

GOOD TIDINGS

A RELIGIOUS MESSAGE, PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY
THE REFORMED MENNONITE CHURCH, FOR THE
PURPOSE OF DISSEMINATING SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

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EDITORIAL

We again acknowledge our appreciation to patrons for the many encouraging comments on "Good Tidings."

We hope its messages may be instructive to members and of interest to friends seeking knowledge and true interpretation of the Scriptures.

The unanimity of sentiment expressed by the various contributors scattered over the United States and Canada is convincing evidence that all writers are actuated by the spirit of oneness invoked by the Savior.

In this issue an effort has been made to embrace articles adaptable to the anniversary of the "Birth of Christ," "Message of Peace" and the "New Year" as well as other interesting and instructive subjects defined worthy of thought.

May our efforts be blessed in this little publication which has met general approval. To continue its service of usefulness, we again invite members to contribute regularly, brief articles on scripture subjects, giving privilege to the committee to correct or refuse articles offered.

The price of subscription being low, we encourage all who have not already subscribed, to do so.

Should any who are receiving "Good Tidings" change their address, kindly advise us, so that we can make the change on our record.

CHRISTMAS

Matthew and Luke relate different circumstances connected with the birth of our Savior. Matthew writes of wise men coming from the East, led by a star. At that time, by captivity through wars, the Israelites were dispersed; but wherever they were they hoped for the promised Messiah, and, as at that age supernatural phenomena were not uncommon, the signal of the star and the prompting of those godly men to follow it toward their seat of worship at Jerusalem, can easily be understood. The account intimates uncertainty when they came to the Royal City. The inquiry led to the examination of prophecy. The prophets then were the interpreters of the Divine Will, as the evangelists and apostles now are our witnesses.

Guided by prophecy and the star, the wise men found the Babe at Bethlehem. We can see that the shepherds of whom Luke writes were not the same persons mentioned by Matthew. They were near the scene when they heard the glad tidings, and found the mother and Babe in the stable, as the inn was overcrowded through the influx of the people required to come to their native city to be taxed.

The wise men found the Babe in the house. They came from the East and halted at Jerusalem. By the time they found the object of their search, humane care seems to have been given the mother in the house. This sacred bodily form, "which our hands have handled of the Word of life," bore the Divinity which unites the broken ties severed by the evil temper of sin, from which originates strife, war and discordant churches.

Our spiritual life is incomprehensible, yet it can be made to manifest itself in deeds governing the body. When the Child of Peace was born, Satan, through

King Herod, wreaked his malice in the slaying of the innocents, breaking the hearts of many mothers. Since then his spite was shown in cruelty to many martyrs.

This Great Birth is celebrated by festivity, gift-offering, song and praise, but not always attended by the obedience which brings true praise. The spirit of the Christ-life is peace in our hearts, who are guilty under a broken law. This Child of Fame "shall build the old waste places . . . the foundations of many generations; and He shall be called the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in." Isaiah 58.

Under His ministry the evil temper is to be sweetened, animosities are to be appeased, bitterness of heart changed into love; one purpose shall actuate the Redeemed, divisions shall cease, divorce have no place, litigation and war be unknown; the Church will meet the pictured ideal to be without division. It will be the temple "of lively stones are built up, a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2: 5. Those who have forsaken sin and have plighted their lives to the faith can celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Christ in "the green pastures, by the still waters." Psalm 23: 2.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

MESSAGE OF PEACE

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." Luke 2: 14.

At this glad Christmas season we freely recall with admiration this beautiful song which the angels sang at the birth of Christ. Yet, do we consider and reflect on its real meaning and significance? Do our lives reflect "Glory to God in the highest," by reason of

that event? Can we finally glorify Him in eternal homage amidst the angelic throng when the scenes of this earthly life are closed? Do we possess the peace which this angelic song proclaimed that glad event would bring?

That event which brought joy to men and angels was one of "good will toward men," because it made possible a restoration of a lost peace to the soul, such as is the basis of heaven, and for which the human heart so irresistably yearns. It is placed within our reach but it is not imposed upon us. It is distinct from the social and economic peace which the world long had and continues to have. We can never render "Glory to God in the highest" unless this peace proclaimed by the angels possesses our heart.

Near the close of the Savior's life, when about to leave his disciples, he declared to them, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you." The Savior foresaw and foretold the persecution, suffering, trials and tribulations which the twelve would have to pass through; and the trying circumstance was before him of having to make the supreme sacrifice in atonement for the sins of mankind; yet here in this midnight hour he bequeathed to his disciples this legacy of deep-seated peace, which could not be disturbed by outward perils and tribulations, as is shown in the subsequent history of the apostles, and as was also in the Savior's life. It is the legacy bequeathed to his real followers in all time, in accordance with the proclamation of the song that the angels sang at the Savior's birth.

The sublime exclamation of the prophet was: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." Its truth is attested by one example after another throughout Old Testament history, and

under the Gospel dispensation the service rendered by, and the relation between the true believers and their God is a still more intimate and much nearer one, with a closer leaning on the Lord and trust in His providential care, than was the case under the Old Testament dispensation.

The dispensation of this peace to his disciples and followers, as was characteristic of the Savior's life, is based on humility and submission to the divine will, and a life lived in this close relation to the Lord with an abiding trust in him, and with his spirit shed abroad in the heart, as the controlling influence in our life.

In the example the Savior gave, there were no wounded feelings because of an injured reputation,—he had already made himself of no reputation. There were no anxious cares for empire, wealth or honor, but,—“Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God.” This, so long foretold as it was fulfilled in his life, was the basis of that peace, as similar humility and singleness of purpose to do the will of the heavenly Father, will also be the means of dispensing that peace proclaimed in this angelic song.

Notwithstanding the stupendous efforts made to procure and maintain peace among nations and individuals, there are groaning empires and tottering thrones, with powerful selfish interests arrayed against each other. It is a condition bringing untold suffering and anxious cares to many, because of, and resulting from, ambitions and aspirations for extended power and authority, wealth, honor, and the gratification of selfish desires. Here is peace “as the world giveth,” neither perfect nor enduring—not such as was proclaimed in that angelic song.

The prophet declared, they say,

“Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” It is a condition verified in the world. It is pitifully so in the popular profession of Christianity. The depth of meaning embodied in the peace which the Savior bequeathed to his disciples, as proclaimed in this angelic song, is not comprehended. Efforts are made by theologians and men of great intellectual attainments to enact laws calculated to secure enduring peace in the world. It is a sad thought that the effort is regarded as a great Christian work while it has no gospel promise. Its only reward is a temporal one. Real peace, such as the heart of man is ever yearning for and as was the Savior’s mission to bring within our reach, can only come through individual humility, abasement, self-denial and a non-worldly life, as a result of self-knowledge and a sincere desire to subordinate every desire and prompting to that of doing the will of the heavenly Father; with final salvation through the Savior’s atonement. It is only when this peace which “passeth all understanding” possesses our heart, that we can join in this angelic song as a never-tiring theme now and forevermore.

Doylestown, Ohio.

C. W.

THE NEW YEAR

O! bright New Year thou’rt come today,
 We welcome thee and bid thee stay.
 Thou’rt like a volume clean and white
 With record sealed, hid from our sight.
 We fain would look thy pages o’er
 And read of joys thou hast in store,
 Perchance some ill we might avert
 Or soothe a wound to cause less hurt.
 But God has wisely thus decreed
 The present only is revealed.

We greet thee, gladly, bright New Year,
 And hope thou’lt bring to us good cheer.
 We know with thee come winter’s snow
 And chilling winds that round us blow.
 The winter’s cold and summer’s heat
 But make God’s promises complete.

Then, too, will come the spring time flowers,
 The swelling buds ’mid April showers;
 The seasons, as they come and go,
 Our great Creator’s power show.

O! glad New Year, with purpose bright
 Inspire us all to do the right.
 Each year, each month, and every day
 Are new beginnings on our way.
 Let us our courage now renew
 And each his path in life pursue.
 We’ll ask God’s watchful eye to guide,
 Then safely in His love confide;
 And while we only failure see
 In Him will our perfection be.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

THE NEW YEAR

With the advent of the new year it is but natural that we think of the passing of time. One day follows another, and ere we are aware the months, and even the years have seemed to slip away almost imperceptibly, and now we are at the beginning of a new one.

It is probable that to the youthful mind the coming of a new year has least significance. The month previous has been of more interest to them. The anticipation, excitement, and pleasure of the Christmas holidays are over, and they have resumed the routine of study in the schools.

To the man of business it is a period of interest. He needs to invoice his stock, find the amount of his assets, plan for enlargement, readjust his advertising, thus preparing and hoping for a better and brighter year financially.

To those more advanced in years, the past is full of reminiscence. They enter the new year with more uncertainty, not so hopeful, knowing from past experience that what has happened may happen again.

The beginning of the new year is also an opportune time for us to take account of our spiritual standing. We may see a way to avoid mistakes that have resulted in failure during the past year.

renew our obligations of service to our Divine Master, and strive to reach more nearly the standard which is the aim of every Christian.

With the coming of the new year our dear and quite aged friends may incline to think they will not see its close, and thus standing by the river's brink they wait for the boatman pale, to carry them to that fair land where time is no longer reckoned.

