

GOOD TIDINGS

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

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Editorial	1
Reflections On Life And Growth	2
The Reformed Mennonites	3
God's Foreknowledge	7
The Love of Good	9
Crumbs From The Master's Table (Poem)	10
Being Dead He Yet Speaketh	11
A Memorial Sketch	12
Abiding Life	13
Opportunity	15
The Way is Open	16
Home In Heaven (Poem)	17
True and False Prophets	17
Worship	18
The New Birth	19
True Happiness	20
Love	21
Brotherly Love	21
Self-Denial	22
Meditation (Poem)	23
Brief Notes	24
Questions And Answers	25
Kind Admonition	25
Neglect Is Guilt	27
Confessing Christ	28
Mystery Revealed	29
The Story of Two Judges	29
A Child's Story	32

EDITORIAL

In this our ninth number of "Good Tidings" will be found a number of articles bearing on important Scripture subjects, which we believe will be helpful and instructive to all who are interested in their spiritual well being.

Our endeavor is to publish matter that will tend to the promulgation of truth, and we feel grateful to approximately sixteen hundred subscribers who by continuing their subscriptions give opportunity to others as well as themselves to read the various articles, some of which explain difficult Scriptures, and others comment on those things which we believe are uplifting and encouraging to all who "hunger and thirst after righteousness," whose desire is for growth in the graces and virtues of the beautiful Christ-life which qualifies for the heavenly association wherein is found the fullness of joy.

In this number will be found several articles which refer to the late decease of our beloved brethren, Bishop Jacob S. Lehman, and Minister Henry H. Fisher, both of whom were advanced in years and served the church long and faithfully. May the mantles which they laid off rest on other worthy shoulders.

To continue the service of "Good

Tidings" for the great and worthy cause, we again invite members to contribute regularly, suitable articles on Scripture subjects; giving privilege for the committee to correct, or to reject articles offered.

We suggest that contributors of articles will please compare Scripture quotations with the Scriptures before sending them to the Editor. This will eliminate much tedious work for the committee and typist in preparing articles for the printer. In the past we have found many incorrect quotations.

All subscribers whose subscriptions expire with this number will please without solicitation promptly give their renewals to collectors in their locality. Should there be no collector convenient, send renewal direct to John K. Ryder, Business Manager, 840 East Orange Street, Lancaster, Pa. We would appreciate promptness in order to avoid confusion and the possibility of missing copies.

REFLECTIONS ON LIFE AND GROWTH

"For as the earth bringeth forth her bud and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." Isa. 61, 11.

In the changing seasons we behold the fulfillment of God's promise to man, "while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, . . . shall not cease." At this season the ripening fruit, the fields of new mown hay, the golden grain all give promise of a fruitful harvest.

An all-wise Creator shows us that He not only provides food for His creatures, but also delights the eye of man with nature's beauty. Does not the varied

color of plant and flower arouse in us wonder and admiration for the Creator? We may not all have opportunity to enjoy the beauty of fields of waving grain and the green pastures, yet in our small gardens, many of us enjoy the beauty of nature in its unfolding. We have cultivated the soil, seeded and planted, and daily watch with interest the coming forth of leaf and bud.

The germinating of the seed and the growth of plant-life are dependent upon the life giving warmth of the sun's rays and the gentle rains. "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

There is a similarity in spiritual and natural life and growth. In the parable of the sower our Savior wished to impress us with the importance of good seed falling upon good ground, that in due time it may bring forth fruit abundantly. A parable is a representation of spiritual things under a similitude of natural things. In this parable our Savior represents the sower as the Son of man. The seed sown as the Word of God. The ground upon which the seed is sown, the heart of man. The birds or fowls represent the wicked one that catcheth away good seed sown. The good ground represents the honest and good heart which heeds God's convicting grace.

When the awakened soul opens the door of the heart the grace of God finds entrance. Through the working of grace that heart becomes fertile and productive. If cultivated the gifts of faith, love, humility and meekness will show fruits in daily life. Thus honesty, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, compassion and love for all mankind will be manifested. Christ's spirit abides "as a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The fruits of the Good Spirit do not fail.

In love our Savior warned His disci-

ples, "Watch ye therefore for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, . . . lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping, . . . I say unto all, watch." As we are warned to watch, there is danger.

Spiritual and natural life are alike subject to injury from enemies. From experience we gain knowledge of the many destructive enemies to which plant life is exposed. The growth continues unless molested by insects or disease. When molested plant-growth is retarded. Thus watchfulness is very necessary. Noxious plants spring from the earth which, as weeds, will choke the growth of useful plants and should be weeded out and destroyed. As caretakers we must combat and destroy the insect life, or enemies, which attack root, stem and leaf. Constant vigilance is necessary in both spiritual and natural growth.

In the spiritual life constant watching is necessary for the enemy attacks in many ways. Carnal reason, when not restrained, is a destructive agency which injures the root and may destroy the life. Unbelief, as a noxious weed, and as a tare sown by the evil one, tends to choke the good seed.

The enemy or weeds may be small and at first hard to detect. Sin does so easily beset us in our sinful nature. Satan ever awaits entrance at the door of the heart. Inward watching is necessary, since the evil one seeks to destroy the fruits of the Good Spirit. "Sin lieth at the door, . . . thou shalt rule over him." If we are not awake to danger "the little foxes" will enter. The little foxes may represent yielding to worldly influences and pastimes, covetousness, deceit and vanity.

Our Savior provides us with weapons to meet the enemy, "the shield of faith," and the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." We are commanded to be girded with them and to continue praying always, "bringing into captiv-

ity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is. He shall be as a tree planted by the waters and that spreadeth out her roots by the river; . . . her leaf shall be green; . . . neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

Hagerstown, Md.

E. S. L.

THE REFORMED MENNONITES

[This article was published in "Good Tidings" July, 1922, many applications for extra copies were made—the supply on hand was soon exhausted, since then there have been numerous requests to have the article republished. In compliance to these requests, we believe we are warranted in republishing it in this issue.]

There is very little known by the public in general, of the principles of these people, who are often objects of criticism on account of their peculiarities. This criticism usually arises, however, from an incorrect knowledge of their Christian sentiments; and the why and wherefore, of some of their views, may be interesting. Among their peculiarities are church purity and unity, non-resistance, detachment or separation from the vain pursuits, pleasures, and fashions of the world; and also from all forms of worship not in harmony with the doctrine taught by the Son of God and his Apostles.

They claim true Christianity to be the result of a divine power or principle begotten within the soul, by the combined influence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; without which no person having reached the years of discretion, can consistently claim an interest in the heavenly inheritance.

They further claim, that wherever this heavenly influence is brought to bear upon the human heart, its effect will be the same—in accordance with the principles of unity so plainly taught

by the Son of God and his Apostles. This unity was practically demonstrated when the Church of Christ was first established, on the day of Pentecost when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul."

We find conclusive evidence that this unity was designed to exist amongst Christ's followers and in his church, in Christ's prayer to his heavenly Father, in (John XVII): "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." Evidently the unity of Christ's followers was ever to be a means, to convince the world that he was the Redeemer.

It is further claimed by the Reformed Mennonites, that Christ has, through all the dark ages of the world, preserved unto himself a people — a church — a kingdom on earth; which amidst all the persecutions of her apostate enemies, has maintained this unity, and the doctrine of Christ in its purity, up to the present time, in fulfillment of the prophecies of old, relative to Christ and his kingdom, that "He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Christ said, "upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

In the *Martyrs Mirror* we find on page 353 (283 old edition) that "Mention is made in this (16th) century, not only of the Waldenses, but also of certain churches at Thessalonica, in Greece, which are declared to have remained unchanged in faith from the days of Christ;" and on page 354 (284 old edition) "They stated further, that the church of God had remained unchanged

in faith from the time of the Apostles; and that they still preserved in good condition the letters which the apostle Paul wrote to them with his own hands."

In J. N. Brown's encyclopedic of religious knowledge, as given by Reinerius, who admits the Paulicians, Paterines and some others, to be identical in principle and faith with the Waldenses, he says: "Of all sects which have been or now exist, none is more injurious to the church of Rome than the Waldenses. First, because it is more ancient. Some aver their existence from the days of Pope Sylvester; others, from the very time of the Apostles. Second, because it is so universal. There is scarcely any country into which this sect has not crept. Third, because all other heretics excite horror by the greatness of their blasphemies against God; but these have a great appearance of piety, as they live justly before men, believe rightly all things concerning God, are opposed to the Church of Rome, and in their accusations are easily believed by the people." Such a concession, from such a source, speaks volumes. Here, then, as a succession of faithful men, whose apostolic origin, perpetuity, universal, (though oft hidden) diffusion, general orthodoxy, evangelical simplicity, and sanctity of character, is admitted by the church of Rome herself; and in all this long and dark history it has maintained a true and faithful adherence to the primitive principles of Christianity, testifying against all forms of worship not in harmony with the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. These are they that have kept the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Peter Waldo is generally supposed to have been the founder of the so-called Waldensian church. History, however, does not sanction this supposition. Waldo labored in the cause, but the Waldensian church was only a link in per-

petuating the principles and doctrines of Christ. So may we also say of Menno Simon, from whom the Reformed Mennonites derive their name, and who continue the succession, unity and principles of the true church of Christ, of which there shall be no end.

