:16; 1 Cor. 8:2.

(2) "Dwelling in the things which he has not seen" -- how economically yet effectively the Apostle uses his brush strokes! Could there be a more apt way of describing the Christian who prefers his own speculation to the Word of the Lord, the Christian who brazenly invents his own types and doctrines, refusing to "cast down imaginations [literally, "reasonings"], bringing every thought into subjection to the mind of Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5.) The thought of the passage need not be different even though we accept as more authentic the manuscripts that omit the "not." The emphasis would then be on the word "he" "Dwelling in the things which *he* hath seen;" not the things which God had taught.

(3) "Vainly - [without any excuse whatsoever] - puffed up by the mind of his flesh, is sure to be one of the characteristics of one whose self-conscious humility is only skin deep. As compared with more feeble brains his may be "a great mind," but if he would only honestly compare his mind with, the only Mind in the universe that can reason effectively, true humility must result.

(4) "Not holding the Head." It is apparent; that the only way to insure the maintaining of our proper relation with the Head (the One who does our reasoning, our thinking, for us) is to be completely' humbled; and how thankful we should be for every exposure of our inabilities that thus we may be reminded in every moment to turn to Him "who is able."

Reverence and fear of the hosts of spirit messengers, good and bad, are things of the past, but the principle still *lives* in the "channel" idea. To the flesh; it is too often pleasant to have some one say, "I have been appointed to decide for you what is truth." It is strange that such a theory could secure a following; but much more astounding that any one of us, knowing the thousands of mistakes of judgment chargeable against each of us, should ever forsake our great Head to follow his own imaginations!

In setting the various members in the Body, God hath set some in very high positions, and in our appreciation of these is one of the greatest danger to the members in general: that of substituting for the legitimate use of these teachers a subserviency, to them. Each member has his position, but only because of the Father's having placed him there; and this is as true of, the least of the Body members as of the Apostle Paul. Realizing this fact, every Christian will be well protected against the spirit, whether from within himself or from without, that would "stir up strife among brethren." Only he who knows their effectiveness as a divinely appointed "channel" of the

"increase of God," will be *"knit together"* with the various "joints and bands" of the Body. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou established strength, because of Thine adversaries, that Thou mightest still- the enemy and the avenger." - Psa. 8:2.

It is not merely because a doctrine is at stake that Paul writes the passage we are considering, but because eternal life is at stake; therefore the solemn earnestness of his warning. It is true also that the belief of certain truths would tighten their hold on the Lord. Then, too, self-conceit, that would war against the full acceptance of God's Word, must be vanquished if the hold on Jesus is to be made secure. There is, besides, a transforming power in truth; the nobler: the truth, the higher will be the point to which it can, lift one. A dispensational truth does not have to become an untruth in order to lose its effectiveness, a nobler, higher truth, as for instance the antitype of that dispensational truth, if received into the life, may carry its recipient beyond the realm of, that first truth. All they had learned through Moses regarding the ceremonies of the tabernacle were true, but the day of "greater sacrifices" had come and these brethren must have the greater transforming power of the, greater truths-another reason why there must be no intrusion of "messengers" in the position designed only for the Advocate. He can "take away sins"; the "blood of bulls and goats": could never, though the animals were appointed of God as sacrifices. So also, every "messenger" of God is appointed for a specific work, but none to be an atoning sacrifice.

In his argument against elevating messengers to a station above the one to which God appointed them, he is not setting aside the teaching of such passages as the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians that each member does have his place in the Body and is to be accepted and used as God intended he should be used in assisting others to "increase with the increase of God." There must be no lack of appreciation of any "joint" in his capacity of a joining member if the Body is to be "knit together" for this absolutely essential growth; for that growth is by that which "every joint supplieth." For this reason Hebrews 10:24-26 associates the Second Death with those who do not appreciate their great privilege of assembling together.

Skilfully Satan suggests a great variety of excuses for separations. Effectively for a few the cords of love reach out drawing them together. "The love -of Christ holds us together" is Young's translation of 2 Corinthians 5:14 in his "Comments." Surely only one "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mired," one "not holding the Head," one not appreciating "the increase of God, will neglect privileges so precious.

-P. E. Thomson.

The Letter to the Colossians

Col. 2:20-23

"If we died with Christ." - Col. 2:20.

(*The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - November, 1943*)

THE PART of the Epistle pertaining to controversy is now coming to an end. We pass in the next chapter, after a transitional paragraph, to simple moral precepts which, with personal details, fill up the remainder of the letter. The antagonist errors appear for the last time in the words which we have now to consider. In these the Apostle seems to gather up all his strength to strike two straight, final blows, which annihilate the theoretical positions and practical precepts of the heretical teachers. First, he puts in the form of an unanswerable demand for the reason for their teachings, their radical inconsistency with the Christian's death with Christ, which is the very secret of his life. Then, by a contemptuous concession of their apparent value to people who will not look an inch below the surface, he makes more emphatic their final condemnation as worthless-less than nothing and vanity -- for the suppression, of 'the flesh' . . . So we have here two great tests by their conformity to which we may try all teachings which assume to regulate life, and all Christian teaching about the place and necessity for ritual and outward prescriptions of conduct. 'Ye are dead with Christ.' All must fit in with that great fact. (*The Expositor's Bible.*) Only one mind will then be accepted as the authorized regulator of our lives, the "mind of Christ"; and it *will* manifest itself as of "value against the indulgence of the flesh." - R. V.

In studying this passage we have to consider first the great truth of the Christian's death with Christ, using it as a touchstone as to our actual spiritual condition.

"In Him" is a favorite phrase with the Apostle in the preceding verses as in all his writings. It speaks of the closeness of union of the Christian with his Lord, with whom however there can be no union for the one who is "living after the flesh." Therefore the . day of our being joined to Him is the day of our death with Christ. It must be borne in mind, however, that this death is considered in the Scriptures from two standpoints: (1) The moment of consecration at which the will agrees to death, from which time we are counted as "dead with Him."; (2) the bringing to the death all human desires, "dying daily." The symbol of baptism, to which the Apostle has already pointed, while lasting but a moment, represents this death in both aspects.

"DEAD WITH CHRIST"

Through all Paul's teachings there runs the scarlet thread of Christ's death, and along side of it our death with Him. On the lips of those *who* do not know the reality, this is mere rhetoric or mysticism. To Paul, and all who follow him as he followed the Lord, death to self and the world *is* the rule of life, the miracle by which the disciple becomes one with his Lord.

Death is a symbol of finality and completeness, a "great gulf" fixed, between us' and those things which by it are relegated to a forgotten past. What more apt figure could there be of this "forgetting the things behind" than the white face beneath the sheet. The intense, interests of the past are, now "as though they had not been." "His sons come to honor and he knoweth it not." How impossible 'for any cries of love and desire to pass this chasm!

This spiritual experience is not without other physical counterparts. It is no unusual thing- for one's emotions to so occupy *his* mind that he becomes insensible to *all* else, even intense physical

pain. The horror of warfare is not so much in the sufferings of the battle-field, where in fact excitement deadens many of the sensibilities, but in the *hours* of waiting for the blow to strike. So if we are filled with Christ, and the glories of the new life are begun "*in Him*," we readily become insensible to the things that shortly before occupied all our thought. The test should be easily applied: Do I find myself so engrossed in the things this life has to offer that I forget the spiritual realities, or have the glories of my present spiritual experiences so great a hold upon my life that they can make me largely oblivious to physical joys and often even to necessities? Perhaps both are true. Then the question is, Which is the more effective? Which is the more frequent experience? Has the cleansing stream of His love' and truth washed from the channel of my life the rubbish gathered there in the years of living after the flesh? For however righteous that former life had endeavored to be, it was regulated by the flesh' and could never be countenanced by Him in whom we now live.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." (Rom. 6:12.) "He died for all, that 'they which live should no longer live unto *themselves*.'" (2 Cor. 5:14,15.) For the Jew *the -cross* means first, death to the law, but for the Gentile Christian that same cross means death to self and the world. "I am crucified with Christ." (Gal. 2:20.) "Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Rom. 6:6.) "Those that belong to Christ Jesus, have crucified the flesh, with the passions and desires." Therefore "it is not for me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." - Gal. 5:24; 6:14, Diaglott.

LIFE, A DAILY DYING

Separation from the world and deliverance from the bondage of selfish desires is not instantly complete, but if we are Christians in any genuine sense, that state is entered on the day of our consecration to Him, and from that day our life is a process of "dying daily." To the end of the earthly pilgrimage we will be in the flesh without being ruled by its dictates and desires, and therefore "in the world but not of it." For the "more than overcomers" this is not a mere phrase but a tremendously valuable reality, won in many hard-fought battles, from which all, may emerge, thanks to His mercy, without even the smell of the conflict on their garments. Not even a tear-drop will be left to stain their garments.

To the Christian, as it will be to the world in the Age to come, the doctrine of the ransom towers in importance far above all others, but "Let us all note well this point-'This is the will of God [concerning you], even your sanctification.' Let nothing becloud or obscure this truth; neither other truths nor errors." (Manna, July 1.) And he who hopes that the process of sanctification will progress in a life where selfwill has not been ordered from the field is like a general advancing against an enemy while there is mutiny in his own ranks. A great army that went before us went down in defeat on this account. "Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works." (Rom. 9:31, 32, R. V.) If we are to give way to the will of the flesh in any particular, to let it dictate in any degree, or take any credit to itself for any portion of the "strength sufficient for every time of need," defeat is surely ours, and as ignominious a defeat as theirs. As the few men of faith in their ranks stand out, so the "Little Flock" of trusting ones of this Age will, to the glory of the One who has given them the '*victory*, "shine forever, as the stars of the firmament." The shame of our - failure goes to the self-will that insisted on entering the fray; the praise for every conquest won, to the cross of Christ. If the cross is not victorious in our-lives, it is not in them. We have not "died with Christ."

The endeavor of commentators to determine whether the "world" referred to in Paul's phrase, "the rudiments [the A B C's] of the world," is Jewish or Gentile, need not particularly concern us. Our great concern is to know Christ and Him crucified, and we with-Him. There is salvation in nothing that either world has to offer. Paul's unanswerable argument therefore is, "Why subject yourself to ordinances." "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." - Acts 4:12.

ADDITIONS TO THE WORD OF GOD

For centuries the rabbis had endeavored to make explicit the Mosaic instructions, that all might know their duties to God. It is reasonable to suppose that nothing more than this was in the minds of the early teachers, but soon the process became one of additions to instead of explanations of the Word. And though the additions have been provided by the thousands, no Jew, or Bible Student, has yet added anything of value to that precious Word.

The precepts of the Essenes especially abound in injunctions of the kind alluded to by the Apostle Schoetgen says; "They allowed themselves no food that was pleasant to the taste, but ate dry, coarse bread, and drank only water. Many of them ate nothing until sunset, and, if any one touched them who did not belong to their sect, they washed themselves as if they had been deeply defiled. There is a quaint passage in Maccoth regarding the Nazarite restrictions: "If they say to a Nazarite,- Don't drink, don't drink; and he, notwithstanding, drinks, he is guilty. If they say, Don't shave, don't shave; and he shaves, notwithstanding, he is guilty. If they say, Don't put on these clothes, don't put on these clothes; and he, notwithstanding, puts on heterogeneous garments, he is guilty." Let us to whom these restrictions sound so foolish guard well our minds to assure ourselves that we are adding nothing to the Gospel as our hope of salvation or for the regulation of the lives of our brethren. Any of our additions would in reality be more foolish because of our enlightenment. Ignorant zeal is always capable of 'perpetrations just as foolish as any that have gone before.

One of the greatest testimonials to the purity of the inspired Word is that intolerance always has to turn, not to the Word, but to the 'rabbinical additions for its support; and if none is found ready-made, a demon-emulating desire to exclude others from the Kingdom privileges can soon produce something satisfactory out of its own ingenuity. Sadly enough, no truth is too sacred for such to make their carnal additions to, that their unholy purpose may be accomplished.

Christianity is a religion of principles rather than of prescriptions. It prefers to say, "Thou shalt," rather than "Thou shalt not. "Love, and thou fulfillst the law." It cleans the inside of the platter, with the assurance that the outside will then be; presentable. Should the outside give no evidence of the washing of the water of the Word, the assumption then is safe that that water has not been freely enough applied to the "inner man." Pray with all earnestness "That He would grant you, *according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man*" (Eph. 3:17) and the indwelling Christ will lift us above the precepts of men, yea will assist to a rooting and grounding not just in the doctrine, though it reveals Him, but also in the "love" which He is. Any standard lower than this must result as pomegranates fastened on the thorns of a brier bush, soon to fade and lose their beauty. As physical decomposition is the lot of all we touch or taste or handle, so will "perish with the using" every modern so-called improvement in the "Way" a loving Father has provided for our safe journey to the heavenly courts.

There were "touch not, taste not, handle not" rules in the Law given through Moses, and while Paul has already pointed out that the Christian is not to look to these for his salvation, it is not with these that he is dealing in this discussion, but restrictions which are "after the

commandments and doctrines [teachings] of men (Verse 22; Isa. 29:13), additions which men even up to our, day dare to make to the inspired Word, instilling fear instead of confidence. The things which are after the commandment of God, instead of perishing with the using, increase with use, a treasure which faileth not, kept in bags which grow not old. The Scribes and Pharisees of an earlier era failed of attaining His riches because of hypocrisy, for though honoring Him with their mouth they were "teaching for doctrines the precepts of men." - Matt. 15:7-9.

"I BROW-BEAT MY BODY"

The Revised Versions render the twenty-third verse: "Which things have indeed a show of *wisdom* in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." It was after Paul had left behind the man-made "highway of holiness and had entered upon the God-given "narrow way to life," that he learned effectively to "keep under" his "body and bring it into subjection." - Diaglott: "brow-beat"; Thayer: "beat black and blue."

Note that a religious life may have a great "show of wisdom" and yet be valueless. Paul noted three points on which the false religion of his day appealed to the eye: (1) It claimed to be the worship of a free will, voluntary service-or does he mean that it consisted in self-imposed tasks-a burning of incense to themselves? Then (2) these teachers, commentators presume, boasted that their devotions were the outcome of great humility on their part, a humility so great that they must look to angel mediators for -their contacts with God. To have taken God at His Word would have shown real humility. (3) The strongest, claim for wisdom in their "systematic' theology," however, was the severities it placed on the body, an asceticism in reality much more to men's liking than the abandoning of self. By making themselves uncomfortable, thousands in both heathen and civilized lands have thought that they were making themselves' more acceptable to God. It is hardly possible that a fallacy so widely prevalent, both among heathen and Christian devotees, is not traceable to one source-the Father of lies. For the Christian it has surely been an inexcusable travesty of the Master's injunction to "deny" ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him.

There are some things in which the heart judges better than the head. A mere "show of wisdom" does too frequently deceive the latter. Safety is assured for the one who walks the Narrow Way, if to a heart set on righteousness there is added the protection of a head unreservedly given over to the guidance of the One who alone can be trusted to make no errors of judgment. This is safety, not merely for the brief space of this life, but it works a transformation into Christ's likeness that gives assurance of being and working with Him for eternity. Let us learn well the lessons that death with Him has to teach, in order that there may be a life devoted to Him and *His* righteousness, the influence of which will bear a fruitage in the "home missionary field" far beyond anything that money could finance. Let our motto be, "Where He leads me, I will follow," and others *will* take note of us that "we have been with Jesus and learned of Him." There is no mistaking one who is enrolled in that school. However far he be from graduation, the robe of that school unmistakably identifies him as of it. But this figure is much too feeble for the purpose of expressing the closeness of the relation we are privileged to sustain with Him, yes, *in Him*. To live with Him is intimacy; to be dead with Him, this is ultimate oneness with Him. This is deliverance from every deception of Satan, participation in every blessing of Christ.

- P. E. Thomson.

The Letter to the Colossians

"If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory." - Col. 3:1-4, R. V.

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THE PARAGRAPH to be considered in this discussion is the beginning of a new section in the letter. The controversy with the errorists of Colosse is ended, and Paul has entered upon his exhortations to those desiring to be "rooted and built up in Christ." (Col. 2:7.) The bridge that connects the two sections is, "If then but, in the words that follow, there is a reminder of the controversy which he considers as fully settled by the arguments already presented-lovingly, but with no lack of positiveness. This phrase, "If then ye were raised together with Christ," corresponds to the one that opens the previous paragraph (Col. 2:20), "If ye died with Christ"-an argument against submission to the thinking of the errorists. The new phrase serves the still loftier purpose of exhortation to the life of holiness, to which the rest of the epistle is principally devoted.

The first exhortation, "Seek those things that are above," nestles, as a jewel' in its golden setting, between two supreme inducements-one that the present should fully appropriate, and the other that adds unspeakable lustre to a glorious future: no better present inducement to "seek the things that are above" can be suggested than that the old life has been left behind, if "ye were raised together with Christ"; but to claim to have been raised together with Him becomes a mere farce if we do not "seek the things which are above, [the place] where Christ is," and where we hope to dwell with Him for eternity.

The exhortation that immediately follows is similar: "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth." In this instance, the reason follows, and is a double one: "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." By this arrangement the Apostle has placed the two jewels, the two precepts, in a setting of divine logic, motives beyond the pale of human selfishness. They embody the thought of union with Christ in His death and in His resurrection, and a consequent participation in His life, both the present hidden life and the future glorious one which is to be manifested to all creation. This full blossoming flower can be a possibility only if there has been the patient period of growth and development as a bud under the great Husbandman's direction.

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

Earlier in the Epistle Paul has told us of the great change which, must be evident in every Christian, viewing it from the two aspects of death to the world, and death to self. (Col. 1:6, 10, 11; 2:10, 11) just as there is a definite time for this growth and experience, so there is also a definite means-union with Christ through faith. The faith that comprehends His death and appropriates it, can be trained to appropriate and experience His resurrection life. Thus -his death and resurrection become both the basis of salvation and the pattern of life. There is, too, in the latter a prophecy of the future life.

UNION BY FAITH WITH CHRIST

Only by a living faith can there be genuine communion with Christ, and only by a living faith can there be the communication of this hidden, but none the less real, life in Him. "In Him was life" (John 1:4; 10:10; 11:25; 14:6; Rom. 5:21; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 John 5:12), and therefore, in the words of this Epistle (Col. 1:17), "in Him were all things created, and in Him all things consist." Jesus, in His discussion of the resurrection in John 5:24-26, uses a similar expression, but evidently with a different meaning, for there it is, "As the Father hath life in Himself" that He "hath given to the Son to have life in Himself." The Logos gave life to Adam and Eve and to all living creatures, drawing from the Heavenly Father's reservoir of grace. Just as from the day of His creation as the first-born of all creation (Col. 1:15-17) union with the Father maintained Him in life, so in God, the Self-existing One, all creation, including the Logos, lived and moved and had their being. (Acts 17:28; Exod. 19:4; Dent. 6:24; 33:27; Psa. 18:35; 37:17; 41:12; Isa. 41:10; 46:4; 63:9, etc.) "How precious is Thy lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou wilt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light." "In Him was life: and the life was the light of men." (Psa. 36:7-9, R. V.; John 1:4.) Finally there came a day that the Logos was given life in Himself in a new sense. From that day He has been "the express image of the Father's person" and therefore has life in Himself as the Father has life in Himself, and union with Him can give life in a new sense. - Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15.

It is impossible that a God of wisdom would trust Him with the supreme powers which this implies until He had been tested in the last point where weakness might show up some, moment in the eternity ahead. (Heb. 4:15.) And until the testing is finished and successfully passed, Jesus could not permit Himself to be called "good." (Matt. 19:17.) ' It is therefore not only a sympathetic Life-giver we have during the time of our being tested in all points, but One whose life has been tested for absolute perfection and who consequently can give life that is without spot or blemish or any such thing. (Eph. 5:27.) When the last of our tests has been successfully passed, we also can as safely be made "partakers of the divine nature."

Life as it is manifested in vegetation and the animal kingdom is dependent on union with the Fountain of life, though even the intelligent animal, man, is generally unaware of that union. The higher life of the new creation can be neither begun nor continued except by a conscious union with Him. In truth they must "acknowledge Him" in *all* their ways if He is to direct their paths and thus continue them in life. (Prov. 3:6.) In this way only is His fulness received into our emptiness, His righteousness into our sin-condemned being, His life into our deadness.

