

GOOD TIDINGS

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THE REFORMED MENNONITE CHURCH, FOR THE
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EDITORIAL

With this issue of GOOD TIDINGS we welcome New Year. Time is prolonged and we should rejoice in the continued opportunity afforded us for accomplishing the purposes of life; pressing forward in faith and hope, discharging our duties and fulfilling our responsibilities with cheerfulness and thanksgiving.

The year Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-Six marks the passing of many who endeared themselves to us through social and family ties.

Our hearts are saddened at this time by the death of our brother, John K. Ryder, who was identified with this publication from its beginning—one who was deeply interested in the work and gave to it his time and talent. We also mourn the loss of our brother, Frank M. Bear, of Waynesboro, Pa., not many months since, who faithfully labored in the vineyard of the Lord. Their places are vacant, their voices are stilled; but we will long cherish fond memories of their worthy lives, and the word of truth which they so faithfully dispensed unto us.

While the memory of their features is dear to us, best of all we love the character of our friends. The unselfishness, the sincerity, the kindness and gentle-

ness of our departed brethren will long remain in memory to comfort, to inspire and bless us. They endeavored to shew themselves "a pattern of good works, in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned." They chose the good part with Mary of old that will go with them into eternity. We believe it will secure for them "an inheritance incorruptible that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." May that gracious word which they so earnestly taught go with us as a lamp to our feet and a light unto our pathway.

Change and decay are written upon all things pertaining to this mortal life, with one exception—the plan of salvation ordained by God and perfected by the death and resurrection of our blessed Savior. This can never be changed; it is established upon an immutable foundation, and is the same "yesterday and to-day and forever."

Sorrow comes to all, it enters every home. In the light which the Gospel has shed upon death, we can look beyond the grave with hope, so that our sorrows shall not overwhelm us and our duties here will not be left undone.

An article appears in this issue of GOOD TIDINGS which was written nearly 400 years ago, in the days of persecution, by Thos. Van Imbroeck. This confession of faith on the subject of baptism confirms the truth that the true faith does not change, but is the same in all ages.

CHRISTMAS

Almost two thousand years have passed since the birth of the Savior, yet we commemorate the event each year. It is well that we call to mind the great good that was brought to us, and reflect on the meaning and purpose of His coming.

It was the Lord that condescended, and was born of Mary in Bethlehem. It was He of whom the prophet spoke: "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

His was a lowly birth, yet it did not lower Him; He was still the holy child. "He took upon Himself the form of a servant" and came in a manner fitting to the nature which He partook of. Man, though he could be perfect, has nothing to be proud of, and in heaven there is no pride. The birth as well as the life of Jesus exemplifies simplicity of living and teaches the lesson of humility.

He came for a great purpose. The angel said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name *Jesus*: for He shall save His people from their sins." He came to redeem a race, lost and in bondage; it was this that caused the angels to rejoice at the annunciation—"Good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people."

He came to enkindle a fire on earth, to restore His love in the hearts of His followers; to bring them near to Him as He came near to them and "was not ashamed to call them brethren;" "to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad," that there might be "on earth peace, good will toward men."

As He sought no worldly triumph nor earthly glory and as pomp and grandeur were foreign to His nature, so our rejoicing is not in any outward display, but it is a rejoicing in spirit.

Our thoughts at this season and also with the closing of the old and the opening of the New Year should return as always to the great debt we owe to God. We should incline our hearts to Him and strive anew to live closer to Him and to one another, to be more loyal and self-denying, more considerate of others,

more helpful, more kind. Only thus by serving Him willingly, joyfully, by seeking to serve others and by doing good to all men as He did, shall we understand what Christmas means.

CHRIST'S LOWLY BIRTH

“There was no room for them in the Inn.”

This situation confronted Mary, the prospective mother of Jesus, in Bethlehem of Judea. She was consigned to the stable and there the blessed Babe was born. “He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.”

It seems remarkable that the birth of the Son of God should have taken place under such humiliating circumstances. That He who in spirit was with His Father in glory and happiness from eternity; “He whose name shall be called wonderful, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace;” “He whom God appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power,” should have entered the world in this manner. When we contemplate Jesus in this exalted and glorious condition, and then consider His lowly birth, our minds are filled with wonder and amazement! Ordained by God, in a mysterious manner, to partake of flesh and dwell among us, His advent marked the beginning of a new era to mankind, an era of peace and love. The angels heralded His coming by the sweetest song that had ever been sung to mortals—“Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will toward men.”

We must believe that the lowly manner of His birth was not an accidental occurrence, but that it was according to a preconceived plan of God. It is in-

tended, no doubt, to impress us with an example of humility and self-abasement; and as a rebuke to our pride and our strong aversion to the receiving of Him into our hearts.

The plan of salvation from its inception was characterized by humility. Jesus' life from the manger to Golgotha was a pattern of meekness and condescension. To make room for Him in our hearts we must become humble and contrite. He will not enter a proud, selfish heart; there is no room for Him there, for He must occupy the whole heart.

“Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me.” Rev. 3: 20. This blessed relation can only be attained by Jesus being born in our hearts. He then becomes unto us, “The way, the truth and the life.” “We love Him who first loved us.” There will be no divided affection, for He said, “He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.” Also, “He that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.” Luke 14: 33.

There is much lavish display in the so-called religious world in commemorating the birth of this blessed Jesus. His virtues are eloquently extolled, and fascinating music both vocal and instrumental is employed, apparently to enhance His praise. All of which is very attractive to the natural senses, but we fear woefully devoid of the spirit.

Grand and costly churches, temples and cathedrals have been erected in the world, wherein to worship God. Many of these buildings are sumptuously furnished and decorated. This extravagance often imposes a great burden upon many worshipers, although it may be intended to promote the praise and glory of God and Jesus. God cannot be glorified by any material works of man,

no matter how beautiful or costly. All outward display and ostentation originates in hearts that are yet carnal and where Jesus has not entered.

True, under the Mosaic dispensation, God authorized the Jews to use the finest material in building and decorating their places of worship. They used gold, silver, precious stones, and elaborate tapestries—notably in the Temple at Jerusalem, which was magnificent in all its appointments. Their worship, however, was literal and carnal; it was embraced by their natural senses and practiced in a carnal way through sacrifices, ordinances and ceremonies. But these were only a “shadow of things to come.” They typified the spiritual or christian era which the birth of Jesus initiated. The beautiful temple which Solomon built and dedicated to the glory and worship of God was symbolical of the spiritual temple or kingdom which would be established in the hearts of all those who make room for Jesus. “Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 25.

Under the Mosaic economy all places of worship were dedicated to God. Now, however, the temple of God is the redeemed and sanctified heart—it is dedicated to the worship of God, not the material temples and churches—Christ Jesus fulfilled the law for all such souls. “He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” Col. 2: 14. He imparts the spiritual life, and supplants the carnal worship which obtained under the law, by the worship which is according to “Spirit and in truth,” for the “Father seeketh such to worship Him.”

Woe is pronounced on those who exclude Jesus from their hearts; they can-

not be saved. They may be deluded, though living an upright, moral, charitable life receiving the ordinances, and being diligent in church service; for the convincing evidence of accepting Jesus is obedience to all His commands, which comprise self-denial, non-conformity to the world, non-resistance of evil, separation from all false worship, and peace and unity among worshipers.

Blessed and holy are they who make room for Jesus in their hearts, they have the promise of “manifold more in this present time and in the world to come life everlasting.” Luke 18: 30. They not only rejoice in celebrating the birth of Jesus, but they rejoice always in considering His gift of eternal life. They rejoice not by any worldly or carnal display, but in the spirit, making “melody in their hearts to the Lord in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM BUILT ON LOVE

“Our Father which art in heaven.” Matt. 6: 9-13.

The opening address to the Father leads the way to the petitions following; it recognizes God as All wise, All powerful and All gracious; as Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things visible and invisible; which implies ability and willingness to supply the need of all His children, both as it pertains to body and soul. We will recognize the opening address as Christ designed it; as coming from God's spiritual children. The address implies being partakers of the divine nature, renewed to His image, through faith in Christ and the consequent regeneration through the spirit and word of the Gospel. All those are heirs of the Father; they are His children and spiritual family on earth, and are one united people.

First petition, "Hallowed be Thy name." In this petition is a recognition of God's condescending love in becoming our Father through Christ Jesus. It is for ourselves, not for God, that we pray. Our prayer is no service to God; no ill can ever happen Him. His name is always holy. Our prayer is that God's name, that is always holy, may be hallowed in us by cherishing purity and eschewing evil.