This may appear assumptive in defense of the Reformed Mennonites, but as the retention and practice of the pure principles of godliness as revealed in the doctrine of Christ, is the only evidence of the true succession of his church, and as Christ said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; and no man cometh unto the Father but by me;" and Paul says, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his," it is very evident that the possession of the Holy Spirit is a necessary qualification for church membership; and the church of Christ can be composed only of truly converted and enlightened individuals: those who possess and obey the love of God, which is shed abroad in the hearts of all true believers by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them.

Christ said: "The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name; he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you, and when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he shall guide you into all Truth." To suppose that this Spirit of Truth would teach different principles at different ages in the Christian Era, would be charging confusion to God himself and would be antagonistic to the prayer of the Son of God, and the instructions of his Apostles, and inconsistent with the order of heaven. Consequently, the Reformed Mennonites in their sincere regard for the true principles of Christianity, claim that the true church of Christ is a united body, born of one spirit, bound by the inseparable compact of Godly love into an association, where "all are perfectly joined

together in the same mind and in the same judgment;" adhering closely to the primitive principles of Christianity, as defined in the doctrine of Christ.

They do not expect to be saved by their adherence to the outward form of religion; but firmly believe that external works are the effects of regeneration.

Christ said: "If a man love me he will keep my words." Consequently, they claim that whosoever does not keep Christ's commands, manifests thereby that he does not love Christ, but is unconverted; controlled by the spirit of self; unfitted for church membership; and has no ground for a hope of final acceptance; and also, that the true church of Christ ever has kept, now does, and will continue to keep his commands for "He that sayeth he knoweth or loveth God, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

A careful investigation of the teachings of Christ, would lead us to the conclusion, that he places the human family into two classes, the converted and the unconverted; and into two kingdoms, the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of Christ.

In the kingdom of this world the sword is used to overcome evil, but Christ commands the subjects of his kingdom, not to resist evil, but to overcome evil with good. He teaches that there are but two ways. The strait and narrow way which leadeth unto life, and the broad way which leads to destruction.

The word of God has so plainly set forth the impossibility of blending these two kingdoms or ways, that no one should be influenced by his worldly feelings to doubt the truth of it. Christ said: "My kingdom is not of this world;" "ye are not of this world;" "I have chosen you out of the world;" and

Paul says: "Be not conformed to the world, but be yet transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, perfect and acceptable will of God."

These views are strictly adhered to by the Reformed Mennonites, and are considered by many as being quite shortsighted and peculiar. However, if the children of God are called out of this world, and are to prove the good, perfect and acceptable will of God by a non-conformity thereto, how can they at the same time take an active part in all the vain pleasures and pursuits indulged in by the worldly minded, figure actively in political strife and contention, and tender their service to whatever the goddess of fashion may dictate, when it is clearly demonstrated by the holy scriptures, that those who engage in these things are obeying the god of this world, and not the God of Heaven?

In this age of temporal prosperity, advance of intellectual attainment, rapid progress in the arts and sciences, and the almost unparalleled attainment of temporal and national glory, it is a question whether the simplicity of the religion of Jesus Christ is not being superseded by a form of godliness, which is more in harmony with this world, than with the doctrine of Christ.

Let us imagine ourselves as having set out in this so-called Christian age, in search of that "holy nation, royal priesthood, and peculiar people," of whom the Lord has said: I have chosen you out of the world; ye are no more of the world, but prove ye the acceptable will of God by a non-conformity thereto; and where would we find them? Certainly not in deadly conflict with each other on the field of battle; certainly not in political strife and contention; not in our social gatherings and festivities, where vain amusements are more sought after than Godly piety; and we might also

say, not in our popular churches, where the devotees of the goddess of fashion are more numerous than humble hearts; but alone among those who have been called by grace from the broad way of worldly pleasures to the narrow way of self-denial; who have renounced the kingdom of this world and yielded themselves to the service of Christ, and willingly bear his cross and the reproach of the worldly minded.

Christ said—"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments," also "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." The Reformed Mennonites claim, that this love to God and our fellowman, is the only principle which man can receive, to fit him for heaven, and that this principle is shed abroad in the heart of the true believer by the Holy Spirit, and constrains him to obey all the commandments of Christ and the Apostles. They also claim that this divine principle is the controlling influence in the true church of Christ and prevents the existence therein of strife, litigation, jealousy, slander, envy, hatred, revenge and animosity; and that the true church of Christ is a united body, as Paul says: "Fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded, that ye all speak the same thing, and there be no divisions among you." Believing this, the Reformed Mennonites cannot consistently and conscientiously participate in any form of worship that is not in harmony with the principles, purity, and simplicity, of the doctrine of Christ; but wish it distinctly understood, that they are led to this alone from a sacred regard and reverence for the word of God, as revealed by the Son, as the last and conclusive will and testament of the Father. In accordance with these views, they believe it to be the will of God that the church of Christ shall be as "a city that is set upon a hill which cannot be hid," that

in case of soul-sickness or disgust at the vanities of earth, or moved by grace to a desire for a triumphant immortality, the poor penitent should have no difficulty in deciding who God's people are, or where the spiritual ark of safety is, in which alone is security against the day when the elements will melt with fervent heat and a fiery wave shall usher in the closing scene.

Carlisle, Pa.

A. M.

GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom. 8: 29, 30.

The text is part of a difficult subject which is spread over a number of chapters, and we will follow the roots to the center from which they diverge. Will the reader kindly go with us in our examination? In the first chapter of the Epistle we read: "When they knew God they glorified him not as God, . . . and their foolish heart was darkened; . . . as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Those who were darkened and hardened are in the foregoing scriptures held responsible for choosing such a state. In the same chapter it is declared: "Thou after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath"; making us accountable for what we treasure up.

In the third chapter it is said: "They are all under sin," showing no preference. In the fourth chapter we find: "Righteousness is imputed if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead"; making righteousness dependent on our faith. In the fifth chapter we have it: "Therefore being

justified by faith we have peace with God." In the sixth chapter we are admonished: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, . . . yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness;" which is an appeal to the will. In the eighth chapter: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Here God's foreknowledge is admitted, but predestination seems to have the sense of preparing. When persons are pliable like clay to the potter the Ruler of the Universe can shape the vessel to suit His purpose. If we yield obedience to the evil ruler, he will shape us.

Our limited minds cannot enter the bounds of infinity, and it may be Paul's mind could not fully grasp all that he wrote under inspiration; but ample evidence has been quoted that he argues our accountability, and that we can control our choice of service.

Reader, with the ninth chapter the subject deepens. It may be too deep for us. In our nothingness we exclaim: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" As the Scriptures are given "that the man of God should be thoroughly furnished unto all good works" we claim that we should try to know them. If Paul had believed that God elected some to be saved and others to be lost he would not have opposed God's will, to elect or reprobate, by wishing that he might be accursed for Israel's sake, as by election their state would have been unalterably fixed. He dwells on the privileges given them, and his longing is that they may choose life. He admits that the word had taken effect on some of them, but makes the exception: "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, and speaks of the promise given

to the children of Abraham as being "counted for the seed." In this statement he brings into view those who have faith, like Abraham had, and those who are fleshly, as being distinct classes.

He refers to Abraham's son Isaac who was given contrary to nature, as a type of Christ our means of saving grace to those who believe on Him. He then writes an allegory on Jacob and Esau, using Esau, the first-born, to exemplify the Law and Jacob the Gospel. To Rebecca, the mother, the Lord said her twins are to be the heads of "two manner of people, . . . and the older shall serve the younger." The Law, which is the older, shall serve the Gospel, for it spiritually prepares the soul for the Gospel. This allegory forms the basis of "the purpose of God according to election, . . . not of works, but of him that calleth." The writer wishes to illustrate that God's love was set on the Gospel, the covenant of love, and not on the Law which allowed wrath. Under this similitude the apostle has affirmed the Old Testament rendering this way: "I loved Jacob and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." Malachi 1:2, 3.

Esau was the head of the Edomites who were not in favor with the Israelites. As Jacob received the blessing from Isaac, the father of the two sons, the term "hatred" signified displeasure on the nation of Esau and pleasure on the descendants of Jacob, from whose lineage Christ sprang. This distinction is national not personal, and has no reference to the state of the soul.

Speaking of Pharaoh, the same national distinction should be observed, for he was the ruler of an idolatrous nation, which was under God's displeasure, and was made an example of the fate of sinners. It is not said that He created Pharaoh to show His power in

him, but that He raised him up, or placed him in power for that purpose. He asserts that as the potter has power over the clay so God has power over nations, and that He "endured with much longsuffering those fitted to destruction." If they had been elected for destruction God would not have had longsuffering for them.

By vessels of mercy and those "afore prepared unto glory" the subject seems to indicate those who yielded themselves to be such that they could be called into Divine service, for it is said: "I will call them my people which were not my people." Had they been elected they always would have been His people.

The reason given why Israel "hath not attained to the law of righteousness" is: "For they stumbled at that stumblingstone"; and it is written: "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." The Savior says: "He that believeth not is condemned already." John 3:18.

In the tenth chapter of this Epistle we find: "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." This promise offers an opportunity to all. The complaint against Israel is: "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Their unwillingness is the cause of complaint.

Surely we know that God is a Spirit, and His law influences all alike whether they know the letter or not. Wherefore the heathens who have not the letter are as accountable as those who have the letter. They may not conceive all the literal forms defined by the letter, but life is not in the letter, in the rite or the ceremony.