THE HIGHEST HUMAN ATTAINMENTS NOT SPIRITUAL

To "live after the flesh" is to starve the new creature, and to study the beauties of the Bible *merely* from an intellectual standpoint, would be following the flesh and might result in the deadening of every spiritual sensibility. The exercise will be good for the brain, but a vain thing in this battle against the world's allurements and the weaknesses of the flesh, especially as the powers of evil are arrayed on the world's side, with intellects far surpassing the best of ours. Such activity instead of being an evidence of life is only the galvanic twitching of the muscles in a corpse. If Christ lives in us, the symptoms of life should be continuous, and quickly so, if we live in Him, by Him, with Him, for Him. To this end all our powers, not excluding the best our brain can give, must be devoted.

The passage under consideration, along with many others, proves that the resurrection of Jesus was an uncontested article of faith in the early Christian religion. That resurrection is to us a seal of the Messiahship of Him who was "declared to be the Son of God with power, by His resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4); and it is a prophecy and an assurance of ours, for "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *first-fruit* of them that slept"; and, too, it is a pattern of our newness of life, as indicated in the exhortation to "*likewise* reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin." Union through Christ, if faithfully maintained, inevitably results in a moral and spiritual change, of which His resurrection is the symbol. Death with Christ brings to an end, reckonedly, the old life with all its selfish desires and sympathies with the sin that every where surrounds it; but resurrection with Him institutes a new life—new hopes, new aims, new thoughts, new activities, new capacities. The weaknesses of the flesh having been condemned, and covered by the precious blood, in this reckoning of ourselves dead, a new life is begun, in which by faith the Christian can say with the Apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13.) The heathen converts to whom Paul was writing were probably, many of them, outstanding examples of the contrast between the life that Jesus calls death (Matt. 8:22) and the "newness of life" in which all who are His must surely learn to walk. Those heathen, as well as their ancestors for many generations, had walked in the ways of sin, but they were now planted in a path, the end of which revealed, in vivid contrast to the blackness of sin, under the flood-light of divine love, their eternal hope, the heavenly home, "where Christ is."

Nothing less than true heart-appreciation has ever appropriated that hope. Many a mature Christian must look back regretfully on early years of merely intellectual acceptance of truths, years in which he was thinking of himself as being "dead with Christ," though actually still very much alive according to the flesh. He reached his maturity only when his *heart* had grasped Christ. Only then could there be any real death with Him or any living of the new resurrection life. "To this end Christ died, and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living" (Rom. 14:9), not however that He might be in the culmination Lord over dead Christians, but over those who are "alive in Him."

The resurrection life demands this, not only the highest type of morality, but much more than this. We are enjoined to "let not sin reign in our mortal bodies" (Rom. 6:12), and if Christ live in us, ours will be the Christ-life. The water in the stream and the water in the fountain are the same. The light that filters into earth's foulest dungeon does not lose its heavenly purity. The Christ that liveth in us is the same Christ that lives in heaven.

There are many arguments for the life beyond the grave, but the one proof of it is the resurrection of Jesus. Many excellent discourses have been preached on the subject of the resurrected life manifest in us, but by far the best one is the life itself, the "living" epistle—that discourse preached by the Christian in his daily living in newness of life, the life begotten in him "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. 1:3; Rom. 4:25; 10:9.) As Jesus manifested God in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16; John 1:18; 17:6, 26), so also we should be effectively "epistles of Christ," showing forth **His** praises by living the new life that speaks not in praise of self, but of Him who bought us. - 2 Cor. 3:2, 3; 1 Pet. 2:9.

THE HIDDEN LIFE

However well we may in our present state show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, the great importance of that light will still remain hidden except for a few stray beams. Not only is it impossible for us to give out more than a very much obscured light, but as only man knoweth the things of man (1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Cor. 2:11), so only those who are living after the spirit can comprehend the things of the spirit. Our light must therefore in

the main fall on blinded eyes. There is a more important sense, however, in which ours is a hidden life. Its source is a hidden one, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." As another has said:

"The life of those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High may be called a Hidden Life, because the animating principle, the vital or operative element, is not so much in itself as in another. It is a life grafted into another life. It is the life of the soul incorporated into the life of Christ; and in such a way, that while it has a distinct vitality, it has so very much in the sense in which the branch of a tree may be said to have a distinct vitality from the root. It buds, blossoms, and bears fruit, in the strong basis of an eternal stock. 'I am the vine,' says the Savior, 'ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.' This is a great mystery, but it is also a great truth. The Christian, whose 'life is hid with Christ in God,' can never doubt that his spiritual existence and growth originate in, and are sustained in, that divine source alone.

"In the second place, the life which we are considering may properly be called a Hidden Life, because its moving principles, its interior and powerful springs of action, are not known to the world. This is what might naturally be expected from what has already been said in respect to the relation existing between a truly devoted Christian and his Savior; inasmuch as he is taken from himself, and is grafted into another, and has now become a 'new man in Christ Jesus.' The natural man can appreciate the natural man. The man of the world can appreciate the man of the world. And it must be admitted that he can appreciate, to a considerable extent, numbers of persons who profess to be Christians, and who are probably to be regarded as such in the ordinary sense of the term, because the natural life still remains in them in part. There is such a mixture of worldly and religious motives in the ordinary forms of the religious state, such an impregnation of what is gracious with what is natural, that the men of the world can undoubtedly form an approximated if not a positive estimate of the principles which regulate the conduct of its possessors. But of the springs of movement in the purified or Hidden Life, except by dark and uncertain conjecture, they, know comparatively nothing. Little can the men who, under the teachings of nature, have been trained up to the reception and love of the doctrine which inculcates 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' appreciate the evangelical precept which requires us, when we are assaulted, to 'turn the other cheek.' Still feebler and more imperfect is the idea which they form of that ennobling Christian philosophy which inculcates the love of holiness for holiness' sake. They are entirely at a loss, and, on any principles with which they are at present acquainted, they ever must be at a loss, in their estimate of that intimacy and sacredness of friendship which exists between God and the sanctified mind. Rightly is it said in the Scriptures, 'But the natural, man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'

"Again, the Hidden Life has a claim to the descriptive epithet which we have proposed to apply to it, because, in its results upon individual minds, it is directly the reverse of the life of the world. The natural life seeks notoriety. Desirous of human applause, it aims to clothe itself in purple and fine linen. It covets a position in the market-place and at the corners of the streets. But the life of God in the soul, occupied with a divine companionship, is not so. It pursues a lowly and retired course. It obeys the precept of the Savior: 'When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and pray to thy father which is in secret.' It neither desires to see nor to be seen openly, except when and where duty calls it. It is willing to be little, to be unhonored, and to be cast out from among men. It has no eye for worldly pomp, no ear for worldly applause. It is formed on the model of the Savior, who was a man unknown. He came into the world, the highest personage on the highest errand; and yet so humble in origin, so simple in appearance, so gentle in heart and manners, that the world could not comprehend Him; and He was ever a sealed book, except to those who had the key of the inner life to open it with."

THEN SHALL YE ALSO BE MANIFESTED

As surely as Jesus' humiliation and obedience "led to the cross, and the cross to the empty grave, and the empty grave to the throne, so surely does the throne lead to the coming again in glory. And as with Christ, so with His servants, the manifestation in glory is the certain end of all the preceding, as surely as the flower is of the tiny green leaves that peep above the frost-bound earth in bleak March days. Nothing in that future, however glorious and wonderful, but has its germ and vital beginning in our union with Christ here by humble faith. The great hopes which we may cherish are gathered up here into these words, -- 'shall be manifested with Him.' That is far more than was conveyed by the old translation -- 'shall appear.' The roots of our being shall be disclosed, for He shall come, 'and every eye shall see Him.'" In the same sense that every eye shall see Him, the Church also shall "with Him be manifested in glory." A full manifestation of the Church in the present time would not be a pleasant spectacle. How' thankful we are that there is so much hidden; and how thankful we can be that in the revealing, the glory will go to the One in whom our lives are now hid. All the world will realize that those then associated with Him are those who formerly were such as they, who met just such temptations as assailed them, and who were just as weak as themselves, but victors through Him who loved us and bought us, because "strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto all patience, and endurance with joy." (Roan. 8:37; 1 Cor. 15:57; 1 John 5:4; 2 Cor. 2:14; Col. 1:11; see R. V. and Diaglott.) The inner man of the heart will no longer carry about a body with traits that need to be concealed, for his will be the completed character-likeness to his heavenly Father-"His name shall be in their foreheads." (Rev. 14:1; 7:3; 22:4.) "Then shall the righteous blaze forth like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." - Matt. 13:43.

Note that it is not merely a manifestation to the Church but a manifestation "with Him" who is to be revealed to the entire creation. Then, without spot or wrinkle or blemish or any such thing (Eph. 5:27), "prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21), they shall be joined with Him in a blessed union instituted by our heavenly Father Himself, and which none can sever. They are ready to enter upon the blessed association that will be theirs as Bride of the Lamb. Eternally they shall serve, like Martha, in a service that shall never for a moment interfere with their sitting as Mary in rapt attention at His blessed feet. So "shall they ever be with the Lord." - 1 Thess. 4:17; John 12:26; 14:23; 17:24; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23.

"Manifest with Him in glory"! Who can speak of the self-revealing splendor of the great I AM? "He is light." Any effort to describe or even to imagine His glory would only dim His luster; nor can our imperfect understanding comprehend the glories of the resurrected Lord standing in the heart of that blaze. We, like the Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration, would fear to enter into that cloud. (Luke 9:34.) Who can even faintly suggest the glory of those who shall "awake in His likeness"! (Psa. 17:15.) And this is not a shining forth as a comet, nor as one of the short-lived stars which frequently mystify the astronomers. "They shall shine as the brightness of the firmament for ever and ever." - Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43; 1 Cor. 15:41, 42.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PRACTICAL AID

The injunctions that head this chapter are not for those who are clinging to the things of the earth in the mistaken conviction that they can serve two masters, but for those who seek the Kingdom of God in faith's assurance that all such things as are necessary of this earth will be added to them by our heavenly Father's grace. (Matt. 6:33.) "Godliness is profitable unto *all things*." (1 Tim. 4:8.) To the mind set on heavenly things, the earth has nothing to offer. "But then, indeed, I even

esteem all things to be a loss [Gr: "bones thrown to the dogs in the streets"] on account of the excellency of the knowledge of the Anointed Jesus my Lord; on whose account I suffered the loss of all things, and consider them to be vile refuse, so that I may gain Christ." (Phil. 3:8, Diaglott.) And what joy it will be to turn the bones, well laden with the meat of divine grace, over to the Gentile "dogs" in His due time. The present is but the vestibule of an infinite future, not only for the Church, but also for the world.

The world has made considerable progress in many respects, but it is yet far from fully appreciating the importance of forming correct habits of thought. Most of us as children are permitted to form thinking habits that can be eradicated only by years of endeavor, if ever, before the principle is even suggested to us that "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." - Prov. 23:7.

If there is any subject with which, one finds he is able to discourse with freedom, it must be that he has thought much along that line. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matt. 12: 34.) If therefore that one cannot talk freely of spiritual things, the Apostle's suggestion seems to be the one necessary remedy: "Set your mind on things that are above." Daily the pressure of earthly things increases on every side, and with that increasing pressure, the necessity for greater vigilance in the matter of "redeeming the time." (Eph. 5:15, 16; Col. 4:5.) In the rush of our day there is danger for all, that quiet meditation on heavenly things will be a lost art. "A book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that *thought upon His name*." (Mal. 3:16.) The mind of the flesh knows well that it must sort its affairs out into things important, moderately important, useless and injurious. The Christian who has not done this will find little time for "thinking on" that wonderful list the Apostle gives us of those things that will continue through the great time of destruction ahead. (Phil. 4:8.) Ours will be but a painful and fruitless creeping along the lower levels of the earth unless we "see the King in His beauty and the land that is very far off." (Isa. 33:17.) Only in the secret place of the Most High, with our doors shut about us, can we escape the destructive fury being visited on a commercial and war-mad world. (Isa. 26:20.) Fortunately those doors are ready to welcome us at all times, whatever our business and however driving our necessities.

There is a delicacy of thought and a carefulness on the part of our translators suggested by the comma which the Revised Versions have placed after "where Christ is" that assures us that, however imperfect their work may be, their hearts seem to have been earnestly desiring to give us a true representation of the divine thought in the original. His presence there makes very definite our hope, for He that went to prepare a place for us (John 14:2, 3), having died that we might live, now that He ever lives to make intercession for us will not permit any outside influence to interfere with our attaining the heavenly inheritance which is ours in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 1: 11.) May the "God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" give unto us "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; having the eyes of our hearts enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His own right hand in the heavenly places." (Eph. 1:17-20, R. V.) "And now, my little children, abide in Him; that, if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." - 1 John 2:28, R. V.

- P. E. Thomson.

The Letter to the Colossians

"Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience: wherein ye also once walked, when ye lived in these things; but now do ye also put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth: lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man." - Col. 3:5-10. A. R. V.

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - February, 1944)

THE PORTION of this epistle that pertains to the building of Christian character, opens with these verses, showing how to clear the ground that the new building may be erected. Just as a conquering king invading a country must, as the first act of his reign, destroy the power previously established, just so the Christian's first endeavor must be, in cooperation with his powerful Ally, to obliterate the last vestige of enemy-power within his being. To war against the world and the Adversary while the will of the flesh still persists, would be like a general going forth to battle against his country's enemies when there is rebellion in his army's camp. Therefore Paul deals with this enemy first. That course is the wise one also from another standpoint: one can become so engrossed with the absolutely essential battle against the world and the Adversary, particularly the former, as to entirely forget the necessity of vanquishing self. Then, too, unless self-will is first attacked, one's battle against the world and the Adversary is almost certain to degenerate into an effort to reform the world. For that task we will not be ready until God has stamped His approval upon us by investing us with the power and the wisdom of the divine nature.

These verses are connected with the preceding discussion by the word "therefore," referring back to two reasons given for the destruction of the fleshly will: because "ye died" with Christ, and because ye "were raised together with Him." The hard, practical facts that the Apostle is setting forth are thus built on the foundation of mystical truths that to the world would be no basis of argument, but to the Apostle and all those who have the mind of the Lord, are more convincing than any human reasoning that could be adduced.

To slay habits that have grown to hardened manhood through many years of nurturing requires a blade of keenest edge. This the Apostle has supplied. In fact, something serious has happened to dull the edge of these doctrines if they are not effective in killing our human desires. Truth held in self love has lost all power for this work. A consuming desire for the approval of our fellow-men may drive us to the *curbing* of some of the most manifest of our fallen desires, but only divine grace can nerve our hand to the striking of the blow that will make the work of destruction complete.

Of wisdom the Wise Man says, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Prov. 3:17); and the new creature by faith recognizes the truth of this description: but to the old creature the paths of true religion, *the* "wisdom that cometh down from above" (James 3:17), are steep, and climbing there is never easy. The upper air is bracing and exhilarating to the new creature, but trying to the old, accustomed as he is to the lower levels only. The self that is denied finds no joy in the *experience*. **On** the *other* hand, one wholly devoted to God finds no true satisfaction until the denial of self is as real and complete as the Apostle's forceful figure of death makes it. He knows that the genuine holiness on which his heart is set can never be attained as long *as* the will of the flesh is permitted exercise in any detail of life. It is the love of Jesus Christ and the power of His Spirit that dwells within that urges on to victory in this unending fight against the flesh in its daily strife to regain rulership in our lives. Only implicit trust in our

Captain and His assurance of ultimate victory can give the courage to stand our ground day by *day* in the very center of the raging battle. Though a thousand fall at our side and ten thousand at our right hand, there is no reason for quailing, no reason for cowardly shrinking in the presence of the foe, for the form of our beloved Captain (Rotherham: "Princely Leader" - Heb. 2:10) is always visible *in* the very forefront of the *fray*.

THE GRIM CATALOGUE OF THE CONDEMNED

"The Apostle stands like a jailer at the prison door with the fatal roll in his hand, and reads out the names of the evil doers for whom the tumbril waits to carry them to the guillotine. It is an ugly list but we need plain speaking that there may be no mistake *as* to the identity of the culprits. He enumerates evils which honeycombed society with rottenness then, and are rampant now. The series recounts various forms of evil love, and is so arranged as that it starts with the coarse, gross act, and goes on to more subtle and inward forms. It goes up the stream, as it were, to the fountain head, passing inward from deed to desire"; "fornication," all immoral sexual relations, then "all uncleanness," embracing every manifestation in word or look or deed of the impure spirit. Then follow the sources of the evil deeds, "passion," and "evil desire." They include all forms of hungry appetites and desires after "the things that are upon the earth." No lesser condemnation could be passed on these criminals, for they are the murderers of our race, "dead in trespasses and sins." The "wages of sin [in us or in the world] is death."

The placing of "covetousness" in such close connection with the grosser forms of sensuality is deeply significant. It has the same root, and is therefore closely allied with these-it is but another form of selfish desire going out to "the -things which are on the earth." (Exod. 20:17; Psa. 10:3; Prov. 28:16; Jer. 6:13; Ezek. 33:31; Hab. 2:9; Luke 12:15; Eph. 5:3; 1 Tim. 3:3; Heb. 13:5.) So ingrained is selfishness in the animal nature that it is incomprehensible to it that self can be actually dead in the new creature. Therefore the carnally-minded gossip may not realize that the evil passions yet living in his own nature may be dead in the one whom his unholy imaginations condemn.

Some translators, and they are justified by the Greek Lexicons, make the phrase which follows "covetousness," a reason for its condemnation to death. They read "inasmuch as," or "for it is idolatry." It is an even more debased form of idol worship than that practised by the heathen since it means the depriving of others in order that our selfish desires may be gratified. Though unacclaimed among men, it numbers among its votaries more worshipers than all other religious combined.

The act of cutting off the fleshly members can never be pleasant except to the one who has learned the hideousness of sin and the beauties of true holiness. We can never hope for a full revelation of the latter in this life, nor can our imperfect minds ever realize how hideous sin in its mildest forms must appear to the eternally pure minds of our Heavenly Father and our Heavenly Bridegroom. But we can increase our appreciation of the things that are lovely by "thinking on these things," and as these things daily gleam before our eyes with added luster, blacker will appear every sinful tendency, every trace of the old self and its ways. No longer will we make excuses for them, but rather will join with our worst enemy in the inventing of terms of reproach to heap upon them, knowing well that the condoning of our offenses only delays the day of the death of the earthward members. It is not enough to say, "That is my weakness," unless we can also say, "His strength manifests its perfection in my weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9.) Let us not say, "That is my way," but rather, "That was my way."

THE END-DEATH

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14:12.) Because they think it is inconsistent with His love, many students of the Word refuse to hear anything of the wrath of God. Paul shuns not to declare the whole counsel of God, and therefore he declares that, "on account of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6, see Diaglott), or as the Authorized and Revised Versions have it, "for which things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience." In every one of these selfish propensities there is, by His pre-arrangement, the seed of destruction. Any of them uncurbed will lead to the utter oblivion reserved for all who are wedded to unrighteousness; for every form of selfishness is a crime against the God of love, and a disgrace in those who bear His name, and so must be condemned of Him. - James 1:15.

GOD'S WRATH MANIFESTING LOVE

The two thoughts of love and wrath are not incompatible. True love, associated with power and wisdom, could not eternally permit a sinner to continue in his downward path of misery. Love must spare him the misery of complete degradation. There is this distinction between the divine and the human wrath, that God's always operates because of love for all the inhabitants of the universe, and even, for the one against whom His wrath moves; whereas the human is too often a mere manifestation of malice toward another. Paul can truthfully speak of God's love toward us when we were "children of wrath." (Eph. 2:3, 4.) A God who could countenance evil and permit its continuance eternally, under any condition, would not be a God of holiness any more than we can be holy if we countenance and condone sin in our mortal bodies. God is angry "with the wicked every day," (Psa. 7:11) and "with the perverse He will show Himself froward." (2 Sam. 22:27.) And unbelievable though it may be to our human senses, there will be froward ones even in the Millennial Kingdom, "the land of uprightness." When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth and the inhabitants will be learning righteousness, even then . "Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal wrongfully, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord" (Isa. 26:9, 10, R.V.); or as Young's Literal Translation renders it: "In a land of straightforwardness he dealeth perversely and seeth not the excellency of Jehovah."