Second petition, "Thy kingdom come." When our Lord enjoined this prayer, the kingdom as restored and returned to the hearts of believers had not yet come, and therefore the disciples could not realize the fullness of this prayer. "Except a man be born again he cannot see into the kingdom of heaven." The new birth came after the atonement and outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and with it came the kingdom prayed for, as follows: "Thy kingdom come." The kingdom is founded on love, existing in the heart and consisting in "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." All Christians constitute and are that kingdom in which there is neither war, violence nor divisions. "Thy kingdom come" is a petition for peace on earth and good will to men. We cannot consistently pray for a kingdom that is fundamentally antagonistic to war, litigation, divisions, pride, selfishness and all forms of dishonesty when we yet live in any one of these anti-Christian indulgences. If we love and practice Gospel precepts we may offer this petition, and our Father will grant our request, which is not only for ourselves, but also for our brethren and for all mankind. In this petition we ask that Christ in spirit be enthroned in our hearts, that His Gospel and spirit control our lives, that we may be a tower of strength against all evil,

and an inspiration to our fellow travelers.

The third petition is, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." This is also a petition in our own behalf and that of others. For the will of God must necessarily be done. But our petition is that we obey, as do the angels in heaven. There is no discord there. Their delight is in the doing of the Father's will. The Father is love, and if we are born through His spirit we love and obey Him, and we also love one another, seeking not every man His own, but also that of another. No worldly system, no matter by what name it is called, can effect a real change in the world, even socially, because its ethics do not change the heart. The Christ life is the only remedy which reflects the Father's will and leaves the soul uncontaminated by sin.

Fourth petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." This petition has a twofold meaning. It is a petition for necessary bodily food for the preservation of our natural lives, without which we cannot live, since the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and every creature is good if received with thanksgiving. In addition it is a petition for grace to enable us "to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly before God." It is a petition for a love of Gospel precepts, and of faith, love and humility.

Fifth petition, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." While in this mortal state we make debts, spiritually. The human family has fallen under a spiritual infirmity. We may term it human depravity or inbred sin, it matters not. The fact remains that no mortal can abide the judgment of God's holy law. This infirmity is general, hence the need of the great redemption wrought by Christ. The believer does not knowingly and wilfully violate the

spirit of the law; yet through weakness he commits both sins of commission and of omission, measured by the standard of holiness unto the Lord. For these he asks forgiveness. We will not overlook the remarkable feature of this petition, that of it being conditional. We only ask to be forgiven as we forgive others. If we fail to forgive those who trespass against us, and yet offer this petition, we in effect ask God not to forgive us our sins. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. What hypocrisy to offer such a petition to the throne of grace when we cherish unforgiveness in our hearts toward any fellow mortal.

Sixth petition, "Lead us not into temptation." When we are tempted to commit sin, we are influenced by our depraved nature. God does not tempt us to commit sin. He may allow us to fall into temptation, for our learning and purification. The meaning of this petition is, that we acknowledge our weakness and dependence upon our Father's care over us; that we desire His watchful and loving providence over us, knowing that He remembers our frame, that we are but dust, and therefore pities us as a father does his child. It is inconsistent to pray to be preserved from temptation, and at the same time go into temptation, such as evil associations, where is levity, vanity and pride.

Last petition, "Deliver us from evil." There again is implied a love of truth, righteousness and holiness. If our actions contradict such petition, then is our petition hypocrisy. The substance of the Lord's prayer is invaluable. Happy is that people who do in truth and sincerity pray what is so well known as the Lord's prayer; but far better not repeat it, in prayer, when our hearts and minds are not in accord with the letter and spirit of it.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

HUMILITY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6: 63.

In all ages forms were associated with worship. The two sons of Adam used sacrifices, so did the patriarchs previous to the giving of the law. The law embodied the same. The Gospel uses forms in worship to represent spiritual truths. Forms are means of exercising the mind leading into the subjects outlined. The form is easily taken for the reality. Such was the failing of the heathen nations noted in Scripture history. Their formalities did not correct their unholy lives. The Scribes and Pharisees, with all their semblance of godliness, were pronounced by the Savior to be hypocrites, because they professed what they did not do.

True worship in the New Testament age is agreement with New Testament teaching. The Savior says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." To come under this blessing persons must know that they are sinners, and that all good is an applied quality, not natural to us, but coming from an influence that appeals to us as the sun reaching nature in its varied forms brings out heat and life by its power. We owe to divine power all the good that is developed in us, which sense divests us of all self-glory and gives honor to the source of all gifts, for all our attainments and for every possession.

If we are talented, if we score marked success, if we lead and are admired, if handsome and envied, the thought should be, God has made us. If we lack ability, if we fail oftentimes, if we must follow those who can lead, if the vain slight us, if we are awkward and uncomely, if we

are maimed and dependent, we still are God's workmanship and He is the friend of the lowly.

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord," is counsel teaching humility. Condescension and abasement become creatures who are burdened with sin, and who know that all excellence comes from the author of life.

Have the words of the Savior force: Blessed are the poor in spirit—he that humbleth himself shall be exalted? Is there truth in the assertion, "Boasting is excluded?"

Does reason persuade us that such frail beings as we are, among the innumerable multitude, should live in humility before God and walk in simplicity before one another to show our equality, and that as God is no respecter of persons so we imitate Him who in loftiness so greatly excels us?

If we acknowledge humility to be a virtue then we admit that all the righteous do practice it, and that where it is not practiced there is no righteousness. Humility of soul is the basis of love, for the Spirit is not conferred where there is no abasement.

The vital principle of love based on humility is the element of distinction in Christ, the perfect man, who could bear all insults and abuses with patience. "In His humiliation His judgment was taken away." We understand where there is true humiliation there is no judgment. True humiliation tempered by love makes Christians defenseless and passive, distinguishing them from the contentious and the proud. "Charity suffereth long and is kind, * * * endureth all things."

Forms in worship are wisely ordered because we are impressed by them, but they are not the life of the service. Forms in the church express unity, but if Christians do not live peaceably they

believe the expression of the ordinances. In the formation of many sects the principle of love, as well as the expressed doctrine of the Head of the church, is ignored.

The church is called the Body of Christ. Separating is dismembering the Body. The church is represented as a kingdom, having a head, who says: We cannot serve two masters, and that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand and is brought to desolation. Where division exists desolation of feeling is the sad effect, since the social nature suffers. Proof is patent that professing Christendom suffers desolation in consequence of the worldliness that is tolerated in the churches, dimming the light of the institution which is to be "the city on a hill" diffusing spiritual luster.

While the church has formal ordinances as exercises to keep up unity of action in the association of its members, and while harmony gives force and promotes usefulness in any body of people, it should always be considered that forms in themselves are lifeless, and that there is a deeper basis to be sought on matters of faith than church membership.

For this cause the Savior taught, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things." The spirit in us must be good by a fixed purpose to fulfill righteousness, for good dwells in us to the degree in which we yield ourselves to it. We are the stage on which the acts are performed either by God or Satan, since "to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey his servants we are."

We who have the Scriptures have a criterion to decide what is a godly spirit. The last covenant defines love to others to be equal to love for ourselves. Our treatment of others is made clear, that

we shall not exalt ourselves above them, or close our sympathies toward them, or in any way inflict on them what we would not inflict on ourselves. This rule indicates the practice of peace toward others regardless of their practice toward us, which means the same love toward our enemies which God in His benevolence shows toward sinners in this world to gain them. "Knowest thou not that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Let us be open to the spirit of religion of Christ and the forms will not separate the sheep who hear the voice of the Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

THANKFULNESS

The year just passed has been one of unprecedented prosperity in the United States and Canada. Production of the various industries has been enormous; many stupendous undertakings were begun, or completed; workmen were usually well paid for their labor, and the tillers of the soil, in most sections, were abundantly blessed in the harvests. Progress in man's various activities is very rapid. Great strides were made in the increase of knowledge, and much effort put forth to make this life one of ease, comfort and pleasure. Truly we are living in an age of hitherto unknown privileges. The marvels of yesterday are the commonplace things of to-day: the luxuries of our parents are considered necessities with us.

Should it not cause us to stop and consider what this leads to? Profane history shows that nations at the height of prosperity are in greatest danger of moral and intellectual decay. "Pride goeth before destruction," and riches are a snare, when they beget surfeiting, rioting and greediness. Why? Because man, under affliction, bereavement or

poverty, realizing his helplessness, will appeal to God, but in times of prosperity is inclined to feel independent and self-sufficient. May God help us to think soberly when we are favored with this world's goods, lest we forget Him!

The Pilgrim Fathers, who emigrated to North America that they might have religious freedom, experienced much hardship in wresting their first harvest from the virgin soil. Threatened by hostile Indians, savage beasts, famine and disease, they dwelt in continual anxiety. At last the meagre crop was gathered in, and they felt to set apart a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God, who had cared for them. Since that time it has been an annual custom to keep this day, in which to praise the Lord and thank Him for His blessings. Those who till the soil can best appreciate the bountiful harvest, knowing that they may "plant and water, but God giveth the increase."

We believe that God's object in providing for man's temporal needs, whether he be good or evil (Matt. 5: 45), is not only to assure his earthly well-being, but that he, as the creature, would honor Him, the Creator. And not only that man should feel thankful for these blessings, but that these evidences of God's love would draw our minds to the great purpose of our being. Paul writes (Rom. 1: 20), "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Truly, all the creation testifies to the existence of a Supreme Being, who desires that we should be happy, and whose Word reveals the course that we must take to attain to true happiness.