We find in the eleventh chapter: "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew; . . . there is a remnant according to the election of grace, and if by grace, then it is no more of

works; Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for." They "were blinded" for they sought it by the works of the law, and not by faith. "Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them, (the Israelites) to jealousy." The faith of the Gentiles should have been a stimulus to the Israelites to accept Christ. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity, but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again." Here favor or disfavor is made dependent on believing or not believing, on willingness or unwillingness,—evidently meaning to a full degree, for "God looketh on the heart." God gave His oracles to the nation of Israel for a specific purpose, but under the economy of Christ there is no difference in nations or persons, for "now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference." Rom. 3: 21, 22.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

THE LOVE OF GOD

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." 1 John 3: 1, 2, 3.

The Apostle having previously declared "that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of God"; here in our text breaks out in language of adoration

in view of the unspeakable gift conferred upon him and his fellow believers by the Father. He especially invites attention to this strong manifestation of love, which is the giving of His only begotten Son that through Him they attained salvation and are now sons and heirs of the everlasting inheritance.

"Love is of God." The Christ life and the love of God are the same; both are eternal and unchangeable. If the love of God is bestowed upon us then we have the life that Christ gives and are the sons of God.

The love of God constitutes the life, and the life gives light. "In Him (Christ) was life and the life was the light of men." By walking in the light they were in fellowship one with the other and constituted God's people.

The graces of the life are given as follows by the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 13, revised edition: "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil, beareth all things and endureth all things. Love never faileth."

If we conscientiously adopt the law of love, in its very spirit, which is the divine life in the soul, and obey it in sincerity of heart, courts of justice will not be necessary and war will cease from the earth, we mean as far as mankind are under the influence of divine love.

An eminent expositor of the Bible commenting upon the prophecy of Isaiah, "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, and neither shall they learn war any more," uses this language: "If all men were consistent Christians there could be no war." The attainment of our text challenges our attention and warrants our admiration. It confers upon us peace of mind and rest of soul as an effect of our sonship.

The love bestowed upon us confers a peace that is above all human understanding, because it is an unending peace; it is the peace of Christ. It is a peace of soul, a love and striving for peace with all mankind. It is peace in the family and peace in the Church.

Where love dwells there is rest of soul in this life and a preparation for eternal rest in heaven. The world does not know this life; it is hidden from them because they know not the Christ. The question may arise, is the gift of love attainable by all? We answer it is, for the following reasons: Christ said, "I am come that they might have life and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Another important inquiry follows: What is necessary to the attainment of so valuable a gift? The answer is very simple, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," which implies an awakening, sorrow for sin, contrition of spirit, humility of heart and the exercise of a living faith born of God. "Whosoever hath this hope in him purifies himself even as He, God, is pure." In this sentence is embodied the principle of Christian obedience. All obedience performed through the spirit is love in action. It is the effect of the indwelling Christ spirit, which sheds abroad the love of God in the heart. The love of God prompts obedience to His will, which His Son revealed. In evidence is the following: "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." "The entrance of Thy words giveth light."

There can be no purification without the avoidance of that which defiles. Disobedience is sin, and sin defiles. Divine love is separated from inward and outward sin in the individual. It is inconsistent to encourage any one in doing

what we condemn in ourselves. We learn from the prophet that God and His chosen people could not walk together, because they were not agreed. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" His people forsook His law and therefore He did not regard their worship. He would not hear their prayers nor regard their solemn assemblies unless they purified themselves through faith and repentance. "Whosoever hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure"; in agreement with this principle and Scripture testimony a member of the Church of Christ withdraws from all disorderly members; such who cause divisions he avoids, and with such who fall into gross sins he keeps no company until they purify themselves by faith and reformation of life. Under the old dispensation every departure from God's law disqualified His people to perform acceptable worship. Purification was indispensable to acceptable worship.

Under the Gospel dispensation the Church is under the most solemn obligation to stand in defense of the unity, peace and purity of its members. "But we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." In this part of our text is found the sweet consolation coming from the promise of a glorified state and of the eternal union with Christ in glory.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

CRUMBS FROM THE MASTER'S TABLE

Matt. 15: 27.

If but a crumb of comfort
Fall from the Master's board
From it we too may gather
The joy within it stored.

The woman's faith in Jesus,
"Lord help me," was her cry,
Her earnest humble pleading
Her Lord did not deny.

He gave this blessed comfort
 "Thy faith hath made her whole";
 This precious word of promise
 Can cheer each troubled soul.

May we, dear Lord, be given
 This wondrous gift divine;
 True living faith from heaven
 Within our hearts enshrine.

With faith and hope to cheer us
 We'll journey on life's way,
 Until in triumph glorious
 There dawns eternal day.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

BEING DEAD HE YET SPEAKETH

The apostle Paul, writing of those who were justified by faith, refers to Abel who offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous. God testifying of his gifts and by that testimony, "He being dead yet speaketh."

Have not we all been impressed by our faithful and beloved teachers, some of whom have long since fallen asleep? Their voices are stilled, and their forms are hidden from our sight, but being dead they yet speak to us.

The prophet Isaiah says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him who bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion thy God reigneth." The prophet's subject was most sublime, and the apostle under the influence of the Spirit, applied this scripture to the preaching of the Gospel, to those who bring glad tidings of salvation.

The application was most fitting, referring to the true shepherds of the flock, who by their earnest appeals, ever declared God's love and mercy and His willingness to save. Their tender entreaties and loving counsel we will never forget. They are an inspiration to us amid the cares and sorrows of life, being dead they yet speak.

We thank the Lord for a faithful ministry who will not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, and who will speak to us words "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Their responsibilities are weighty, to win souls to Christ and guide the flock aright; not on one hand to "heal the hurt slightly," nor on the other hand to "break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax," but to divide the word of God aright, to give safe and wise counsel and to lead the flock in safe paths, unto green pastures and beside still waters.

The apostle Paul when nearing the end of life's journey said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only but to all them also, that love His appearing."

There ever have been and are yet, laborers among us, who have devoted their lives to the calling of the ministry. Our aged and beloved brother, so recently called by death, devoted a life of more than sixty years to the Master's service. He ceased not while strength remained to urge watchfulness and prayer. The weight of years oppressed him, and while memory and the perceptive powers became partially impaired, yet sensibility to the truths of the Gospel remained in vigor, and the atonement of a crucified Redeemer cheered and sustained his soul. He could say with almost expiring breath, "With Thee, there is no death."

Death has since then again, suddenly and unexpectedly, entered our midst and called another beloved laborer to his reward. The church has lost another strong pillar, and we feel a great loss, but we are comforted believing our loss is his gain.

There is a duty resting upon us all, to assist in keeping "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." We are admonished to "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief." These are impressive Scriptures, and we should ever remember our obligations unto "Him that loved us and washed us from our sins and hath made us Kings and priests unto God and His Father." We are not our own but "are bought with a price" and we write our epistles by our lives. Although death may claim us we yet may speak.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A MEMORIAL SKETCH

"The memory of the just is blessed,"
Prov. 10: 7.

Two faithful laborers in the vineyard of the Lord have passed away. They now "rest from their labors and their works do follow them." They consecrated their energies to serve their God and promote the furtherance of His kingdom upon the earth. They put their talents to usury instead of burying them in the earth. Like clay in the hands of the potter, they yielded themselves to the great Master-BUILDER, and He made of them "vessels unto honor sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." 2 Tim. 2: 21. They fulfilled the high and holy calling as ambassadors of Christ with zeal and untiring devotion. They were memorable examples of humility, relying always upon the grace of God to whom they gave all the glory for their special gifts. Their voices are stilled, their labors have ceased, but they long will live in memory. Their words of counsel, consolation, reproof and warning will be

heard no more, but memory still impresses them upon our minds and hearts, and we can give praise and gratitude to God for thus endowing, fitting and qualifying persons to watch over the dear flock, and to awaken sinners to repentance. They "cried aloud and spared not, they showed the people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins." Isa. 58:1. They declared the whole will and counsel of God. May we who remain revere their memory and be inspired by their worthy example, and their wholesome instructions to a closer walk with God. Their departure causes a vacancy, over which we sorrow but we are consoled by the words of the apostle: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." 1 Thes. 4: 13, 14.

O, blessed hope in God! It cheered, comforted and encouraged our beloved brethren in their pilgrimage, and when death has closed their career, this same hope is a consolation to the mourning friends. May we cherish that blessed hope which we believe they enjoyed, for it unfolds to our spiritual vision the bright prospect of a glorious immortality! For the apostle says, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. 15: 53, 54, 55.

We miss our dear departed. We will see their faces no more. We mourn the loss yet we can "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" for we believe they

fought a good fight, they kept the faith, Henceforth there is laid up for them a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge will give them at that day. 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

ABIDING LIFE

“For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” James 4: 14.

This is one definition of life, given us by the Lord, through His servant James.

Man’s wisdom defines life as “Animate existance; union of soul and body; period between birth and death.”

This definition applies to the life which terminates with our earthly existence, when the animating part of man’s twofold being leaves the earthly house of this tabernacle, and it returns to the dust from whence it was taken; for we read: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Man having been endowed, by the Creator, with a living soul, was in a state to do the will of God, for he was the crowning part of God’s visible economy; and was given dominion over all else here which God had created, and through his soul or spirit, was to magnify God, and praise Him for His wonderful works, and for the love which He freely bestowed upon the race.