How much we love and admire the old! We benefit from hearing their experiences; we see lovely traits of character. In their helplessness and trust, which are manifested both toward their God and toward their loving friends upon whose service they depend, they inspire us with a sense of veneration. We wish that we might grow more like them, as we follow closely in their thinning ranks.

May the new year make us better, wiser, kinder to all, especially more thoughtful of the aged, more patient with those bearing the heavy burdens of life and more tender toward the young.

With this prayer in our heart, and invoking the blessing of heaven upon all God's creation, we hopefully, trustfully begin the New Year.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

WATCHING

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Math. 26: 41.

There are many gospel injunctions and warnings along the line of practical Christianity, but this one is of special importance. Only to read and understand it will prove no benefit, but to practice it, will be the means of averting sinful acts and transgressions, and will prevent much pain and sorrow. To avoid sin is to avoid trouble. Solomon said that the way of transgressors is hard.

When the convicting grace of God

appears to us and impresses us, we become sorry for our past sinful lives, and even if we were moral, entirely devoid of gross sins, we still see ourselves sinful inasmuch as we failed to honor God and confess Christ. This state of mind we call repentance and it is a necessary condition for God to work in us, to make us new creatures. We cannot convert ourselves. God alone can do this. This change is called regeneration.

Reasoning theoretically, one might suppose that if God converts a person there would be no further tendency to sin. Such, however, is not the case. Our sinful human nature, often termed the flesh, cannot be converted. One who is converted is given the power to keep it in subjection, not the power to purify it. Satan will often tempt us to go astray. This fact is sustained by the saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." If it were not for the tendency to go astray, the church ordinance of communion, which is to remind us of what was done for us, and the ordinance of feet-washing, which impresses upon us the duty of mutually reminding and helping each other, would not be necessary services.

To attend church services and to read the Scriptures are profitable, but to be a Christian we must obey the instructions of our text; we must make them part of our lives and practice them daily. To do so, however, requires a very honest and diligent analysis of our thoughts and deeds, to take captive our thoughts to the "obedience of Christ."

If one believer reminds another of a wrong, the true Christian spirit actuates the party addressed with a feeling of gratitude for the interest shown, even though the views advanced happen to be weak. The intention in reminding is right, even if the opinion is wrong. In such a case the matter should be rea-

soned, even if the aid of other fellow-believers is necessary. Should one yield in such a case to a prompting of impatience, the enemy of the soul is having the advantage and the advice of our text should be followed. Many serious and long-continued controversies, accompanied by ill-will, and at times followed by complete spiritual death, could have been prevented by closely following the injunctions of our text.

In life generally the plainest, simplest, self-evident matters are the most important and most deserving of recognition and heed; and just so in the spiritual life, many of these simple, plain Scriptures are much more important than those more difficult of comprehension.

Individuals differ much in their dispositions and temperments. It behooves us all to study to know ourselves and to strive valiantly and earnestly to safeguard our besetments.

These remarks are very simple, but the fact remains that *living out* this simple text means much more in the sight of God, and keeps up our spiritual life more fully than much Bible reading or the possession of extensive Bible knowledge. In other words, it is not how well we *know* the Gospel, but how well we *live* it that proves our love to God.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. K. S.

SIN AND GRACE

God is holy and man is sinful. The Psalmist prays, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Man sinned, and sin created the barrier between him and God and severed communion. "Our sins separate between us and our God and hide his face from us." Holiness and sin by their diverse nature are not reconcilable; the barrier is fixed, and the separation eternal, unless

there is a means to take away our sins. We are dependent on that means.

God loved man always. He has never changed; we see it in the promise given to our first parents after transgression, in all of His dispensations to His people, in the whole of revelation: and it is affirmed by that most precious passage of all scripture: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

He who was one with the Father in heaven came upon earth, "made in the likeness of men," without sin or the propensity to sin, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" and by His sacrifice and offering reconciled us unto God's holiness, and made a full and complete atonement for sin. This is the infinite love of God for fallen man.

The whole race of Adam is free; none are guilty until they do wrong. We are born free from condemnation; we grow up in innocence, without law, and consequently without transgression; we reach the years of understanding of the awakened conscience, knowing good and evil, and as we make choice of evil we become guilty and our sins are imputed unto us.

God's attitude to sin has never changed; we see it in the penalty for the single transgression in Eden and throughout the old dispensation when "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." Jesus the Friend of sinners, and instant in forgiveness of the penitent and ignorant, never compromised with sin but reproved it, and His condemnation of the malicious Pharisees was the most severe that language can express. His sacrifice for us, since it was required to take away sin, must ever stand as the most convincing proof of the separation sin causes between man and God.

The atonement does not change the condition of the sinner, unless he accepts its offered grace. With knowledge our responsibility increases, and with neglected opportunities, guilt. The great sin of the world is the rejection of Christ.

Sin is the blight upon our lives. Afflictions and sorrows come and go and we learn to be resigned to them, but our sins have cost us much and on life's page they are the only real blot.

The darkness of the world is that it does not see its sins, or it calls them by another name, or it excuses and tolerates them, saying "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," and its prophets say falsely, "No evil shall come upon us." But sin is a reality; its evidence is within us and without; it has cost the precious blood of Christ; the penalty for it is inseparable from it; retained, it binds to eternal death; it is against God and He is the final Judge.

We need to feel our responsibility to our own souls, above all our accountability to God. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" It "is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It awakens the conscience, and between the awakened conscience and sin there can be no peace; it reveals the true nature and awful character of sin, and its exceeding sinfulness, and the accusations of conscience for sins committed bring upon us the most painful suffering that mortals can endure.

This is a merciful revelation, for by it we realize our need of a mediator and Savior and that we cannot be saved unless we forsake our sins and accept Him by faith, in complete submission to His will. He "who His own self

bare our sins, in His own body on the tree," is the only means to save us from sin—from its penalty, and to restore us to favor and communion with God by the one Sacrifice and Offering, made not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins committed by us "who know to do good and do it not."

M. H. M.

(R. F. D. 4, Lancaster, Pa.)

THE CARNAL AND SPIRITUAL MIND CONTRASTED

The apostle says, "To be carnally minded is death, to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Rom. 8: 6. "The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be." Rom. 8: 7. The carnally minded are those who live for this world; they are diligent in seeking attainments, in which the flesh delights. They fulfill the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. 1 Jno. 2: 16.

They, however, may be moral, upright and worthy citizens; they may be charitable, kind and self-sacrificing. They may embrace religious worship; for carnal reason is so subtle that it may deceive them into a faith which gives promise to the soul—and yet be without Christ. They may refuse the Cross of Christ, and the nonresistant, self-denying doctrine, as being impracticable and nonessential and substitute what is more liberal, the "commandments of men."

Such are in spiritual darkness not realizing their deplorable condition, trying to worship God under the law: "The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did by which we draw nigh unto God." Heb. 7: 19. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." Rom. 3: 20. The carnally minded, then, who put their trust in

the moral works of the law, are building upon the sand, and we fear "their house will fall and great will be the fall of it."

Truly great will be the fall, when every hope and prospect for the soul will be blighted forever. No more grace, no more mercy, when that final sentence of doom is pronounced: "Depart from me into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 8: 13.

What a contrast to the spiritually minded who have repented and have accepted Jesus as their Savior. They have been born again—"Not of corrupt: le, but of incorruptible seed of the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." 1 Peter 1: 23. The veil of Moses has been removed from their hearts. They now "see with seeing eyes and hear with hearing ears the blessed things which were kept secret from the foundation of the world." Matthew 13: 35. Christ has fulfilled the righteous law of God for them, and they are no more under condemnation.

They have passed from death unto life; from darkness into the light of the "Day Star, Christ Jesus, which has risen in their hearts." 2 Peter 1: 19. They live in peace and unity and "love one another with pure hearts fervently." To retain this blessed condition to its consummation, requires continued grace from God; for there is a conflict. The flesh, being unconverted, is always open to suggestions of evil.

The devil through carnal reason assails them. He insinuates that it is not necessary to be so strict; not necessary to cut off all gratifications of the flesh; why not enjoy a few of the many pleasures which this beautiful world affords? He says, God is merciful and long-suffering and will not cast us off, for He wills that we should be happy. "Ye shall not surely die," saith the tempter.

They must use violence to preserve the faith; must use the "weapons of their warfare, which are not carnal, but mighty through God." Cor. 10: 4. However, with all their self-denial and assaults of the flesh, they can rejoice in the Lord. By exercising faith in Him, there is always consolation, rest and peace for the soul. They know that "His eyes are over the righteous and His ears are open to their prayers." 1 Pet. 3: 12. They are encouraged by the precious promise: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 1 Cor. 10: 13. Thus they are buoyed by the precious promises and the blessed hope which is the "anchor of the soul," which hope gives them the bright prospect of glory and happiness in the world to come. "For they know that if their earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, they have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. 5: 1.

Lancaster, Pa. E. H. W.

LIFE ETERNAL

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." St. John 17: 3.

Christ's mission was to give divine life unto us. The need of a Savior implies the fact that mankind were unsaved. He says, "Ye must be born again." This demand means the beginning of a new life; it signifies a condition opposite to that into which we come by the natural birth. To be born again signifies a renewing. Our first parents, through disobedience, lost the holy life, and fell under sin, by which

the whole human family was brought under this yoke of sin and there was no one to deliver them from this bondage but Christ, the promised Messiah. He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." St. John 10: 10. He brought a new spiritual existence to light, and extended the realms of peace. He opened the new and living way to the heavenly Paradise. He revealed the whole counsel and will of His Father, and gave commands how we shall live.