So we have reason to be doubly thankful, if we can partake of these natural

blessings in that frame of mind. Rather than elevate us, perishable riches should impress us with the need of seeking a better and enduring substance, and of using our means for the relief of our less favored fellow mortals.

And how should we express our thanks to the Lord—with the lips? Yes, but not with the lips alone. If we “draw nigh to Him with our lips, and honor Him with our mouths” while our “hearts are far from Him,” our worship is in vain. Paul says (Rom. 2: 4), “The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.” This is truly the purpose of God’s goodness—to draw men to forsake their selfish lives and seek His Kingdom.

Read the 95th Psalm, and you will see how we can best praise God for His mercies. “To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart.” Suppose we were to say to our parents, “Father and Mother, I appreciate all that you have done for me in rearing me to manhood; you have shown great love toward me, have made many sacrifices in my behalf, and I want you to know how thankful I am,” and then immediately would turn away from them, disregard their appeals, and perhaps cause them to become objects of charity in their declining years—where would be the evidence of thankfulness?

How inconsistent, also, if we thank our Heavenly Father for all His gifts, if we are not willing, in return, to surrender to Him our whole will, heart and mind! Unconverted people often make the remark that they are thankful for this or that, but in what way are they thankful? Our God is a jealous God, who is not satisfied with partial surrender, or half-hearted service, but the command to those who wish to come to Him is, “Glorify God, both in body and spirit, which are God’s.”

Our prayer would be, for the coming year, not only for the believers in Christ,

but for all nations, that they may walk humbly in the sight of God, realizing that all good and perfect gifts come from Him; and that, in return for His loving kindness, we may yield ourselves into His hands, that “He may work within us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

Stevensville, Ont.

W. I. T.

IS CHRIST DIVIDED? 1 COR. 1: 13

Is not the Gospel considered as an unalterable guide to determine one’s hope of heaven? Yet, seeing the greatly divided state of the religious world and the general disregard for many of the plain teachings of Christ, one cannot but think that men lose sight of the fact that “God is a jealous God,” jealous of His word. In the times past, it is said, “every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward.” Now, since the promise of a Redeemer is fulfilled and free pardon is offered to the penitent, is it God’s goodness that causes men to presume to worship according to their own judgment regardless of Christ’s word sealed with His blood, and to esteem lightly the judgments of God pronounced on disobedience?

The doctrine of church unity is founded on Scripture. Divisions are said to be carnal and are reproved. They are contrary to the spirit of the Gospel which is love, and they are foreign to the nature of the kingdom of heaven which is peace.

Unity is the result of these principles of peace and love being established within the soul. Christ said, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, * * * for behold the kingdom of God is within you.” This implies a change of heart. Peace was not on the earth until Christ came. He taught the doctrine of the new birth, through

which experience man is fitted to become a subject for His kingdom.

The effect of the Spirit of Christ is to unite in faith and doctrine. All, regardless of number, are brought through its blessed influence into spiritual fellowship as was the church at Pentecost which was not divided but "of one heart and soul." That such fellowship might continue Christ prayed the Father that not only His disciples, but that all who should believe through their word may be one even as He and the Father. John 17. And since He knew that His followers would fail at times, He gave a rule in Matthew eighteenth to preserve the church in unity and peace. If one disobeys the spirit of love he shall be spoken to; if he regards the reproof and repents all is well. If not, labor to regain him must be continued. Finally if he will not hear he must be separated. Unity must be preserved; without it the communion of the bread and the cup would be sacrilege. 1 Cor. 11: 17-30.

In the kingdom of this world there is confusion, contention, war. Christ called His disciples out of this kingdom and said, "My kingdom is not of this world." He commanded that the sword be put into the sheath, and contrariwise taught His disciples to live in peace, to love their enemies, to return good for evil, to suffer wrong patiently in imitation of His example and of His precept "that ye should do as I have done to you."

Many persons acknowledge the wrong of divisions and contentions but fail to see the inconsistency of partaking of the communion service when such conditions exist. In doing so they profess unity when they are not united. "Wherefore," the Apostle says, "come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." Everything that is not in

agreement with God's word, He regards as unclean.

In all times it is an offense to God when His people are disobedient and live in disorder, allowing themselves to be misled by false teachers. It can be said now as it was of old: "Who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts?" Isaiah 1: 12. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jer. 5: 30, 31.

Lancaster, Penna.

J. K.

THE HAND OF JESUS

Holding fast the hand of Jesus
Youthful christian on life's way
Take the Savior for your Helper
Ask His guidance every day.
Sin and danger may surround you
But His hand holds you secure;
Trust Him, He will never fail you
Lean upon His promise sure.

Holding fast the hand of Jesus
Manhood, busied with life's cares
Ask His spirit to direct you
Shield you from the tempter's snares.
In the world but still not of it
Striving for a higher goal
Holding fast the words of Jesus
He alone can save the soul.

Aged christian, O what comfort
O what joys are held in store
Only waiting now for Jesus
Waiting to be wafted o'er.
You have toiled and long have labored
Often wearied in the strife,
Trusting firmly in the Savior
Who can give eternal life.

Holding fast the hand of Jesus
Soon the journey will be o'er,
Freed from every sin and sorrow
There is bliss for ever more.
Holding fast the hand of Jesus
He will be your closest friend,
And He this assurance gives you
I'll be with you till the end.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

BAPTISM

Confession of Thomas Van Imbroeck, concerning baptism, delivered to the lords of Cologne, where he was imprisoned for the faith. A. D. 1558.

I believe and confess that there is a Christian baptism, which must take place externally and internally; internally with the Holy Ghost and with fire, externally with water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Internal baptism is imparted by Christ to the penitent, as John the Baptist said: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I; whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Matt. 3: 11; Mark 1: 8.

Christ confirms these words when He says to His disciples, "That they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." And this promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Acts 1: 4, 5.

But the external baptism of water, which is a witness of the spiritual baptism, and an indication of true repentance, and a sign of faith in Jesus Christ * * * is fully comprehended and contained in the words which Christ speaks to His disciples: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matt. 28: 19, 20. In Mark we read thus: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16: 15, 16.

These words of Christ fully comprise the ordination and institution of the Christian baptism, and all that pertains to it; for Christ, who is the eternal wisdom of the Father, has expressly and completely thus commanded it. Now, as He is the Light and the Savior of the world, we find in this command that teaching and believing must precede baptism. John 8: 12; 3: 17.

The Scriptures cannot be broken, neither are we to take away from, or add to, the Word of God; nay, not even the smallest tittle or letter of the Gospel may be changed. Hence, the ordinance of the Lord respecting baptism must remain unaltered; for it is the word of God, which abideth forever. Deut. 4: 2; Matt. 5: 18; John 10: 35.

Hence, the words of Christ declare that teaching must take place before and after baptism, in order that the person baptized may use diligence to observe, after baptism, the Gospel (which was presented to him before baptism), and all things commanded him; for he is no more lord over himself; but, as a bride surrenders herself to her bridegroom, so he, after receiving baptism, surrenders himself to Christ, and loses his will, is resigned in all things, without name, without will, but leaving the name to Christ, and letting Him reign in him. * * *

With this ordinance of Christ, accord also the apostles, as faithful stewards and dispensers of the manifold grace of God; for thus did Peter and the other disciples preach the Gospel at Jerusalem, and they that heard it were pricked in their heart by the word, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them: Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy

Ghost." Acts 2: 37, 38. Thus did also Philip, when he expounded the Scripture to the eunuch. And the latter, when he had accepted it, said: "What doth hinder me to be baptized? Philip answered: If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." Acts 8: 35-37. Thus also those of Samaria were baptized, when they believed the words of Philip.

Again, when Peter preached Christ to the house of Cornelius, and spake the word of life, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. "Then said Peter: Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Acts 10: 44, 47, 48.

From these and other passages it is evident that the apostles first taught, and that from teaching follow repentance and faith. For, how shall they believe, says Paul, without hearing. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10: 17. Hence, penitent faith is confessed and so to speak sealed by Christian baptism. For after baptism a constantly good and godly life should follow; this is the true ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His apostles, as you may read everywhere throughout the Acts of the Apostles.

With these words, Paul tells us what the baptism of believers signifies, namely, the dying of the flesh, or mortifying of the old Adam, the burying of sin, the putting off of the sinful flesh, and the resurrection of the new man and life; and this for this reason: since Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead for our justification, and we, through the spirit of faith, have been incorporated or grafted into Him, and hence have become entitled to the merits of His death, yea, are made par-

takers of all that is His, and thus, in and through hope, are confirmed in His fellowship (unto which we are called through grace); therefore we must also, for His name's sake, die unto sin, bury it, and live unto righteousness, that we may be a true branch on the vine.

In this manner the apostle Paul speaks also to the Colossians: "Ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him." Chap. 2, verses 10-13 compared with Eph. 2: 4-6.