Man and God were in perfect harmony, there was no disturbing influence, nothing to detract from a perfect peace between the creature and Creator. And the Lord God planted a garden for man, and placed him in it to dress it and to keep it, and commanded man saying, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

Here is the first mention of man dying, the first mention of a punishment to be inflicted, should man disregard the commandment of the Lord God, and this punishment was to be death; not only the vanishing away of the vapor that appeareth for a little time, not only the terminating of animate existence, not only the disunion of soul and body, not only the end of the period between birth and death, but a far more terrible and lasting blight; because man did transgress, did eat of the forbidden fruit, and did die; which death has cast its shadow over him through all the ages which have passed since this transgression, since man became a fallen being, whose every natural desire is in opposition to God and his love.

In this condition man is today, where before the fall, love, peace and unity existed, there is now hatred, emulation, wrath, strife, fighting, war; numberless sects, divided religion, discord, in fact every evil work which fallen man can conceive—all the fruit of disobedience.

But what about *life*, we ask? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away; what of this vanishing away? what of disunion of soul and body? what after death? The blessed Savior said, “I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly”; and to Martha He said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” Here is a promise from God, of life, here is the fulfilling of the promise which God made to man, after his disobedience, after he had died, had become dead in trespasses and sin, dead in the spirit while still alive in the body.

Here is revealed the power of God to restore to man, that which he had forfeited through disobedience, to restore the dead spirit to life, through the re-

demption wrought by Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God: "He that hath the Son, hath life."

The vanishing of the vapor, the dissolution of soul and body, we may term the little death, for it is of little importance in comparison with the death of the soul. The sentence was, "the soul that sinneth it shall die." All were dead, all were under condemnation, all were "without hope and without God in the world."

The vapor had not vanished, body and soul were still united, the body was still living but in a deplorable condition, for death had come upon all and there was no escape, for when the body is dead it is utterly helpless, so the soul also is helpless when it is dead and cannot attain unto life, cannot obtain salvation; in this condition God's love for man was manifested so strongly that He sent his Son into the world to be a propitiation for the sins of every man. He leads His people Israel, not the literal Israel as did Moses, but His spiritual Israel out of bondage. He has power to save even unto the uttermost those that come unto Him, who put their trust in Him, and obey Him.

Now we can see "How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth." The Saviour spoke of peace saying, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The peace of God passeth all understanding, and in those souls which have received life from Him, there is an enduring peace which no earthly power can destroy.

To those who have received this life, His word is meat indeed. They know in whom they have believed, and are

persuaded that He is able to keep that which they have committed unto Him against that day. Therefore they take His word as their guide, and seek to obey it above all else, and like Moses of old, "choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

The Savior's teachings are plain and point to Him and to Him alone as the only and complete Savior. To be risen with Him means, "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." If we are not to serve sin we are to serve the Lord Jesus, and if we believe that salvation can be attained by living a good, moral, upright life, doing unto others as we would wish to be done by, by being honest in all our dealings, and in every way living a life as exemplified by the walk and teaching of the Savior, yet did not feel to give Him the honor for what He has done for us, who bore our sins in His own body upon the cross, we would be idolizing our own efforts, serving sin and not our dear Lord and Savior.

Should we be baptized in some certain manner and feel that this was the only way necessary to our salvation, we would, by ascribing virtue to the ordinance, make an idol of it, and would not be serving our dear Lord, who gave Himself for us. If we used effort to obtain good government, to have just and equitable laws enacted which we were conscientious to execute, would this be abiding in the doctrine of Jesus? John writes, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the

Father and the Son. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Behold how great a responsibility rests upon each soul, and if we transgress how shall we abide His coming.

Were we to observe all the ordinances, instituted by our Lord, and ascribe thereto any saving virtue, which belongs to Him alone, we would be allowing ourselves to be deceived, "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

These teachings of the word of the Lord, and the exemplification by His dear Son should teach us that, "in him was life; and the life was the light of men," and that life is not a vapor that appeareth for a little time, then vanisheth away; it is not our animated existence, not the union of soul and body, not the period between birth and death; but that eternal existence, which has been given to man by God, through the sacrifice which was made by His only begotten and well beloved Son, upon the cross, by His triumph over death, by His glorious resurrection from the dead, by the power given Him by the Father.

Jesus Christ is indeed as He said unto Martha, "The Resurrection and the Life, and he that believeth in Him, though he were dead yet shall he live"; and by no other means can life be obtained; therefore let us become wise unto the salvation, which God in His infinite wisdom has made possible for us to obtain. This is the only means of salvation, the only means of obtaining peace, joy, and happiness, the only means of obtaining *life*.

Glen Elder, Kansas.

E. F. S.

OPPORTUNITY

Soon after the first transgression and before anyone had departed this life, God in love, gave the promise of the Messiah, affording all the opportunity to be saved. Mankind in yielding to the enemy became his servants, and having lost the divine image were incapable of extricating themselves from this doleful state, except through the promised Messiah.

God dealt kindly with mankind, as we find Noah preached many years, and all were invited to enter the Ark. The Israelites that left Egypt had the promise, if faithful, that they could reach and enjoy the land of Canaan, which flowed with milk and honey. The three men for obedience were preserved in the fiery furnace. Daniel remained unharmed in the lion's den. Job's faith endured when nearly all his earthly possessions were taken from him. Elijah's offering and altar that were consumed by fire from heaven all show that God's blessings will attend obedience.

In the fullness of time, the Savior made His appearance and invited all that labored and were heavy laden to come and find rest for their souls. This offering of pardon and grace is free to all who seek it with a contrite heart and a broken spirit. All our sins shall be washed away, the heart shall be cleansed and renewed, and in it the Divine image shall be enshrined, the happy soul shall be freed from the blight of sin, remorse of conscience and fear of judgment shall cease. Such souls shall be raised up from dead works to serve the true and living God.

How sad! that so few avail themselves of this gracious opportunity to be eternally happy as is shown by the Savior's pleading: "Oh! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how

oft would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathered her brood under her wings, but ye would not.”

When the Savior fed the five thousand so miraculously from five loaves and two fishes, told the people of the glorious kingdom on high, counseled them to forsake the error of their ways, and to close in with the overtures of merey, by living in obedience to His holy Word, when He spoke of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, of denying themselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts and living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, they exclaimed, “this is a hard saying, who can hear it?”

The enemy having gained the ascendancy still holds the unconverted in his grasp, and he mixes ideas of truth with falsehood, and persuades by carnal reason that God will not destroy any of His creatures, he comforts them with a false hope. The language of our blessed Saviour: “I am the door to the sheep fold, and if any man climbeth up some other way, he is a thief and a robber,” gives evidence that there were deceivers who claimed to serve God but evaded the cross; who thought that by giving their goods to feed the poor and their bodies to be burned, or by taking the world with them, and not being willing to forsake the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, or by having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, by secretly yielding to sinful desires, by failure in duty as the Word teaches they rob the Son of the honor of being the Deliverer, “who brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” Such would not seek every opportunity in their daily walk, conduct and conversation to praise the Lord for His unbounded love and deliverance, because they had no deliverance.

His declaration: “I am the way, the

truth and the life, and no one cometh to the Father but by me,” closes the way and opportunity for us to be saved unless we accept His teachings in their entirety. His teachings reach to every condition of life; He is a judge to the widow, a father to the fatherless, and has promised to be with His children unto the end of the world. “His ways are the ways of pleasantness, His paths are the paths of peace.” “His yoke is easy and His burden is light,” and to those that yield the will entirely to Him, He will send the Comforter, the Spirit of love, that will lead them into all truth, will sustani them in every trial, and will be their guide, comfort and consolation unto the limit of time, and into the boundless realm of eternity!

To delay may mean ruin, to be untrue may rob our souls of the crown of heavenly felicity! Now is the golden opportunity. Today is the day of grace: “today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”

Williamsville, N. Y.

W. S. N.

THE WAY IS OPEN

When Jesus came to the grave of Lazarus, He commanded the stone at the grave to be removed and “cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.” He could have said, Stone be thou removed, and His command would have been obeyed. But human hands placed the stone and human hands were to remove it at His command.

In this benighted and bewildered world the grace of God appears to all, teaching all to repent, but usually there is a stone or some obstacle in the way, which is caused by the evil spirit. But, if we become willing to have removed the barrier between us and God, Jesus will instantly call us to come forth. Our shackles, or grave clothes, will be loosed, and if we are obedient our sins

will be forgiven. This shows the height and depth of God's mercies.

We might say in a spiritual way that we are living in a worldly ship that often is endangered by storms, tossed to and fro, that we at times fear shipwreck. Christ has thrown out a life-line within reach of all, and whosoever will grasp it in sincerity will not perish, but will be safely landed on the shore of safety.

The wonderful examples and works of Christ were as manifest during His stay on earth, as His never-ceasing appeal for all to accept salvation. The invitation is extended to every accountable person on land and sea. God's watchful eyes are over us, His merciful arms are stretched out to receive all.

It is lamentable to know how little God's word is regarded by many! Some even deny the Bible to be God's word, and the divinity of Christ; others discard many of the commandments. When we read the prophecies of hundreds of years ago telling of the fearful conditions that shall be in the latter days, we should be convinced that God's word is true. We are taught: "Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

Every true Christian acknowledges the Bible to be divinely inspired. If we accept Christ's word, happy are we if we obey it! Christ is our Shepherd and all that are obedient will enter through the gates into the city of the New Jerusalem.

Sterling, Ill.

C. F. M.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Heb. 12: 11.

HOME IN HEAVEN

When the cares of life are over,
And our conflict here shall cease;
There remains a home eternal
Where the saints shall dwell in peace.

Christ prepared it for His children
Who will love Him and obey
The commandments He has given,
And will walk with Him alway.