Therefore we must hear Him in all things that He has commanded us, take upon ourselves His easy yoke, bear His cross and follow Him as our example. If we live according to our own will, disregarding His word and example, then we are yet in the yoke of sin and death; the Son has not made us free; for those whom the Son maketh free are free indeed. St. John 8:

Because those who have been freed love Him, they keep His commandments and have the promise of life eternal, not by natural generation, but by spiritual regeneration, They are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. St. John 1:

They have beaten their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruninghooks, neither do they learn war any more. They use no other sword than the sword of the Spirit, and the shield of faith, whereby "they cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10:

The only begotten and blessed Son of the Most High God, through whom grace and truth has come and in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid, has made us partakers of these gifts, who are willing to serve the

Lord with all our hearts. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." St. John 17: 3.

Canton, Ohio.

A. F

FIRST CHAOS, THEN LAW

The Father and the Son were associated in the creation: "Let us make man in our image;" . . . "created all things by Jesus Christ," are testimonies. Gen. 1: 26; Eph. 3: 9. Law is expressed in the prohibition: "Ye shall not eat of it." Gen. 3: 3. The power of law is in the penalty following its violation. The object of law is order.

If our first parents had obeyed, order would have continued. Had order continued God would not have chosen Abraham to be the head of a separate nation to restore order, for all would have had that moral sense by which Abraham pleased God; and through the loss of which, in that day, idolatry became so prevalent, just as the loss of faith now causes wrong worship. To obey true law, we must exercise faith, or in other words, we must have confidence in the Supreme Will.

The curse was placed on Cain for his disobedience to the law of justice; for he did not deal justly with his brother; and "he went out from the presence of the Lord." This separation was not heeded by the decendants of righteous Seth, who by intermarriage with the unrighteous, provoked the penalty of the flood. Gen. 6: 2.

Law was then for a time vested in the patriarchs, next given in tables of stone from Sinai, and in oral statutes. The law from Sinai was an expression of the Divine Mind, given to the Israelites. All of mature age who had set out from Egypt, except Joshua and Caleb, failed to keep it. Even Moses failed through a slip at the rock of flint. Not that they

were spiritually lost for violation of the literal law, before the fullness in Christ had come. They had a future opportunity. Pet. 4: 6.

By Christ came the spiritual law ruling in the soul, which never comes in conflict with true worldly law, inasmuch as it prompts to a correct life and has praise from those who administer just laws. Rom. 13: 3. He, who is the source of all law and order, sought to rule the Israelites by His appointed servants, but they clamored for a king such as the heathen nations had. 1 Sam. 8: 7. He indulged them; when the kings obeyed He blessed them; when they disobeyed He punished them.

Regard for the authority of God, and justice to one another were the aims of the law of Moses. The ceremonies of the law were typical of spiritual things. Heb. 8: 5. The law and the mission of John the Baptist were preparatory to salvation. They pointed to the Savior. The judicial part of the law of Moses is the foundation of good worldly law.

Portland, Oregon.

I. H.

REDEEMING LOVE

God created mankind pure, giving them their free will. The angels too possessed a free will, and could or could not abide in their first estate as they chose. God abides with those who cherish holiness. Angels and mankind were put on probation. Some of the angels failed and mankind failed.

In heaven Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels. The latter prevailed not and he and his adherents were cast into the earth. The angels that were loyal kept their first estate but we are not informed of pardon for those who broke heaven's peace and were cast out.

In the garden of Eden, Adam yielded to the tempter and thus brought upon

his posterity sin's inheritance. Compassion has been granted to man. In Christ's sacrifice we have pardon, by obedience to Him we have restoration.

In Christ all who believe and obey have hope. Their affections and aspirations are heavenward; while the disobedient love earthly things and their perverseness is instigated by satan.

God provides us with our necessities. The sun to rise on the good and the evil; rain falls on the just and unjust alike, but the gift of grace is given to those only who will obey. They are ingrafted in the Good Olive Tree to be partakers of its "root and fatness."

The believer has free converse with his Maker; his heart is purged from an evil conscience, giving him entrance into the path of peace.

Sin is not purged from the flesh, but is subdued, for the Holy Spirit controls the will to sanctified purposes. But sin may revive if we are not guarded; wherefore we are admonished to "watch and pray." Our natural inclinations are dangerous foes.

The Spirit says: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." He will not suffer us to go astray without warning. David says, "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil." Solomon says, "Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die." God invites and pleads until we yield to His grace unless we utterly harden ourselves. Our Savior was received with a great ovation at Jerusalem, but He bewailed her coming destruction.

We read of holy beings that rest not day nor night, glorifying and magnifying God, which was and is and is to come. They are filled with the ineffable glory surrounding them to give thanksgiving and praise to the Author of it all. Rev. 4: 8. "Now we see through a glass

darkly; but then face to face." 1 Cor.
13: 12.

Lancaster, Pa.

A. K. H.

CHRIST OUR ALL

Translated from a German Hymn

Whatever earthly ills we share
They soon will pass away,
But those who cast on God their care
Have found eternal day.

Adieu! to worldly wealth and fame;
Its empty pleasures, too;
Give us the cross in Jesus' name,
His will to know and do.

The fleshly pastimes of the world,
Though fair and sweet they seem,
Have many to perdition hurled
Through sin's enchanting dream.

But those who build on God alone,
A sure foundation lay;
Redeeming blood their sins atone.
The Life, the Truth, the Way.

Dear Jesus! Be our all in all,
Our righteousness be thine,
That we in darkness may not fall
But walk in light divine.

For Thou our chosen Bridegroom art,
Woed by unfailling love,
Each consecrated Christian heart
Finds comfort from above.

Fort Loudon, Pa.

C. R.

REST

How much we all desire rest after a long journey, or a hard day of labor and anxiety! How tranquil and sweet is the natural rest! Such rest, however, is only for this life. The soul within this body is ever reminding us that we have no continuing city here. The word of God teaches us that there is a rest prepared for all who will accept His proffered gift of grace; a home in the Eternal City, not made by hands; a city "whose builder and maker is God;" a place of everlasting rest offered unto us without money or price.

How sweet the words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Lay all your cares and burdens down and rest your weary head upon His breast. Would that all might attain such rest. What a safe repose!

The gates of the temple are open wide for all who will accept the offered gift of rest promised unto the faithful. The gates are never closed by day or by night. These are the words of our Lord and Savior, who wrought redemption for you and me—He who had power to open the way into the Holy of Holies, where we find everlasting peace and rest, the longing of our souls.

Who would not be willing to renounce this world of sin to follow the meek and lowly Jesus, and obtain this desired rest, where we can see Him face to face? Here "we see through a glass darkly." Yet we need not become discouraged if the vision is not as clear as we often wish.

We must put our trust in God, who will lead and guide us into all truth. He has promised to be with us, never to leave nor forsake us. His word is ever true. "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away." These are words spoken by the Son of God. Words spoken by man are oftentimes forgotten, but His words are eternal. May the essence of His words of love sink deep into our hearts, giving us rest and peace.

May His Spirit ever dwell within us. God, who delighteth in love and mercy, will forgive the penitent all their sins and give them strength to live the true life.

The warfare is daily by which we in our actions are writing epistles read and known by all observers. How important that we fulfill the principles of the Gospel in all we do. There is power in love, both natural and spiritual. A soft,

loving answer turneth away wrath. If we lose the spirit of love, we lose the essence that gives us power to resist the assaults of the wily foe, who tries to deceive us and to rob us of rest and to hinder the salvation of the soul. May God bless and keep us, the light of His face shine upon us, mercy and truth keep and uphold us, that when this life closes we may hear the welcome plaudit, "Come thou into my rest prepared for you."

Dear ones in the saving faith, may we be encouraged by the words: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Lancaster, Pa.

A. A. G.

ONE UNDIVIDED CHURCH, THE EFFECT OF LOVE

Unity is that state of being which implies harmony, oneness, association and consolidation. (New Standard Dictionary.)

The unity of Christ's followers is emphasized by New Testament teaching, as one of the primary evidences of their sincerity and faithfulness. On the other hand, division is a mark of insincerity, selfishness and unfaithfulness.

Christ's prayer, John 17, is a strong appeal for unity and oneness. This prayer is directed not only to the disciples but to all "who believe on Him through their word."

Paul's Epistles throughout plainly instruct the church to unity and harmony. Rom. 16: 17; Rom. 12: 4, 5; Cor. 1: 10; Eph. 4. By following carefully his reasoning in the epistle to the church at Rome it is obvious that his supreme thought was to maintain unity.

The church at Rome consisted partly of Gentiles converted to Christianity and partly of Jews. The Jews, under Moses' law, were taught to consider themselves the only people to whom the

divine favor extended. On the other hand, the Gentiles were educated to hold the Jews in contempt. They had no dealings with each other.

Paul being familiar with their prejudices, realized that the "wall of partition" which stood between them must be removed. He knew from his own experience that nothing less than a change of heart and the putting on of Jesus Christ would help them to forget their prejudices and hold them together in one body.

Conditions could not have been more unfavorable for establishing Christ's doctrine of unity and love. On the contrary conditions could not have been more favorable for a divided church. Paul might have reasoned, as do many teachers in our day, that differing so widely in their opinions, one church would be impossible, but in the face of all the difficulties which then arose tending to disorganize the body, unity was maintained.