These words of Paul sufficiently indicate that in baptism the past life must be buried with Christ, and, through faith, rise to a new life; for the outward sign alone is of no value in the sight of God; but faith, the new birth, a true Christian life—by these man is united with God, incorporated into Christ Jesus, and becomes a partaker of the Holy Ghost.

Hence, external baptism does not conduce to salvation, if the internal baptism is wanting, namely, the transformation and renewing of the mind. Once more Paul says to the Galatians: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3: 26, 27.

Paul says to the Ephesians: "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." Eph. 5: 25, 26.

Here we plainly perceive that the washing of water is joined to the Word; for no one is cleansed by the washing of water, but by the Word; as the Lord says: "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." John 15: 3.

In another place, Paul calls baptism a washing of regeneration, Titus 3: 5, because baptism represents regeneration; even as circumeision is called a covenant, because it represented a covenant. Thus also the paschal Lamb is called pascha, that is, a passing over, though it was simply a memorial of the passover. Thus is baptism called a washing of regeneration, because it belongs to the regenerated children of God, who are born of incorruptible seed, namely, the living Word of God, or, as James says: "Who are regenerated by the will of God, by the word of truth." 1 Peter 1: 23; James 1: 18.

Still another point is also to be considered here—that the apostles say, We must be regenerated by the Word, that is, through the preaching of the Gospel. But by what will those who say that children are regenerated prove this? since neither preaching nor Word obtains with them.

Finally, Peter says also in his epistle: "When once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 3: 20, 21.

From the words of Peter we perceive that baptism is represented by the flood, through which God punished the whole world; but Noah, with his house, whom God deemed righteous, was preserved in

the Ark from the water; even as Israel passed dry-shod through the Red Sea, and were thus delivered from their enemies; but Pharaoh, with his entire host, was drowned in it, so that not a single one escaped. 1 Cor. 10: 1, 2.

Thus it is with all the works of God; that which is life for the pious is death for the ungodly, as Paul testifies with these words: "We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life." 2 Cor. 2: 15, 16.

For, noble sir, and servant of God, I appeal to you, whether it is not now as it was in the time of Noah? They build; they plant; they buy one field after another; they feast; they drink; they marry, and are given in marriage; and all this without the fear of God; and they who do this are well known, yea, all corners of the world are full of abominations and idolatry. May the Lord convert them all. Amen. Luke 17: 26, 27; Matt. 24: 37, 38.

The reason why they live without the fear of God, and without care, is that they have no example. They console themselves only with this, namely: I am a Christian; for I am baptized. Thus they speak, thinking that it is sufficient if one is only baptized; but they know little what baptism signifies; for they have not yet drank of the living fountain, of which Jeremiah speaks; but they drink of the wells which they have digged themselves; "For they have forsaken the true fountain, says the Lord." Jer. 2: 13.

So it is now also with baptism, as I have sufficiently shown above, that believers only are to be baptized. But now the command of Christ is ignored, and those who dig or devise a well, or baptism, of their own, are received; and

thus is fulfilled what Christ says: "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." Matt. 15: 6.

Still more might be shown from the Scriptures; for Paul writes very clearly to the Hebrews (concerning the preparation of Christians), declaring that those who would receive this Christian ordinance must first learn the principles of the Christian doctrine, namely, repentance from dead works, then faith in God, and then baptism. Heb. 6: 1.

THE JOYS OF A BELIEVING HEART

The apostle Paul in writing to the Christians at Rome desired that God would fill them with "all joy and peace in believing." In this age of doubt and indifference what longing we have for truly believing hearts! To feel there is a God who not only rules in the "kingdoms of men," but who also takes note of every individual being, and loves and is willing to guide them in ways that are for their good is the substance of faith. It softens our contacts with life as well as fills us with comfort to know that we are not carried along by a merciless fate. If we can in any situation say with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth" we place ourselves in the attitude of trustful children and should experience joy and peace in believing.

At once place during Christ's earthly ministry it was said, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." This can well be applied to our generation. The workings of grace, which really are "mighty" in reclaiming the heart from sin and establishing a life of true holiness in the believer, are frustrated many times by our own lack of faith. It is possible for unbelief to travel under a better name, and through its subtlety it is given recogni-

tion in many ways. If there was a sincere belief in God among professing people there would be more heed given New Testament teaching which so plainly tells of the Lord's will that we strive to forsake all manner of sin and false doctrine. Sin and unbelief surely are convertible terms and the fact that there are degrees of unbelief does not justify it in any sense in the sight of God.

So we conclude that the greatest loss that can come to man is not of the things we can see and handle, but it is the loss of a believing heart. We may be wise to know good and evil, and have fame and fortune smile upon us, but if we have lost that childlike faith in God we are failures in the light of the Divine plan. It is only the deceitfulness of sin that prompts unbelief. We were made to worship God and without that we can never be truly happy. The Psalmist must have felt this when he prayed, "O satisfy us early with Thy mercy that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." Rejoicing in the Lord is commended many times in the Scriptures, and undoubtedly it is with those of an humble mind who cultivate the Divine virtues that we find the fullest share of Christian joy.

There are joys of various kinds in this life. We all have more or less taste of them and we should be grateful for the blessing they are to our natural life, but we realize in most cases they are short lived and leave little to their credit. It is not so with the joys of a believing heart which are of lasting quality, lightening every burden and leading one to the perfect bliss promised the faithful.

It is sin and all its reactionary effects that bring sadness in this life, just as it is right living that brings gladness. With all our helps we are not wise enough in the ways of God to know more than in part what right living is. Liv-

ing for a principle and worshipping a Spirit is not natural to man, and we need regeneration. We need the faith that is born of God. The Savior compared the Good Spirit to water, which, if dwelling in us, will spring up unto everlasting life. We have reason to think that faith and joy are manifestations of this spirit.

To believe and rejoice in God sincerely we must be true Christians. This means we must have the spirit of Christ and according to the words of the apostle Paul old things must pass away and all things become new to us. Our faith must have a good foundation. It is said the devils also believe; but they tremble in their belief. With us love should be the ruling power and obedience the fruit. Conviction of duty and remorse of conscience come to us as friends drawing us humbly to God who is ready to receive us and teach us the way of salvation. All must repent and come by way of Christ and the cross. In short to have our share of holy joy we must be faithfully living "the life that is hid with Christ in God" and not be depending on outward circumstances or our own accomplishments to bring it to us.

We who have tasted that the Lord is gracious and who thank Him daily for what we have received still stand appalled and feel ashamed because of our lack of faith. Many have been the echos of the disciples' words. "Lord I believe, help Thou my unbelief."

How thankful we are that time and opportunity are still left to place ourselves with the elect to whom the apostle Peter wrote, "That the trial of your faith might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." 1 Peter 1: 7, 8, 9.

Thus the joy and peace of believing do not end with this life but stretch out through the ceaseless ages of eternity. They are graces in our daily living and intimations of a blessed future following death.

Chambersburg, Pa.

M. C. S.

SELF-DENIAL

"If any man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." Matt. 16: 24.

In these words the Savior addresses those who have a desire to follow Him. He points out that this means a sacrifice, a denying of self. We are all afflicted by selfish desires and promptings. Why? Because we are of the earth and earthly inclined, whereas to be "spiritually minded is life and peace." Earthly minded persons are not always inclined to be wicked, nor to seek their pleasure in those things that are of a debasing character, but on the contrary, they may be of the highest type of citizenship and in fact may be very religious and self-sacrificing. To some persons the denying of self is the giving up of some particular desire which may be debasing; and in doing this they may be encouraging themselves to believe they are doing God a service. We are of different temperaments; what is a denial to one person may be no temptation to another. To one who has no desire for strong drink, there is no self-denial in abstaining from it. To one who has no pride in dress there is no cross in dressing plain.

Souls may be deceived because they place their hope of salvation upon works and sacrifices, as abstaining from strong drink, dressing in a simple garb that is not in conformity with the world, and giving to the poor. We may forget that while these acts are all commendable for "Having done all these we are still unprofitable servants," we are only doing

our duty as God's most highly endowed creatures should. When we take honor to ourselves for doing that which is our duty we are robbing God of that which belongs to Him.

Denying self means more than this. It means taking captive every thought to the obedience of Christ. Denying self is to enter into a close examination with the secret thoughts of our heart, to refuse any suggestion that would hinder God's work in the soul and to be passive and obedient to the commands given by our Savior: "If a man love Me he will keep My words." John 14: 23. If we deny self we will follow His counsels because we have received His spirit which it is said will lead us into all truth. We will deny the selfish idea, that we merit honor or praise for doing that which is our duty. A child that loves its parents finds pleasure in doing what they require of it without receiving pay or compensation. So too do the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ derive comfort from that faith which worketh love and obedience.

Those who think they do God service by making certain sacrifices and build their hope of salvation upon their works are like servants or hirelings who work for pay.