"THE WRATH OF GOD COMETH"

The "majestic present tense" may be accepted as expressing both the recompense already manifest in the depravity of the creature given over to sin, and also the inevitable "utter destruction," as Thayer defines it. Accurately Zophar the Naamathite states the principle by which retributive justice works in this life: "His bones are full of his youth, but it shall lie down with him in the dust. Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, though he spare it, and will not let it go, but keep it still within his mouth; yet his food in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him." (Job 20:11-14.) During the many centuries in which God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath "fitted to destruction," His wrath thus has been just as much in the present tense as it will be in the day of their destruction. Then, too, the absolute certainty the "word that goeth forth out of His mouth shall not return unto Him void" is expressed in the present tense which He uses of future events.

Since the slaying proposed in this passage can be accomplished by no blade with a dull-edge, it must be done by "the truth as it is in Jesus." (Eph. 4:21.) Not only will perverted truth fail to give

the blessing for which truth was divinely purposed, but if willfully "added to" or "taken from" will undoubtedly bring great injury. This seems to be the teaching of Romans 1:18, A.R.V.: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness." Every Christian whose motive in holding to the Word is as pure as the Apostle's, can make as effective use as he of Spirit-revealed truth in slaying the tendencies of the old creature and in building up the new into the likeness of Him who is Truth.

THE SPIRIT-GUIDED LIFE

Appreciating the important mission of divinely given truth, every sincere student will not only make certain that he is "established in the truth" (2 Pet. 1:12), but will be eager to most earnestly scrutinize everything that is offered to him as truth with the dual endeavor of never becoming established in any error and of never failing to apprehend, as promptly as possible, all truth that comes within the range of his spiritual vision. Nor need this carefulness result in, an ungodly fear lest in his searching he should be led into some error, for he has the promise Jesus left with us that if he has the guidance of the Spirit it will lead "into all truth." On the other hand, to devote one's time to what he realizes is error would demonstrate an ignorance of his need of sanctification and a lack of love for truth.

DEATH, A FORCEFUL FIGURE

The milder meaning which common usage has attached to the word "mortify,"- doubtless in the minds of most readers nullifies the effectiveness of the King James and the English Revision. So far as we have noted, all other translations, evidently having in mind this difficulty, have substituted synonymous but more effective expressions such as "make dead," "put to death," "slay," "destroy," "kill." It will not be safe to be less drastic than these expressions indicate. A dead member ceases to function, and no sincere Christian can countenance less than this for any of these criminal tendencies. Jesus tells us the only effective: method of dealing with each of them: "Pluck it out, and *cast it from thee.*" (Matt. 5:29, 30.) Accurately the word "mortify" describes -the sentence pronounced by God upon our earthward habits, the sentence in which we must concur not only with our will, but also with all our power and our inventive genius, discovering every possible way in which we can cooperate in the work of carrying out the divine sentence.

Note that the Apostle Paul's theology and our Lord's recognize our "members which are upon the earth" as sin-cursed, God-condemned. They do not have the thought of taking the old creature and working with the few faint evidences of righteousness that may be found in it, and developing them until they have reached perfection and then calling it a "new creature"; but their proposition is a clean-cut one: slay the old, and secure life for the new from the only Source of life. Paul's exhortation in this passage is to first put off the old with its characteristics, and not until then does he instruct regarding "putting on."

Christ Jesus is made unto us "all things" in this work. Neither the death nor the life can be completed outside of the "truth which is in Christ Jesus." We would not, however, belittle the commendable efforts of moral men to attain the highest standard within their reach, even though under present conditions it must be far below the perfection which is the goal of the new creature-"without spot or wrinkle or blemish or any such thing."

While the "bringing into subjection" of a Christian's body must undoubtedly bring results apparent to all discerning beholders, the eye of the flesh will never be able to fully comprehend the beauty of this "new creature in Christ Jesus." (1 Cor. 2:15, margin; 1:21; John 1:10; 1 John

3:1.) Only our Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Bridegroom, and, others in proportion as they have their mind, can discover all the intricacies of the character-likeness that is being worked out in them. How can one walk in and appreciate the light who is bound with the chains of darkness? How can one be freed from blindness while still under the blinding influence of Satan and self seeking? And how can we hope with bare and unaided hand to tear out the members that are the very idols of the old life? To the Christian, "Repent and be baptized," means to "possess [the control over] your members which are upon the earth" and "rise to newness of life with Him." To have a good "victory garden" we must plant seed. Watering the weeds will only assist their growth. They must be plucked out and cast far enough away so, that they will not again take root there.

There is no more lamentable evidence of self-seeking than the using of truth for personal ends: such as, to glorify the flesh by argument, to sow discord among brethren, or to build up an earthly organization. If the fact that we differ with other students of the Word is of more importance to us than the sanctifying power of the truths in which we are established, then we are just another cult, holding the truth, but in selfishness. Truth is not given us just that our heads may differ or that we may work in a different part of the Harvest field, but that "Thou mightest create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." - Psa. 51:10; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10.

"SINS IN WHICH YE ALSO WALKED"

Being reminded of a sin-infested past is not an occasion for discouragement, but for rejoicing in the blood shed for us. Being reminded of the cleansing power of the blood is not that we might continue in sin, but that we might take courage in struggling against it. Being reminded therefore of the sins "in which ye also walked beforetime, when ye lived in them," should be helpful for any Christian, encouraging him to thankfulness and to faithfulness. But all the benefit of retrospection is lost unless there is no faith in self and implicit faith in the power of the blood. There must be also every evidence that we are giving "all diligence" to walk in the footsteps of the Master. All should know well that they can be "acceptable sacrifices" only as His righteousness is ours through justification and His will ours through education. This will mean (1) a deep, heartfelt contrition for sins, past and present; (2) a complete turning away from them in our wills; (3) a daily battle against them -- a relentless battle fought in the strength which He supplies and with which every power of our being cooperates; and (4) the humility that can never fail to result in one who personally knows God, and therefore has learned to hate iniquity as our Lord hated it.

An excellent test as to our hatred for sin and our love for our brethren is to note whether we have plausible and nice sounding explanations of our own "slips," and harsh ones for others'; or whether we are able to speak charitably regarding others, while violently hating our own imperfections. How frequently we will use words and phrases regarding our own faults that sound almost like terms of affection, as compared with what we have to say about the faults of others. Let us make sure the matter is reversed and the mild sounding phrases saved for others than ourselves.

True thankfulness for the strong and loving Hands which have brought us from the filthy mire of the pit of sin cannot but result in rejoicing that the "power of salvation" is for all, and will even eventually call from the grave every one that sin has condemned, that all may have a full opportunity to "seek the Lord." (Acts 15:17; Gal. 3:8, 14.) If the spirit of this promise (Eph. 1:13, Diaglott) fills our hearts, we will never be tempted to dethrone our Heavenly Father and take His place as Judge of either our brethren or the world. Every trace of imperfection discovered will be

only an occasion for greater rejoicing in the deliverance that lies ahead. That spirit alone will effectually crowd out all criticism and condemnation.

The root of no sin of the past life has taken deeper hold than that one of judging others. There are few of us who, if we could but see ourselves, would not discover this sin prevalent in some thoughts and perhaps even in some words of every day. Though so ingrained in our being as to be committed unconsciously, there is no excuse for our not using every endeavor to eradicate it and every other sin; for the wheat will not grow to its golden maturity in a field choked with thistles.

"YOU ALSO"

The phrase "you also" appears in the fourth, the seventh, and the eighth verses, but each time apparently with a different application. In the fourth verse it associates the believer with Christ; in the seventh it associates him with the entire heathen world; but in the eighth it seems to be reminding him that there are other faithful and sympathetic brethren associated with him in the desperate struggle against the inherited and cultivated imperfections of the flesh, such as "anger, wrath, malice, railing, and shameful speaking. This is another reminder than they have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light (Col. 1:13); that whereas at one time they walked in conformity with the ways of the world, they should now conform themselves to the rules of the new association. It is not sufficient, however, to limit their attainments to conforming with the example of the poorest Christian they know or of the best. All must keep their eyes fixed on the perfect Pattern, the beauties of whose holiness will so entrance them that no amount of failure will deter from daily struggling for a little closer approach to His likeness. These two things therefore are essential in the life of every Christian: a clearer vision of the divine perfections, and a deeper contrition for sins past and present.

"PUT OFF THEREFORE"

In the eighth verse the Apostle substitutes for the figure of slaying another of which he also makes frequent use throughout his letters-that of "putting off" as one would lay aside clothing. This "stripping off" of various forms of *wicked hatred* is as complete as the previously mentioned slaying of different types of *wicked love*. It is not unfitting that the first should have been dispensed with by the more passionate figure of slaying, and the chill malignity of this new list dealt with finally and by the more deliberate "putting off."

The virulent poison of hatred-like jealousy, "cruel as the grave,"-is in this last list: "anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking." In fact jealousy is often easily traceable as the root of these evils. Who then, discovering them in his garden, could hesitate to grub deep until the last desecrating fiber has been removed? No Christian life can flourish to full maturity while they are permitted even a feeble existence.

The Apostle proceeds (verses 5 and 8) in opposite directions in describing the two streams of vice. In the first he began with action, and then went up the stream to its source of evil desire; in the second, beginning with the source in evil thought, he proceeds down stream to shameful communications. Our Master informed us that the real pollution is not that of physical dirt, but of mental filth such as these.
- Matt. 15:18-20.

The "anger" which opens the list is of course not the righteous kind, but selfish, fleshly. "Wrath," the second in the list, is anger boiling over, uncontrolled. The mere control of it is not however satisfactory. It also must be stripped off. Who would think of venturing before the throne of God with either of these in his heart? The putting-off process is necessary if we are to enter into the "fulness of

joy" which should be ours every moment of every day, and will be if spent in His presence. The dove, not the eagle, is the divine symbol of the Holy Spirit.

"Malice" is anger that is planning action in accordance with its wickedness. Even slight satisfaction in the misfortunes of others should therefore be recognized and repelled as at least a faint trace of this wicked perversity.

Instead of the "blasphemy" of the Authorized Version, Alexander McLaren accepts the rendering of the Revised, "railing," as better. He says: "The word means, 'speech that injures,' and such speech may be directed either against God, which is blasphemy in the usual sense of the word, or against man. The hate blossoms into hurtful speech. The heated metal of anger is forged into poisoned arrows of the tongue."

"Then follows 'shameful speaking out of your mouth,' which is probably to be understood not so much of obscenities, which would more properly belong to the former catalogue, as of foul-mouthed abuse of the hated persons, that copiousness of vituperation and those volcanic explosions of mud, which are so natural to the angry Eastern."

An exhortation against lying completes the Apostle's list, and it is in the proper relation, for a failure to love others as we love ourselves must usually be the explanation of this fault. The injunction is to "Lie not one to another" -- a course that is obligatory since we are "members one of another." If my brother's interests are my interests, I must of necessity deal honestly with him.

It is not asking too much, as the association of the Apostle's ideas *here* indicates, to expect the Christian to give equal consideration to purity of word, with purity of life and conduct, however much more difficult the process may be. The writer once sat under the instruction of a teacher whose English was a model of purity. Her friends testified that her ability was the result of three years of painful, painstaking consideration of every word she spoke. She thought the goal worthy the effort. We might doubt the wisdom of her inflicting that three years on her friends, but no one will doubt the wisdom of equal or greater care in the weighing of our words that we speak nothing harmful to others or dishonoring to our glorious Head. - "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear." - Eph. 4:29, R. V.

The principles stated in these verses are so elementary and obvious as to cause one to wonder why the Apostle has taken time to state them. His reason most probably is because we are prone to forget, and because we need to be assured that through grace the victory can be won. Though the victory be not manifest to all, if the striving is in heavenly strength and with faith in the covering of Christ's righteousness, the result will be acceptable to the One who is able to judge, and with authority.

"O sacred union with the Perfect Mind!
Transcendant bliss, which Thou alone canst give!
How blest are they this pearl of grace who find,
And, dead to earth, have learned in Thee to live!

"Thus, in Thine arms of love, O God, I lie;
Lost, and forever lost, to all but Thee!
My happy soul, since it hath learned to die,
Hath found new life in Thine infinity.

"O go, and learn this lesson of the Cross,
And tread the way which saints and prophets trod,
Who, counting life, and self, and all things loss,
Have found, in inward death, the life of God."

- P. E. Thomson.

The Letter to the Colossians

"Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, that is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman but Christ is all, and in all." - Col. 3:9-11- Amps R. V

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - March, 1944)

THE TRANSLATORS are generally agreed that the first phrase of our quotation is used by the Apostle as a reason for the "putting off," of "anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking," "lying," previously mentioned. At first it may appear illogical to put off these vices because we have put off the old nature with its vices. All students of the Word, however, have learned too well the Apostle's carefulness of reasoning to suppose there is not very accurate thinking, back of this recommendation. On examination of the passage we find that it looks not only backward to the "stripping off" of the eighth verse but forward to the "putting on" of the twelfth. The logician's "therefore" joins the two thoughts.

The first thing of note in the passage is that the Apostle takes for granted that the Christian has stripped off "the old man *with his doings*." There is no place in the Apostle's scheme of Christian living for a mere pretense of consecration. Christianity is an intensely practical thing that entirely revolutionizes the life. No more is anything done because of submission to habits formed in youth. Those are "his doings," and must be "stripped off" ruthlessly" that our application of this new figure may conform with the figure previously used, of death and burial. (Col. 2:12, 13.) In considering dress as a symbol of character, it is interesting to note that in our language the word "habit" does duty for both costume and custom.

Change of clothing as a figure of a change of condition is frequently used in the Scriptures: "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness." Jehovah is represented as saying regarding Joshua the high priest: "Take the filthy garments from off him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich *apparel*." Jesus also used this figure in His parable of the man without the wedding garment, also in that of the prodigal son. (Psalm 132:9, 16; Job 29:14; Isa. 52:1; 61:10; Zech. 3:3-5; Luke 15:22.) But in the passage being considered, the use Paul makes of the figure is a strange paradox: a man who has put off an old man, and is now putting on the new man. *Paul* thus makes it very clear that there is a personality, an identity that is never lost in this changing about. Though death has taken the old man, the same individual, though now a new creature, is the one resurrected to walk in newness of life with Christ. The old man is of Adamic stock, and the new a regeneration through the Word.

For such Christians as these to whom the Apostle is writing the visible outward change is greater than for those who live in communities where all are more or less affected by the refining influence of Christianity. The lives of even those who reject Christianity are usually to some degree influenced by the power' of the cross. Indeed many true saints can point to, no sudden and meteoric rise to holiness, because of having from infancy been under the influence of Christian associates.

"BEGOTTEN UNTO NEWNESS OF LIFE"

True religion is a personal matter, not something to be inherited from our parents, but a personal gift from our Heavenly Father. However noble the life before the moment in which that gift was received, it was a life of selfishness, lived for one's self and his loved ones. The newness of the new creature is in that it is not of this world but of heavenly origin, "begotten again," "begotten of the Spirit," "in Christ Jesus." Therefore, however exemplary the life may have been before, however unnoticed the change in the eyes of his companions, there is a complete inward transfer of allegiance clearly distinguishable by the individual if he has placed his all in the hands of the Savior. For one thing, he will, perhaps *for* the first time, discover how deeply entrenched is selfishness in his being; though up to that time he may have thought he was living only for others. Here begins the struggle that he must have the courage and endurance to continue until the old creature's "house" that he must of necessity use in lieu of a body,, has been laid aside that he may be finally "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." (2 Cor. 5:2.) He may suffer many humiliating revealings of the habits of the old creature that cause him to do the things that he hates, but there should never be a moment of relaxing the new creature's opposition to the ways of the old, never a moment when his will is not for righteousness, and so supremely so that even the thought of *evil* will find no welcome in his mind. - Rom. 7:15; Psa. 101:3; 119:104, 113; Prov. 8:13.

Since his begetting was through the Word, then to that Word, and to that Word and its Giver only, he must *look* for a continuation of life.. (Matt. 4:4; James 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:23; John 6:63; Phil. 2:16.) He has been "begotten to a hope of life" (1. Pet. 1:3, literal - Diaglott), and if life is to be perfected in him, it can be only through the words of life, 'the living, the life-giving Word of God. (Acts 5:20; Phil. 2:16.) So powerful is the influence of this begetting that "whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not," the sin that others would charge against him being not the work of the, new will but of the flesh. (1 John 5:18; James 4:7; 1 Pet, 5:8, 9; Luke 4:8; Rom. 6:13; Eph. 6:13; 2 Pet. 3:17.) Daily the keeping. power of the Word will be safeguarding his life, a shield and a buckler, his defense even against the wiles of the Arch-enemy of his being "Thou wilt keep him *in* perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength"; margin, "the rock of ages." (Isa. 26:3, 4.) With our feet established on that Rock, God's strength gives a true manifestation -of itself in our weakness. - 2 Cor. 12:9, 10; 13:4; Heb. 11:34; 1 Cor. 1:27; Psa. 8:2.

Changes somewhat comparable to the transformation in one who comes from self to Christ are often noted in people of the world, and these changes, too, are usually the result of some thought having newly laid hold upon the life. Why then should it seem impossible or even strange that a flash of Spirit given truth revealing the love of Christ should open blinded eyes to see a transfiguring vision of the altogether lovely One?

Believing truths merely with the head does not make one a Christian: "With -the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (Rom. 10:10; Matt. 6:21; Prov. 23:7; 4:23.) This heart belief cannot mean less than a complete revolution of the entire being. All such old things as the new creature cannot use to advantage will have passed away; but "*all* things will have become new-even the old things that the new creature has" found it advisable to retain will have been renewed in such an actual way that he can truly say, "Behold *all* things have become new." He now does only those things that are in harmony with his understanding of the will of God; but even such common and human things as eating and drinking, he does "to the glory of God," or he is not a new creature according to the Apostle's definition of one. (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Cor. 10:31; Matt. 5:16; John 15:8; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 6:20.) "If there has been any reality in' the act by which we have

laid hold of Christ as our Savior, our whole being will be revolutionized; old things will have passed away--tastes, desires, ways of looking at the world, memories, habits [standards, pricks of conscience, and all cords that bound us to our God -- forgetting past and all things -- will have become new, because we ourselves move in the midst of the old things as new creatures with new love burning in our hearts and new motives changing all our lives," a new goal shining before us, a new hope illuminating the blackness of past days and the dingy ness of the path ahead, a new song on our lips, a new power in our hands, a new Friend by our sides.

To attempt reforming an individual into the likeness of Christ before the revolt against the rule of the flesh, the world, and the Adversary, and before the acceptance of our new Ruler have taken place, is like attempting to build the second story of a house before the first. The failure can be no less complete. Only first-hand faith is a foundation solid enough so that on it may be reared the glorious structure of "gold, silver, and precious stones" which the Lord has planned for each of His children of this Age.

PUTTING OFF, A DAILY PROCESS

As already noted in the Revised Versions the passage under consideration is introduced by "Seeing that." Though this reading is disputed by some, we have retained it since it is a logical connection with the preceding and a natural translation of Paul's words. And in it there is a reason for the preceding exhortation to "Put off all these," and also for the following, "Put on therefore" the beautiful garb of love and compassion.

When a heart is given to the Lord, the work of putting off and putting on, in a sense, takes place at once, but time must be allowed for this change to be wrought into the character, and for it to consistently show in the conduct. There are daily manifestations of at least traces of the old life, and there must be a daily putting on of the new. It is not illogical, then, to put off what we have put off *in our consecration contract*; nor to put on actually what we have *by faith* put on. This merely means, live consistently in accord with your expressed resolve; carry out item by item what in that one moment you agreed upon as a whole; the enemy has been cast out of the central citadel, but keep up the fight until he has been driven beyond the utmost bounds of your realm. To stop short of that is to demonstrate that our avowed hatred of his rule is mere sham. *To be* content to have any shreds of the old filthy garment clinging to us -is to deny our love of purity.

THE NEW GROWTH, AIM, AND PATTERN OF THE NEW MAN

For a moment the figure of the garment passes from the mind of the Apostle and he gives us a passing glimpse of the glory of the new creature, his spirit kindling to new fervor at the thought of the transformation under way for the "up-newing" of Jew and Gentile.