New Testament readers are here given proof of the wonderful power of the Holy Spirit, by bringing Jews and Gentiles into such perfect oneness. We have here an example teaching us that when souls are truly converted to Christianity, suffering themselves to be disciplined by the law of love, they will have the "same mind and judgment and speak the same thing." If under such adverse conditions unity was maintained in the church at Rome, how can we consistently support divisions?

The question is frequently asked by those who are disturbed by these divisions, "How can Christians be divided into so many sects or churches when they claim to be actuated by the very spirit which begets unity and harmony?" We reply by Scripture authority that true Christians cannot belong to a divided church. The principle of love which bound Jew and Gentile converts

together into one visible body under such adverse conditions, cannot fail to bind believers together today into one church. The thought of separating will never be entertained, unless one first separates from Christ.

Prior to the change of heart, which Christ requires of His followers, we are under an influence that begets divided sentiment and opinions. If we claim to have experienced a change of heart and still remain divided in sentiment, each following his own opinion, we give evidence that we have not risen above our former carnal state. Christ cannot be our Head unless we come into harmony with His doctrine of unity. The word teaches that Christians are in Christ and Christ in them. If divine love in action effects such a compact or union with Christ, it cannot fail to unite all who are in Christ. Under this influence we receive power to subdue the spirit that prompts divisions.

To have happy home and social relations and to fill competently the position of employer or employee, individuals are required to surrender their selfish interests and to yield to those in authority. To have respect for our superiors indicates the highest type of citizenship. The same rule applies in the church. To maintain unity and harmony we are required to surrender our selfish motives to Jesus Christ our Head.

Persons who read and give sober thought to New Testament teaching will agree that to make the Christian religion a reality, to enjoy the beautiful Christ-life and the full benefits of the church, we must individually and collectively respond to Christ's prayer for oneness and to Paul's wise counsel as it is recorded in his epistles.

We cannot, by Scripture authority, prove that the church may be divided, for it is impossible to disassociate unity

with love, peace, harmony and the Christ-life.

Some of our readers may be of the opinion that the churches are united because their members worship together. If united, then why continue separate organizations? Let us assume that there are a number of persons in a community who are converted to Christianity, possessing the spirit and mind of Christ. Should not the effect be the same today as on the day of Pentecost and as it was with the Jew and Gentile in the church at Rome? The evidence of their sincerity and faithfulness was manifested by their unity of mind and heart.

Does not the principle upon which the Christian religion is founded, namely, love to God and love to man, oppose the divided church idea, and does not the written Word, which is the expression of God's will, condemn not only divisions but every act and motive that tend to disrupt and divide?

Lancaster, Pa.

F. E. E.

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Read as the subject, Mat. 25: 1, 12. Everyone interested in salvation is impressed by this parable, that we might make an indifferent profession of religion and in the end be rejected. The possibility of so sad an end should prompt every Christian to base his assurance of hope on "the foundation that standeth sure."

The Bible is a means of guidance unto eternal life. It is a witness coming from God. The Savior says, they that hear His sayings and do them are like unto persons building a house upon a rock. If we make the Scriptures the basis of our hope we are building upon the rock, and our house will not be moved by storm or flood.

Many of our Savior's sayings are

intended to comfort and help those who seek salvation. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Persons interested in salvation know that without righteousness there is no promise.

The parable of the unjust judge, who was moved by the persistent appeals of the widow was designed to prove that earnestness in faith will triumph. Luke 18: 1, 8.

Hope comes from believing. Faith is the eye of the soul, seeing "great and precious promises." Faith looks at things eternal, and sees the emptiness of passing pleasures. They who possess true living faith are willing to strive against sin, for they know its destructiveness. Paul says, "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body and bring it into subjection." 1 Cor. 9: 26, 27. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." Prov. 16: 32. Menno Simon said, he was more terrified at the promptings of hatred and envy than of fire and sword.

Christ was anointed to preach good tidings to the meek. They who have meekness will hear the gospel, and will be comforted by its glad tidings. The broken hearted, because of sin, seek the healing in Christ. "He gives unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Isa. 61: 3. That is, He gives consolation to deliver from the spirit of penitence.

Sackcloth and ashes were of old used in times of humiliation. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Isa. 61: 10.

We should not comfort ourselves with a hope unless we wish to obey God's

counsel. Those who do so, compare with the wise virgins.

Paradise, Pa.

J. W.

"RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE"

Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life," John 11: 25. Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, had died and had lain in the grave four days when Jesus came. Martha said to the Savior, "If Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Jesus replied, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." It is recorded here that the Savior went with Martha and Mary to the tomb and raised Lazarus from the dead.

The Savior, no doubt, was impressed with the lack of faith among those surrounding him. By performing this wonderful miracle he clearly demonstrated that He was endued with power from on high.

This circumstance may, however, have a deeper meaning. This death, resurrection and the renewed life very strikingly represents the change of heart that every soul will experience by rising from the dead state of sin to that new life in Jesus Christ.

We all agree that we have departed from God by transgression. God through love, sent His only begotten Son into the world that by believing in Him we may have life everlasting. This being His mission He employed ways and means to make man sensible of his fallen state and to bring him back into the happy relation from which he had fallen.

He spake many parables and performed many miracles, but the disciples did not fully comprehend their spiritual

meaning. Inasmuch as they had not yet received the Holy Ghost.

As Christ brought Lazarus to life, He has brought to all who believe and obey his word, a life that cannot be taken from them, which is spiritual and eternal. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Those who are willing to learn of Him, learn to be meek and lowly in heart, and find rest unto their souls. Having accepted the invitation they will follow the counsel of the apostle Paul: "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory." Col. 3: 1-4.

We are to become dead to sin, and alive in Christ, in conformity to His death and resurrection, that we may be conformed to Him in His ascension into heaven, where, as our surety, He is exalted on the mediatorial throne, at the right hand of the Father, to appear in His presence and to prepare a place for us.

All such souls have part in the first resurrection. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years." Rev. 20: 6. To have a part in the first resurrection we must forsake sin and our former life, and accept the spirit and mind of Christ. To all such souls the promise is eternal life. On such the second death hath no power, they will reign with Christ during the full day of grace, whether it be a day or a thousand years. "Beloved be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years

and a thousand years as one day." 2 Pet. 3: 8. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." 2 Pet. 3: 10, 11.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

It is not in works we do, but we must be quickened through the spirit, The world and the flesh, with all its attainments shall avail nothing, for our treasure will be in heaven.

God's children are not a party to the kingdom of this world. Having part in His death and resurrection, they have set their affections on things above.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. J. T.

REFLECTION

To all companions in the faith, who have been delivered from the spiritual Egypt of sin and led through the Red Sea of the blood of Christ, which overwhelmed the satanic Pharaoh by the glorious victory of the spiritual Moses, Jesus Christ, who by His death on the Cross wrought a triumph over the prince of this world and over the power of darkness.

What grace the merciful God has shown us herein, and how we received the Lord Jesus Christ, when we bowed our knees to the Most High God and received the mark of the Lord, and the seal of the living God in our foreheads. At that time we were strong, we renounced the devil with all his works, we forsook antichrist with all his

idolatrous ways and false worship, we overcame the world and all that is in it by our faith; we crucified our flesh with its lusts and affections, we presented our bodies living sacrifices unto God.

We opposed the evils in the world; we made a covenant with God, by denying ourselves to serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives; we surrendered ourselves to the Holy Spirit to be obedient, and when this was done how strong our faith was at that time. How our hearts then burned with love to God, how we were comforted with the everlasting comfort of the grace of God! God in mercy received us into the fellowship of His Son, killed the fatted calf, arrayed us in the best robe, put a ring on our hand and rejoiced with the heavenly host that we who were dead are alive, who were lost are found; for the faithful Shepherd, Jesus Christ, who came from heaven to seek the lost sheep, sought and found us poor and wandering in the wilderness. He took us upon His shoulders, bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and brought us into the sheepfold, that is, the Church of God.

We should therefore take heed to our calling and regulate our walk by the gospel in the fear of the Lord, and not hear the false prophets, of whom the apostle Peter writes: "These are wells without water; clouds that are carried with the tempest to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lust of the flesh, through much wantonness those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty they themselves are the servants of corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the Holy commandments delivered unto them." 2 Peter 2: 17, 21.

Therefore let us remain firm and immovable in Christ Jesus and His doctrine, and not look back with Lot's wife toward Sodom, nor long for the flesh pots of Egypt. If others do so, and with the stubborn Israelites take a dislike to the Bread of Life, and with the disciples at Capernaum are offended at the word of God and call the word "an hard saying," let us not do so. It is full of divine sweetness and spiritual nourishment. Let us say with Peter, "Lord thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art the Son of the living God."

Solomon says, "The man that turns aside from the path of wisdom shall remain in the congregation of the dead."

God, the Father of mercies, who hath quickened us, and hath begun a good work in us, the same will also complete it and make us fruitful in all righteousness, and present us unblamable to Him, protect us from all evil and preserve us unto His heavenly kingdom.

Rohrerstown, Pa.