In Christ's sermon on the Mount He presents man's whole duty. In the Beatitudes He pronounces blessings upon those conditions that are entirely opposite to the trend of man's mind, and to attain these blessings it is necessary to practice self-denial.

Under the law, resistance of evil was tolerated together with many other liberties, which Christ said was suffered on account of the "hardness of heart." The natural, carnal man is under the law to-day, and his first impulse is to resent an injury, or retaliate for an offense. Christ's commands are "resist not evil." "Love your enemies." "If

a man take away thy coat let him have thy cloak also." To be qualified to obey these commands, "We must be born again." We must accept Christ as our Savior and helper. When under His divine ruling, we will be given power to "deny ourselves and take up our cross." We will not only refrain from the act, but will take the evil thought captive.

We accept by faith what Christ asks of us, for we believe He loves us and only requires such self-denial as is for our good. Souls who have been wrought upon by Christ's spirit have a desire to do His will, deny self and follow Him; they are brought into fellowship, are baptized into one body and become the church of Christ; each according to his gifts contributing to the building up and maintaining the church in which all have a common interest. To them, certain commandments are given as a help in living the self-denying life. In the eighteenth chapter of Matthew Jesus laid down a simple rule to be practised among brethren, which if strictly obeyed will preserve the church in love, unity, peace, and purity. Love and unity must be apparent else there would be no evidence to the world of the true worship. The apostle John says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." The Savior prayed "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." John 17: 21. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Here self-denial is required, because our fallen nature would lead us to tell the fault to others; and by doing so we would violate the law of love, a transgression equally as great as the one committed against us. "If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Following this command

in the true spirit of love, the erring one may be regained but if he will not hear, his true condition will be revealed.

While it is true that many souls reason that each one must give an account of his own deeds, it is clearly shown by this command that we are also responsible to God for our brother's misdeeds when we have knowledge of them. If one fails to follow Christ's command as given here, he is guilty of the sin of omission and failing in one of His commands "he is guilty of all." To deny self signifies a deeper meaning than many of our dear friends conceive, because in the New Testament there is no teaching that will sanction conditions as they exist in the religious world to-day. There can be no divisions among Christ's followers. Christ's doctrine is plain and simple, but human wisdom often gives a wrong interpretation, because it suggests the evading of self-denial and the cross.

Some of Christ's commands may seem hard sayings, but we must accept them by faith and not do as many of His disciples did, "walk no more with Him."

The day of judgment will come to us all, then Christ who now pleads with all to come unto Him, and receive eternal life, will withdraw His mercy, and become the Judge of the "quick and the dead." Many will come saying, "Lord, Lord open unto us," and He will answer, "verily, verily I say unto you I know you not." These are they who did not deny the selfish promptings; and who reasoned that it was no harm to indulge in worldly pastimes and amusements and who refused to bear the cross of Christ. To many it may seem hard to hear the command "deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me," but how much harder in the day of judgment to hear, "Depart from Me into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." Jesus calls all to come

unto Him. We must make an unconditional surrender. Then the "cross will be easy and the burden light."

The fruits of the spirit will be manifest, "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law." Gal. 4: 22, 23. To gain anything valuable in this life we must often practice self-denial, and when we have attained it we can only possess it for a short time, until we must leave it to others for "here we have no continuing city." The span of life is short at best. How much wiser and of how much more value it is to deny ourselves and "lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven," which will serve us throughout eternity. O Eternity! endless duration! Here time is reckoned and all things come to an end, whether it be joy or sorrow, happiness or disappointment; but eternity can not be reckoned, there will be no end.

Lancaster, Pa.

B. G. L.

"BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE"

While the Books of the Law abound in commands that the Israelites were to observe scrupulously, it is the spiritual passages scattered here and there throughout the Pentateuch that make it interesting and valuable to us. When their children would inquire "what mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?" the Hebrew fathers were to answer them by citing the history of God's dealings with them.

In their Shema or daily prayer, they were admonished: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach

them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

The word of the Lord to Moses was, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" Then only would they be worthy of the blessing which Aaron was commanded to bestow upon the people: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

In these Books of the Law, the weakness of God's chosen Israel is clearly shown. Rather than continue to serve God faithfully, they were inclined to follow after strange gods. They were commanded to destroy all altars, groves, and places of worship which they found in the land they later conquered. They were also warned not to be snared into worshipping those idols after destroying them or to be interested enough to inquire, "How did these nations serve their gods?" but the command was, "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God."

When under temptation to forsake the Lord, how important that we do not forget the words of the prophet Isaiah, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." So were the Israelites taught, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, saying: let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken unto the

words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

Undue hardships were not imposed upon them in offering the sacrifices required by the Lord. If the place chosen by the Lord was too far from their home, or the sheep or oxen too heavy, they could kill of their flock or herd and eat it within their gates. Or they had the privilege of selling their intended offering, go to the place chosen by the Lord and with that money buy whatever they desired to sacrifice. But they were not to forbear in keeping the passover unless they had a lawful reason, such as being ceremonially unclean or on a journey; otherwise they would be punished by being cut off from among the people, because they did not bring the offering in the appointed season. Thus the Lord always had a care for His people, to keep them near to Him.

As an evidence of His presence, and blessing upon them, the Lord appeared to them in the cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. This continued from the time the ten commandments were given until their entry into the promised land of Canaan, while Moses was their leader.

As to their daily conduct, they were taught, "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind." Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people." "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man." To all these declarations was added the impressive statement, "I am the Lord," so they could not forget the source of their peculiar privileges and blessings.

In order that they might obey perfectly the word of the Lord, they were taught, "What thing soever I command

you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

May we cherish the spirit of Joshua, the successor of Moses, when he said: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Waynesboro, Pa:

B. F. M.

THE UNKNOWN GOD

The question, *Is there a living God*, seems to exist in the minds of some men. Our first thought may be to doubt the sincerity of such persons, especially since God is in evidence everywhere. However it is better not to draw conclusions as to the motives of others. God knows man as he is, we know him as he seems to be. We are acquainted with the exercises of our own mind and if we grow in the knowledge of ourselves we become more charitable and better able to sympathize with other struggling souls.

Consciously or unconsciously we are reaching out for something. We have been created with this disposition, which is very much more pronounced in the child. It suggests the reasonable counsel, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Eccl. 12: 1. Our entire existence here is a preparation for something, and when the mind can be receptive, so well illustrated in the child mind, which typifies the Christ mind, God will equip us for life which the doubtful soul can not experience. There are influences present with us, which we recognize in time as good and bad. It is the conviction of the writer that all nor-

mal persons have the privilege of decision and may choose whether their path be one of sin, bondage, and finally condemnation; or whether it be one of righteousness, freedom and in the end eternal peace. Whether it be preparation for temporal life only, and death; or for life with a scope including both temporal and eternal qualifications. "The wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life."

The vital question is: Do we worship a known or unknown God? The worship of something is common to man. Years ago people worshiped images, a custom not so prevalent nowadays. However, idolatry may take on a new and more subtle form. Our life may be in things which we forget will pass away, enjoying and using them as if they were the end instead of the means to the end of life. It is the thing or things we love more than God that become our idols. It may be anything; even our own thoughts, ideas or plan of life; or even our very religious devotions which if they be not in conformity with the teaching of Jesus, that become an idol. This condition is more deceptive than the worship of hand-made images.

Our knowledge of God is dependent upon our faith in Him and our willingness to accept, as our mode of life, His way of salvation, revealed within the heart of man, and as taught by Jesus Christ.

What God wants from us is our love, which is worship. There is nothing He needs from us, but if we love Him, we will be in a position to receive from Him. "If a man love me, he will keep my words." St. John 14: 23. Our life will manifest our love, lip devotion is empty and oftentimes misleading.

When we reflect upon the goodness of God, even for a moment, and then consider our lack of appreciation, we marvel at the patience and love showered upon

us. As previously referred to, surprise is expressed that there should be even one blind to God, inasmuch as His handiwork is everywhere visible. Viewing it from another angle we wonder that there are so few professed atheists, knowing the tendency in human nature to be drawn away from God's influence, and inasmuch as we know and are able to realize God only as we have allowed His Spirit to influence us. Here again God's long-suffering is beyond our understanding. During this period of probation or preparation we have the privilege of calling upon God for help. However, there seems to be an end even to this. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Rom. 1: 28.

"What is our Life?" "What quality is our Life?" Will our life continue when the body and its perishable associations return to dust? "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." 1 Peter 1: 24. We must answer for ourselves before God. If we accept of God's gift, "Eternal Life," we will know Him and will not need to be told there is a living God. We must experience this ourselves. No manner of discourse will reveal this to us, for it is not a gift of man, but of God. "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Heb. 8: 11.

Men are inclined to be either too busy or careless of time to think that it will cease, or they may say thoughtlessly, "They have too much to do with the present to trouble themselves with the sentimentalism of the future life." The eternal thought or answer: "But the Spirit of the Lord endureth forever." This surely excludes and gives little en-

couragement to anything not in harmony with the life as revealed in Jesus Christ.
Lancaster, Pa. M. H. B.