As the rendering of the Revised Versions indicates by the phrase "*being* renewed," the transformation is not the work of a moment, but continuous. How very slow or difficult it may be, it must be persisted in until perfection is reached, or the "old man" will "*wax* corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." (Eph. 4:22 See A. R. V.; Rom. 6:6; 1 Pet. 4:3, 4.) The result will be, "according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20); persistently downward if the will of the old is allowed sway, but upward into the very presence of Jehovah Himself if our all is surrendered to His will. If one would attain to that, let him "put on the new man, which after God (Greek: in accord with God) is created (Greek: made habitable, completely changed) in righteousness and true holiness." Young has it: "in righteousness and kindness of the truth." (Eph. 4:24.) "The New Testament in Basic English" gives this interesting rendering: "Put on the new man, to which God has given life, in righteousness and a true and holy way of living." The

parallel passages of Colossians and Ephesians link the thought of truth with the new creature. The Diaglott literal rendering of the phrase in Colossians makes the parallelism more complete. It reads: "by exact knowledge." Light was the first thing in the old creation, it is the first thing in the new. And it must to the end "shine in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God," if the up-newing is to attain to "the perfect will of God, His likeness. - 2 Cor. 4:6; Rom. 12:2.

One wonders at times as he reads various translations of a passage, each stressing precious truths, if it may not be that this is one of the means by which the Holy Spirit guides into all truth, having chosen (or shall we say, having prepared) a language capable of conveying such a wealth of thought that no one word or phrase of other languages can convey it all. The Revised Versions' rendering of the phrase we are considering: "that is being renewed *unto* knowledge," like the Diaglott rendering, expresses a vital truth, for we can never safely forget that we "know nothing yet, as we ought." (1 Cor. 8:2.) While knowledge is a means by which the likeness of God is worked out in us, yet in order that exact knowledge may be attained, it is also necessary to have the image completed. As we grow in knowledge we grow in resemblance; as we grow in resemblance we grow in knowledge. When the full radiance of His glory shines undimmed in our face, we shall "awake in His likeness" to "*know* even as we are known." (Psa. 17:15; 1 Cor. 13:12.) We must be like Him in nature to see Him as He is; but if we are ever -to be like Him in nature, we must be made like Him in character by seeing Him with the eye of faith, not as imaginations would paint Him or creeds misrepresent Him, but, under the guidance of His Word and Spirit, know Him "as He is." (1 John 3:2.) "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" now and for eternity. - Matt. 5:8; Isa. 33:17; John 17:24.

Because the image of God in us for the present is rudimentary, we are exhorted to be "imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love as He hath loved us," yea, even to "walk in the light as [in the same manner as] He is in the light." (1 John 1:7; 2:6; Rom. 6:4; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:2.) But the goal always before the consecrated is: "As [accordingly as] He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all your conduct." (1 Pet. 1:15, see Diaglott.) This is the purpose of all our putting off the old and putting on the new. To this end Christ died. Thus the blackest limp, dug from the deepest mine, can be changed by His alchemy into the brightest of jewels to shine eternally in His diadem.

UNITY IN THE NEW CREATION

All artificial methods of attaining unity have always and must always fail. There is one that succeeds: looking beyond national, social, creedal, and educational boundaries to Him who is our all, and in all. All who are in Christ and in whom Christ dwells are one in Christ Jesus, brethren to be loved and fellowshiped. If any be Christ's, then are they, regardless of race or creed, Abraham's seed and heirs with Christ. (Gal. 3:29.) The false teachers of Colosse did not have the breadth of vision to grasp this fact, but were teaching that there was a privileged class in the Church, favored above others because they had been born Jews or had received higher education. At the foot of the cross there is no time nor thought for the distinctions the flesh would make and selfishly cling to in rebellion against the Apostolic in junction.

Paul was writing to people in a world where class distinctions cut deeper clefts in their social geography than our modern imaginations can fathom. Deeper and wider than any other, was the Jewish concept of the rift between circumcision and uncircumcision. Nevertheless in Christ Jesus, even for a Jew, that distinction was obliterated. And for the cultured Greek, even the Scythians, the lowest of the barbarians, had become their brethren in full fellowship.

The arrogance born of education, while probably the most virulent of prides, found a close counterpart in the superiority of master over slave. The untold miseries caused by slavery in that far-off era can be but dimly known. It is estimated that its horrors crushed all the joy out of the lives of more than half the world. In the lovely letter of Paul to Philemon, apparently delivered at the same time with this letter, there is given a little hint of the new joy of those "bondmen and freemen" made "free with -the liberty wherewith Christ makes free." There can be no freedom for the bondman, in the ancient or the modern types of bondage, until he has learned that the so called freeman is in as much need of being made free as he himself-that every member of Adam's race until Christ has made him free, in his bondage to sin, bound in chains more binding, more galling, more vile by far than those worn by the most pitiable of galley slaves.

Christianity entered upon no campaign of social reform, no direct war against the evils of slavery; but instead of merely touching the surface, as reform movements do, it reached the heart of the matter to "make free indeed." It sowed new seed in the weed-infested ground and thoroughly choked out the obnoxious growths in the ground thus sown. But the work is not complete, for only a heart here and there has been blessed with this liberty. Only when that great tidal wave of the "knowledge of God" has overflowed all the earth, will the last ridge disappear that now separates it into the many little miasma-infested pools that spread misery and destruction throughout the land.

The life-time galley slaves of Satan, who have faithfully kept stroke for him, will every one have deliverance provided. (Eph. 2:2; John 8:44; 1 John 3:10.) Only by drawing their first breath of freedom in that Kingdom of righteousness and peace which Jesus even now is preparing to establish, will -they learn the real horrors of slavery and the joys of freedom. Then, finally, will all bondage end, except -that of love and faith; but, praise God, "of His Kingdom and peace there shall be no end." - Rom. 14:17; Isa. 9:7; Dan 7:14; Luke 1:33; 2 Pet. 1:11; Rev. 11:15.

- P. E. Thomson.

The Letter to the Colossians

"Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." - --Col. 3:12-14, A. R. V.

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IT IS not possible to determine whether the Apostle's "therefore", referred only to his statement, "Christ is all and in all," or also to the earlier one, "and have put on the new man," but it is probable it was his intention that "therefore" should connect the passage with both these statements, since that construction parallels the one considered in our last study. In review of this we epitomize: the new nature was made ours in the moment of consecration, therefore, the, Apostle says, clothe it in suitable garments. And since Christ is all in all, those who are in Him must surely be aware of that fact and should draw about themselves His beautiful garments. For the members of that Body this will result in a unity genuine and permanent. Appropriately, it is social qualities Paul considers in the verses being discussed; by no means implying, however, that this is all there is to the Christian life.

The fact that we are "God's elect, holy and beloved," is stated as additional grounds for the course of conduct outlined. ("As choice ones of God" is the translation Prof. Young gives. Instead of the word "holy" Goodspeed and the Centenary New Testament have "consecrated.") The changed relation to God must inevitably result in a changed relation to fellowman, and this will be most noticeable in one's association with those who have consecrated themselves on the basis of the "ransom for all" - all others of "equally precious faith." (2 Pet. 1:1; 1 Tim. 2:6.) The Christian life is not mere glad emotion, self-congratulation, but additionally there is the joy of service to others, not omitting such a small detail as the turning to them of a face lit with His joy and His love. In this "Be imitators of God, as beloved children," imitators of the One who pours out His blessings on the thankful and the unthankful. - Eph. 5:1; Luke 6:35.

In a double sense they now are not their own; in accepting the ransom they have agreed to it as their purchase price; and in consecration they have given their all into His possession. (1 Con 6:19, 20; 7:22, 23.) It was "while we were yet sinners" that Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:15) the very pinnacle of all God's favors; let us not then withhold our small favors from any one else merely because we see something in him which is not to our liking. The largest of our bounties, by comparison with God's bounties to us, sinners sold into the bondage of sin, will be small indeed. As we recognize what God has been to us, let us be to others, and especially to those nearest to us whether in home or in church, for there we are most apt to forget to be Godlike. Familiarity breeds at least carelessness. They need us and our kindness as we need them and their graces. Fortunately in every one there can still be discovered some traces of the original likeness to God; and a genuine *love for His character* will gladly brush aside any number of "veils," that we may admire these traces of Godlikeness in our brethren. The fulness of this joy cannot be known by those in whom there is a hindrance to the shining forth of God's character because of their finding joy in looking for faults in their brethren rather than in disclosing the beauties of God-given, holiness. Every faint glimmer of His character made visible will be another star to guide us in our charted course. The closer one comes to a star, the brighter it shines. The beauties to be discovered in our brethren will never be known by us if we are cutting ourselves off from their fellowship, nor even if while having fellowship we are in any particular holding ourselves aloof from them. Our Father has not arranged that ours shall be *art* unsocial

life. For one of us to plan such an existence, instead of resulting in a manifestation of the graces Paul here outlines, can hardly do otherwise than develop supreme selfishness.

THE CHRISTIAN'S WARDROBE

A heart of compassion" is the Revised Version's rendering of the first item of the Christian's apparel. At the start, the brother's faults are recognized, but with compassion. *In* the ears of the moderns, who have substituted formal modesty for the genuine, this translation has a more pleasant sound than the King James' literal rendering, "bowels of mercies." With the Greeks, bowels were a symbol of violent passions, but with the Hebrews, a symbol of tender emotions. When without interpretation a phrase is meaningless to modern Gentile ears, the translations which are really interpretations are preferable. On the other hand the Diaglott more literal rendering of the opening phrase "be clothed" is preferable, for even our prosaic minds can understand and profit by its symbolisms. The following helpful lesson is drawn from it by Adam Clarke: "Though I know that to *put on*, or to be *clothed with* are figurative expressions, and mean to assume such and such characters, and qualities; yet there may be a higher meaning here [than the obvious application]. The Apostle would have them to *feel* the *slightest touch* of another's misery; and, as their clothes are put over their body, so their tenderest feeling should be always within the reach of the miserable. Let your feelings be at hand; and feel and commiserate as soon as touched."

LEARNING COMPASSION BY SUFFERING

Opportunities to exercise this quality of pity are as extensive as our contacts mental and physical, for every individual is deserving of it in some measure, though that fact may not always be apparent. It is fitting that the Apostle's series should begin with a quality so much in demand. Inattention, lack of perception, and pre-occupation with self rob us perhaps of most of the privileges of its exercise. The fierce heat of selfishness dries up its flow, until that which should be, a torrent comparable to the flow of God's love becomes but a rivulet, or perhaps a dry and parched gravel bed. In God's providence sorrows are permitted in the heart with which He deals that it may know the refreshment of the outgoing stream of love, expressing itself in compassion to all others who suffer. India yearly has lost its thousands by starvation, and we scarcely give passing notice; but when calamities touch our shores, we display in great headlines our sympathy for this corner of the groaning creation. Let the love that "seeketh not her own" take possession of a heart, and the face of every stranger, however remote his life is from ours, calls forth this divine attribute of compassion.

Custom, if not guarded against, will entirely rob us of this sense, for people in general accept the reign of sin and death as a natural condition for the human family and view its devastations, in those beyond their circle, with indifference. Consequently there must be a conscious process of clothing ourselves in tender compassions. And that garb will do much to win the confidence of those we would help with either physical or spiritual comfort. Its lack will result in our ministrations to the needy being repulsive, because given as one would throw a bone to a dog. It is not ingratitude alone that rejects favors. Make others' sorrows *our own* and that will teach us the tact that dispenses blessings with gentle hands.

KINDNESS

Where there is no apparent occasion for "pity," there is still need for kindness. (Chrestotes translates it "gentleness.") Its need is universal. Some by nature radiate kindness as sunshine; but most of us must acquire at least the habit of making it perpetual. Keep our mirrors always toward the sun and they will always glow with a light the world can look upon only with veiled faces. After his season in the mount with God, Moses had to put a veil over his face, so brightly it shone with the glory of that few moments' contact. They that *dwell* in that presence where there is fullness of joy must radiate that joy upon others, reflecting His "tender mercies overall His works," "the just and the unjust." (Psa. 25:6; 33:3; 145:9; Job 34:19; Matt. 5:45; Acts 10:34, 35; 15:19; Rom. 2:11; 10:12; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 4:32; 6:9.) "If thine enemy hunger, feed him," is a more profitable injunction for us than for our enemy-if the motive is kindness. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." - Matt. 5:7, 44; Prov. 25:21, 22.

HUMILITY

From here onward the graces are those evident under oppositions. "Humility" heads the list of these graces because it is an essential safeguard if we would honestly represent God among the Gentiles. (1 Pet. 2:12.) Nothing so quickly demonstrates its lack as slights and insults. The wounded one, if not humble, will be so pre-occupied with his own hurts that the kindness he should be showing to his enemies will be entirely neglected. One who is not humble will not "do good to them that hate him," unless he thinks that course will increase his own reputation. (Matt. 5:44.) This is the false humility of Colossians 2:18.

There is in this word no intimation of ignorance of one's own abilities; but for the Christian it indicates that he knows "there is none righteous," and that whatever he possesses he has received from God (Rom. 3:10; 1 Cor. 4:7), that that in which others boast, rightly appraised, is "their shame" (Phil. 3:19) and that all the proud must eventually be brought low. (Luke 14:9; Psa. 18:27; Isa. 14:11, 12; Isa. 23:9.) From the highest hill to which pride can ascend it is still some 93,000,000 miles to the sun. Instead of a recital of our accomplishments and virtues, our cry must be, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

MEEKNESS, LONG-SUFFERING

The next two qualities mentioned, "meekness and long-suffering," are so closely associated it is well to consider them together. One has distinguished them by saying that long-suffering is not soon angry and meekness not at all. We would rather say that either is capable of righteous indignation, and neither guilty of fleshly anger. "According to the most thorough investigators, meekness is the temper which accepts 'God's dealings,' or evil inflicted by men as His instruments, without resistance, while the latter is the long holding out of the mind . . . [without giving way to a temptation to unbecoming] action, or passion, especially the latter. The opposite of meekness is rudeness or harshness; the opposite of long-suffering, swift resentment or revenge. . . . The meek man puts himself below the offender; the long-suffering man does not," necessarily. In other words, the Christian in his duels with the world and the Adversary, does not permit the enemy to choose the weapons.

FORBEARING, FORGIVING

There is a close affiliation between meekness and forbearance, and between long-suffering and forgiveness. Forbearance will not operate consistently without the assistance of meekness, nor can long-suffering be persisted in unless it has its source in forgiveness, which cleanses the heart of all enmity and irritation. Thus the Apostle gives an outline of the true Christian in his social life-"all rooted in pity, and full of soft compassion"; quick to see, to feel, and to comfort in sorrow; manifesting kindness to all who come within its reach; because of lowliness of mind and calmness under provocation, showing neither resentment nor revenge, but patient under wrongs, never requiting wrong for wrong, and always ready to forgive; for to forgive is as natural to the compassionate heart as that the sun's rays should melt the glacier.

Even after centuries of preaching the standard of these verses by a few daring souls, that kind of a character has not yet become the ideal of the so called Christian world; instead, he who attains it is to them "a poor, spineless creature." In the day of battle he would be condemned as a traitor to his country. Loving one's enemies must for the fleshly mind be reserved until after the battle. It takes courage to build, or attempt to build, such a character in the midst of a generation that can accept none of its qualities without some nullifying modification. Heroic firmness, disregard for popular esteem, confession of our weakness, and unfaltering faith in His strength and willingness to supply it, are necessary if passions are to be subdued and forgiveness flow freely from the heart. But, "Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

A MOTIVATING PATTERN

Great attainments require lofty motives. The highest attainments require the loftiest of motives. "We are to forgive *as* Christ has forgiven us; and that 'as' may be applied either as meaning 'in like manner.' or as meaning 'because.'" There are Greek words having each of these meanings, but since the Apostle used the one having both meanings, both can be accepted as his thought here. Christlike perfection is our ideal, the goal for which we strive; His example our inspiration. In the parallel passage in Ephesians (Eph. 4:32) our Heavenly Father is cited as our example. The Apostle uses there the same Greek word for "as": "*in the same degree*" and "*because*" "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," forgive each other. A heart truly appreciative of the pardon offered it, will be a softened heart, eager and joyful in its forgiveness of others. But unless that spirit is present before the pardon is asked, it will be so grudgingly given as to leave the culprit with no feeling of love on our part, but much of our condemnation of him.

The Apostle is not startling us with his originality, but reiterating the principle laid down by our Master: "Love one another as I have loved you." (John 14:34; Luke 6:36.) If the cords of love bind us to Him they will securely bind us to each other; and instead of calling forth our condemnation, the imperfections that show up in our brethren will draw us that much more to them in sympathetic, compassionate, forgiving love. "Even as the Lord forgave us, so also do ye"; then pray, "Forgive us as we forgive." - Mark 11:25; Matt. 6:15; 18:35; Acts 5:31; James 2:13.

THE COSTUME COMPLETED

"Above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness," but this time, not above all in the sense of greater importance, but merely of position, as the girdle is over all the other garments to brace and confine all in a safe and consistent unity. It is a silken sash, of most expensive fabric, woven in the loom of God's providences, so soft it would seem to have no binding power; but how well we have learned that it alone can be used as a girdle to keep these

other qualities in control. Various other girdles have been tried—doctrines, works, organization, etc. - but all have been proved utter failures. Love alone is the perfect girdle for the binding of the "perfectnesses that make up the rest of the costume. - John 13:34; Rom. 13:8; Col. 2:2; Eph. 4:3.

"Pity" without love is but (the cold compassion of superiority; kindness, that others may marvel at my generosity, but mockery; humility and meekness without love serve well as the hypocrite's garment of light; while "long-suffering" and "forbearance" without love is merely -an armed truce waiting for revenge; "forgiveness" without it, a lip service. *Could* such a one pray, "Forgive as I forgive"? It is true all these may be had in some fashion without love; but with love as "the girdle of perfectness" all these divine qualities will be given permanence, and assurance of the privilege of being a blessing to others both in this life and in the life to come. The clothes of the children of Israel were protected from wear and decay during their wilderness journey, but for the antitypical Israelite there is a better arrangement. The longer their garments are worn the more beautiful they become, for into each of them is daily transfused more of the divine quality of love that binds.

"We may recall the other applications of the same figure which occur in the parallel Epistle to the Ephesians, where Paul sketches for us in a few rapid touches the armed Christian soldier. The two pictures may profitably be set side by side. - Here he dresses the Christian; soul in the robes of peace, bidding him put on pity and meekness, and above all, the silken girdle of love.

'In peace, there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility;
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,'

then 'put on the whole armor of God' [for our warfare against the world's spirit, the flesh, and Satan] the leathern girdle of truth, the shining breastplate of righteousness, and above all, the shield of faith and so stand a flashing pillar of steel. Are the two pictures inconsistent? Must we doff the robes of peace -to don the armor, or put off the armor to resume the robes of peace? Not so; both must be worn together, for neither is found in its completeness without the other. Beneath the armor must be the fine linen, clean and white—and at one and the same time, our souls may be clad in all pity, mercifulness and love, and in all the sparkling panoply of courage and strength for battle.

"But both the armor and the dress of peace presuppose that we have listened to Christ's pleading counsel to buy of Him, 'white raiment that we may be clothed, and that the shame of our nakedness do not appear.' The garment for the soul, which is to hide its deformities and to replace our own filthy rags, is woven in no earthly looms, and no efforts of ours will bring us into possession of it. We must be content to owe it wholly to Christ's gift, or else we shall have to go without it altogether. The first step in the Christian life is by simple faith to receive from Him the forgiveness of all our sins, and that new nature which He alone can impart, and which we can neither create nor win, but must simply accept. Then, after that, come the field [of battle] and the time for efforts put forth in His strength, to array our souls in His likeness, and day by day to put on the beautiful garments which He bestows. It is a life-long work thus to strip ourselves of the rags of our old vices, and to gird on the robe of ... [Christian virtues]. Lofty encouragements, tender motives, solemn warnings, all point to this as our continual task. We should set ourselves to it in His strength, if so be that being clothed, we may not be found naked and then, when we lay aside the garment of flesh and the armor needed for the battle, we shall hear His voice welcoming us to the land of peace, and shall walk with Him in victor's robes, glistening 'so as no fuller on earth could white them.'"