H. S. M.

THE WAY

Thomas said unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus said unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

In the prophecy of Isaiah, 35: 8, 9, 10, we read of the way, which the Lord promised to prepare for his people, which prophecy pointed to our Lord and

Saviour, Jesus Christ, who was to come in the fullness of time, to do the will of the Father, to redeem his people Israel, to bring good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

John the Baptist, was sent to fulfill the prophecy, by preparing the way of the Lord. To make his paths straight; every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

This Way, is the way of salvation, it is the way of peace, it is the way of love, it is the way of joy unspeakable, it is the way of the Lord, which he has prepared for the salvation of our souls.

It is a perfect way, it meets every requirement, every need, it fills every longing, every desire, of the sin-freed soul and will save unto the uttermost all who are willing to come upon the Way.

God has revealed unto us, through His word, the way. John says, 1st John 1, 5; "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

When once we know our fallen nature we find that every inclination, thought and deed, is contrary to the will of God. We find that there are none who do good, no not one. We can then understand that we have need of something which we do not possess and cannot of ourselves obtain, which need brings to our mind the words which the Saviour spake unto Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I say unto

thee, Ye must be born again," which brings to our attention the need of a change. There must be the putting off the old man, the Adamic nature, with its lusts and desires, for, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." By nature we do the things of the flesh, and the things of the Spirit are foreign to us, but the grace of God teaches us that we cannot continue to live after the flesh and please God. The blessed Saviour said unto the Samaritan woman, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

This would bring to our mind, what manner of persons we are, how insufficient, how destitute, how needy, how poor we really are, and should move us with true humility and humble resignation to say with the Apostle Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" When the Way reveals itself by saying, "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

The way is now open, but it is a narrow way, for Jesus says "Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, few there be that find it." Here now is a most vital point in the way and we the children of men, should consider well these words of our Lord and Saviour for He has also said unto us, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many

wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

Let us consider the power of the enemy of the soul. By this power satan is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. Thus he has the subtle ability to deceive many souls; but God warns us, saying, what a man sows that shall he also reap, if he sow to the flesh he shall of the flesh reap corruption, but if he sow to the spirit he shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Here are the two ways pointed out and it would seem that with the wisdom God has given unto us we would use the utmost diligence to obtain an enduring substance, and give the more earnest heed lest a promise being left us we fail and come short of it.

We are responsible, for God has warned us of our lost condition, and revealed His way of salvation, and He warns us against being deceived, and losing sight of His way and again fall into condemnation, through not searching the Scriptures, and not following their teaching.

Many, many of the human family feel that what they think about the way will save them, whether what they think accords with the teachings of the Saviour or not. John writes, in his First Epistle, fourth chapter, that we should try the spirits, because many false prophets are gone out into the world; he also writes of the love wherewith we should love one another, finally saying,

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment we have from him; That he who loveth God loves his brother also."

From these Scripture testimonies, it should be plain to every thinking mind, that the kingdom established by our Lord is a peaceable one, ruled alone by love, where there can be no hatred, vengeance, strife, war or bloodshed, and when we hold views contrary to His word we are not upon the Way, do not know the Truth and therefore cannot possess the Life; are not willing to be washed by the lowly Teacher of Nazareth, and from His declaration to Peter, we have no part with him.

If we desire to have part with Him, in the resurrection, and His glory, let us use diligence to heed His word which is to be a lamp to our feet, to show us the way, truly a blessed way, if we walk therein.

Glen Elder, Kan.

E. F. S.

A PRAYER

A Heart-cry by a Convert—written in 1881.

O Lord, help me my cross to bear
As through the day I go;
"Subdue my flesh," this is my prayer,
And Thou the way dost know.

Who can express or understand
The Christian's inner life?
The daily trials on every hand,
The fierce spiritual strife.

The weakness, the lack of faith,
The longing after good;
The feeble prayer, that scarce a breath,
By Thee is understood.

Lancaster Pa.

L. L. F.

CHURCH UNITY

The subject of church unity has attracted more than ordinary attention since the late awful world war. This

is shown by the effort that is being made for a federation of the churches. The Scriptures teach, not a federation of churches, but the necessity of one spiritually united church or body. The spiritual unity of God's people under the gospel dispensation, was foretold by the prophet saying, "they shall all be taught of God." Christ, the author and founder of the Church, prayed for its unity. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are." St. John 17: 11 . . . 20, 21. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." He also taught unity without regard to nationality (in a figure) saying, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." St. John 10: 16. These denominated "other sheep" were believing Gentiles not yet led out and brought into the visible church with the believing Jews as Christ was not yet glorified, the Holy Ghost was not yet given nor the church established.

No revelation of God to man is more clearly expressed than that there will be a succession of believers united in faith and doctrine and in spiritual fellowship, from Pentecost until the end of the world. The doctrine of a united Church is taught by Christ and the apostles, therefore a divided church consisting of sects is unchristian. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it and present it to himself a glorious church, hence his counsel, "If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall

make you free." St. John 8: 31, 32. The same word and spirit that originated the Church can be relied upon to perpetuate it. The effect of the word and spirit of the Lord is humility and love to all who come under their influence. These divine virtues will control the actions of all believers and especially of the ministry, who are appointed for the perfecting of the saints.

When controverted matters arise for which there are no specific scripture directions given, the ministry will counsel together in the spirit of love and humility and the minority will yield to the majority and an agreement will be reached as in the primitive church, without causing division.

Years ago divisions occurred in professedly Christian churches of which I had knowledge. A certain number of ministers separated from the main body. The reason they gave for so doing was, that the old or mother church had departed from its former teaching or practice. If those churches were at one time sound in faith and practice and afterward became derelict in duty, separation was justifiable. They drew a number of members with them and preached and administered the ordinances, and recognized themselves a church. This was so in several so called churches of Christ. None of those with whom I was acquainted heeded Paul's counsel to faithful followers, "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them," Rom. 16: 17.

There is no Scripture authority for organizing new churches as long as we believe there are organized churches of Christ with faithful ministers who preach sound doctrine and are faithful in the observance of the ordinances and maintain the unity and purity of the members of the church. Those above

referred to, have gone to their reward. They organized new churches but did not separate from the worship of the then existing churches and their followers of today do not separate. Such a course increases divisions which are unscriptural. "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine receive him not into your house, neither bid him godspeed for he that biddeth him godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 10: 11.

This scripture does not forbid hospitality, but it does plainly forbid religious worship with those with whom we are not united in faith and doctrine. It is probable the elect lady had a house suitable for worship and teaching. If she would have opened for one who was not sound in faith and teaching she would have bid him godspeed, but she would not have done wrong to extend hospitality. It is a Christian duty to do good to all men.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Why can baptism be refused to infants while the Saviour plainly said "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not" ? Mat. 19: 14.

A. 1. To the above quotation the Saviour added, "for of such is the Kingdom of heaven." If they are of the kingdom of heaven baptism will not be necessary to their salvation. The atoning blood of Christ has cancelled the Adamic sin and the child has committed no sin, hence it is saved.

2. The Savior said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The child cannot be

taught, nor can it observe the things commanded.

3. Baptism is an external sign of an internal change, and is the rite of initiation into the church of Christ, the function of which is to keep up and foster the spiritual life, and to partake of communion, which are exercises of which the infant is not capable, and could not partake of these.

Q. What does the apostle John mean when in his Gospel he writes of being "born of blood, of the will of the flesh and of the will of man.?" 1: 13. .

A. John in the same passage writes of those who were "born of God" and to whom He "gave power to become the sons of God." These were such as "received Him"—even "those that believed on His name." Evidently these were "born of God," the only ones that were Christians, and those who had the three other births were not Christians, though they had a change. John calls it a "birth."

Many Jews felt that they were descendants of Abraham and Moses and therefore were God's children, and rejected Christ. To be born of blood is a term applied to one who without much thought, prayer or reading of the gospel, mechanically accepts a faith which is not the true faith, simply because his parents or other blood-relations had accepted that faith.

One born of the "*will of the flesh*" is one who blindly, without real sorrow for sin and without prayer and much reading of the gospel and considering it seriously, accepted a faith that suits his flesh, that is, his human nature requiring less self-denial than the true faith; or who accepts a faith with certain theories that appeals to his own reason, though not in harmony with the Word.

To be born of the "will of man" is to mechanically accept the faith of a man

by wishing to please another, regarding all faiths as about the same.

All of the foregoing are very common occurrences, and they are very sad, since the most serious condition in the lives of all of us is our relationship to God. If people would be strictly sincere and would read the Scriptures carefully, and accept them, and pray to God for light, all would become true Christians regardless of any spurious Christianity maintained by friends and relatives. The New Testament teaches but one doctrine to all of us. There is nothing in it that supports the very popular idea of a divided church, but there is enough in it to show that such a theory is erroneous.

PARAGRAPHS

To all who live a consistent Christian life, Christ's yoke is easy and his burden is light.

* * * *

Christ's kingdom established on the day of Pentecost has existed since its founding and will exist forevermore; for "of His government and peace there shall be no end."

* * * *

We become amazed at the depths of degradation and depravity to which man can fall; and we contemplate with admiration and awe the boundless grace and mercy that can restore and raise him to the heights of heavenly glory.

* * * *

There are events in our lives that seem to us of outstanding importance; but when we awaken from sleep and spiritual death in our sins, and come to life and light in Christ, and willingness to walk with him on the narrow way, that is an event that causes the angels in heaven to rejoice.