THE HEAVENLY WAY

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there." Isaiah 35: 8, 9.

God created Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden and gave him Eve as a help-mate. They were happy because they were at peace with God and loved Him. But they yielded to temptation, and through disobedience this happy condition was ended as they lost the fellowship and communion with their Maker which they had enjoyed. Having obeyed the serpent or devil they fell under his power as it is said, "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness." Rom. 6: 16.

Yet God in His great love and wisdom did not leave man altogether without hope but promised that in the fulness of time He would send a Savior and Redeemer who would restore to mankind the love which was lost in Eden. Gen. 3: 15.

The prophet Isaiah in the words quoted foresaw the blessed time when men could be restored to peace and fellowship with God and walk in obedience to Him. At the appointed time, God sent His Son into the world, heralded by angels who proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men." In Him all of

the promises given to the holy men of old were fulfilled.

Through Moses, God had before given the law to His people. It embraced the moral law, rules for worship, and civil enactments founded on justice which were enforced as are the laws in the kingdom of this world to-day. "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life," full restitution for any loss, injury or damage was required. Divorces were granted for many causes.

When Jesus came He established a new way. He did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. Matt. 5: 17. He lived a perfect life; He fulfilled all righteousness, and He taught a new doctrine which required a change in the heart of man in order that the lost love might be restored to him again. This change He demanded: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" "Ye must be born again."

Of divorcement, He said that Moses permitted it because of the hardness of heart, "but from the beginning it was not so." Now, when the mind and affections are renewed and purified there is but one cause for which a man may put away his wife, and marry again. Under the new dispensation our words are to be yea and nay, and we are not to swear a legal oath. No more is it eye for eye, tooth for tooth, but I say unto you that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain; give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away. You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse

you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Matt. 5: 31-45.

Such was the manner of our Savior's life and of His teachings. He consecrated the way of self-denial and sacrifice, of peace and holiness. It is a blessed way, the kingdom of heaven on earth. Into it He gathers all who will come to Him of the lost through Adam's transgression.

Those who have entered upon the way are not left without a guide for throughout the New Testament is the record of God's will and word. As the teachings differ from our natural inclinations which are selfish, we see that by nature we are out of the way, and that we are sinners. Alone by coming to Jesus and walking in agreement with His will may we hope to be of the number of whom it is said, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22: 14.

Arkona, Ontario.

L. M.

CHOOSING WISELY

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."
Joshua 24: 15.

We quote the above which was spoken by Joshua in his address to the children of Israel, when he was old and stricken in years. In a touching manner he reminds them how the Lord has blest them in giving them rest from their enemies, and in their possessing a land which had been promised to them so long before. Then follows these inspiring words: "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and do all that is written in the

book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left. * * * Choose you this day whom ye will serve," and the people said unto Joshua, "The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey."

Most of us have had time, in our lives when it became an imperative duty, or I may say a necessity, to reach a decision in some important question. It may have pertained to something in our natural life, or it may have been at that momentous time when we first felt God's call and His convicting grace, which we read "has appeared unto all men." Perhaps we were not quite willing to obey the still small voice and make the sacrifice although we were impressed with the importance and wisdom of making a choice, as to whom we would serve. Happy indeed are those who at this period in their lives or at the first call resolve with God's help to courageously follow the Lamb wherever He leads.

Religion is a reality, a heart work. All who are willing to become followers of the meek and lowly Jesus experience a blessed sense of comfort and restfulness, a nearness to the Savior, feeling that they are trusting alone in His saving power. Since they have this hope it is but right and natural that they desire that all might enjoy and share with them the blessed comfort.

Especially are they concerned for those of their dear friends who apparently seem to stand just at the door of entrance, almost persuaded, and who freely tell of being impressed with God's word, and the wisdom of making this wise choice.

Yet many, then, question whether there is no intermediate way. They desire salvation. They try to live honest pure lives. They have given years of toil and study to gain the experience and ability to render valued service in many varied positions. But they realize that

they in filling those positions, are often called upon to violate the spirit of God's word, so plainly defined in the Sermon on the Mount.

For all such dear friends our sympathies and prayers are offered but we cannot comfort them in the course they have been taking. For, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?" How valueless are the opinions or judgments of man.

We read, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." "If ye love me keep my commandments." "Ye are not of the world, I have chosen you out of the world." To King Ahab it was said, "Obedience is better than sacrifice."

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

CHRISTIAN FREEDOM

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8: 31, 32.

The Jews could not understand that they needed to be made free, when they never were in bondage. They did not realize that they were in bondage under the devil, and were lacking the free fellowship with God, which it was their privilege to enjoy. They felt, however, that something was lacking, and they endeavored to supply it as Adam and Eve sought refuge in a covering of fig leaves, the Israelites, under Aaron, bowed down to a golden calf, so the Pharisees sought righteousness by works and taught the traditions of men for doctrines. Mark 7: 7, 13.

Such conditions still exist; men not having the spirit strive to obtain comfort by other means, seeking relief by good works, laboring to promote the welfare

of humanity, and the progress of the world, all of which is commendable, but it still does not bring that perfect peace of mind and freedom from an accusing conscience, which only the meek and lowly in life attain. In the world are many classes, laboring together in part, yet to an extent standing aloof from one another; even in the churches there is not that free flowing together of sentiment, and confidence, but a feeling of anxiety lest friendship be disturbed or lost.

In the church of Christ there is no distinction by classes, of high or low; for the high are brought down and the low raised up by the power of the Holy Spirit, which teaches love and instills confidence and freedom so that there is nothing to hinder a flowing together. And, finally, the freedom from the torments of the second death which is awaiting those who are not found written in the book of life. Rev. 20: 15.

Landisville, Pa.

C. S. N.

SUPPLICATION

O, Lord of love and mercy great
Do unto us Thy grace impart,
That we may walk with hearts sincere
In Godly love, in Godly fear.

Thy spirit grant, O Jesus kind,
That we by it Thy truths may find;
That from delusions we may flee
And ever strive to live in Thee.

O do Thou work within us Lord
According to Thy will and word,
Cleanse, sanctify us, and produce
Hearts fitted for the Master's use.

Grant us Thy spirit, Lord, divine
Subjecting every thought to Thine
Live in accord with Thy command
That we by doing all may stand.

For O, Thy blessed word is rife,
With hopes of everlasting life,
Thy word, which passeth not away
Will judge us all at final day.

Then Lord of love and mercy too
To whom is praise and honor due
Keep, guard, protect us, Holy One,
That we by grace may overcome.

May we from death to life arise,
To blissful mansions in the skies,
Our song of praise, O then will be
Saved, saved by grace eternally.

Lancaster, Pa.

C. N. H.

NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The familiar words of Jesus addressed to the scribe in answer to a question regarding the commandments no doubt represents the state of many persons in the world to-day. Not far from the kingdom would imply a knowledge of its Ruler, and a clear understanding of the provisions and conditions under which one becomes eligible to enter it; and naturally an appreciation of the benefits accruing to those who become subjects of that kingdom.

Those so well informed would not be lacking in discernment, and therefore entirely able to make wise decisions, and should profit by the exercise of this gift, which in itself is one of value. As with the scribe, whatever it may be that bars the way, the counsel of the Supreme Lawgiver avails nothing unless we accept and act upon it. From the same source comes the assurance that for anything forsaken "in this life we shall receive an hundred fold, and in the world to come eternal life." So that we need have no fear of losing anything of value, but have the promise of gain in the natural life, and a reward in the eternal.

This should be sufficient to set at rest the fears of those who may be skeptical of the results of following the counsel of an Authority whom none should question. The serious thinker probably disposes of the matter as the Roman governor dismissed Paul, upon the occa-

sion of the memorable interview, when he proposed sending for him at some future time, to hear more on the subject in which he appeared to be interested, and perhaps accept the Divine counsel which was offered. This favorable time evidently did not arrive as we have no account of such an occurrence.

This visionary future time, or "convenient season," is perhaps the illusion of many persons intending to give due consideration to the acquirement of Divine wisdom. Temporal matters are engrossing and take first place, while the most important becomes secondary. The parable of the rich man, wholly absorbed in the care of his possessions, is a forceful illustration of the folly of devoting the time and talents entirely to the things that will serve only in the natural life. The counsel is to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added."

Hagerstown, Md.

A. K. H.

BRIEF NOTES

We are again in the midst of the Holiday festivities, in which expenditures, often lavish, extravagant and injudicious, are made in bestowing gifts, many times where they are little needed. The real Christmas spirit will find a fuller expression in such aid as we can give to the poor, destitute and needy, and where suffering may be alleviated at home and abroad.