- P. E. Thomson.

The Letter to the Colossians

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.... Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.... Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." - Col. 3:15-17.

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - June, 1944)

THREE PHRASES are the keys and inspiration of the verses under consideration: "The *peace* of Christ," "the *word* of Christ," "the *name* of the Lord Jesus." The first sentence could as well have been considered in connection with the previous discussion, for it is as much related to the one as to the other. But since it is not a portion of the metaphor with which the previous passage closed, it seems more appropriate in connection with the present discussion. This sentence has to do intimately with the personal life of the Christian; the second with our fellowship, teaching, and admonishing each other. The last sentence deals in the broadest of generalities, covering the "whatsoever" of Christian activities.

Rather than interrupt our discussion later for its consideration, we note here that the Apostle is not in harmony with using Jesus' name and His title, Christ, as applicable to Him at different periods of His life. This passage uses the two forms with evident reference to Him without the thought of any such distinction.

Some manuscripts read, "the peace of Christ," and others, "the peace of God." The former is approved by such authorities as the Revised Versions, Diaglott, Rotherham, etc. Either rendering is quite acceptable. It is logical, however, that the Apostle should write regarding the peace of Christ since Christ's closing legacy to His Church was, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you," and since the peace of God is the peace of Christ. (John 14:27; Mark 9:50; Rom. 5:1; 8:6; Gal. 5:22; Psa. 119:165; Prov. 3:17; Isa. 26:13; Phil. 4:7.) Paul was a good student of the Lord's words and could not overlook so precious and so startling a legacy as this one -- startling because given at a time utterly out of harmony with the spirit of the words, judged from a natural viewpoint.

From the spiritual viewpoint there was nothing more logical than that under the shadow of the cross on which He was to secure the purchase price of redemption for the world, He should assure this little band to whom the secrets of the Lord were being made known, that they were to have a prior claim upon the peace He was securing for the universe. Like their Master, who in that very hour was "troubled in spirit," dark shadows would fall athwart their pathway beset by many foes, endangered by numberless pitfalls, yet they too could always have with them that peace to rule in their hearts. According to the American Version this peace would "arbitrate in their hearts"; according to Rotherham, "act as umpire."

The English language, we believe, stands alone, in having an apostrophe "s" to show possession. Other languages use what is literally rendered into the English as "of." "The peace of Christ" or "the peace of God," means the peace which is the possession of the Father and the Son. The phrase, "My peace," therefore carries the same thought, though doubtless used here to add greater emphasis and to make the promise a more personal one, as well as to contrast His perfect peace with the lesser degree the Apostles already enjoyed. During the years the disciples walked with Jesus in the flesh, their peace came from contact with Him, and from their confidence in Him that their physical necessities would be supplied, as their Master, if necessary, could miraculously multiply loaves and fishes to satisfy their hunger, and use a living fish to bring a coin to pay their

taxes. But beyond this was the peace that came from their hope that He would "redeem Israel." All the peace that natural things could give was theirs. But they must wait, until the day of Pentecost to experience the joy that He promised in the phrase, "My peace I give unto you." Then they learned something of what *His* peace had actually been, the peace of sonship, the peace of full submission to the infinite power and wisdom of their Heavenly Father.

PEACE A POSSESSION OF THE INNER MAN

Our Lord's legacy and the Apostle's exhortation give no thought of a life protected against all enemy threats or even invasion. The Apostle does offer the consolation that in every dispute in this sanctified territory, all that is out of harmony with the peace of God will eventually be ruled out. He who spoke peace to the troubled waves of Galilee assures calmness to every heart fully submitted to Him. His promise is not that there shall be no storms, but that the "prince of the power of the air" shall not prevail to do harm to any of His beloved ones. (John 16:33.) Without the storms we would never know His power or love, nor ever learn what it means to trust.

Where the peace of God -rules in the heart of every individual in a Christian communion, no Satanic power can stir up discord. (Psa. 29:11; Rom. 14:17.) Six thousand years of endeavor on Satan's part has not yet disturbed God's peace. Where that peace rules, there is no power that can prevail against it. The peace that was bequeathed to us is a peace of submission to a power "greater than all that can be against us." There must have been experienced first, of course, the peace of reconciliation through our forsaking of sin, and recognition and acceptance of the full atonement made for us. Then the great Accuser can bring no charge against God's elect who from sin's condemnation have passed into the realm of divine love.

For the Christian there is often the strange anomaly of a peace temporarily disturbed because of his eagerness for a quick establishment of complete and eternal peace.. Our restless wills are usually long in arriving at that condition where our immersion into His will is so complete, that we are eager to have not only His will, His peace, but are perfectly willing to abide His time for the installing of its undisputed reign. Not one point was left out of Christ's submission to the Father's will, therefore His peace was complete-it was beyond -the reach of any disturbing influence.

His willingness to suffer ignominy and death for the deliverance of the human race demonstrated the eagerness of His desire to give them the blessings of life and all that attends it. What a contrast there is between His peace and our impatience! Even we who live apparently at the threshold of the new day, find it difficult to be patient during a few years of warfare and bloodshed. Perhaps the explanation is that we are seeing the suffering more clearly than the certainties and the glories of a resurrection for the groaning creation under the dominion of righteous judges. Or perhaps we have not learned how inferior our wisdom is to the perfect Mind that has planned and is accomplishing every feature of a flawless plan for the entire universe, as well as for each of us personally.

How then shall we carry out this exhortation of -the Apostle to "*let the peace of God reign*"? As it is to "reign in our hearts," there is only one way-to ruthlessly uproot everything else that is in our hearts and give Christ full, possession. If we are to be "strengthened with power" sufficient to ward off every adversary of our souls, natural and spiritual, in order that we may have this peace, it will be through the undisputed reign of "His Spirit in the inward man." That means Christ "dwelling in our hearts by faith" - submitting every smallest detail of that life to Him for His direction and overruling. (Eph. 3:16, 17; John 14:20; 17:23; Rom. 8:10; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; 1 John 3:24; Rev. 3:20.) There is no reason to suppose that Jesus was exaggerating when He said

the Father took note of even a falling hair. We are therefore slighting Him when we take under our own direction the smallest detail.

The reigning, arbitrating peace not-only rules out all illegal contestants for our hearts and awards the final prizes, but throughout the contest permits no violation of the rules. It is hardly possible that under this arrangement even our physical organisms should fail to feel the benefit of so wise an arrangement. If this end is not being attained, the explanation should be sought and a means of correction discovered. Whatever ruffles the surface of our sea of Galilee so that the face of Jesus cannot be seen, must be avoided. One who has for a season enjoyed the peace here recommended, will instinctively shrink from anything that would even slightly disturb it. All the treasures of earth would not be sufficient inducement to cause us to sacrifice the peace that a Christian through experience has learned to rightly appraise.

This peace is a mutual possession, not the treasure of a few isolated Christians, those that have lived in monasteries, etc. It is a thing *"to which we were called in one body."* (Eph. 1:23; 4:4-6, 12; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Col. 1:24; 2:19.) The rendering of Young's literal translation of the next phrase, "become thankful," infers that those who have not the peace of Christ have no basis for knowing true gratitude; and also that those who experience a measure of it must be on guard against the sin of ingratitude.

Jew and Gentile have been knit in the one body, not to -continue the old warfare, but to enter upon a mutual possession of peace, such peace as attended Him who went to the cross rather than sacrifice it. Since the Apostle's day the situation has changed in the Church. The test is no longer as to whether peace will reign between Jew and Gentile. Today's corresponding one is no less searching. It is as to whether we are rejoicing that He has "set" the members in the *Body as it hath pleased Him, "all by the same Spirit."* - 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 18.

THE INDWELLING WORD OF CHRIST

In the American Revision the sixteenth verse reads: "Let the ' word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God." This associates the wisdom with the teaching through psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

When appropriating the word of Christ by feasting as largely as possible upon the precious words of the Gospels, we must never forget Christ's assurance that when He left His disciples, there were still many things He would like to tell them. The only source available to us for learning these additional things is the Spirit-inspired utterances of His servants.

The phrase, "the word of Christ," may, according to the Greek, have the force of, "the word concerning Christ." With this thought the exhortation sends us to His Word, not only to read the words which Jesus actually spoke and later inspired His disciples to speak, but to consider all that relates to Him. Our Bible study under the guidance of this exhortation will not cease with the New Testament, but under Jesus' own instructions we will turn to the Old for whatsoever is written concerning Him "in the Law and in the Prophets and in the Psalms." Additionally, every word given by inspiration during the first four thousand years may be accepted as the Word of Christ, not only because of His harmony with it, but because of His cooperation in its delivery to man. This is all a wonderfully interesting treasury of the very finest of literature. To the Christian, however, it has a vastly greater appeal than to the one who approaches it merely from a literary standpoint. To the Christian it is received as the peace of God is, that it may reign in his heart. It is thus manifest in his contacts with his brethren, even to the extent that in his selection of hymns

in their assemblies, he will be influenced by their spiritual needs, requesting a certain selection not merely because either the words or the tune are a favorite with him, but primarily because he finds in those words teachings which he believes will be at that moment especially valuable to his brethren and to himself.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

In one respect "the Word of Christ" is like other words -- the question as to whether or not it shall *dwell in the heart* is the responsibility of each individual. An effort, and for most of us a great effort, must be made to establish it permanently in our memories. In our school days we were not supposed to have mastered a subject because we had gone over each item once. Instead, there was the home study, the recitations in class by ourselves and others, a review of that subject a few days later, another review and examination at the end of the term, and at the end of the year a final examination covering the whole matter. These many reviews finally established a few points in our minds. One of the old Greek philosophers, with a brain better than any of ours, said that he never knew anything until he had forgotten it six times, meaning that the process of frequent reviews was what gave permanence to his mental impressions. In dealing with the Word of Christ we are handling treasure so vastly superior to any of the truths and supposed truths that philosopher labored so hard to make his own, there can hardly be imagined any endeavor too strenuous for us to make. To this end the daily reading of four chapters that the Bible may be read through once a year, suggested in our issue of August 1942, is to be highly recommended. Some have found it profitable to memorize whole chapters and entire books of the Bible, finding in so doing each word emphasizing and adding to its depth of meaning. These things will assist considerably in the process of making the Scriptures our own. But to them, study and meditation must be added if the Word of God is to "dwell in us richly." When these processes have accomplished their purposes, because of the very nature of our hearts and minds, we will be "in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." This will give balance to the character, no phase of the Christian life crowding out any other, but all leading to that love and zeal that overflows in service for our brethren and for all men as we have opportunity. - Gal. 6:10.

Young's literal comment would make the passage read: "Let the doctrine of Christ dwell inwardly in you, richly in every (kind of) wisdom, teaching and admonishing yourselves in (or with) psalms (accompanied with musical instruments), and hymns, and spiritual odes, in joy odeing in your hearts to the Lord." How devoid of wisdom we can be in connection with so simple a phase of our spiritual worship as this, is indicated by the fact that some dear brethren have made a prominent phase of their religious life their insistence on singing only psalms and these never to be with the accompaniment of musical instruments. No less lacking in wisdom would seem to be those who entirely omit singing from their gatherings because "we have no singers in our class," or because "we have no musical instrument." The fact primarily to be considered is not the artistry of the rendering, but the heart devotion to the Lord and the spiritual profit of the words to those who sing them and hear them. Just as unwise are those who have a hymn book well representing Wisdom's wide horizon, but use little of it. Even so simple a thing as this in a measure may be determining our faithfulness to this injunction in the Word of the Lord. The depth of our appreciation of the riches at our disposal is determined by our faithfulness not only in seeking them or in meditating upon them, but also in our use of them for ourselves and our brethren. We know from many sources that song had a large part in the worship of the early Church. A great burst of Christian song attended each new awakening to Christian life throughout the following centuries. It is not however music as an art form, but as a heart expression of closeness of relationship to the Lord that marks these revival periods.

PERSONAL DESIRES SACRIFICED

"What is it then, brethren? When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." (1 Cor. 14:26.) This and other texts indicate that the meetings of the early Church were very free and informal, and apparently, at least, on most occasions open to all. The Apostle's exhortation that follows is against any individual taking more than his share of the meeting. No one brother should select all the hymns or make all the comments or even any large proportion of them unless it so happens that he is either the only competent or the only willing brother present.

Spiritual songs were apparently a freer form in word and music than psalms and hymns, perhaps in spirit at least moderately corresponding with our solo and other choir numbers of this day. Whatever the form, psalm, hymn, or spiritual song, if sung "with grace in the heart," and therefore "unto God," all will be edifying to the hearers whose hearts are attuned to the divine message conveyed, and acceptable to our Heavenly Father, regardless of the degree of artistry. Pure devotion, however, will always rejoice to bring its best.

There is much that must be brought under the guidance of the divine Spirit; therefore the next verse records the Apostle's injunction: "*Whatsoever* ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Nor do we suppose that this injunction is limited to the conduct of fellowship meetings. Rather, it seems to encompass the entire Christian life, leaving no minor detail untouched. All human slavery is galling. But there has never been a slavery so confining as that of the Christian. Yet the yoke of the Master is easy, His burden light. Those who attempt to enter upon this slavery from any other motive than that of doing it "in His name," that His name may be glorified, can never long stand the strain of this bondage.

There are two phases to performing our every task in His name. Everything must be done not only in *obedience* to His authority, but also with complete *dependence* upon His help. That name hallows and makes noble every endeavor. Nothing is so trifling, so uninteresting but that this talisman can transform it into a thing of freshness and beauty. As of old, this name casts out devils and stills storms, gives all sufficiency to the weakest, and a deep interest in the dullest task.

By the magic of that phrase, in His name, a reason is discovered for thanksgiving in "whatsoever ye do." Thanksgiving is an alpha and an omega of the Christian life. Thankfulness prepares the way for all Christian graces; for tribulation is necessary for their development, and only a thankful heart can properly and promptly appropriate the blessings which are effectively concealed from all other eyes in this strange wrapping. All others think of God as a harsh exactor, and will later hear applied to themselves the term "slothful. The one who thinks of Him as a God who gives, and is always giving, will joyfully bring to Him the service of obedience and carry away the reward of a ripened character. He will bring his service not that he may be paid, but that the Master may be glorified.

If, when confronted by new duties or sufferings, we hear Jesus saying, "This do in remembrance of Me," life will be a sweet fellowship with Him; and every moment a golden vessel on which His name is engraved; each moment will bear the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." Ours is the altar that sanctifies both the gift and the Giver. By day or by night, in sunshine or under a clouded sky, in moments of repose or during the fiercest of activities, the sweet incense of a life devoted to Him arises from that altar, acceptable to God the Father through Him.

- P. E. Thomson

The Letter to the Colossians

"Wives submit" - "Husbands love" - "Children obey" - "Fathers provoke not." - Col. 3:18-21.

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - August, 1944)

THE INFLUENCE of the Bible has thoroughly reached every portion of the world known by most of us, and what it has accomplished in the transforming of the home is accepted as a thing to be expected. The instructions regarding the proper conduct of a Christian home, as given by the Apostle in the verses under consideration, and their context, and in 1 Cor. 7:10; 1 Tim. 3:11; Titus 2:4, 5; 1 Pet. 3:1-7, and more extensively in Paul's letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:22; 6:9), had nothing however of the familiar sound to the heathen of the first century. They were being introduced to what was in practically every particular a newness of life. As familiar as most of the principles laid down are to us, there are in them subtle suggestions that are apt to be overlooked largely because we do feel so familiar with Christian principles. The precepts are extremely simple and their necessity in the main quite obvious. The servant, the child, and the wife are instructed to obey, the husband to love, the father to show gentle consideration, and the master to show impartiality and justice.

These are not however merely rules of conduct the Apostle is giving, but methods by which our Heavenly Father may be glorified. Incidentally, the individual heeding the injunctions is himself richly blessed, and is constituted a greater means of blessing to those with whom circumstances daily give him contact.

Unfortunately, in our century there is a tendency to consider the word submission "old fashioned." Anything viewed as a means of giving honor to the name of our Heavenly Father will never become "old fashioned" with those who truly reverence Him, and the more difficult the circumstances, the more gladly will they render that homage. While submission is the keynote of the wife's relation to her husband, it is, however, submission only "as [Greek: because, or in the degree] it is fitting in the Lord." In the letter to the Ephesians the wifely relation is placed on the very 'highest of planes. It is there considered as a type of the relation of Christ and the Church. The duality, therefore, and the source of the wife's subjection to her husband, will be the same as the quality and the source of the new creature's subjection to Christ. In other words, love will be the animating principle.

In a proper marriage, the believing wife gives loving obedience, not because she has found a master, but because her heart has found a place of rest. But faith, raising her submission to a still higher plane, enables her to render joyful obedience even where the unworthiness of the head of the household is apparent, for she recognizes that the opportunity of honoring her heavenly Head is only the greater because of the difficulties the human relationship presents. She, too, must accept the privilege of obedience to an earthly husband as a means of proving her devotion to her heavenly Lord and an opportunity of practicing the complete submission that will be for eternity the glory of every member of the Bride Class.

Undoubtedly the process is made much easier, if not more beneficial, where there is reason for love and reverence, for the heart that loves cannot do otherwise than seek and rejoice in opportunities of serving. The nobler, the purer, the more unselfish the heart, the nobler, purer, and more unselfish will that service be.

Submission on the part of any one is limited by the restriction, "We must obey God rather than man." (Acts 5:29.) The wife might by human reasoning, make an additional exception where her judgment is of a superior quality. Popular opinion, however, confesses that the Scriptural standard is the one unconsciously accepted by mankind. Higher education has made submission of the wife more difficult in our day, but it is the more meritorious. It is the tendency for human logic to accept this as an excuse for insubordination, but the admonition still stands, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, *as it is fit in the Lord.*" They, like their Head, are learning submission by the things which they suffer. How convenient if a large portion of that suffering is in their home, and how joyfully they can accept it if they recognize its purpose and advantage. Whatever our heavenly Father's final verdict on one who, does not, as an honor to His name, gratefully profit by the privilege of submission, even the most difficult, we must remember we are not the judges. We can pity her for her lack of perception in failing to see the greatness of her privilege of by this means glorifying Him. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." - Eph. 5:22, 20.

THE HUSBAND'S DUTY

It is in connection with the Apostle's discussion in Ephesians of the husband's duty to his wife that he introduces the teaching that their relation corresponds to that of Christ and the Church. It is Christ's love, however, and not the love of the Church, that is taken as the example of perfection. The Lord's love for the Church is generous, calm, patient, self-sacrificing, truly self-forgetting, asking nothing but love, giving all, shrinking from no suffering, not even death itself. Christ loved the Church not because of her loveliness, for He "gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." - Eph. 5:26-28.

Much that the world calls love is selfishness. The couple married "in the Lord," may require years to attain the self less love Paul exhorts them to emulate. Because the husband loves, he will not be harsh or bitter-"cross or surly" is the "Centenary Translation of the New Testament" rendering. The Diaglott uses the word "harsh." If any husband finds his wife lacking in submission, he would do well to consider whether a kindlier, more Christlike disposition on his part, might not inspire submission. She may give the intermittent submission of fear to a gloomy, ill-natured, or surly husband. Christlikeness should evoke joyful, unbroken submission. She should rejoice to honor one with such a character, as her head and 'king-she as a queen freely doing the will of her honored and revered head. On the part of neither will there be a morbid fear of rights infringed, of independence lost, or regret for whims ungratified. Quarrels will give way to loving confidences. There is a practical lesson in Romans 12:1 for every husband and parent, for there is a winning power in "tender compassions." - Diaglott.

No human being, however close the relationship, can come between husband and wife without interfering with the Lord's plan for them. But the Lord can and must come between them, a third party uniting the two, to make them one "in the Lord." If that fact could always be kept in mind, the ideal marriage relationship would result; Each member of this partnership can do much to make it easier for the other to be conscious at all times of the Lord's presence as a bond of union.

THE DUTIES OF CHILD AND PARENT

The instruction to both parents and children [Mosaic Law: those who are not of age] is also brief but clear-gentle consideration, prompt obedience in all things, and with one necessary and proper exception: the command must be in harmony with the Lord's will.