In bright realms of endless glory,
Face to face we Him behold;
Angels there will bid us welcome,
O, what happiness untold.

Sorrow, suff'ring ne'er shall enter,
Love and peace doth there abound,
Sin and death and parting never,
In that blest abode are found.

Joy eternal, boundless blessings,
Eye hath never seen them there;
Heart of man hath no conception
Of the treasure we shall share.

Fayetteville, Pa.

C. J. M.

TRUE AND FALSE PROPHETS

Not only the Psalmist but all mankind are awed by the knowledge and power of Almighty God. The starry firmament above and the earth beneath show His might, and we are moved to exclaim, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" Mankind is an infinitesimal part of the creation, yet by the simple plan of salvation they can become heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

Previous to the transgression the presumptuous spirit did not manifest itself. How defying the language of Cain when he was asked, "Where is thy brother Abel?" and he said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Cain gave evidence of having yielded to a foreign influence which would carry him to destruction, but God provided a way of escape. "Sin lieth at the door, and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."

Evidently at this early age there was a consciousness of good and evil.

Abel and Cain are types of two distinct kingdoms. Abel was a type of the spiritual kingdom, and Cain a type of the kingdom of this world. As Cain slew Abel, the type would have been destroyed if God had not restored it by the birth of Seth. By this birth we are convinced that God's design can not be overthrown. The kingdom which Cain represented did not fear nor respect the counsel of the Lord, and they were always in superior numbers, and were in direct opposition to the principles which Seth represented, so that his kingdom always suffered.

Had mankind believed God as did Noah, their destruction by a flood of waters would not have been a necessity. Noah and his family gave evidence of true faith, and were preserved from the deluge of water, but the unbelieving all perished. "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark." Unbelief among mankind during all ages was quite prevalent, and when God appointed true prophets for the benefit of His people, false prophets arose to deceive them. The true prophets were commissioned to make God's will known, but what the false prophets prophesied pleased the people to their own destruction.

In all ages mankind have been free to accept or reject God's counsel. Obedience was rewarded by prosperity but disobedience by destruction. The natural disposition of man has never changed, and as the unbelieving in the early ages of mankind were always vastly in the majority, it is reasonable to suppose that they are proportionately in the majority at the present time,

which make the danger of being deceived even greater than at any previous age. There was no age in which God did not make His will known, but there were always very few that believed Him.

The prophecies referring to Christ and to His kingdom were clearly foretold, but when He came in the way in which it was foretold that He would come, very few believed Him. Giving sight to the blind, and restoring life to Lazarus, proved to be good reasons to the unbelieving for His destruction, and we should always be very careful to obey what He has commanded, regardless of what our flesh must suffer, lest we crucify Him afresh.

The Savior warned that false Christs and false prophets would arise, and show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if possible they shall deceive the very elect. Matt. 24:24. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." John 4:1. We are warned, and if we are wise we will take the word of God as the man of our counsel, regardless of the consequences. Obedience is a fruit of love, and nothing will separate the true believer from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.

Camp Hill, Pa.

J. I. M.

WORSHIP

God is love. We are witnesses of His love in the many blessings we receive, the rich provision for our support in sending the early and latter rain, that the earth can bring forth its fruits in its season for the support of our natural bodies. The glory of God is manifest in His creations; the things of nature spread around us show us His power, each in their order—the trees, the flowers, the birds, the irrational creatures, all in order without change in the his-

tory of the world. Should we not in contemplation of God's incomprehensible love well forth adoration and praise from our hearts evermore? Are we not dependent? Have we not proof that we alone are out of order? Have we not the evidence in our hearts that we are accountable for the use we make of our intellect with which we are endowed, from which there is no escape except through God's love and tender mercies?

Redemption is within the reach of every one, but alone as God designs, for He alone our Creator knows best. Sin has corrupted man's heart, light and love has been lost, yet, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

We may express faith in the merits of Christ as the Savior and yet not be willing to follow Him or accept His teaching. We may be devoted in worship and yet have our hearts in the world and its pleasures. Such worship is without virtue, deceiving us. The true worshipers accept Christ's teachings, John 4:24, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The carnal mind cannot receive the things of the Spirit, neither can it know them. It follows then that a new birth must take place, old things must pass away. Matt. 18:3, "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." John 3:7, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again."

God is love, which every soul must confess, and in dealing with the stony heart of man, that he could restore the life that was lost by transgression, that we could enjoy that peace and fellowship with Him, Christ, God's only Son, revealed God's plan of restoration in plain, simple, but positive language founded on love. Can one possess the

Holy Spirit and still live in sin? Can a person rightly interpret the Word as the everlasting truth and live a carnal worldly life? In worship we cannot repeat the Lord's Prayer, in effect, if we are not willing to do the things for which we ask. When living in a state of darkness, not possessing the Holy Spirit and not obeying the truth, it follows that we cannot be citizens in God's kingdom, nor members in His family and household. God is not our Father and we are not heirs to the heavenly inheritance.

We may think of death, our accountability, may fear God and judgment, the weight of our sins, but may overlook God's mercies in allotting the days of grace, the blessings of opportunity. When we have time to open our hearts to the spirit of grace we find pardon through a kind and loving Savior, who suffered and died for us that we might have a hope of rest when the trials and troubles of life shall close. Life is of few days with all its pleasures. Is it wise to idle our time away resisting every offer a loving God has made to give us rest, not only here, but hereafter? Let wisdom in choosing be our guide and while in the days of grace give our hearts to Him that He might work in and through us as He sees best, that His name may be honored and our souls find rest.

Medway, Ohio

C. A. H.

THE NEW BIRTH

It is declared: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God"; which testimony leaves everyone without a hope of future blessedness and should convince all of the truth taught by our Savior that, "We must be born again." The Savior knew that His teachings could not be understood nor be practiced acceptably by any one who has not

received the new birth. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5.

We are warned by John, the Evangelist, against the danger of being born of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man. John 1:13. We may follow the advice of our kindred and accept their religious views, thinking that if their way is good enough for them it should be good enough for us. We might join one of the many churches for the furtherance of our business interests, or with the view of being advanced socially, or because its doctrines agree with our natural fancies. We may come under the influence of a certain minister—it may be an evangelist, and may follow his plausible human doctrines; but if we yield to such influences we will be born of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man.

To be born of God means to obey the convictions of truth which come to every soul, leading those who heed them into agreement with the spirit of God's word, whether they have the letter of the word or not, for God is a Spirit, and He controls all who yield to His gracious influence. The new birth does not come to us by uniting with the church, though unity and church fellowship is the effect of being "born again."

Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, living soberly, righteously and godly must characterize all those who receive the new birth. In such souls the love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, which tempers them with a disposition for peace and unity and effects a perfect oneness, for which Christ prayed, that by this oneness, as by a miracle, it should be shown that the Father sent Him. John 17:23.

The unscriptural opinion has become

popular that the Church of Christ may consist of good and evil members. This cannot be the case when the evil ones are known, for the command is to "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." 2 Thess. 3:6. We are taught that "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." 1 Cor. 5:6. Retaining those in the Church who willfully commit sin would prevent that happy state of peace and unity which must exist in the Church of Christ, and for which the Savior prayed.

Archbold, Ohio.

C. D. R.

TRUE HAPPINESS

True happiness can be obtained only by serving the Lord. The more faithful we are to God the more light He gives us. We can mar this happiness by not confessing Him; this we sometimes experience—that we are ashamed of the Lord, and this brings unhappiness; and why should it not? Sometimes we are not as kind as we should be, or we may think someone has not been kind to us; but in examining ourselves we may find the wrong to be in us. We should pray earnestly for light to know ourselves, and should not be ashamed of our profession; for if we are ashamed of the Lord He will be ashamed of us before our Father and the holy angels. God has at no time asked anything of His people that they could not do. When we are willing to give up everything and follow the Lord, then can we say, "God is mine helper." So long as we have not given up everything He cannot work in us, and we are not worthy of Him. I believe that we all would have the desire to be blameless before the Lord.

Oh, may we ever thank the Lord for the gift of grace He gives to those who love Him! It is evident that we are not under the right spirit when we are not thankful. We should be very careful not to judge one another, not to

think too highly of ourselves, and ever esteem others better than ourselves. We should ever be mindful of the distressed, the afflicted and the weak in faith, and those whose hearts are heavy with sorrow. We should ever try to give cheer and kind words to them. This is within our reach, is without price and is entirely becoming for us to practice. This should be the desire of every believer. May we strive to be faithful in all our appointed duties and follow them in love.

Lemoyne, Pa.

K. R. E.

LOVE

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3: 16.

We know that love is the foundation of true religion, for God first loved us in that He gave His only Son that we through Him might be saved. Is it not then our highest duty that we also love Him with a true heart fervently? Without love it is impossible to please God, and if we love God we will also love our brethren. John says, 1 John 4: 20, “for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” We should examine ourselves that we may know by our walk and conduct whether we love our brother or not, for it is said: “Walk in love.”