* * * *

"Many will say to me in that day,

Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye workers of iniquity." And the allusion here is to *professed zealous worshippers of the true God!*

* * * *

It is a serious thought that we are all traveling in one direction or the other, —on the broad road, leading downward to spiritual death and destruction from the presence of God, or on the narrow way, leading upward through this vale, to life, light and immortality and an eternal abode in the presence of God.

* * * *

What avail nicely worded prayers and entreaties to God for blessings, if we are unwilling to fulfill the conditions on which the dispensation of these blessings rest? As well pray to images of wood or stone. What mockery to pray "Lead us not into temptation," when we yet place ourselves under evil influences and are unwilling to be delivered from their power.

* * * *

"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." When we entertain selfish or impure desires for the gratification they afford us, our hearts become defiled as truly as though we committed the wrong, in word or deed. Here is need for cleansing, if we would "be like him" and "see him as he is;" for "every one who hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."

* * * *

If we would not believe the Bible account of the fall of man from grace and favor with his God, the truth thereof would yet be attested by the fact that the human being only, from being at his best, as created, "A little lower than the angels," can degenerate to such depths of depravity as to place himself below

the brute creation, where there are no degenerates, but all living on the highest plane in their creation.

* * * *

The controlling influence of self eliminated from the heart and divine love restored, will result in consistent Christian practice. It implies the principle of heaven on earth. "For behold, the kingdom of God is within you." When the kingdom of God has dominion within us the result will be in evidence as on the day of Pentecost, when "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul."

* * * *

Felix, the representative of the great Roman government, trembled, when Paul, a prisoner in chains, weak in bodily presence, and unassuming, "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." And King Agrippa, amidst all his official pomp, had to say, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." How truly God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty."

* * * *

"God be merciful to me a sinner," is acceptable prayer when it expresses the feelings that are deep in the heart. "From the end of the earth I will cry unto thee when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I." That was the expression of the Psalmist, as it ever is of those who "are of a contrite and humble spirit," with whom "the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity will dwell," and "revive the heart of the contrite ones."

NOTES FROM HISTORY

The rulers from the time of Christ, in the early period, destroyed both the lives and writings of the believers, which accounts for the meager history

of that early age. For centuries after Christ the believers were persecuted for not accepting the idol worship of the pagans.

Constantine, the Roman emperor, in the beginning of the fourth century, favored the Christian religion, but only as a dead form, for he banished from his empire those who did not embrace it. By him the decree of force was substituted for the criterion of conscience, which is God's sacred precinct to control.

Persecution in various forms was practiced until the beginning of the eighteenth century. In the later centuries the State churches tried to enforce, by violence, infant baptism, and to make all subjects join with them in worship, and in military service. In these demands there was an arrayal of the worldly kingdom against God's kingdom, which caused true believers great hardships, and from which they now are graciously exempt. But this privilege we should not abuse by giving license to our fleshly desires. We have no true faith without the witness to our lives of all that the Scriptures teach.

In the time of Christ the Roman Empire controlled about all the important countries, and as the Greek language was general, which was the language spoken by the apostles, their way was open to "preach the gospel to all the world;" by which term, in those days, was meant the Roman Empire. Luke 2: 1.

The apostles nearly all were martyred by the pagans before the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70. The Roman emperor, Domitian, in about the year 98, banished the apostle John to the isle of Patmos. In the beginning of the second century the emperor Trajan passed laws against Christians because, through their teaching, the heathen temples were being forsaken.

T. J. V. Braght writes that in the third century thousands were slain for refusing to worship idols; and says that after the Reformation, when the churches combined with worldly government, he knew by name 800 persons who were slain for not agreeing with popular worship, and about 1000 whose names he could not learn, all were victims between 1524 and 1660. Kirchmeyer estimated the martyrs who dissented from popular religion to have been, in 1531, over 1000.

"The Reichstag of Speier, composed of Protestants and Catholics, in 1529, passed an edict that every rebaptized adult should be put to death." In the treaty between Protestants and Catholics made in 1648, at the close of the "Thirty Years War," they agreed to give liberty of conscience to all religious denominations except the Ana-baptists, who took no part in the war.

Martin Luther in his work, published in 1520, writes, "The Pope is in error in teaching that it is right for a Christian to defend himself with violence against violence in opposition to the word of Christ, in Matt. 5." That was before Menno Simon left the Catholic priesthood. Dr. Max Goebel says, "Luther also denied to Christians the right to go to war."

Menno Simon was a Catholic priest for several years until about 1524, when he began to preach the Scriptures as he had read them. He obtained a reputation as an evangelical preacher, during a period of about ten years, when he met believers called Waldenses and with whose faith he agreed and from them received baptism. They appointed him to preach, which caused the Catholics to excommunicate him, and to put the price of forty guilders on him for his arrest. He did not originate a new faith.

In the beginning of 1525, the Wal-

denses were driven from Switzerland by the Reformer Zwinglii, the head of the Reformed Church, for not baptizing infants, and not worshiping with him.

"The first Mennonites came to Germantown, Pa., in 1683. About 1781 many Mennonites were induced to settle in Russia, to avoid military service in Germany. A hundred years' exemption from military service was promised them in Russia, at the end of which period that concession ceased, and very many of them emigrated to the United States and Canada.

It is a true observation that: Purity of the congregation is defeated by infant baptism, as it is well known that not every child of Christian parents becomes converted. The Bible teaches baptism only upon the faith of the individual who receives it.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST AND HIS PEACEABLE REIGN

There are many prophecies in the Bible concerning the coming of a Savior, a Redeemer, who is called the Wonderful Counsellor, the Prince of Peace. Malachi, the last of the prophets, speaks of Him as "the Sun of Righteousness who shall arise with healing in his wings." After Malachi all prophecies ceased for four hundred years. Peace had long been lost upon the earth, yet there were some faithful souls who regarded what was written of the coming of the Redeemer, and who believed that the time of His advent was nigh.

The nativity of our Savior took place amidst the most humble surroundings. The obscure little town of Bethlehem—the inn which was too full—no room for Him, His birthplace a stable, and His cradle a manger; such were the conditions attending the birth of the Savior of the world—the Son of God.

But it seemed as though the heavenly host could not wait to disclose the divine message. We are not told that any other than those humble, watchful shepherds, who were alone in the fields with their flocks feeding in the stillness and darkness, heard the declaration of the lone angel, who said "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." It is likely they alone heard the multitude of the heavenly host singing the sweetest song ever heard upon earth, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Is it any wonder that the angels rejoiced to tell the glad tidings that man's redemption was nigh, and that the hope of the pious watchers, and the expectation of Israel was realized? No wonder the shepherds left their flocks and hastened to Bethlehem to see the child and to make known what they had seen and heard. All that heard wondered, and Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

The wise men from the East were led by a star to do homage to the heavenly Child. Balaam had prophesied, "There shall come a star out of Jacob and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel," and it is possible the Magi may have been influenced to follow this remarkable star, which led them to Jerusalem. When they inquired for "Him that is born King of the Jews," Herod was troubled, and sought to slay the Child, but Joseph, being warned by God, sought safety by fleeing into Egypt with the Child and His mother, returning later to Nazareth. All these circumstances and change were foretold by the prophets.

We know nothing of the childhood of our Savior, nor how His days were spent. We read the Child grew and waxed

strong in spirit He was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him. When He was twelve years of age He accompanied His parents to Jerusalem to attend the feast of the Passover. On their return, He failed to accompany them, so when they sought Him they found Him sitting with the doctors both hearing them and asking questions. All that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. No doubt He had been taught of the Scriptures and moral law, as youths at that time were, but He had never learned in the schools of the rabbis, and yet He showed such marvelous wisdom, and so deep a knowledge in all things divine that the question was asked later, "From whence had this Man this knowledge, seeing He is unlearned."

When His mother chided Him for causing them anxiety, He replied, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" They did not understand His mission but His mother treasured these sayings. We know of only this one instance in His life until twelve years of age, and of the next eighteen years we know nothing except that people asked, "Is not this the carpenter?" He returned from the temple with His parents to Nazareth, and is supposed to have worked with Joseph as a carpenter until He was thirty years of age, when He was publicly anointed and consecrated to His life-work, the redemption of fallen man. He entered at once upon His mission of teaching and doing good. He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, gave sight to the blind and restored the dead to life. Even the wind and the sea obeyed Him.

He offended the Jews when He called God His Father, and they accused Him of making himself equal with God, and of disregarding the law of Moses, but He replied, He came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it.

There were many who believed and followed Him, but there were many more who did not receive His teaching, and hated Him for the truths He told them, and the doctrine He taught. Of old it was said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy," but He taught a new commandment, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." He came with a message of love and good will and promised the blessings of peace to His disciples: "My peace I leave with you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

He brought peace, but only to those who heard His word and believed on Him. The angelic testimony, with all the prophecies, are evidence of a reign of peace upon earth, as a fruit of Christ's work of redemption. He did not change the world nor its customs. The world is ruled by the sword to maintain right and secure justice, and ever will be. The kingdom of the world and the kingdom of Christ are separate and distinct kingdoms, and ever will be. Our Savior said, "My kingdom is not of this world, else would My servants fight."

In the peaceable reign of Christ, where love to God and love to man fill the heart, there is peace. There can be no strife where love rules; and to those who believe and obey His teaching He brings peace. As it was only to the humble, faithful shepherds the angels appeared to announce the advent of the blessed Savior, so it was only to those who had faith and came believing that He offered help and healing, and it is alone to those who come penitently and believing, who humbly ask for mercy, that the light of heaven is revealed and peace and pardon promised. All that He asks is, that we come.