Obedience has not reached absolute completeness unless it is prompt obedience. This only is the kind "well *pleasing* in the Lord." It is also to human eyes a gratifying spectacle, and much is added to the joy of later years for the one who can look back upon a childhood in which this was the habit. The story is recalled of Dr. Johnson, grown to manhood, standing bareheaded in the market place at Lichfield, with the rain pouring on him, in remorseful remembrance of boyish disobedience to his then deceased father. No tears are more bitter than those shed for wrongs done to one who is gone beyond the reach of our penitence.

Obedience to be fully pleasing to the Lord must be not only prompt but the response of love-not obedience that is rendered through fear. The Christian parent can make it much easier for the child to render this, type of obedience when his commands have been changed to love-inspired requests. Love will invariably endeavor to make commands less and less required and to eventually arrive at the condition where requests will be all that is necessary. This sometimes means many years of - training for both child and parent, and perhaps that is one reason' for the Lord's arrangement by which the child was left to the training of its parent until he was thirty years of age. Conditions in the world today might be very different if that divine provision had not been set aside. - Exod. 20:12; Lev. 19:3, 32; Deut. 4:9; 6:7; 11:18, 19; 27:16; 31:13; Psa. 34:11; Prov. 1:8; 6:20; 10:1; 13:24; 19:18; 20:11; 22:6, 15; 23:13, 14, 22; 26:3; 29:15; 30:17; Eccl. 12:1; Matt. 15:4; 1 Tim. 5:4.

There is no substitute for love in winning the confidence of the child. (Prov. 10:12.) His keen perception is quick to discover its lack, and however rigid the self-control of the parent, there are bound to be revealing moments of lovelessness moments when some tone or look betrays the selfishness that caused the parental outburst. The difficulty is practically the same if the parent does have love for the child but greater love for self.

Probably the greatest hindrance placed in the way of children's obedience in our day is the lack of respect parents show toward each other in the presence of the children. No Christian parent has the right to expect the child to be obedient to the one for whom he or she is showing no respect. The child must himself first be taught respect for both parents, since in no other attitude can he render obedience "well pleasing in the Lord." The Lord has well covered every phase of child discipline in this phrase, but for details, other Scriptures should be consulted. We recommend the rereading of Chapter XIII, Vol. VI, of "*Studies in the Scriptures.*" What is most needed is to surround our children with a 'thoroughly Christian atmosphere, from their earliest moments; to let them see in their parents the genuine fruits of spiritual life -- love, peace, purity, tenderness, kindness, unselfishness, loving thoughtfulness of others -- a holy life.

How do parents provoke their -children? Perhaps most often by unreasonable commands, unnecessary and capricious restrictions, alternating with' listless laying aside of all restraints, by failing to first learn self-.control themselves and to manifest it in tone and manner; and also by being prompt to see and speak of faults rather than of those things that are worthy of praise. Such failures on the part -of the parent are almost certain to be followed by bursts of temper on the child's part, as the parallel' Ephesians passage points out, for which the child will be punished, whereas the real guilt is the parent's. The result is often listlessness, less desire to give obedience,

and a certainty that it will be the fear-inspired kind instead of the love-inspired response that is pleasing to the Lord.

The child's sense of justice though, like his parents', tinged with selfishness, has not yet been depraved through his contacts with the world, and is apt to severely condemn all unthinking parental selfishness. Parental love can effectively train this sense of justice in almost every instance, into the better, the proper channel of devotion and joyful obedience to the self effacing parent. In other words, usually the thing necessary when listlessness and apathy is noted on the part of the child is not more scoldings from the parent but more self-examination on his part. A good teacher or parent, when a child is unresponsive, will first examine into his own faithfulness, and very honestly and minutely, before there is any criticism of the child. When a child's attitude says, "It is useless to try any more," or "What is the use of trying to please him?", the teacher or the parent may be almost certain the standard has not been set too high, but the reward too low. The rewards that the largest of incomes can provide are too low for the heart that is craving love.

We may best know what would be well-pleasing to the Lord by considering His treatment of the human family, rebellious and estranged from Him. (Psa. 89:30-33; Lam. 3:1.) His love withholds neither punishments nor blessings. But in making this comparison it must not be forgotten that the definite indication is that God's present procedure is best only for the present, and therefore to be superseded by a new arrangement in due time. At that time it is clear, love will not delay but hasten the hand of justice. Now "sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily" (Eccl. 8:11); but then every evil will have not only a speedy, but just, recompense. There is however an excuse for any parent reasonably delaying justice, for he must recognize the danger of injustice, or even unrighteous anger, in hasty judgment on his part. The parent who fails to guard against these things may some day learn that because of his fault there have been talents buried in a napkin. (1 Sam. 3:13; 2 Sam. 18:33.) It is sunshine that ripens fruit, and frost that scatters the blossoms. Bear in mind, too, that the power of Jesus in our lives is not because of austere commands, but because of His drawing near to every one of us to be a brother to us, one that "sticketh closer than a [natural] brother." The principle of the power of love to gain obedience is well illustrated by the experience of a sister who as principal of a graded school established so great a reputation for the school that yearly a great university sent a delegation to examine into her method. It is not probable that many of, the members of these committees ever comprehended her -explanation that the beautiful development of the children of that school was' the result of teaching them to do everything from the motive of love. The difficulty was not to teach the pupils that supreme lesson, but to find teachers who would cooperate.

There is a beautiful suggestion for parents also in the texts in Revelation that tell of Jesus' reign being a shepherding, though with a rod of iron. That will be a period of supreme rewards, attended however with retributive justice promptly administered. (Rev. 2:27; Psa. 2:8, 9, Rotherham.) The child is fortunate whose parents use the *spirit of that Age* in his rearing. That will be 'an application of the addition the parallel Ephesians passage makes: "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This, however, can lead to consecration unto death in this life only for those who are now called of the heavenly Father, for we have Jesus' plain statement on that (John 6:44); but the parent will have done his duty, and the fruitage in the next Age may be to the glory of God. Perhaps Dr. Maclaren's statement of the case in commenting on this text is too often true:

"I fear that [bringing children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord] is a duty fallen woefully into disuse in many Christian households. Many parents think it wise to send their children away from home for their education, and so hand over their moral and religious training to teachers. That 'may be right, but it makes the fulfillment of this precept all but impossible.

Others, who have their children beside them, are too busy all the week, and too fond of 'rest' on Sunday. Many send their children to Sunday School chiefly that they themselves may have a quiet house and a sound sleep in the afternoon."

The admonition to the children of Israel is just as applicable today to spiritual Israel: "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." - Deut. 6:6, 7; 4:9; 11:18, 19; Psa. 78:5-8, Col. 3:16.

- *P. E. Thomson.*

The Letter to the Colossians

"Continue in prayer, . . . Withal praying ... Walk in wisdom, . . . redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, . . . that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." - Colossians 4:2-6.

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - December, 1944)

FAR BEYOND their realization all of God's creatures are dependent on Him from whom comes all light, power, and life. In the passage last considered the Apostle gave instruction to Christian husbands, wives, children, masters, and slaves. These verses now before us open with an exhortation to constancy in prayer and watching therein with gratitude for past blessings as new light, life, and power are required. No Christian can walk so close to the heavenly Father that he will not have need of prayer, and every form of prayer, private, family, and class. Every sail will be set by those eager to make- port. If we would be "filled with all the fulness of God," we should appropriate every opportunity of fellowship with Him. Doubtless David's "seven times daily," a mere pittance for the earnest Christian, was merely a figurative expression of the constancy with which he prayed. - Psa. 119:164.

In asking prayers for himself the Apostle implies that if he has this need, there is no Christian who does not need and should not ask for the prayers of others. There may be implied also the duty of husband and wife and child praying together, and even the master and the slave joining their voices at the Throne. The word rendered "withal" has in it the thought of "at the same time with," and is so rendered by the Riverside New Testament.

The more sincerity, humility, unselfishness, and gratitude there is in the prayer-life, the more of godliness will there be in 'the relation of husband and wife, of child and parent, of master and slave. But to be effective, constancy in prayer is needed. "Attend constantly to prayer" is the Diaglott's exhortation. This is the thought also of 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing." For one to cease praying is to raise the white flag of surrender with an invincible army of reinforcement just in sight. The plan of the Apostles to "give themselves to prayer," the early disciples "continuing daily with one accord in the Temple" for prayer, and the exhortations to "continue instant in prayers" (Acts 6:4; 2:46; Rom. 12:12), give no occasion for the foolish thought that the Christian life consists only of prayer or that there must be the audible utterance every moment. God's message to us in the Bible is not words, but the thoughts of which the words are the vehicle. So with our prayers to, God; the words are not The prayers, but merely a convenience in expressing the thoughts. One, then; who constantly practices the presence of God in every thought and every activity is a praying Christian, and is constant in prayer, however many and insurmountable the hindrances that crowd out almost all opportunities of formulated petitions. Earnestness and fervor are necessary in that life of prayer that one may not be discouraged, for almost all if not all Christians have three "constant" enemies bitterly opposed to constancy in prayer -- the world, the archadversary, and his own flesh and the flesh of others.

COMMUNION

Not only must prayer be persisted in, but all three of its elements must be perpetuated -- communion, aspiration, and submission. Only with an unbroken consciousness of God's presence can there be unbroken communion. For the true saint the reeking odors of Simon's tannery are as conducive to saintly devotion as the sweet fragrance of priestly incense, the noise of madly whirring factory wheels as the silence of the cloistered abbey, the filth and squalor of the crowded city streets as the purity of heaven itself. In truth these hindrances but drive one to flee for self

preservation to the one place. where peace and perfection may be found. Distressing scenes, that would if he permitted them crowd all else from his thought, surround every Christian; but lifting his eyes above them, he fixes his gaze on, the mountains of God's wisdom, justice, love, and power "that tower in the vista of every avenue of his life.

ASPIRATION

It is impossible that the spirit of aspiration should be lacking in the prayer of one who through his days is conscious of the presence of God in all his affairs To know God is to have a consuming desire to be like Him. This, too, is intensified, as closeness to Him reveals in vivid contrast our unworthiness of such fellowship. In the presence of His power our weakness. would be appalling, and how discouraging the contrast of our folly with His wisdom., our sinfulness with His holiness, if that walking and talk ing with Him were not the means of appropriating to ourselves His graces as an overcoming power in our lives. It is said that "In a certain valley in Rumania there is a most beautiful garden containing nothing but roses. When the season is at its height, the perfume- is such that if you visit the garden, and come back to the city, people know at once where you have been. You carry the fragrance with you. Is it not, then, as true, if we, frequent the presence of God, delighting in the glory and excellencies of Christ, we may come back to the city and shed the fragrance of His presence around." - Bible, Students Monthly.

SUBMISSION

The third quality is essential also. If there is to be uninterrupted communion, and if aspiration is to be cleansed of all selfishness, there must be uninterrupted submission. As we pray not, "Grant this thing because I deserve it" but "because of Jesus' merit," so we pray not, "Do this because I wish it," but "Grant that Thy will may be done, and mine never yea, that I may cease to have a will or even a preference in Thy presence." This spirit of submission, learned at His footstool, transmutes the most menial of tasks into service to Him as part of our "acceptable sacrifice."

One has compared the prayer-life of a Christian to the deep bass note' of the organ above which rises and falls ever-changing melodies and harmonies. All are bound into one harmonious whole by it, and so prayer and its spirit running through the day make of that day, however varied it may be, however crowded with cares it may be a day of communion, aspiration, and submission.

WATCHING

The very constancy of prayer makes more necessary the matter of "watching therein." Drowsiness is, apt to overcome one continuously engaged in any matter, and what saint is there who has not at times found his altar set up on the borders of Slumberland. In an affair more important to the interests of the flesh, when one finds his' eyelids growing heavy, he takes a stimulant. Paul is suggesting this method in spiritual matters; but he would have us use the most effective -of all stimulants, "thanksgiving." No other' thing can be so conducive to fervor in prayer as genuine appreciation for the favors attained as a restilt of previous hours on our knees. Watching there .fore closely to see the loving Father's will for us in every affair, His powerful handy shaping every event, His wisdom preventing each test greater than we are able to bear, His grace supplying strength sufficient for every time of need, in every respect His strength manifesting its perfection in our weakness, prayer will seldom lag or become drowsy. These prayers will be "in the spirit." - Eph. 6:8.

For most Christians it is probably a help to have definite times of prayer, and if the mind wanders as the result of -too long sessions of prayer, the simple remedy is more frequent and shorter seasons, as well as a more intense interest in the things about which one prays. And let no one think that having the spirit of prayer is a substitute for and relieves one of the need of frequent opportunities of formulated praise and petition. Though we may not be able to spend nights on the mountain in prayer, or often "rise up a great while before day" for our devotions, ours is not the Christ-life unless prayer is a prominent feature of it. With a sense of our need there will be "strong crying and tears" that must be expressed; with a sense of our occasions for gratitude, there must be .a pouring forth of a torrent of praise, incense very grateful to our heavenly Father. As memory is woven into hope, there will be for him who watches in prayer, aspirations daily striving for higher ground. "Nearer my God to Thee."

Albert Barnes wrote in commenting on, Matthew 6:5 - "Every, Jewish house had a place for secret devotion. The roofs of their houses were flat places for walking, conversation, and meditation, in 'the cool of the evening. Over the porch, or entrance of the house, was, however, a small room of the size of the porch, raised a story above the rest of the house, expressly appropriated for the place of retirement. Here, in secrecy and solitude, the pious Jew might offer his prayers, unseen by any but the Searcher of hearts.... This is the place commonly mentioned in the New Testament as, the Upper Room, or place for secret prayer. The meaning of the Savior is that 'there should be some place where we may be in secret -- where we may be alone with God. Since the Master who had not where, to lay His head could always find a place for His secret devotions, and since He suggested that arrangement to those who followed with Him, there would seem to be little excuse for any today failing to find time and place for solitary communion with God. If the will is present, the way will be found.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

In his dismal, barren Roman cell, wrists chafed with heavy' iron fetters, -the prisoner sends out a call for help; but what humility, what lowliness of tone there is in his "withal praying for us"; what self forgetfulness in his "praying for' us that God may open unto us a door for the Word." This thing for which he is in bonds, the "open Secret," Moffatt renders it, and "the sacred Secret," Rotherham, is so important to him that he can forget his "bonds" in his eagerness that it shall be proclaimed. ' He does not even pray 'that there shall be any penalty imposed on this base earthly government for, the indignity done his heavenly Government by pacing its ambassador in bonds. (Eph. 6:19.) He does not ask even the boon of a single ray of sunshine for himself, but only freedom for the Word of God. Philippians 1:13, written apparently about this same time, tells of the answer received to those or similar prayers. Not only among the soldiers of the "Pretorium Camp (Diaglott footnote), but "in all other places" "the things which had happened unto" him "had fallen out . . . unto the progress of the Gospel." The wisdom of his God had chosen 'the apparently barren soil of a soldier camp to plant seeds that were to bear a fruitage that would be borne to "every place," perhaps by those' very soldiers that placed the fetters on his wrists or stood guard over him day and night. The prison doors of Rome were no more effective in confining a messenger of the "sacred Secret" than were those of Jerusalem or those of Philippi. - Acts, 5:19; 12:10; 16:26.

Paul wished to proclaim the message of the Kingdom privileges for the Gentiles, not because it would bring comfort to his body or add friends to his companionship, but because that was the message given the Church to preach. Like Peter (1 Pet. 2:12), though every Jew and every Gentile should "speak against him as an evil doer," he would pray and enlist the brethren to pray for him that a door of opportunity might be opened for yet wider distribution of this message that was more precious to him than the approval of his neighbors or even-than life itself.

He preached that message knowing that the consequence would be "bonds awaiting him at Rome." And from Rome he pleaded for further privileges of "suffering with Christ." But with all his learning and experience, he still was not self-confident: "Pray for me that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak."

THE PROPER CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

Paul writes to those who "have fled for refuge" to Christ, and who there are safe from the storms that threaten those still "without." These, hearing some little of the Christian standards, decide as to the wisdom of joining or not joining us "within." That decision is based as much, if not more, on what they see of our lives than on what they hear of our message. It is extremely important, therefore, that the messenger shall not be primarily concerned with self and personal, comfort and welfare; but it is just as or more important that he shall think of self in so far as he represents the message he proclaims.; One cannot honestly preach "Peace on earth, good will toward men," and be a trouble maker; tell of 'blessings for all the families of the earth, and not seek to "do good unto all men as there is opportunity"; proclaim a God of love and not strive to manifest His graces in every word and act. "If any will not hear the Word, they may without the Word be won." (1 Pet. 3:1.) As' today a larger measure of morality has through the influence of Christian teachings been attained by the world; and through the close affiliation between "sheep and wolf" much of the world's spirit has been imparted to the organizations that bear His name, the Christian will have to be as wise as an unusually wise serpent or the world will have only the ministry of words to get from him.

"And the wisdom which is to mold our lives in view of these' outsiders will 'discern both time and judgment,' will try to take the measure of men and act accordingly. Common sense and practical sagacity, are important accompaniments of Christian zeal. What a singularly complex character, in this respect, was Paul's enthusiastic and yet capable of such diplomatic adaptation; and withal never dropping to cunning, nor sacrificing truth! Enthusiasts who despise worldly wisdom, and therefore often dash them selves against stone walls, are not: rare; cool calculators who abhor all generous glow of feeling and have ever a pail full of cold water for any project which shows it, are only too common-but fire and ice together, like a volcano with glaciers streaming down its cone are rare. Fervor married to tact, common sense which keeps close to earth and enthusiasm which flames heaven high, are a rare combination."

TIME AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT

A special way of showing wisdom toward those "without," is by "making the most of our opportunities," as Goodspeed, apparently correctly, renders the phrase that our King James and Revised Versions give us as "redeeming the time." In the margin we find, "buying up the opportunity." Make your own the passing moments to use them not for self but in this great thing that demanded all the talents of the talented Paul. It is a wide-awake Christian that does not permit the world to "buy up" what we have covenanted to give the Lord of influence and time. In the sense of this Goodspeed Translation, to make, the most of his opportunities, one must know something of the characters he might be used in influencing, so that if they take, offense, it will not be because of his unwisdom. Our message should also be "in season" for them. Otherwise the grace with which he enjoins seasoning our speech will go unheeded. . We may not be fully informed today as to the Apostle's meaning in using the figure of salt in this connection. Perhaps Goodspeed is correct in his interpretation which he gives as a translation: "Always put your message attractively, and yet pointedly." The latter phrase is a valuable suggestion, but the other is weak. Grace *is* much more than attractiveness. Spencer uses the word "courteous"; the Diaglott,

"affability." Thayer defines it as "sweetness, charm, loveliness," in this connection. Note the linking of wisdom and grace also in Colossians 3:16, but there the word probably carries both its meanings, including also the divine favor, an inward condition marked by its outward expression in loveliness which in spite of its medium shows some traces of divine likeness. Let our "citizenship" be betrayed by the 'spiritual "accent" of our conversation.

Salt of an aromatic variety was used in the temple sacrifices to cover unpleasant odors. 'Perhaps the intent of the suggestion is that in addition to letting, no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth," ours shall be the "sacrifice of praise to God continually." That salt will preserve our conversation from the corruption of frivolous vaporizings, unchristian gossip, ill-natured complainings, etc.

Salt was used among the Greeks as a symbol of wit, because of its giving savor to the conversation. Judging by the Apostle's example, we can only suppose that if he has this use in mind, he is doing no more than warning against a too ponderous and pedantic style in our presenting of the message. The conversation should demonstrate the Christian graces. Let them, together with the great joy we have in our message, be the advance agents of that message, seems to be his recommendation.

Paul presupposes that the brethren at Colosse know *what* they should answer, and does not wish" it to lose its effectiveness, as unfortunately most of us know it can do, by our not remembering "*how* we ought to answer every man." The grace of self-forgetfulness, having no desire .to glorify ourselves as great Bible students; the grace of consideration, knowing that the one to whom we are speaking has some beliefs of his own which are very precious to him; the grace" of gentleness, that prefers to move slowly rather than wound deeply; the grace of long-suffering, that leaves one undisturbed however aggravating the attitude of the hearer may be; the grace of meekness, that wins respect instead of repelling; the grace of self-control, that makes all these others persist however long the Lord keeps us waiting for evidence of fruitage to our labors-all these are necessary that we may know "how" to give our answers, and since none of them are natural to our fallen nature, the opening, exhortation of this passage must be had recourse to: "Continue, *steadfastly* in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving."