We are taught to love our enemies. When we think of the time when God shall judge the world in righteousness surely we can feel love and pity for those who hate us, inasmuch as they also have a soul that will be saved or lost. When we know ourselves aright we know we have nothing to boast of in our righteousness for we feel that we also were poor, weak, sinful creatures, without God and without hope in the world. With this feeling it is easy for us to love our

enemies, to pray for them, and we will be willing to help them that they may also obtain the gift of eternal life. For this life is even as a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. The love of God constraineth us to love all mankind. John says, 1 John 3: 18, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth”; for if in word only we love God then is our religion vain, but we should love in deed and in truth, which can be seen of all, if they wish to see. Our kind heavenly Father has given us, through the word of His dear Son, a rule by which we may know whether the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

John says, 1 John 3: 14, “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” We know in this natural life whether we love our brothers and sisters, because if we love them we love to be in their company. So it is in the spiritual life. If we love our spiritual brothers and sisters we love to meet them and be in their company. It is the rule by which the world shall know Christ’s disciples. Our Savior says, John 13: 35, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” Let us love not only in word but in deed also. “He that loveth not, knoweth not God.”

Fresno, California.

I. H.

BROTHERLY LOVE

“Let brotherly love continue.” Heb. 13: 1.

This is good counsel given by Paul to his Hebrew brethren. The Savior says, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.” John 13: 35. “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill can not be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the

house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5: 14, 15, 16.

Paul writes, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." Gal. 6: 1. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." Col. 3: 13, 14. If we commit a wrong and our brother tell us of it and we are yet in the light, we will take advice and accept reproof and correction, and will be willing to give every satisfaction without resentment. If we resent we are devoid of pure love. "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned; behold the judge standeth before the door." James 5: 9.

The enemy invents many ways to hinder us and expose us to the danger of losing love. We can read that the church at Ephesus had left its first love, and had fallen, and therefore had to repent again, and do the first works lest He would remove the candlestick. The Savior says, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matt. 24: 12, 13. The Apostle wrote much about pure and unadulterated love in their epistles to the different churches, which epistles are profitable to read.

Many years ago a young man came to our meeting from a distance. After meeting he said to me, "you seem to have a great love for one another; you greet each other with the kiss of peace, giving evidence of the unity, fellowship and love that is in harmony with New Testament teaching." He also said, "In his vicinity church members show less

evidence of love for one another, show less unity, and seem cold one to another." He frequently came to our meetings. He examined the Scriptures and became convinced that there is only one united visible church, and that pure love must unite all the members of the church.

Paul praised his faithful Hebrew brethren. He says, "But ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Heb. 12: 22, 23, 24. May we also be faithful unto the end, and "Let brotherly love continue."

Columbus Grove, Ohio. J. W. B

SELF-DENIAL

"Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself." Matt. 16: 24, Mark 8: 34.

"Self-denial," and the "Cross," frequently used throughout the Bible are synonymous. Unless we, to a degree, understand their meaning and apply them to ourselves, we are reminded that we cannot enjoy the treasures that God would give us.

Self-denial is a comprehensive term. We would take up just one phase of it, the flesh and its lusts. Let us approach the subject by asking ourselves these questions: Since God loves us why does He require self-denial? Why is there so much bodily affliction? The world fairly groans with pain and suffering, sickness and sorrow.

"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Heb. 12: 6. How deep is the mystery of God's chastening of His children! How the soul shrinks at the

very mention of the word chastening. It is built upon the Greek word, "child." It means to be dealt with as a child. God's great purpose is that Christ should be formed in us. The will of the Father is perfect, but *our* wills must be plastic. He does not expect us to enjoy chastening, but by faith we may endure it for the sake of our present welfare and future happiness.

If we violate a natural law, if we have been tempted by our appetites to indulge to excess, and pain follows, let us endeavor to be open and receptive that the chastening may find fertile soil in our souls. We should diligently seek by prayer and meditation to be resigned instead of giving attention, principally to the pain, which may be the effect of transgression. It may be a blessing that we cannot always find a cure for our pain, otherwise God's purpose might be defeated. It is His design that we should benefit by our suffering. It is true Jesus cured and healed the sick, but He associated with the act of mercy the charge that they should sin no more.

We may depend too much upon our natural life and health as a source of joy and satisfaction. Perhaps we are forgetful that the spirit yearns for things that are eternal. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." Gal. 5: 17. "For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Gal. 6: 8.

God, like the natural parent, sorrows when it is necessary to punish us. He wants us to know that the denial of our fleshly desires and promptings, will mean greater happiness in this world, and exceedingly greater joy and happiness forevermore, in the future existence.

Paul says, "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection,"

1 Cor. 9: 27. Yielding to the fleshly dictates of the body is a form of worldliness which may be overlooked. Any natural gratification or perishable habit that enslaves us becomes a heart worship in us. If we desire to worship God, we cannot justify bondage to any of our appetites or lusts. Popular sentiment caters to almost every human weakness. Our appetites and human desires and habits are dangerous snares to the soul. Let us be satisfied with our actual need, and not gratify our every desire, for to do so is worldly, and weakening to the spiritual life.

If we are wise we will allow our suffering to minister good unto us, so that we may be enabled to believe that the Spirit will guide us safely into greater blessedness than it is possible to attain by indulgence of the body. May we, through Jesus Christ, be able to say in truth, "Thy *rod* and Thy *staff*, they comfort me!"

Lancaster, Pa.

M. H. B.

MEDITATION

How sweet it is to turn our thought
From anxious cares of life away;
To be in soul and spirit caught
By pleasant dreams of endless day.

For here, midst scenes of time and sense,
Our minds are captivated by
The things surrounding us, and hence
The treasures waiting us on high

Are oft forgotten, while we strive
To lay up treasure here on earth,
Unmindful that, while we're alive
We ought to seek the prize of worth.

Yet what poor satisfaction we
Derive from all our pleasures here,
Except they be in Christ, for He
Alone the weary soul can cheer.

Then, while we live, may we yet die
To self and every unclean thing,
That we may enter rest on high,
To be forever with our King.

Stevensville, Ont.

W. I. T.

BRIEF NOTES

As water rests only when it reaches the lowest place, so we find rest only when we are burdened and heavy laden, by becoming "meek and lowly in heart"—our ambition, pride and selfishness subdued, and all our desires subordinated to do the will of the heavenly Father.

* * * *

How often we see that "The love of money is the root of all evil." The evil is not in the money itself, but in the covetous desire for it—the purpose and motive in the heart. True followers of the Savior have "all things as though they had them not," as stewards using them with a sense of responsibility for the manner and purpose of their use.

* * * *

The life of every acceptable worshiper of God is characterized by the sincere desire that in every condition and activity in life God might be glorified. There may be failings through a weak humanity, daily and hourly deplored, but there can be no other desire cherished in the heart and carried into fulfillment without weakening the spiritual energies and making us subject to the evil influences by which the arch-enemy of peace and happiness interrupts the believers comfort and security.

* * * *

In contemplation we contrast time with eternity. Time—a measured portion or duration—yet ample to choose our course which determines our eternal destiny. Eternity—endless duration—in contemplation of which it is said, "imagination cowers her wings at the foot stool of the Creator." Eternity, in which to rejoice in a wise choice though temporal sacrifices may have been required, or in which to regret our folly. The gracious appeal is, "Today, if ye hear the voice of the Lord, harden not

your hearts." Rejecting the appeal hardens the heart, disregarding the fact that the limit of our allotted time may be near. Will we trifle with our eternal interests when we know our lives are so insecure, and our allotted time so uncertain?

* * * *

We estimate time in days, months, years and centuries; but we cannot comprehend the aeons of ages comprising eternity. We measure distances in miles, even to the farthest planets in our solar system; but we cannot comprehend the appalling distances and the tremendous depths of space where astronomy reveals many other mighty orbs. We realize that the Creator has set a limit to our comprehension. Wonder and awe fill our minds; but we cannot comprehend the infinite and the eternal. Assigned, as has been to us, a sphere "a little lower than the angels," this contemplation should increase our sense of responsibility as being a part, however small, in this vast economy, in which God's knowledge and care extends to a sparrow falling to the ground, and to the lilies of the field; yet how much more to us, as beings called into existence for the purpose that we might glorify Him by devoted service in time and by angelic homage throughout eternity!

* * * *

We are told that our best efforts are needed to right the wrongs in the administration of worldly government. This is admirable, commendable service, and often a duty devolving on those who serve in the worldly kingdom. When Christ was on earth, there were wrongs in the worldly government just as there are now, but He left them as they were. When arraigned before Pontius Pilate, He declared, "My kingdom is not of this world." And to His disciples, "I have chosen you out of the world."

Worldly government is based on justice. The appeal is to all to share the greater benefits of Christ's kingdom which is based on love. Divine love alone qualifies us for entrance into His kingdom, and it brings peaceable and righteous results to all, when it becomes the ruling power in the heart. If all would obey its promptings, graft in government would be eliminated, national quarrels would end and war would cease from the earth. These happy ends can only be accomplished by every individual heart yielding to the work of grace by which we are "chosen out of the world." The benefits of this service in Christ's kingdom will continue and endure throughout a happy eternity, while worldly governments rise and fall, groan and crumble; for "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What is idolatry?

A. To allow anything to hinder us from obeying God's word in its full spiritual meaning is giving away the affection of the creature to something aside of the Creator. Covetousness is called idolatry, because it is undue love to what is here. All worship that does not fully agree with the Spirit of God's word is idolatry as it is setting up our own way instead of God's way. The Savior says, if we do not give up all for Him and His word, then we love something more than Him and cannot be His disciples. As our love is our worship, or adoration, we are true worshipers or idolators according as we place our love.

Q. Can unfriendly feelings exist between Christians?

A. The Holy Spirit dwells in them, which is God's love; their hearts are "knit together in love," (Col. 2: 2;) they all are branches in the True Vine; they shall greet one another with the Kiss of Charity. 1 Peter 5: 14.