The bed in the manger has vanished

and the angels' song is no longer heard on earth, yet the spirit of peace, and a united church, must ever abide with God's people, and "there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." John 10: 16.

O! sweet was the message, its rapturous strains
Of glory to God upon high,
To wandering shepherds on Judea's plains
Proclaimed man's salvation was nigh.

While angels no longer appear on those plains
The message of joy to impart,
The spirit of peace on earth yet remains
With those who are upright in heart.

How wondrous the story of Infinite love,
Our Savior a ransom to be
Forsaking the mansions of glory above,
That man from sin's bondage be free.

Hagerstown Md.

E. V. L.

THE LEAST AND YET GREAT

In reply to the question, who is foremost of six greatest men in history, the historian, H. G. Wells, in the American Magazine for July, says: "There can be no other answer than, Jesus of Nazareth." He calls attention to the fact that the Roman historians ignored Jesus entirely, and that a historian like himself, not even calling himself a Christian, "cannot honestly portray the progress of humanity without giving foremost place to this penniless teacher from Nazareth."

When the disciples of Jesus wondered who among them should be the greatest in His kingdom, he told them that unless they humbled themselves as a little child, they could not even enter His kingdom; and that the least among them should be great. He humbled Himself as the least among them, making Himself of no reputation; and after nineteen hundred years the influence of that humble life and teaching is acknowledged by an unbiased historian, as the greatest in all history.

The disposition of man is, as was manifest in the contention among the

disciples of Jesus, to seek greatness in the exercise of power and authority, and to acquire empire, wealth and honor. These were the motives that prompted Caesar, Alexander, Napoleon and others; but this historian sees no greatness in their lives, for indeed true greatness never comes from following these promptings.

The following of these promptings, which arise in every human heart, ever brings sin, sorrow and suffering in its wake, as history in all ages and our own experience abundantly testify. They are foreign to the Savior's kingdom; and our efforts to acquire that humility which the Savior declares is necessary for entrance into His kingdom, and to become truly great, will ever be futile until we learn to know and become impressed with the sinfulness of these motives.

Self-knowledge brings abasement. Humility comes in no other way. God's holy law was given from Mt. Sinai, and also written upon the human heart, to effect this end. When we realize that not only the wrong deed but the cherishing of an impure desire unfits us for heaven and happiness, for it disturbs our happiness in this life. So when we scrutinize our motives and promptings, do we not have abundant cause for abasement? It is God's goodness leading us to repentance and a renunciation of our own desires, that gives us entrance through our humility and the Savior's atonement, into His Kingdom.

However humble we become, the Savior humbled Himself even more—unto death on the cross. As we realize that it was for our sakes, through love he made atonement for our sins, it cannot fail to bring a feeling of deep abasement and gratitude which can find expression only in the service we will then willingly render to Him,

in subordinating every selfish desire that we may do His will. Its fullest expression will require eternity to give homage "before the throne and before the Lamb." This constitutes our highest conception of heaven and happiness, into which we can never enter without a realization of true greatness.

Doylestown, Ohio.

C. W.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Christmas day brings sweet remembrance,
Well may every heart rejoice,
Birth of Christ announced by angels
And proclaimed by heavenly voice.

Wondrous words heard by the shepherds,
"Peace on earth, good will to men"
Christ is born, the promised Savior,
Born this night in Bethlehem.

Birth of Christ, foretold by prophets,
Telling of this blessed day,
Promised Savior, man's Redeemer,
Comes in God's appointed way.

Jesus now proclaims salvation—
He will cleanse our hearts from sin,
Make of them a new creation,
So that He may dwell therein.

Peace on earth will be our watchword,
Servants of the new born King,
Seeking paths that lead us heavenward,
Let us now His praises sing.

Waynesboro Pa.

A. F.

DEVOTED RUTH

In the Book of Ruth we find true love and devotion of a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law. When Naomi was bereaved of her husband and two sons leaving her with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, she was sad, we may think, but through her love for these lonely young widows she forgot her own sorrow and tried to make them happier by requesting them to remain in their own land while she would return to her native country. They had different dispositions.

Orpah, with tears, decided to remain while Ruth, with tears, said: "Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to keep me from following after thee, for whither thou goest I will go, where thou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God. Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried."

Ruth might have had more pleasure in her own land, but her love for the loved mother urged her to leave all.

So we may think to have more pleasure in the world by being contented to follow the ways of the world. Yet it were wise, if we would, like Ruth, leave all this, and come, as she did, to the Lord, saying to our friends: Entreat me not to leave the Lord, nor keep me from following after Him. For whither the Lord leads, we should be willing to follow. We should say, Thy people shall be my people.

Thus we should ever cling to the Fold or Church, and ever be careful and guard each other from the many snares and false doctrines which are extant, of which it is said, by them the very elect, if it were possible, might be deceived.

Oh! that we may close the door of our hearts to all that does not agree with the gospel, and that we remain a united body, and can say to one another, "Thy God is my God."

Hagerstown, Md.

C. C. S.

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON

Text—I John 5: 11, 12: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

A record is an account. The apostle says, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." This record directs to the life of the

believer, because it is the life which refers to the Son of God. He came for the purpose of enlightening. The apostle says, "the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Inasmuch as He was immaculate He could assume the cause of us all, and could effect restoration. The purpose in our creation is, that we should glorify the Creator. God made the creature responsible for his own actions.

The way is opened by Christ. If we recognize sin within us, from which we cannot relieve ourselves, we feel the need of the service of the Son of God. It is not by any work of righteousness that we are saved but God's mercy.

Our Savior's words are, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." When we love Him our names are recorded in the Book of Life, and what is that record? We can enjoy a good conscience towards God and man, and that record we have within ourselves, because all know when they do wrong. We have testimony when the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit.

If we have the Spirit of the Lord, we cannot espouse two causes at the same time, as the blessed Savior said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." The life of self is to be brought into subjection to the Spirit. If the whole human family would have the Spirit, there could be no war, no violence, no strife, no contention. This was demonstrated when the disciples were told to "tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until they be endued with power from on high." They became one heart and one soul.

Christ is the light of the world.

When light appears, darkness vanishes. When daylight disappears, darkness rules; light and darkness cannot mingle. So it is in the spiritual life.

Our purpose should be to obey all divine teachings, to follow the Lamb, not alone on flowery plains, but also beneath the cross. When in the Garden of Gethsemane, to be offered for our sins, His perspiration was as great drops of blood, and in the agony of His soul, He said: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Our suffering is not worthy to be compared with the joys that shall be revealed in the future.

We are sanctified by obedience. Then we possess the peace of God. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

Our blessed Savior referred to the servants that were sent into the vineyard at the sixth, ninth and eleventh hour. At the eleventh hour, the householder said, "Why stand ye here idle?" Oh, the love and mercy of God, that he extends to us time until even the eleventh hour. But it appears ungrateful to postpone duty until our sick bed for the gratification of our Adamic nature.

The Church cannot save us. Nevertheless, the Church and the ordinances are by divine institution and have their purpose. Baptism is a testimony against the life we have led in sin and evidence of the life we have received through Christ. The communion service is in remembrance of what our blessed Savior has done for us. God has never been without witnesses. Those souls which receive the ordinance of baptism are witnesses inasmuch as they testify against their former life, and bear evidence to the life which they have received by grace in Christ.

Waynesboro, Pa.

H. H. F.

REPLY TO A FRIEND

In writing on the important subject interesting us I feel unworthy.

It is evident that light and darkness cannot harmonize spiritually, and that in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper Christians and sinners cannot unite. "We cannot serve God and Mammon

. . . Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

God is the Author of love; satan is the author of hatred, strife, murder.

Paul said he knows nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. My desire too is to know heavenly wisdom, for it is pure and peaceable and easily entreated.

We by nature have a selfish disposition to which we must die if we wish to obtain spiritual life. This life is spiritually begotten and manifests itself in deeds in all who are partakers of it, for, it is said, there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed. Among those deeds are love to bring unity in the church, and love to one's enemies, as Stephen, when he was stoned to death for the faith, prayed God not to lay the sin to the charge of his slayers. He was of the heavenly kingdom, and was ruled by love. Those in the worldly kingdom rule by the sword and inflict punishment on their enemies. Those in the heavenly kingdom never inflict harm, but recompense evil with good, which shows a light that is easy to discern.

The parable of the Prodigal Son aptly represents our course of life. He claimed the right of his own will. It was given him. He abused the privilege given him. So do we. In the extremity of want he joined himself to one for help. He sent him to feed swine, which, under the law given by Moses, were unclean animals, and they portray sin. The type is that the convicted sinner flees to morality, or to some church ordinance for comfort.

This disobedient son found no comfort until he had returned to his father. Neither will the troubled sinner find rest before resolving to obey his convictions. He was joyfully welcomed. So the angels rejoice over the sinner who seeks the Father in heaven. The best robe that was put on him symbolizes the robe of the slain Lamb. The fig leaves which our first parents used for a cover is an emblem of our own righteousness. The other ornaments put on this penitent son are figurative of the virtues of the Spirit.

Love must be prominent in Christ's disciples, for He says: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

In conclusion, my affectionate counsel is, read the Scriptures.

Lauraville, Md.