- P. E. Thomson.

The Letter to the Colossians

"All my affairs shall Tychicus. make known unto you, the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord: whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our estate, and that he may comfort your hearts; together with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one; of you. They shall make known unto you all things that are done here:" - Col, 4:7-9.

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - February, 1945)

THE FEW verses that remain of this Epistle to be considered have to do with Paul's personal friends, and the verses we are now to examine introduce us to the two brothers who were the bearers of this letter and the one to Philemon. Dr. Wordworth's rendering of 2 Tim. 4:12 makes Tychicus also the messenger who delivered- the first letter to Timothy, probably at the time of this mission to Colosse. The route Tychicus took in this journey was probably across Italy, then by sea to Greece, across Greece, and by sea from there to Asia, the Asia Minor of today. It is probable that one more letter may have been delivered at this time, the letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 6:21, 22), for the seaport at which he landed was Ephesus, from which, , probably after a much needed rest and the 'spiritual refreshment the brethren there would be to him, he must travel through rough passes to the upland valley where lay Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. This final stage was, however, perhaps the easiest part of the journey for him, for here he was treading the soil of his homeland. We are not told what his native city was, but apparently it was not Colosse, since if that had been the case Paul would undoubtedly have mentioned that fact when giving it as the home of Onesimus.

In five books of the New Testament Tychicus is referred to, and in four of these he is explicitly mentioned as an Asiatic. According to Acts 20:4, he was one of the number, perhaps seven, who traveled with Paul on his return journey from the third missionary pilgrimage; but he did not complete that trip, being left behind, probably at Miletus. (Acts 20:15, 38; 21:29.) The other mentions of him are in Titus 3:12 and Ephesians 6:21. This last is of special interest as Tychicus is the only brother honored by mention in this Epistle. It is thought probable that he is also the brother alluded to in 2 Corinthians 8:18 as an associate of Titus in the service of collections for the poor. He stands as a representative of the many unheralded though faithful servants, from whose number a few were selected by divine inspiration to give us a glimpse into the shadowy beginnings of the "Mystery hid from ages and generations," "in God." (Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:9.) His name is but a shadow that appears for only a moment, but long enough to assure us of the greatness and sacredness of secular service done for Christ, however small it may be.

He does not appear in the inspired record until near the conclusion of Paul's missionary work, and it seems probable was a fruit of the Apostle's long residence in Ephesus, terminated by the first recorded trade union violence. There was a short stay in Europe for Paul, and then began his last fateful journey to Jerusalem in which he was joined at different places and times by that interesting group of friends, three from Europe, four from "Asia," and two of these from the wilder inland country of Lycaonia. Tychicus and Trophimus were from Western Asia. (Acts 20:4; 21:29.) Only the latter is definitely mentioned as continuing with Paul to Jerusalem, but it is natural to infer that the purpose of all these brethren in joining his company was to be with him at the journey's end. Aristarchus, of Thessalonica, is mentioned as having sailed with him on his return from Palestine, implying that he alone was left to minister to the Apostle's needs. - Acts 27:2.

PAUL, A WISE AND FAITHFUL STEWARD

From the letter to the Corinthians we learn that the Apostle was too sagacious-and too conscious of the danger of brethren seizing on slight pretexts for criticism, not to have with him some one to, share in the responsibility the funds. for the poor involved. If this was his purpose in selecting brethren from widely separated sections of his mission field to attend him, we can see the wisdom, in the course; and in it we can see a good example for those who have the responsibility of administering the financial affairs of others either before or after their death.

It is supposed the journey of Tychicus and Onesimus occurred about 62 or 63 A. D., four, or five years " after Paul's last pilgrimage to the beloved Jewish capital. The two brothers were to supply for the Colossian brethren the details regarding the Apostolic mission which were omitted from the Epistle, some of which it would doubtless have been indiscreet to commit to writing, particularly facts regarding "those of Caesar's household." They would be eager to hear what was the subject matter of the discourses delivered by Paul in this journey, the arguments he had presented in personal contacts with Jew and Gentile, and the many precious hours he and Tychicus had spent alone, whether in the prison cell or the cottage hired later.

It is now generally believed that the letter to the Ephesians, as it is usually designated, was really, a circular letter. That being the case, and this being the occasion of its delivery, we can imagine Tychicus rehearsing the many details of the Apostle's service to each of the little groups of Bible students in western "Asia." As a native of this territory, he was the logical one for that mission. How these little groups, in their quiet upper rooms or, at some secluded point on a river's brink, must have hung on every word of his narrative. With each telling the scenes and words recounted would become more precious to the reporter as well as to the audience; and we may be confident many tears of joy and of sympathy fell during those sacred occasions of heart fellowship.

There were some sad hearts in that company to be comforted, for there were some of their brethren who were being led away with strange doctrines. Tychicus could tell them of many such that Paul had sought to help, confidently, however, leaving the results to the Lord. There was a hope, too, that the ministry of Tychicus might inspire some of these faltering ones to return to their first love. Nothing is more powerful in influencing people to believe the truth than a knowledge of its power in a life. Of all "living epistles" there was none that would better repay study of it than Paul's own, nor any that Tychicus would rather dwell upon. This is not the last we hear of Paul's "faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord." Once more the Apostle at least plans to send him on a mission, this time to Brother Titus in the island of Crete. - Titus 3:12.

PAUL AND TYCHICUS PART

Not until Paul was confident that the time of his departure was at hand did, *he* dispense with the ministrations of this faithful servant. (2 Tim. 4:12.) We have only our untrustworthy imaginations to guide us as regards that parting. The joy of a return to his old home, and the friends old and new awaiting him there, could not lessen even in a slight degree the sadness of Tychicus in that moment. There was no intimation of a mission to the churches in connection with this final journey, but one who had long devoted himself to others could not so suddenly change. Doubtless in him the Lord found one just suited to the needs of Western Asia Minor and its many little groups of believers. Ten years of faithful service with the wise Apostle would well prepare him for the handling of many a difficult situation as it arose in later years. The one who would brave the dangerous journey from Rome to Colosse to deliver two or more letters was ready for the final journey and anything he would find awaiting him at its end.

Our reason for confidence in Tychicus is not based on these surmisings, however, but on the Apostle's commendation of him, calling him a "beloved brother," a "faithful minister." In this last phrase Paul is speaking of the personal attendance of Tychicus upon the Apostle, as secretary and general helper to take care of many little details that otherwise would have robbed the more capable brother of precious privileges of service for which he alone was suited. An honest, loving, and zealous soul, though he is no orator, no organizer, nor a great thinker, if he does not shrink from menial tasks and is willing to perform them with no thought of the plaudits of the multitude, will find the Lord ready with tasks suited for his abilities.

If Tychicus exercised any of the prevalent "gifts of the spirit" that fact was not mentioned. He had a more important mission, to fulfil. He "ran errands" faithfully. "Well done, good and *faithful* servant" will sound just as sweet to the one who has busied

himself in .doing little things for the Lord as it will to an Apostle or an orator. Even the greatest of the Apostles could not hope for the final divine approval until he had proved himself "faithful in that which is least" -- such trifles as tent-making and dictating letters for slaves.

Tychicus was not only a faithful servant, or deacon, to Paul in his personal needs, but had the yet higher distinction of ,being a "fellow slave in the Lord." In this expression the writer and the deliverer of the letters are brought to the same level. Tychicus rejoiced to be the servant. of the Apostle, who refused the title of master of the slave, recognizing that "One [and only One] is our Master, even Christ." True Christian love and fellowship prompted Paul to use this phrase, which reveals something of the motive that prompted such devotion in the heart of Tychicus. The phrase not only shows to us something of the Apostle's character, but tells us of the value of small things done as unto the Lord. It demonstrates to us the divine recognition of the ones who are used in holding up the hands of more talented but no more appreciated servants. "In the Lord" all service and all brethren are great and should be so appraised by those who have the mind of the Lord. It takes a Paul to write the letters, and a Tychicus for their delivery. Each is deserving of our warm gratitude, and our failure to show it cannot but count against us.

GOD'S ORGANIZATION,

The distinction between sacred and secular occupations disappears, too, when they are done as unto the Lord and under His direction. Efficiency in His service demands organization of, effort just as any secular activity demands it, and, if promoted for His glory and conducted under His direction, will have His reward, without regard to the number of "talents" available. Every individual, as well as every little assembly of the Lord's people, has the privilege of demonstrating this principle. The building of the fires, the sweeping and the dusting, are exact counterparts of the tasks performed in the adjoining house; but here, done for the Lord, are as certain of His reward as the most carefully thought out discourse ever delivered. It is not the nobility of the task but the motive back of it that determines its greatness.

During all the weeks of his trip to Colosse, it could hardly once have entered the mind of Tychicus that his name was to be known wherever the Gospel was preached; and that thousands were to be encouraged to faithfulness by his devotion -- that others were to be spurred to faithfulness in the doing of trivial things and thus unsuspected by themselves, perhaps be gaining immortality for their names. For a few centuries the pomp of the "eternal city" has continued, but when men have learned the emptiness of its vanity and boasting, little Colosse, made famous because Tychicus took a letter there, will still have a hallowed place in the divine "Hall of Fame." Nero will rise to "lasting shame and contempt," Tychicus to eternal glory. All things done for Christ are eternal, whether or not they are known and acclaimed by men. But note that no one serves alone in the courts of our temple, except the High Priest. We are acceptable only as members of His Body and as joint participators in His grace,

the grace accorded *every member of* that Body. This is an equally blessed partnership whether our nearest neighbor in it is a Tychicus or a Paul.

The soil that was fruitful for Christ in Paul's day is now overrun with the weeds of Mohammedanism. The labor of Paul and Tychicus to human eyes seems wasted, obliterated by time. Paul however was no writing for the little handful at Colosse only, but for a world of disciples. Tychicus was not only carrying his letters across the seas, but across the centuries. Using the opportunities at hand, they were performing more wisely than they knew, for they were cooperating in an organization whose all wise Head was making all the plans. They had no knowledge as to where their labor was to end. Their only responsibility was with its beginning, in their own hearts. God has directed the flow of the stream that has sent its refreshment into thousands of gardens.

It is not what we see of results that counts, but what God plans; and what God sees are the heart motives. It is not our, planning, but His blessing that brings the worthwhile results. When the heart is right, the blessing is given. Our wisdom is no less foolishness with Him than, is the world's. So far as results are concerned none of the 144,000 will have much to show when compared with the great total of our Heavenly Father's purpose, but how inestimable will be their reward. "*Greater* works than these shall ye do." If no task He assigns is too small for us, if we are "faithful in that which is least," greater works than our Head and Master performed here on earth will be assigned to us—those who are prepared unto *every* good work (2 Tim. 2:21); and that will be only one little feature of the great reward of those who are "faithful unto death." Not alone the one: that thinks of great things to do, will receive that reward; but every one whose rule of life is, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," remembering that "Neither is he, that planteth anything, nor he that watereth -- but, God who causeth to grow. Moreover he that planteth and he that watereth are one: howbeit each one his own reward shall receive -- according to his own labor. For we are God's fellowworkmen: Ye are God's farm, God's building." 1 Cor. 3:7-9, Rotherham.

ONESIMUS

It seems that Paul is combining with this mission to the Colossian Ecclesia the personal service to Philemon and Onesimus of reuniting them, this time not only as master and slave but as brethren in Christ. There is no reason to suppose that Onesimus, the run away slave of Philemon, had not formerly the usual faults and vices of his class, but Onesimus, the thief, returns, "the faithful and beloved brother." He had seen Jesus, for he had seen one in whom Christ dwelt. An appropriate time for us to become better acquainted with Onesimus would be in connection with a study of the letter to Philemon. This may sometime be our privilege.

In the King James Version the explanation of the purpose of Brother Tychicus' mission is "that he might know your estate." Other manuscripts than those used for this version give the reading of the Revised Versions: "that ye may know our estate." Most translators follow the latter, which seems the sensible thing to do since this gives a meaning more in agreement with the rest of the passage.

With a graciousness worthy of emulation, the Apostle includes the returning slave in the mission of making "known all things that are done" among the brethren in Rome, making him equally an authority and alike trustworthy with Tychicus of the untarnished record. Onesimus, too, was to be accepted as a comforter of the brethren.

In Paul, in Tychicus, in Onesimus, Christ is manifested as each of their fellow slaves would like Him to be revealed in them, that all who "narrowly observe" us, however slight the contact, may discover that we too have been with Jesus and have learned of Him.

- P. E. Thomson.

The Letter to the Colossians

"Aristarchus ... Mark ... Justus ... Epaphras ... Luke... Demas, . . . salute you." - Col. 4:10-14.

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - April, 1945)

IN THE unity of faith, conflicting patriotisms have disappeared, language barriers are hurdled, and men of different races, men who probably have never seen each other face to face, sending their salutations to a little far off Phrygian village in a secluded valley of Asia Minor, clasp hands across the seas. These salutations may be divided into three groups: the first from three broad minded Jewish Christians. Their greeting has special meaning, coming from those who by nature would have the least sympathy with Paul's work among the Gentiles. One of the greetings is from their own Elder, Epaphras, possibly the same individual as referred to by the name Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25; 4:18. A third is from two others of their own Gentile blood-one, Paul's most faithful friend, and the other, one almost unknown, mentioned without comment, perhaps because the character was already forming that suggested nothing good to say.

Of four of these little is known, and except for Paul's mention of them their acquaintance would never have been made until our meeting beyond the veil. It will be interesting to piece together the little we do know about them, studying them as exemplars of certain principles and practices.

The investigation of the first three is simplified by the presence of the well known Mark in this list of progressive Jewish Christians, sympathetic and evidently non-ceremonial. The first in the list, Aristarchus, bears a Gentile name though Paul assures us he is "of the circumcision." (Col. 4:11.) Acts 20:4 tells that he was "of the Thessalonians." It is quite likely he was one of Paul's converts on that first missionary journey through Europe. Six Gentile names among the seven deacons listed in Acts 6:5, all of whom were Jews, prepare us to find it quite a general custom for Jews of the dispersion, like foreigners in our own land, to adopt some name congenial to their neighbors' ears. At the time of the trade union riot at Ephesus (Acts 19:29), his life was endangered along with that of his fellow-Macedonian, Gaius. He was with Paul on his return to Asia (Acts 20:4); and again in that fateful journey to Rome. (Acts 27:2.) Like Tychicus, he seems also to have been a member of the company that joined Paul in the trip to Jerusalem; at least he was in Palestine with Paul, for the passage last cited tells of his sailing with him when he left for Rome. We do not know how long he continued with the Apostle on that journey; but if at any point Paul was left to proceed without him, as perhaps for a visit to his own home, he was soon with him again, standing valiantly and enthusiastically by him in his work.

His name is connected with that of Epaphras in the Letter to Philemon, written at the same time; but in that Letter he is not given, the honorable title, "fellow-prisoner," that is granted him here, for there Epaphras is the honored one. Regarding this interesting fact, Alexander Maclaren writes: "That interchange has been explained by an ingenious supposition that Paul's friends took it in turn to keep him company, and were allowed to live with him, on condition of submitting to the same restrictions, military guardianship, and so on. There is no positive evidence in favor of this, but it is not improbable, and, if accepted, helps to give an interesting glimpse of Paul's prison life, and of the loyal devotion which surrounded him." Adam Clarke comments: "As Aristarchus had been a zealous and affectionate adherent to St. Paul, and followed him in all his journeys, ministering to him in prison, and assisting him in preaching the Gospel in Rome, he might have been imprisoned on this account. We need not suppose that both he and Epaphras were imprisoned at the same time: about the same time they might be imprisoned, but it might be so

ordered by the providence of God that when Aristarchus was imprisoned, Epaphras was at liberty; and while Epaphras was in prison, Aristarchus was at liberty. This is a very possible, and easily to be conceived case."

THE WELL-KNOWN MARK

Twelve years before this, Mark had attached himself to the first missionary band that left Jerusalem. The others in the band were the Apostle Paul and Mark's relative, Barnabas, of whom we hear no more after his contention with the Apostle Paul over the question of taking Brother Mark with them on a later trip. Charitably-minded commentators have ascribed to his youth, Mark's desertion of Paul and Barnabas when they reached Perga on that first trip. Evidently Paul had also some such charitable explanation, or there was later, considerable growth manifested in this spiritual son of Peter. (1 Pet. 5:13.) Just prior to his desertion, the company had been for a time on the Island of Cyprus, the native land of Barnabas, where there were perhaps many childhood memories to cause the homesick youth to develop an uncontrollable longing for the mother he had left in Jerusalem. Thousands of lads today can testify to the power of that home tie.

It is unknown as to how Mark happened to be with Paul at Rome at the time of the writing of the Letter to Colosse. Apparently he is on a missionary journey, or perhaps is commencing one under the inspiration of the spirit he has found in the prison cell at Rome. Paul suggests a possibility of Mark including Colosse in his itinerary. Perhaps the disrepute into which he fell through his once deserting the Apostle still lingers in the minds of some, for Paul urges, with emphasis upon the words "receive him," that they give a warm welcome to the evangelist.

PAUL THE AFFLICTED

Not less than sixty years old, and probably considerably older, surely more or less broken through the rigors of the sacrifices entailed by his extensive traveling under most difficult circumstances, and "in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft, of the Jews five times" receiving forty stripes save one; thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice suffering shipwreck, a night and a day in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by his own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness; besides those things that are without, that which came upon him daily, the care of all the churches (2 Cor. 11:23-28) -- Paul was much in need of the loving ministrations of a devoted disciple. In Mark, Paul sees just such a brother. (2 Tim. 4:11); and by his sending for him sets us an example of forgetting blots that are on a brother's past, at the same time suggesting to those of us who remember either much or little in our own past, remote or recent, that is painful to us, the wisdom of striving for the "higher ground" where we can by our nearness to our God be of use to Him in bringing comfort to some of those precious to Him. Ours is a ministry of reconciliation, not of condemnation. "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." - Gal. 6:1.

JESUS, CALLED JUSTUS

"Jesus, which is called Justus!" How the name startles us. Jesus, the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua (Jehovah-is-salvation), was probably a name common among the Jews until the coming of the Savior. He made that name despised among the Jews, and too holy for a Christian to retain. We suggest this latter as the probable reason for Paul's companion adopting the Latin name, Justus.

Made immortal by this reference to him, with it Justus entirely disappears from the sacred records. His is the only name in this list not to reappear in the Letter to Philemon. The only reason for his mention now is his desire to be included in, the message of love going to the brethren at Colosse. Men of the world have sacrificed health, fortune, and even the closest of friends, that posthumous fame might be theirs; but, even if he made the same sacrifices, he has gained immortal fame by merely wearing the sweet fragrance of love, and by being a broad-minded disciple -- one of the three Jewish Christians in Rome supporting the Apostle in his carrying of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

COMFORTERS, AND SOWERS OF DISCORD

By the cooperation of these three in Paul's life-mission, they have not only been a "comfort" to him, but have lost the fellowship of the less progressive converts of their nationality in that city. They were, however, well compensated for that sacrifice. "He [Paul] uses a half medical term, which perhaps he had caught from the physician at his elbow, which we might perhaps parallel by saying they had been a 'cordial' to him -- like a refreshing draught to a weary man, or some whiff of pure air stealing into a close chamber and lifting the damp curls on some hot brow." (*The Expositor's Bible.*) The isolation of these three, hints at the antagonism prevalent in the early, days among the Jewish Christians to this carrying of the blessings of the Gospel beyond the bounds of Judaism, thus ending their treasured, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2.) Proselyting was an old and honored custom. But to all except the few, to suggest that a covenant relationship with God could be established without passing through the rigors of the Law Covenant, was unthinkable. All his life Paul's footsteps were dogged by law minded Christians, who, without missionary zeal themselves, unwilling to suffer the privations of the missionary's life, delighted to track his steps and place their shackles on those his Gospel had set free.