* * * *

The spiritual peace and comfort of a Christian life may be enhanced by adversities, often sent as blessings in disguise. Followers of the meek and lowly Savior, instead of murmuring and complaining under trying circumstances, feel that there is still occasion and reason to render thanks and gratitude, by a

more devoted service to God, for they realize their light afflictions work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

* * * *

Once more on the threshold of a New Year, we are inclined to look back over the past year and we may regret things we have done or reproach ourselves for things left undone, but God's word and our experience teach us that we are dependent upon grace to enable us to live our lives in accord with the Father's will. Then with the apostle Paul we will be minded to "forget those things which are behind," and "reaching forth unto those things which are before," press on "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

* * * *

We are impressed that the display that is made and the honor and applause that is given to those of royal birth when they become the guests of a nation and its cities may well serve to show the contrast between the kingdom of this world and that of the meek and lowly Savior. Though He was the King of kings, there were no such manifestations of honor and esteem; neither can a subject of His kingdom receive any acclaim or show of honor nor can he bestow them upon another, because the whole purpose of his life is to glorify his Father in heaven, as he has been so plainly taught by his Savior.

* * * *

In the popular profession of Christianity there are almost endless disputes, controversies and contentions as to whether is it right or wrong to do this or that, as though Christian living was the result of doing certain things and not doing certain others. Christian living is ever from within; not from without. Must not the teaching and prompt-

ing of Christ's spirit in the hearts of all His followers, ever be the same? When such disputes, controversies and contentions exist, is it not an evidence that Christ's spirit is lacking? And if His spirit is lacking how can there be Christian service? * * * *

We know that God's love is infinite and perfect, yet no matter to what degree we may possess it we are still finite and are so easily influenced by our selfish desires. God's perfect love is often expressed in forms and on occasions wherein its purpose is beyond our comprehension at the time. But if we strive to be submissive and resigned there is sufficient of its purpose revealed to us that we are often impressed as was the apostle Paul: "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out." * * * *

An editorial in one of the dailies calls attention to the remarkable inventions and developments which in a few years have equaled those of a century before. Commenting on this, a friend remarked, "Where will it end?" and concluded, "We only know where it will end with us."

It is an impressive thought that amidst all these great achievements, whether we engage in them or merely observe them, there is ever the consciousness present with us that at best our activities in life may end so very abruptly. The question that concerns us is, Have we laid up a treasure in heaven, which will be a source of everlasting joy and peace when these temporal scenes and the turmoils of this earthly life are ended?

* * * *

Reflecting on the purity and goodness of God, manifested about us everywhere, it is profitable for us to look carefully to

our thoughts, words and deeds. Such reflection, to the extent we engage in it, reveals the selfishness and pride which dwell in our depraved nature, brings self-knowledge, and causes abasement within ourselves. God giveth grace to the humble, but He resists the proud. Obedience to the leading and teachings of God's grace, then, brings a yearning for the fullness of God's love, that it may be shed abroad in our hearts, and that its power may enable us to think better thoughts and conform our lives to the promptings of God's love. In Christian living the desire ever is for a closer walk with God.

* * * *

It is said that when John Randolph was on his death bed he told the doctor: "Take this card. My name is on one side. Write on the other side 'remorse' in large letters and underscore the word, as it best symbolizes my soul. I have obtained some relief by looking to Almighty God as a Savior; but when I am dead look at the word which utters the inmost in my soul, and you will understand of what human nature is capable."

In living our life, according to our human nature we may easily commit a wrong and suffer remorse because we cannot undo it, as was the case with John Randolph. But every true follower of Christ has a voice within, which restrains from evil at its source, and prompts to acts of love and mercy. What better New Year resolve can we make than to obey the kindly teaching of that voice? Doing so will bring peace to our souls—peace that passeth all understanding. Refusal to do so may temporarily satisfy our selfish desires, but end in remorse and anguish. Would we bring upon ourselves a condition where "the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched?"

We meet with many sad situations, where there is bereavement, sorrow and anguish of heart, caused by death removing near and dear ones, and often those who are needed and much appreciated in the varied relations of life. But even greater distress may be brought to the hearts of many through family quarrels and contentions that break the sacred ties and inflict suffering upon innocent little ones. When we come in contact with such cases our hearts are often deeply touched and go out in tender sympathy trying to give aid, comfort and counsel as best we can. But in looking upon this wide world and meditating on the suffering and need, and the wail of anguish that goes up from aching hearts, we are impressed with our insufficiency and our finiteness.

In contrast how infinite is God's love, reaching out to all who will avail themselves of it,—a strong arm to lean upon in the darkest night, even when passing through the valley of the shadow of death. When we consider that it is not only now that He extends His support to the faithful but has through all ages and will as long as time lasts, are we not moved by a sense of reverence and awe, in contemplating God's infinite and boundless love?

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Who gave the Ten Commandments?

A. God Himself gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, and Christ our Lord confirmed the moral principles which they embrace.

Q. What two commandments embrace the whole law of God?

A. These two: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength." This is the first commandment and the second is

like, namely this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Mark 12: 30-31.

Q. Why do these two Commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God?

A. These two are the summary of the ten, as they embody the spirit of the whole law. This perfect law of God being the will of God, all of the commandments Christ gave are in harmony with it and the underlying principle is the same; they are given either to help us to keep these two, or to direct us how to shun what is opposed to them. We bear in mind that this law is holy and its perfect righteousness could be fulfilled only by Christ. It is therefore not a standard of attainment to the believer, but, under the covenant of grace, it is the law of his mind; he is conformed to it in will and desire; it is written in his heart and he is ever reaching forth to it. His failures, which do not lessen his efforts, but rather increase them, are covered by the atonement.

Q. What is Faith?

A. Faith is a Divine virtue by which we firmly believe the truths which God has revealed.

Q. What is Hope?

A. Hope is a Divine virtue by which we firmly trust that God will give us eternal life and the means to obtain it.

Q. What is Charity?

A. Charity is a Divine virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves through the love of God in us.

Q. What is Prayer?

A. Prayer is the lifting up of the mind and heart to God to adore Him, to thank Him for His benefits, to beg His forgiveness and to ask of Him all that is needful for soul and body.

Prayer is the yearning of the soul toward God; with or without words it is understood by Him.

Repeating the Lord's prayer in truth comforts only those souls who sincerely desire to do all that the words of this sacred petition imply.

Q. What is meant by taking up our cross?

A. In the reign of Constantine, in the fourth century, the cross was publicly used as a symbol of the Christian religion. This perverted use of the cross, or its misapplication as a religious emblem resulted in making of it an idol.

When Christ said, "Whosoever will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me," He had no reference to a natural cross, but His words had a spiritual signification. The cross is one which we must bear individually, and in our Christian experience consists in the giving up of everything for Christ's sake; in bearing the enmity, the reproaches and the persecution of those who hate us; the denial of all that is in opposition to the humble and self-sacrificing spirit of Christ, of that which would tend to exalt us and lead to envy, jealousy, hatred, variance, strife, and self-love, of that which would tempt us to follow after the affections and lusts of the flesh;—these with other temptations to evil and unfaithfulness constitute our cross which we must take up in order to follow Jesus.

Q. Are the Sabbath day and Sunday the same?

A. No. The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week and is the day that was to be kept holy under the law. Sunday is the first day of the week.

Two reasons are given for this commandment to the Israelites, one in Exodus 20: 11 and one in Deuteronomy 5: 15. The latter applies only to the children of Israel. It is obvious that their observance of the Sabbath was a literal one. The Savior ended the question of a legal Sabbath when He said,

"The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." The Gospel is not a law, nor a covenant of works. It is spirit and life. It brings holiness into man's heart and carries it not only into his religious worship, but into the natural affairs of life and makes every day a holy day unto the Lord. As our Lord arose from the dead on Sunday, the disciples called it the Lord's day and they met to break bread. Acts 20: 7. The literal observance of the Sabbath day was abandoned. Col. 2: 16.

Q. Why did Jesus cry out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

A. Jesus was both "God and Man." He knew that He was ordained to thus suffer and expiate the sins of the world; to this end He came and willingly submitted. He was to "bear our sins in His own body on the tree of the cross." "Upon Him was laid the iniquity of us all." Having partaken of the nature of man, it was His humanity that suffered and caused Him to implore God for help. Upon another occasion, when His soul was troubled "There came a voice from Heaven to comfort Him." John 12: 27, 28. When in agony in the garden, "there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening Him." Luke 22: 43. Can we wonder that in the extremity of His suffering upon the cross He looked for help. He was to accomplish our redemption alone. "And I looked and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought Salvation." Isaiah 6: 3, 5. God delivered Him into the hands of the wicked and the powers of darkness. He was made sin and a curse for us, therefore even God seemed to forsake Him on account of His hatred of sin. Jesus, under this awful suspense and untold agony of these hours of suffering, with the sins of the whole world resting upon Him, felt it was more than

His humanity could endure, and therefore he cried out: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

HOME TEACHING

The subject of teaching our children should be given very careful thought. The word school brings to the mind of every one, a place for learning—becoming acquainted with the tools that will enable the students, old or young, to cope with the various issues of the natural life. However, we realize only too well that learning cannot be limited to the walls of any institution. We should be ready each moment to learn that which will be beneficial to others, as well as to ourselves. Are we not learning continually improved methods of farming and manufacture? In every vocation of the natural life we take advantage of new methods. And yet are they not only the product of the material mind, in the perishable things of this world—working with the tools that have been graciously given to us by the Creator of all things?