D. M.

EXPERIENCE

I relate my experience in the hope of doing a little good to others.

I remember that in my childhood I asked my mother questions concerning the creation.

When I became older, I knew that the wonders in God's works were above my understanding. Some argued evolution. I knew that if human being evolved from an inferior beginning the development was due to an intelligence that the system planned.

I learned that there were opposing influences to cause conflict in us. I saw the demonstration in the visible world of one thing preying on another, and I was conscious of the preying of evil upon me. The good influence prevailed with me and I began reading the Scriptures, which condemned my carnal life. This standard of truth seemed so high that I was impressed that to follow it would hinder me in making my living. In my trouble I

wished I had not known the Scriptures, yet I was impelled to read them. For want of correct understanding, I became tempted with infidelity. From this dangerous device of Satan I was delivered by gaining better knowledge of some of the darker parts of the Book of God, and I resolved to obey what knowledge I had.

I became concerned about baptism, but in looking for a blameless church I found that many professors lived no better than I did. I tried to be a Christian without uniting with a church, but felt the need of fellowship.

I heard preaching and could discern sound doctrine and that there must be love among God's people, and obedience to His word. I was so tossed about that I ceased considering others, and the question of baptism or the church, and became convinced that I must first learn of Christ in myself. This gave me rest. I then united with the church that I believed to be ruled by the Spirit of Christ.

I am impressed that the more we know of God's will the more we feel constrained to obey Him. By our trials we become fitted to bear spiritual fruit, as the soil must be prepared by different processes to yield fruit. God has promised us His guidance here, if we obey, that we may be fitted for the incorruptible inheritance.

We are directed to the example of Abraham. He obeyed by leaving his own country through faith, and was willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac, under command, believing that God could raise him from the dead to fulfill His promise.

The purpose of Christ's mission is to reconcile all men unto God and us to one another. The Savior prayed for perfect oneness among His disciples. It is said, "Many are called, but few are chosen." The thought is, many are

convicted to forsake their sins, yet few are willing. The reply is, "We will not have this man to rule over us." For Christ to rule over us we must be willing to obey His commandments with true purpose of heart, then we can enter into the glorious liberty of God and in the church of Christ where visible. Christ called his followers out of the world, they are in the world but not of the world, where church and state are separate.

Pequea, Pa.

B. E. F.

JOURNEY OF THE ISRAELITES

My dear children, I will now tell you more of the journey of the Israelites, how the Lord directed Moses to lead them toward Canaan, the promised land. We would naturally think that they would never forget what the Lord had done for them, in leading them through the Red Sea on dry ground and in preserving them from their enemies. They were not taken in a direct way, for fear if they became discouraged they might wish to return to Egypt. The way the Lord directed was through a sandy wilderness, and they soon complained when in want of water, and had not been long on the way until they murmured against Moses and longed for the food they had when in Egypt.

The Lord then sent them bread or food from heaven. It was round and white, like a seed, and fell on the ground each morning, and each person was told to gather enough to last for one day, except on the sixth day, when they were to gather enough for two days. None fell on the seventh day—the Sabbath. It was called manna. They were fed this manna for forty years, or while they journeyed in the wilderness.

They were in need of water again and they murmured against Moses because he had led them out of Egypt. They were almost ready to stone him, when

he called upon the Lord, who told him to smite a rock which was near, with his rod, and water gushed forth in abundance. This was done in sight of all the people and was a wonderful display of God's power, for water to spring from a rock where none had been before, nor has there been any there since.

While they were in camp near the stream of water; a people called the Amalekites, who had their homes in the desert, made war on the Israelites. Moses prayed to the Lord, and while he held the rod of God, and his hands were stretched out toward heaven, the Israelites were able to drive the Amalekites away, but when his arms fell down the Israelites were driven away. So his brother Aaron and Hur, whom some people think was Miriam's husband, held up Moses' hands until the enemy was overcome.

Moses was told to remind the people of what the Lord had done for them in the past, and if they would be obedient and keep his covenant, they should be His peculiar treasure and a holy nation. The people answered and said, "All that the Lord hath said we will do." They had then journeyed near Mt. Sinai or Horeb, where Moses had once seen the burning bush, as I have told you earlier. The Lord told Moses to call his people together and He would give them His laws and commandments, which he wished them to hear and obey. He spoke so that all could hear, but the voice was accompanied by thunder and lightning, and the people feared the voice of the Lord and asked that the Lord speak to Moses, and he should tell them what was said. Moses was then told to come up on the mountain and he was there for forty days while the Lord told him what to do, and wrote the ten commandments on two tablets of stone. These ten commandments almost every

child has committed to memory, and if all persons would obey them this would be a better and a happier world.

While Moses was gone the people became restless, and said they did not know where Moses had gone and they asked Aaron to make them a God to lead them. Aaron made them a golden calf out of their jewels, and when Moses came down and saw them worship this calf he was angry, and threw down his tables of stone and broke them. He destroyed the golden calf, and the Lord was displeased with the people and punished them severely. He threatened to destroy them all, but Moses plead for them, and the Lord forgave them for Moses' sake and again promised to lead them. Aaron did not seem to be as strong a character as Moses. He may have thought if they had an image that they could see, they might still be kept to worship the Lord, or he may have feared the people. Moses was told to prepare two more tables of stone and take them up on the mount, and God would write again the words of the law. Moses did so and remained another forty days on the mount. This time the people waited for him, and he had been so long in God's presence or glory, the people could not look upon his face and it was needful for him to wear a veil. These laws given by the Lord to Moses have ever been a basis of the laws of civilized nations and peoples, and are as binding to us as they were to the Israelites.

It seems strange that the people so soon turned to worshipping idols, but they had been so long in Egypt, where they worshipped images, and felt they must have a God to worship that could be seen. The Lord then told Moses to build a tabernacle in the midst of their camp. It was like a tent and could be taken down and carried when they traveled or marched. A cloud covered

this tent, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. This was so bright that Moses could not enter because of it. The people now had this cloud or light before them at all times, to remind them of God's promise to care for them, and that they need no image made by man's hands but should worship God alone. Moses was given very explicit directions how the ark or mercy seat should be built. Aaron and his sons were to be priests and attend to the services. Aaron himself, who was to be High Priest, was only to enter the one room, the holy of holies, once every year. The fire upon the altar the Lord Himself kindled and it was never left die out.

The Lord gave directions for the sacrifices that were to be offered in atonement, A lamb, or an ox was to be offered each day for an atonement for the sins for the people. A symbol of the Lamb of God—the Savior who was to come and take away the sins of the world; but these types or symbols the Israelites did not then understand. They were in this camp almost a year, building the tabernacle, and learning the laws and commands given by God to Moses.

The Lord's commands were plain and easy to be understood. Many of you dear children, have read the Bible and will remember that in building the Ark of the Covenant Moses was given particular instructions, and the Lord required obedience. God has made a New Covenant with us and our reward is not a natural possession, but a spiritual one. Obedience is required of us if we would be His children, just as it was with the Israelites of old.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

CHILD'S STORY

THE STORY OF SAMUEL

Now, my little dears, I am going to tell you a story. I imagine a little group

of children seated around me, wondering what this story will be. It may not be entirely new to you, for in our day most of you love to read, and those who cannot read have kind parents who read to them, and tell them stories. The story I am going to tell you is about Samuel and his mother Hannah, who was a good woman, but was not happy because she had no children to love. She was a firm believer in prayer. I suppose you know that praying means talking to God, just as if you wanted something very much and you would ask your own parents to give it to you, and you knew they loved you and could give it if they thought it best for you to have it. That is just like praying to God. So Hannah prayed for a long time to God that if he would give her a son she would let him work and serve in the temple, for the high priest Eli, who would be a good teacher for her son. God answered her prayer and gave her a dear little boy. She was wonderfully pleased and thanked God for him. She took very good care of him and loved him dearly, but as she had promised him to the priest's work, she knew it would not please God if she did not keep her promise, for if we want God to be our dearest Friend, we must not displease Him by disobedience. When he was still a small boy, perhaps six or seven years old, she took him to the temple, and gave him to the priest.

Every year she went to see him, and always took him a nice little coat to wear. You may know how glad she was to see him, and how happy he was to see his dear mother. After he was there a while and was sleeping in a little bed

next to the high priest's room, he was awakened by hearing his name called, "Samuel! Samuel!" He arose quickly and ran to Eli, thinking he had called him, but Eli said he had not called him, he should go back to bed. After a little while he heard the same voice calling, "Samuel! Samuel!" so he went quickly to Eli again, saying, "You did call me." Eli then told him if he heard his name called again, he should say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," for Eli believed that it was God who called him. Samuel did as he was told, and the Lord told him He was not pleased with Eli, because his two sons were wicked men, and their father did not punish or reprove them as he should have done. And, because Eli had not done his duty, he would not be priest much longer, and he and his sons would all die.

The next morning Eli called Samuel to him and asked him what the Lord had said to him. Samuel loved Eli, and it went hard for him to tell what he had heard, but he was honest and did not want to displease God so he told him all. After a time it all happened as God had told Samuel. Eli's two sons were killed in battle, and Eli, who was old and nearly blind, was so shocked by the bad news that he fell over backward, and his neck was broken so that he died. God's word is always true, and what He tells us will surely happen.

Now I have told you quite a little story, and I will stop for this time. If I hear that you like stories from the Bible, perhaps I can send you another one sometime.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.