Q. Has unfriendliness any room where such a state exists?

A. Love bars out bitterness, contention, litigation, division, destruction in war.

Q. Do Christians dance?

A. We would answer in the negative. In olden times godly people danced, but they were not Christians. The term Christian has been used only since Christ was here. "The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch." Since foolish talking and jesting is forbidden to Christians, is it not a reasonable conclusion that dancing by those who profess Christianity is a violation of New Testament teaching?

Q. What should be our main purpose in life?

A. Time is a measured portion of duration and eternity is endless duration, therefore our purpose in life should not be worldly advancement and achievement which pertains to this life only, but our endeavor should be, to so live that the *word of God*—our guide in this life and judge in eternity—may not condemn, but speak our souls free to enjoy the "hundred fold blessings in this life and eternal life in the world to come."

Q. What is our counsel to one seeking salvation.

A. Pray God for conviction of duty and for a willingness to obey.

KIND ADMONITION

"Take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in my name saying, I am Christ and shall deceive many." Matt. 24: 4, 5. "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch, that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect." Matt. 24: 24.

Viewing the vast field of the religious world, it grieves us as it grieves God, to see the many souls, some with apparent good intentions, laboring under an

erroneous spirit. According to our text, there is danger of being deceived, or of deceiving ourselves. It is written that satan can transform himself into an angel of light, so marvel not if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness. 2 Cor. 11: 14, 15.

In the commercial world the business man's success depends largely upon his ability to detect the inferior imitations and substitutes offered by insincere and unscrupulous manufacturers. For the protection and guidance of the innocent, laws are made and recorded by the governments of the world to expose deception. The same condition may exist in the religious world as our text implies. To protect and safeguard the innocent from being deceived and misguided by false teachers, God has established through the power of His Spirit and by the written word an unfailing and safe criterion to expose deception. The New Testament answers every question essential to salvation in very simple and comprehensive language.

Our prayer is that God may use means to lead those who are being deceived, into the light of His holy truth. The apostle John writes, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." The question might arise, how shall we know whether we have the true spirit? We would answer thus: Let everyone examine himself by the word, which it is said shall be our guide in this life and our judge in eternity. If our life does not comport with the spirit of the word, we should be honest to ourselves by confessing our wrong before God and man and pray for a pure heart, which is indispensable in living the Christ-life. This would be taking heed as our text directs.

Let us ask ourselves does Christ really

make His abode in our hearts? Have we a true knowledge of ourselves? Do we have the experience of the poor publican, referred to in the parable, who smote his breast and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner" or, like the Pharisee, do we say, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." Was the child Jesus born in our hearts at Bethlehem, or was he born at Jerusalem so to speak by a false conception? Bethlehem typifies lowliness, Jerusalem the highness of royalty, for it was the city of the kings. Do we love God above everything else and our neighbor as ourselves? Or have we an evil feeling against any one? The apostle John says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." We can prove ourselves to which class we belong. If we are of the one class we have the promise of eternal life, but if we are of the other class we are deceived, and will have to hear the doleful sentence: "Depart from me."

There is danger too of drifting away. Paul writes, 2 Tim. 3: 1, 13, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come—But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." Are we today what we were when the Saviour first made His abode in our hearts, or have we suffered ourselves to be led away by some foreign spirit? Are we willing to forsake all for Christ's sake? We read, "he that forsaketh not father, mother, sister, brother, wife, children, houses, land and his own life also, cannot be my disciple. No man hath left all these but he shall receive an hundredfold in this life, houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions and in the world to come eternal life. Mark 10: 29, 30.

It avails nothing to say, we are converted, if we are not willing to walk in accordance with God's word and will. It did not profit the Isrealites to leave the land of Egypt, to cross the Red Sea on dry land, and to endure the many hardships in going through the wilderness, even to the borders of the land of Canaan, for on account of their unbelief they had to return to the wilderness and die. Out of the six hundred thousand able bodied men only two were found worthy to enter the Promised Land, namely, Joshua and Caleb. Do we believe that God is able to help us to overthrow the strong cities and the giants we meet on our journey through life? Or do we doubt and become faithless? Do we believe that Jesus is the only means of help, and worthy of all praise, or do we praise ourselves for some good work we perform, and make an idol of gold or silver, like King Belshazzar, when he made a feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine out of the vessels of gold and silver which his father had brought from the Temple, and gave praise to those vessels of silver and gold? In that same hour the hand of God wrote on the wall, and made him fear and tremble. The interpretation of the handwriting on the wall was that his kingdom was finished, and that he would be weighed in the balance and found wanting, and his kingdom would be given to the "Medes and Persians."

Dear reader, let us reflect, are we in possession of the kingdom of Christ in our hearts, or has it been taken from us and given to another who is more worthy of reigning? Oh! let us make our calling and election sure, lest we also be weighed in the balance of God's word and be found wanting. In the resurrection when we will have to appear before the mighty Judge, when the books will be opened, what shall be our record? Shall we lament when we hear it? We

read in Matt. 25: 31, "when the Son of man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall he sit upon the throne of His glory and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand but the goats on the left." To those on the right hand he will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And to them on the left hand He will say, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

New Hamburg, Ontario. A. H.

NEGLECT IS GUILT

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

The knowledge here referred to can come only by intimate association and close relation. We may know a thing historically, or of hearsay. Adam knew God's command to avoid the tree of knowledge of good and evil; he knew the penalty of disobedience, but did not comprehend its full meaning until he experienced its effect. Ex. 2: 17. The Jews knew that Christ would come into the world, because the prophecies to that effect were recorded.

We know that He has come, as history informs us, but we do not fully realize what it means until we experience the entrance of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. In the 14th chapter of John, Jesus said, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Surely he knew Him personally, but not spiritually, or with that knowledge which bringeth life eternal. Jesus said to Peter, Luke 22: 32, "When thou art converted strengthen

thy brethren." The full knowledge did not come until the Holy Ghost appeared and they were filled with it. Acts. 2.

Solomon says, Prov. 9: 10, "The fear of the *Lord* is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." Fear, which our first parents did not entertain, comes first; then obedience; then knowledge. The carnal mind is inclined to reverse this by seeking knowledge first, and that which is in agreement with its inclinations.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. 11: 6. We may not understand how His plans are to be fulfilled in their workings and mysteries, yet God will reveal His precious doctrine and word to those who are willing to trust in Him. Since God was able to create heaven and earth we should believe that He is able to name the conditions whereby we may obtain life eternal. "O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Rom. 9: 20. Shall man, although he has made great progress in science and culture and worldly wisdom, presume to improve upon God's plans, and can he do so without incurring Divine displeasure? God's plans and ways are perfect and final. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Rev. 22: 13.

When the spiritual life is begotten in the heart, and the knowledge of God dwells there, it will manifest itself by revealing our lost condition. The conflict experienced by those who endeavor to fulfill the law of God, will awaken in them a feeling of charity for those who are held by the power of satan. It will beget in the believer a disposition to help them to be freed, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Tim. 2: 4. If all efforts to help are unavailing, the believer will leave them and

flee for his own safety, lest he be a partaker of their evil deeds. 2 Cor. 6: 17; 2 John 11, and come under the same condemnation; lest the light he may have had, be dimmed, and the knowledge withdrawn and finally he be left to share the fate of the unbelievers. Luke 12: 46.

We can hardly accept that God could be so unmerciful or unjust as to cast any of His creatures into a torment, such as the second death is described to be. He does not; the lake of fire was prepared for the devil and his angels, Matt. 25: 41, but if we choose to walk in the ways of the flesh, refuse to yield our members to glorify God, and reject the knowledge which would make us wise unto salvation, and follow the way which leadeth thither, then the responsibility rests upon us.

Landisville, Pa.

C. S. N.

CONFESSING CHRIST

Christ says "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." Mark 12: 8.

What a message of joy and comfort to those who are not ashamed to confess Christ before men! There are, no doubt, many troubled souls who feel that they should confess Him by faithful obedience to His word, but their humanity is too weak and they live on in their sins day by day, hoping for a better time when they may have more courage. "Procrastination is the thief of time"; today is the day of opportunity, the day of grace. "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Tomorrow may not be ours. We know not when we shall be called to give an account of our stewardship. How sad if we were to hear the verdict—too late! Why not give ear to the tender callings of the meek and lowly Jesus, who pleadingly invites all to come unto Him?

How we rejoice when a soul has become willing to confess Christ, to live the life taught in His Gospel! Converted souls are not ashamed to confess Christ. In them the Christ-life becomes a power which the unconverted, worldly-minded can not understand. It is a witness more real and vital than the inexperienced can know. By the power of the Spirit such souls are brought together in unity and fellowship.

Regenerated souls realize that they are dependent upon God and that they are enabled to do only that which divine wisdom permits. They have a treasure which they prize more highly than anything this world can give. Our Savior said, "Peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you." We ask, why should we be ashamed to confess Him before men, when obedience to His Gospel promises "peace which passeth all understanding?"

Do the trials of life serve a purpose in our lives? God rules and his chastening is for our discipline. The storms of life that sweep over us may strengthen or break us. If we are of strong character the difficulties strengthen us; if we are weaklings in faith the storms may crush us. If we have the Spirit of Christ His power will always help us. The divine image in our being will gain dominion if we surrender our all to Him; it will give us power to "eschew evil and do good." "Oh Lord, how great are Thy works! And Thy thoughts are very deep."

Lancaster, Pa.