Even though he is in prison, there is no rest for the Apostle from these ritualistic Christians. They are still preaching Christ "from envy and strife." (Phil 1:15.) Fine men they doubtless were, but their slow moving minds could not keep pace with the Gospel that overnight threw wide open its doors to the whole Gentile world, and announced the transference of every hope from Moses to Christ. But there were these three Jewish Christians in Rome, large hearted and progressive, because they not only believed the Abrahamic promise but partook of its spirit, the spirit that must eventually seal every Christian before he can be admitted to the heavenly courts to share in that most blessed of privileges, the giving of life, health, joy, peace, home, to men. (Eph. 1:13, Diaglott.) Paul knew their bravery, for he had taken the same stand against his own nation. He knew, too, that the coldness of the others was inspired by devotion to an ideal, the very ideal that had driven him to the breathing out of threatenings and slaughter against his own kinsmen. Who could better excuse them?

These men were better than mere sympathizers, saying, "God bless you in your work" -- they were "fellow-workers," bruising their own hands to clear stones from the narrow way that had been opened up for the feet of all the "called of the Father, Jew and Gentile. (Matt. 7:14; John

6:44.) They recognized a divine revelation in Judaism, but saw it now not as a goal but as a prophecy of a more glorious revelation of God in His Son. They therefore gladly cast in their all with one whose only aim was to "preach Christ." (1 Cor. 1:23.) Judaism served its purpose: but the serpent in the wilderness must give way to the Crucified Son; Moses, the Law-giver, be succeeded by Jesus, the fulfiller of the Law; the ministration of condemnation, death, be ended by the ministration of righteousness, more "glorious" by far than all that had gone before. - 2 Cor. 3:7-11.

Some of us modern Christians may be saved from an obstinate conservatism if we will give brief thought to the other brethren in Rome that Paul does not mention, for it was probably not devotion to the Mosaic Law that bound these unsympathetic brethren, but their fanatical subserviency to the man made additions to it that the centuries had accumulated as thick as barnacles on a ship -- rabbinical *interpretations*. It is never the ark of God that is in danger, but those who would set it right. Even though many stars have gone out, the Gospel Sun is still shining. Not what we think we have proved to be the truth is truth, but those statements signed, "Thus saith the Lord." There is always a possibility of error where human interpretation enters; therefore, since we are to speak the truth with meekness, how much more important that this virtue be apparent when interpretations are the theme.

EPAPHRAS, A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST

The dangers that were threatening the Ecclesia of Christians in Colosse, weighed so heavily upon the heart of their Elder, the one who had introduced the truth to them, that he undertook the long journey to Rome for a consultation with the Apostle to the Gentiles. He was not there, however, to portray the Colossian brethren as black as he could, for he gave full prominence to their faith in the glad tidings, their fruitfulness, and their "love in the spirit." Paul in turn praised them in this Letter which the visit of Epaphras had inspired; nor did he neglect to eulogize Epaphras, his "beloved fellow-servant," their "faithful minister of Christ." There is wisdom in this course, for some who heard this Letter read might feel resentment against their fellow-citizen for having reported their condition. Any feeling of displeasure there might have been was offset by this eulogy, by Epaphras' salutation, and by the accompanying assurance that he was always striving for them in his prayers that they might stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. (Ver. 12.) Toil of body and mind may be inferred in the statement of the next verse: "For I bear him witness, that he hath much labor for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for them in Hierapolis."

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

In Christian intercession there is genuine power. In fact in our prayers, even "though thought be broken, language lame," we have one of the most precious of a Christian's possessions. When our prayers are started on their way, they are as far from perfection as all else we do. Providentially, "The Spirit assists our weakness; for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself intercedes on behalf of saints." (Rom. 8:27.) The divine record tells us nothing as to the answer to the prayers of Epaphras on behalf of the Church at Colosse. Other examples of intercessory *prayer*, such as that of Abraham for Lot and that of Jesus for Simon Peter, encourage us to believe that his prayers were heard and the congregation brought safely through the crisis, though, like Lot, the faithful ones may have seen many around them go down in defeat. In his prayers, the love of Epaphras found more apt expression than the most nicely rounded out phrases, or the most painstaking service could supply; but even prayer, supremely powerful though it is, could not make unnecessary the service of love in word and deed in the proper time and place. Activity and words without prayer are feeble; and prayer, the sincerity of which is not proved by cooperation in act and word is, like faith without works, dead. Colosse was assured of

all three of these on the part of their absent Elder. Regarding his prayer, the word Paul employs tells us it was the "effectual fervent prayer" that avails. (James 5:16.) The metaphor used is suggested by the wrestling match, and implies giving the last ounce of one's energy in this matter of prayer, just as Jacob wrestled until break of day with the angel, or as Jesus strove in His agony in the Garden. True love, knowing the danger of his loved ones, could not stop with less than this.

He prays for them, steadfastness-that they may not yield an inch to their adversaries, much less fall before their onslaught; that they "may *stand* perfect and fully assured in all the will of God." This is the American Revision's translation; which gives the same thought as most of the modern translators. "That you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God," is the King James rendering. This also is 'the thought that Young's Literal Translation, based on similar manuscripts, gives: "That ye may stand perfect and made full in all the will of God.

Epaphras would have their feet planted on the highest peak of the Kingdom, their heads lifted above the clouds of opposition, their vision of Him who alone could change them from glory to glory, unobstructed. The stature of a completed man in Christ Jesus will be the attainment of each one at Colosse who has the faith to appropriate the blessings Epaphras is starting on the way to them. Of course nothing less than full conformity to the will of God can satisfy any faithful child of God for himself or for those for whom he prays. This is' God's standard, and our prayers need revision if they are not thus all comprising.

Paul uses the same word here that describes the six waterpots at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, as "filled to the brim." With Epaphras' prayer for his loved ones back in Colosse answered, whichever set of manuscripts we accept, there will be no room left for anything but God. For them it will be, none of Satan or his inspired word; none of the world or its spirit; "none of self, but all of Thee. If it pains us more to see our friends in ill health or *in* poverty than it does to see them lacking *in* the things of the Spirit, we will not be able to pray as Epaphras prayed. The way to accomplish the most for our friends is to learn how to pray.

TWO STRANGELY CONTRASTED SERVANTS

Types of faithfulness and of deflection, Luke and Demas appear last in the Apostle's list. As to when the deflection of Demas began, we do not know, nor its extent. He may not have forsaken the faith, but merely left Paul for a time. Like those who have turned from the faith, his love for this world (2 Tim. 4:10) was probably not a thing of overnight growth but began with desire for some trifle, perhaps undiscovered by himself or any of his friends until the seed had become a noxious weed. The scanty mention given him, leads us to suspect that at least Paul was conscious of a seed that was being nursed to germination. Since a desire for selfish appropriation of the paltry sum in the treasury of the Lord and the Apostles could develop a Judas, we need not look for some vice of great proportions as the danger point for Demas or for ourselves.

Luke, the beloved physician, joined the Apostle, it is understood by some, near the time of the development of a constitutional disorder. On this basis commentators infer that this malady was the reason for his constant attendance upon the Apostle, and accounts in part for the warmth of the Apostle's love for him. Only by the narrator's use of the modest "we" (Acts 27:1, etc.), are we conscious of Luke's presence with the Apostle in the perils of the winter voyage to Italy. He shared at least part of Paul's first Roman captivity (Col. 4:14), and was alone with him in the second. There is no reason to doubt that he 'was at the Apostle's side when the end came.

But even Luke seems to have failed the Apostle for a time, for Paul says: "At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me; may it *not* be laid to their account." (2 Tim. 4:16, A,R,V.)

No one knew better than Paul how severe a test it was on the courage of these brethren to attempt to stand by during an experience that he describes under the metaphor of being thrown to the lions. - 2 Tim. 4:17-18.

The examples of Demas the deserter and Luke the faithful one, afford a wide contrast. They traveled side by side for some time, but unless there was later a return on the part of Demas from his downward course, how far apart were these two friends and ministers of the Apostle at the close of their lives. An imperceptible divergence of two lines of march, if persisted in, means many miles of separation in time. Only slight unfaithfulness can soon mature into hopeless apostasy. "Let him who is thinking that he has stood, take care lest he, fall." - 1 Cor. 10:12, Diaglott.

The unfaithful ones are held up before us in the Bible, not to fill us with fear -- except the fear of trusting in the arm of flesh, and of displeasing Him. Safety is not promised because we are strong in ourselves, but because "God is faithful," and always at hand and eager to bear us safely through every test. Our weak backs would break under the lightest cross if all its weight fell on us. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before *us*, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against Himself." (Heb. 12:1-3, A.R.V.) If we unswervingly do this, there will never be another Demas among us. And, too, remembering the many stumblings before we learned to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, every, erring brother will find our finger not pointed at him to shame, but pointing him to his only Source of strength, the One who will never leave him nor forsake him.

- *P. E. Thomson.*

The Letter to the Colossians

Conclusion of the Letter

"Salute the brethren that are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the Church that is in their house. And when this Epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the Epistle from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it. The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you." - Col. 4:15-18, A.R.V.

(The Herald of Christ's Kingdom - May, 1945)

A PLEASANT TASK comes to its end as in these verses we reach "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand." It was in the tenth year of the Emperor Nero, about a year after this letter is supposed to have been written, that an earthquake destroyed Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. Fortunately, for us, the little Class at Colosse was kept together long enough for this Epistle to be written and left for our edification and encouragement. We have no record as to what became of the brethren who composed the little Class, but judging by the Apostle's bold and energetic language, the grand sentiments of this letter, and his vigorous and majestic treatment of the subject, we would think of those he addressed as a people who would leave the impress of their personality wherever the Lord would place them. Of the brethren in the other two cities we know practically nothing; in fact we would not have known there were any in Hierapolis if it were not for the mention Paul makes of them in the Context here.

Only Revelation 3:17 and this allusion have saved the Laodicean congregation from age-lasting oblivion. Laodicea was a city of greater importance than Colosse, but, as in our day, the size of the city was not the deciding factor as to the number of brethren in it-and the size of the Class no deciding factor as to its importance. "The Church of the Laodiceans" was so tiny that the congregation could assemble in the house of Nymphas, another brother unknown to u except for this mention. How much, however, this briefest of allusions tells about him-zeal for the Lord, love of the truth, and love for the brethren that went to the length of being willing to have his home invaded, perhaps even several times weekly, that it might become their spiritual home! In the enthusiasms of those early days, it is not probable there were any meetings of short duration, nor any rules about the leader seeing to it that the study or the discourse should terminate at some definite moment. We can imagine that it would not be easy for those brethren to understand our being satisfied with a brief hour of fellowship and study. It is just as difficult for commentators who are accustomed to associate great "pomp and circumstance" with the word "church" to understand "the church that is in their house." Nowhere in the New Testament do we read of any congregation meeting in an imposing edifice, nor of any great "drive" put on to build one. Instead, we read of the Church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila in Rome (Rom. 16:5), and 1 Corinthians 16:19 seems to indicate a church in an other home of theirs in Phillipi, from which town that letter is supposed to have been written. Philemon also had an ecclesia meeting in his home. (Philemon 1:2.) In that day a church was never a building, but a group of "saints in the Lord" meeting together under the simplest of circumstances for mutual encouragement and edification; but more especially, for the worship of their Lord. Present day terminology and customs were unknown.

A "CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD" SHOULD BE CHRISTIAN

Every Christian householder should earnestly ask himself what he is doing to make his home a "church of God," for the laxity of present day standards is apt to creep unnoticed into the arrangements of any of our homes. Too many excuses are acceptable for the abandoning of religious instruction and worship. Part of the difficulty is that the custom of the head of the family planning and speaking for the household is becoming old fashioned. Of old one could say, "As for me and my house, we will, serve the Lord. The custom needs reviving. Where the household *has* a head, it *can* be said today. Because the neighbors follow the new custom of disregard of and disrespect to the father and husband, is no reason for the Christian husband and parent shirking his duty to his God. To perform it, he may need to "add to his faith fortitude." (2 Pet. 1:5, Diaglott.) Today, perhaps, one obstacle to the proper conduct of the household, providing religious instruction and regular periods of worship for the family as a unit, is the fact that several members of the home are employed at various periods of the day and it is difficult or impossible to gather all at one time around the altar. An honest effort should be made to adjust matters, and even sacrifices, such as accepting less lucrative employment, be joyfully made that conditions may be bettered.

We may be very confident that the associates, of Nymphas and his family were not chosen primarily because of their business connections or because of their high social standing. Even the small child would recognize the incongruity of bringing into that sacred dwelling any contaminating influence. The irreligious would be uncomfortable in the atmosphere of sanctity that daily worship left there, and impressed upon each life. There' would be no unbecoming and unjustifiable reticence about speaking of the things that are eternal when with those who were living only for the things of, self and the present. On the other hand, if the religion of the household had been of the impractical order that ruled out all joy and lived only to display its severity, necessity alone would have brought any of the neighbors, whether base or noble, into it. The associates were not of necessity limited to those who preferred to hear Bible themes discussed; but since that household knew more about sacred than profane things, and talked more interestingly and freely on sacred themes than on profane, it would be strange if this circumstance did not select for that household, intimate friends with religious inclinations.

There is no more harm in a Christian's exchanging views with a man of the world on clean earthly topics than of his discussing the weather with him; but since the Christian's interest is not centered in these things, the conversation will flow much more freely when dealing with subjects that have been made familiar to him by daily discussion and by meditation on the Word. The world says truly, "We are known by the friends we keep." If our conversation and way of life, attract mainly those of debased standards, those who are irreligious, the explanation is not far to seek.

It is not necessary that every picture or piece of statuary in the home shall be inspired by some Bible theme; for "*whatsoever* things are . . . pure, lovely and of good report" contribute to keeping the thoughts on Him from whom comes every good and perfect gift. The wise householder will select those for the decoration of his home that will ennoble the lives of all who behold. Even consideration for his nearest friend would not induce him to admit within its walls anything that would debase or detract from the spirit of worship. Too often it is the "counsel of the ungodly" that furnishes "Christian" homes and even selects the recreations and amusements of the children. "Blessed is the man" that makes God the Head of his home.

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS

As to why the Apostle instructs that this letter is to be read in Laodicea and not in Hierapolis we cannot know, but probably some strong influence had guarded the brethren of the latter city from the so-called "advanced light" that was endangering the ecclesias of Colosse and Laodicea. There has been much time wasted speculating as to what letter is referred to as "the Epistle from Laodicea." Whether Paul referred to the letter now known as the "Letter to the Ephesians," as some suppose, or whether this allusion indicates that one of the Apostle's letters has been lost makes no difference to us. Since only a small portion of what our Master taught during His ministry has been preserved for us by divine overruling, we cannot doubt but that there is much this beloved Apostle wrote that has not been preserved in the Canon of Scriptures.

There is extant a Latin Epistle from very early times with the title, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Laodiceans," but it is so palpable a forgery, merely a twenty verse compilation of various expressions from the authentic Epistles that it has nothing of value for us except that its close indicates that the Christians of the early days understood the phrase, "the Epistle from Laodicea" to mean "the Epistle to the Laodiceans," thus apparently settling a point, regarding which there has been much discussion.

It sounds strange to us today that any church would need to be urged to read one of the Apostle's letters. Note the still more positive instructions of 1 Thessalonians 5:27: "I charge you by the Lord that this Epistle be read unto all the holy brethren." From this it would seem that some of the brethren were willing to admit that his words were weighty and powerful, but they had no inclination to study or to take them to heart. A later and more refined method of avoiding their instruction is to read them and praise them and then say, "He said this, but he meant that."

Though situated in one of the most fertile plains of Asia Minor, the site of Laodicea today lies without inhabitant, as desolate as Sardis, while faithful Philadelphia has never been without at least a nominal Christian community. The punishment upon the unfaithful individuals seems to have extended even to the community.

"Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it." The tendency of the commentators seems to be to think of this as an indication of unfaithfulness on the part of Archippus, but if he is the same brother, Paul refers to in the letter to, Philemon (Philemon 2), as his "fellow soldier," we are hardly justified in seeing in these words more than a reminder of the urgency of the situation and the necessity of his exercising great care in the ministry entrusted to him. He is exhorted to diligence not because he ministers to a large and wealthy congregation nor because there are men of great influence in it, but for the important reason that this ministry was "received in the Lord." Surely if anything will make him diligent to preserve the purity of the truth, it will be this. As Paul exhorted the elders, the bishops, of Ephesus (Acts 20:28), those who would minister efficiently to others must take heed to themselves as well as to the flock. See also 1 Timothy 4:13-16 and Titus 1:5-9. We cannot reasonably expect to do much good without a heart richly replenished with divine grace. If we would be continually giving out, we must be as continually taking in. Many earnest servants of the Lord have lamented the fact that calls for outward action and for much speaking to others leave them too little time for seasons of spiritual refreshment and advancement by communion with the Everlasting Life Giver. As all the good His ministers would impart comes from God and His Holy Word, it is all important that they keep in constant touch with Him and filled with His Spirit. A minister who searches the Word primarily for his own upbuilding will be ready to feed others. He who would reveal Christ to others must himself be occupied with Christ, must himself "see Jesus only," and have "lost sight of all beside."

A HIGH STANDARD

Archippus may have been a very energetic and active servant to the Class without having quite reached the standard Paul suggests the brethren should urge upon him, namely, that he shall "fill up to the top" his measure of service to them. It is one of those favorite words of his that he is using. Paul is an extremist, and he would like to see every one else as extreme in his devotion to the Lord and His service. Whether or not Archippus was as some think he "Messenger to the Church at Laodicea," the lesson is the same -- that the Lord requires in His servants that they shall be "hot," "fervent" in their use of their opportunities and talents or be "spued" out of His mouth -- cease to be used as His mouthpiece. Lukewarmness is nauseating to Him.

For a brief moment Paul takes the quill from the hand of Timothy, his amanuensis, to sign his name, "his token in every epistle" (1 Cor. 16:21; 2 Thess. 3:17), a slight gesture of personal interest of which we who have not seen the original letters would have been unaware except for these references to his custom. The pathetic appeal to remember his bonds, and his closing benediction, "Grace be with you," are made more touching by the intimation that they are written with his own hand -- a process that evidently was very difficult for him because of defective eyes. Bonds that have been forgotten while with painstaking care he has dictated the letter, are brought rudely to his mind as he endeavors to put these last words on the papyrus. The "weighty words" of warning and exhortation have come from a man who still knows that he is weak, in need of the assistance of the brethren at the throne of grace, in need of their sympathy. Then, too, these "marks of the Lord Jesus borne in his body" gave him a right to speak, and gave authority to his words; but perhaps even more important was the hope that, remembering his bonds, they might be the more faithful to the commission God had given them. Their "light afflictions" might become lighter as they thought on his that never for a moment were eased except by the Lord's grace and the sympathy of his brethren.

Jesus alone could be crucified for them; but Paul was being crucified with them. Though always "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of their faith," remembering Paul's bonds might contribute its mite toward their faithfulness.

GRACE FOR ALL, THROUGH ONE

Words may be piled unendingly on words, but nothing can be added to the benediction with which Paul leaves the Colossian brethren -- and us: "Grace be with you." Writing with his own hand; he has given his usual salutation, but this time in the shortest possible form. He has not however left out any of the blessing. He has asked for the "grace sufficient for every time of need" and the grace by which "all things" are theirs; for they, to have, that grace, must be Christ's just as surely as Christ is God's. It includes all of life and fruitfulness. Eternity is in the word, an eternity of peace and joy, "God's peace," and "fulness of joy."

That grace is offered for all to share alike -- not only the faithful, but also the teachers of error, for with that grace they may be guided into all truth" and join with the Apostle in his campaign against the baneful influence of all who come preaching "another gospel." The purpose of this letter, and of all the Word of God, whether in the accents of the gentle shepherd to the lamb in his bosom or the voice of thunder warning the transgressor, is "grace." Even for the world of unregenerate sinners, God and all His messengers, have a Gospel of grace, "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people," the "Gospel preached beforehand to Abraham," "in thee [and in thy Seed] shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Luke 2:10; Gal. 3:8, 16.) The scattering of the blessings that comprise that grace is entrusted to just one Seed, but if ye be Christ's then are ye that seed. - Gal. 3:16, 29.

A similar benediction there is for every one who today has the spirit of unity as a member of His mystical Body. "The, grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." - Rev. 22:21.

- P. E. Thomson