A. A. G.

MYSTERY REVEALED

"Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables." Mark 4: 11.

This was the Savior's answer to His disciples and to them that were with them when they asked Him the meaning of the parable of the sower. The

parable includes all people, regardless of creed or profession. Let us examine ourselves, to learn to which class do we belong. To the converted, the following is no mystery: "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." 1 Cor. 2: 7. "God hath revealed it unto His disciples by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

The Pharisees demanded when the kingdom of God should come. Jesus answered: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, for behold it is within you." This is quite a revelation. We hunger and thirst for the spiritual food to sustain the spiritual life. God's love shed abroad in the heart is not manifest to the unconverted. To them it is a mystery how the faithful are bound together by love. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another . . . by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another."

Paul told his Corinthian brethren: "Therefore seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty."

We are impressed with the clinging vine. It needs support to grow gracefully; if the support is removed what a crumpled mass lies at our feet! So we in our spiritual lives need the Lord's strong arm to support us that we may have grace to stand the storms and trials we encounter here on earth. We are told to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good . . . holding faith and a good conscience."

Lancaster, Pa.

C. A. M.

THE STORY OF TWO JUDGES, JEPHTHA AND SAMSON

After the death of Gideon the people of Israel cried unto the Lord for help. They were reminded of their ingrati-

tude, and were told to "go, and cry unto the gods they had chosen and have them deliver them in the time of their tribulation." But the people said, "We have sinned, do Thou unto us what seemeth good unto Thee." They then put away their strange gods, and the Lord had compassion and raised up a deliverer named Jephtha. He was a brave soldier but he had been treated unkindly by the men of Isreal and had fled into the land of Tob. In their distress they sent for Jephtha to lead them to battle.

Jephtha made a vow and said if the Lord would give him victory, he would offer as a sacrifice the first thing he met on his return. When he came home victorious, his only daughter came to meet him with music and dancing. Jephtha was deeply grieved for the rash vow he had made, but he did with her according to his vow. Had he lived near the tabernacle at Shiloh, and had he known God's law, he would not have made such a vow. God only required obedience of His children.

After Jephtha there were other judges, but nothing is recorded of their rule and it is supposed that during that time the nations were at peace without, and the judges were able to prevent discord and trouble among the Israelites.

Again the children of Israel turned to their idol worship and, as a punishment, the Lord permitted them to fall under the power of the Philistines who were a strong nation. They suffered under this oppression for forty years. In their distress they called upon the Lord.

An angel appeared unto Manoah and his wife and told them they should have a son, and when he was grown, he would begin to save Israel. He was to drink no wine, nor strong drink as long as he lived and his hair was to grow long and never be cut, for he was to be a Nazarite. A Nazarite was one who was under a vow to the Lord. When a man gave

himself to some work for God he was not to drink wine, and his hair being long was a sign that he had made a promise, or had a vow.

The promised son was named Samson. He was noted for his great strength and grew up to be the strongest man of whom we read in the Bible. He felt the degrading bondage of his people, and began to plan for their deliverance. He did not lead them to battle as Gideon or Jephtha had done, but depended on his remarkable strength.

Samson wished to marry a daughter of the Philistines in Timnath. His parents were sorry he did not marry an Israelite, but the Lord probably permitted it so he would have opportunity to deliver Israel. His parents went with him to Timnath to see the woman. On the way he was attacked by a young lion, and as he had no weapons to defend himself, he would have been killed had it not been for his strength. Samson siezed the lion with his hands and killed him as though he had been a kid.

Some time after, he went to Timnath to be married and his parents were with him. He stopped to look at the carcass of the lion and found bees had taken possession and had honey stored therein. He ate some of the honey and gave some of it to his parents, but did not tell them where it came from. At the wedding feast which lasted seven days, he proposed a riddle to his thirty young friends who were present. He told them if they could solve the riddle during the time of the feast he would give them thirty suits of clothing. If they could not answer it in that time, they were to give him the same reward. The riddle was, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong, came forth sweetness." They could not solve the riddle, and at last begged Samson's wife to find out and tell them. She wept before him the seven days, when he finally told her and she told her people, how

he had killed the lion and later found the honey. They then came and said to Samson, "What is sweeter than honey and what is stronger than a lion?"

He was displeased knowing his wife had told them the answer to the riddle; but he went out and killed thirty of the first men he met, and took off their clothes and gave them to his guests. Samson was angry and left his wife who had betrayed him, and went home with his parents. But later when his resentment had subsided he returned for his wife, but her father thinking Samson no longer cared for her, had given her to another man.

To punish them Samson caught three hundred foxes and took fire-brands and turned tail to tail, and put a fire brand between two tails. He then turned them loose. The grain was ripe and the foxes running through it set it on fire, destroying the grain, and ruining the olive trees. When the Philistines found Samson had done this on account of what his father-in-law had done to him, they set fire to the house of his father-in-law and destroyed both him and his family. Samson then came and destroyed a number of the Philistines as a punishment for killing his wife.

Samson dwelt in a cave, or secret place and the Philistines demanded the Israelites to deliver Samson into their hands that they might bind him so he could do them no further harm.

The Israelites asked him why he made the Philistines angry, seeing they have rule over them. Samson replied, "As they did unto me, so have I done unto them." Three thousand men of Judah came together, to deliver him unto the Philistines. He made them promise that they would not kill him. They bound him with two new ropes and gave him to the Philistines, who had gathered in great numbers and shouted with joy to get him into their hands, but he brake the cords easily and finding a jaw bone

of an ass he took it and slew a thousand men with it. After this slaughter he was very thirsty and feared he would die of thirst. He called upon the Lord for help. The Lord clave a hollow place that was in the jaw-bone, and water came out. After he drank, his spirit came again and he revived.

Samson then went to Gaza, a large city of the Philistines, which was surrounded by a high wall. When the men of Gaza found Samson was there they shut the gates of the city, hoping to put him to death in the morning. But Samson arose at midnight, pulled the gate posts out of the ground and took the gates and posts on his shoulder, and carried them to the top of the hill.

After this Samson loved another woman named Delilah. She did not seem to care for him and the Philistines promised her a great sum of money if she would find out the secret of his great strength. She begged him to tell her, and he said if they would bind him with seven green twigs he would not be strong. She bound him when asleep, but when she called him he broke them easily. Again he told her if they would use new ropes to bind him he would be as other men, but these ropes he broke just as easily. He then told her if his hair would be braided or woven into the loom with the web, and fastened with a large pin to the frame he would be helpless; but when he woke up he carried away both the pin and the beam of the frame.

Delilah gave him no rest until at last he told her he was a Nazarite, and under a vow, and if his hair was cut he would lose his strength. When he again slept, they cut off his locks. When she called him he attempted to rise as before, but he had broken his vow to the Lord and the spirit of the Lord had left him. Samson was then weak and helpless as other men.

His enemies took him to Gaza and

put out his eyes. They made him turn a heavy mill-stone to grind corn, and kept him in prison. The Philistines made a great feast to their god, Dagon and brought Samson to make sport for them. During this time his hair had grown. He asked the lad who brought him out to let him feel the pillars upon which the house rested, that he might lean against them. He put an arm around each pillar, asking the Lord to remember him and give him strength this one time. He pulled the pillars over. The roof fell and he was killed with near three thousand of the Philistines.

Samson was a strong man, but not a great one. He was a man of ungovernable passions, but it seemed that even his worst passions, and the sorrows and calamities that befell him were made instruments of ruin and distress to the Philistines. It scarcely appears that Samson exercised any authority among the tribes of Israel, but he is counted one of the Judges. His exploits among the Philistines were performed by himself alone. The prediction made by the angel to his mother that he should only begin to deliver Israel was literally fulfilled. Samson lived before the time of "peace, good will toward men."

Hagerstown, Md. E. V. L.

THE HISTORY OF ST. MATTHEW A CHILD'S STORY

My dear little children:

In my last writing I told you of the boyhood of Jesus, and that when He was thirty years old He began to preach and tell the people the glad tidings of salvation.

There were four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, each of whom wrote a history or story of the life and doings of Jesus when He was here upon the earth. I will now try to tell you about Saint Matthew, as he is the first

of the four named. We do not read much about his early life, only this that he was a Jew, a native of Galilee, and that he was a tax-gatherer under the Romans. Some writers say Matthew was a very rich man but if he was he must have been one that Jesus knew would be a good, useful man, for He could tell what was in every man's heart. We read that Jesus called him, and he became a willing faithful disciple. After this we read of Matthew entertaining Jesus and several of Jesus' other disciples in his own house with many of the tax-gatherers and other friends. Wealthy persons at that time were in the habit of making great feasts, but we are not told that this was one. We suppose Matthew wanted to take a friendly farewell, and at the same time give his friends an opportunity of seeing and hearing Jesus in whom he believed and whom he had promised to serve faithfully.

He was with Jesus during the time He was on earth, and was one of the number who saw Him after He arose from the grave.

We do not know whether Matthew died a natural death or suffered martyrdom.

The account he gives us of the birth and life of Jesus is one of the longest and perhaps the most satisfactory and complete of all the writings we have. He relates more of the parables that Jesus spoke, and he gives us that beautiful Sermon on the Mount in such simple yet perfect words that it is considered better than all the writings that have ever been known.

When I was a little girl our teacher asked us to commit it to memory and I have been glad that he did and that I learned it then, for I will never forget it as I have forgotten many other things that I learned later in life.

I wonder how many of my little readers would like to memorize it?

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.