Every one agrees that it is well for our children to know something of the life and history of the people of God, and the countries and peoples of Biblical times, together with the prophecies and forecasts of the new era in Jesus Christ. And, would it be untimely, that they should have some knowledge of what Christ's mission on earth was, and what He asks of all who desire to follow Him?

It is plain to many, however, that a true disciple of Christ could not encourage the manner in which the Sunday Schools of today are conducted. They, as we believe most sincere souls see it, can only give information and acquaint the young with the written record of God. They cannot give regeneration of soul or the revelation that must come

through the desire of the heart rising to the throne of grace. If religious instruction is depended upon to make them Christians instead of repentance and faith, it fails in its design. It is building on sand to the ruin of many, many young souls who have trusted in it.

We are taught that children are to be brought up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The duty rests primarily on the parents. The care of teaching the heart more than the head should be foremost and example makes the deepest impression. Christian parents cannot fail to recognize their responsibility. What a wonderful opportunity is spread before them! We must regard it with awe! Little lives in their unfolding are left in our charge. What impressions are we leaving on those tender minds? What can be more enjoyable or interesting or encouraging to us than to help, as far as we are able, to impress those hearts with a desire for the kingdom of love!

From experience we have found that they have a strange longing for the mystery of God and heaven, and death and angels. We say strange, but it is not strange when we even can almost hear the Savior saying, "For of such is the kingdom of God." How close they are to heaven in their innocence and trust! What a lesson to us all!

Some may say, "Can we improve what Christ has called pure?" Far be it from us, but we realize as they leave that state of innocence the question of right and wrong presents itself and then the instruction of Christian parents is of the greatest importance. Is the home doing its part? Is it enough that the children know only the customs of the church, or is it not more vital that they know of the spiritual treasure set in store for them? Are we too busy to set aside a portion of each day, or perhaps each week for an

hour, or half hour, of true enjoyment with them and at the same time adding to our own spiritual growth? In many Christian homes we know it has been done. And we are sure it has not been in vain. A tie has been established between parents and children and impressions made that may never be wholly lost.

May God grant us the desire ever to learn of Him. May He be a lamp to our feet on the way to life and peace! Then may our little light shine in its reflection on other souls.

Lancaster, Pa.

K. B. B.

KNOWN SINNERS CANNOT BE RETAINED IN THE CHURCH

It is a common belief that there are good and bad in all churches; and that one person is not responsible for another's conduct.

That there are morally good people in the churches all will admit, but there are also many such outside of the churches. Therefore moral goodness alone does not prove one to be a Christian. The terms good and bad as used, mean Christian and non-Christian.

The criterion by which we judge our Christianity is of course God's word. Christ's teachings are plain and simple; they have no hidden meaning. The commandments are too clear to be misunderstood and too positive to be disregarded.

If we obey the precepts of Christ in spirit and in truth we prove our faith; if we are disobedient to any one of them we are disloyal to Him, and fail in that test which He gave to His disciples, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." Disobedience disproves one's Christianity.

Two things are essential to Christians,—the one is faith resulting in love to God and obedience to His word. The other is that they "have love one to another."

The question "Am I my brother's keeper" was asked by Cain, and it has been asked ever since. Our responsibility and our duty are clearly shown by a commandment so simple that a child can understand its meaning: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee go and tell him his fault." Matt. 18. That which love requires is binding on us.

As a further duty we are told that those who will not hear, but continue in sin shall be separated from the church; "withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly." Though "the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him," and "every one of us shall give account of himself to God," the duty here stated we cannot escape.

Good and evil exist side by side in this world. It has been so always; it will continue to be so until the final separation is made. Matt. 13: 36-40. In the church it is not so: "Know ye not," the Apostle says, "that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

The scriptures define right and wrong, good and evil; they draw a line of distinction between the two. Would that we could think in the terms of scripture:—"What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil."

M. H. M.

Lancaster, Pa. R. F. D. No. 4

DAVID KING OF ISRAEL

I have told in a former article that the Lord had directed Samuel to anoint David as king while Saul yet reigned. Samuel anointed David as the Lord had directed, and David believed that the Lord had appointed him to rule over Israel. But as he had not been publicly anointed he inquired of the Lord whether he should go into any of the

cities of Judah. He was told to go to Hebron and the men of Judah came and anointed him King over the house of Judah.

However the greater portion of the people were attached to Saul's family. Abner, who had long been captain of Saul's army, and who may probably have felt envious of David's rising popularity, took Ishbosheth, one of Saul's sons, and made him King over some of the tribes. For two years there did not seem to be any serious trouble between the two armies, but later Abner's men were defeated in a battle and Abner himself fled. Asahel, who was swift of foot, pursued him in order to get his armor. Abner then turned and smote Asahel so that he died. Asahel was Joab's brother.

There was continuous irritating warfare between the army of Ishbosheth and the army of David, but followers of Saul's son grew less and less, while David's increased continually.

Ishbosheth had a grievance against Abner and accused him, whereupon Abner was angered and threatened to transfer the kingdom from Ishbosheth's dominion over to David. Abner may have felt that he had done wrong in placing Ishbosheth in opposition to David, and he later came to David professing a desire to serve him and offered to use his great influence in bringing all Israel to acknowledge David as King. Abner was royally received by David, and he then went away promising to gather the tribes together, that they might make a league of allegiance to David.

Joab, the captain of David's army, was away when Abner visited David, and when he returned he was greatly displeased to learn what had occurred. He said Abner meant only to deceive and obtain information of David's re-

sources, which information he might afterward employ to injure David's cause. Joab may have felt that he was in danger of losing his position and Abner was the only one in the kingdom whom he had reason to fear.

Joab immediately sent a messenger after Abner, calling him back in the name of the king. Joab met him on his return and treacherously killed him. He pretended it was done to avenge the death of his brother Asahel. This act caused David much sorrow and he lamented Abner's death. David himself followed the bier, weeping. Although David had been anointed King he felt himself to be under the power of his nephew Joab, who though brave and fearless, was bold and cruel.

When Ishbosheth learned of Abner's death, he felt that his effort to obtain the kingdom was useless. The men of Israel also felt that the strength of Ishbosheth was broken and they turned to David as their deliverer.

Later two officers who pretended to be or at one time were friends of Ishbosheth, hoping to be rewarded for the act, took the life of Ishbosheth while he slept and brought his head to David. But David was angry and caused the murderers to be put to death.

After the deaths of Ishbosheth and of Abner, all the elders of the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, making a league and anointing him king over all Israel. There was great joy in Israel.

One of the first acts of King David was to secure the fortress of Mt. Zion, which had been in the hands of the Jebusites for a long while. This fortress was considered impregnable, but through the ability of Joab the fortress was taken. It is supposed that David named it Jerusalem, "the Possession of Peace."

Hiram, King of Tyre, sent messengers to David with trees of cedar, also masons and carpenters, and they built a house for David in the city, and it was afterward called "David's City."

Ever since the death of King Saul and the defeat of his army, the Philistines had possession of the principal places in the land. As David was now king over all the tribes they decided to attack David before his army was so large. David inquired of the Lord, whether he should go to meet them. He was told to go and his army was victorious.

The Philistines again came to battle and David inquired what to do. He was told to come upon them over against the mulberry trees and when he heard a sound in the tops of the trees, he should bestir himself and the Lord would go out before him and smite the Philistines. David was obedient, the Philistines were overcome and there was a great victory.

David now had respite from war and thought of the ark of God, which had been for many years at Kirgath-Jearim, in the house of Abinadab. David desired to bring it to Jerusalem. He summoned men from all his kingdom, thirty thousand men, to go with him to bring the ark. The ark was placed upon a new cart and drawn by oxen, while David, the priests and all the people accompanied the ark playing joyfully upon their many instruments.

On the way the oxen stumbled and Uzzah took hold of the ark to stay it and he was smitten and died, since no one but a priest was permitted to touch the ark.

This event caused consternation and David was afraid to take the ark home so it was taken to the house of Obed-edom where it was left for three months. David learned that the Lord had blessed Obed-edom and his household and he again went after the ark. Realizing that

they had done wrong earlier in attempting to haul it on a cart, David had it carried by the priests on their shoulders. It was a day of rejoicing in Israel.

David laid aside his royal mantle and dressed as a priest, he walked with the priests, playing upon his harp and singing a song of rejoicing and thanksgiving that he had composed for the occasion. He danced before the Lord accompanying the joyful shouting of the people and the sound of the trumpets. Michal, the wife of David and a daughter of Saul, saw David dancing and reproved him, feeling his actions were beneath the dignity of the king.

The ark was placed in the tabernacle which David had prepared for it. David then offered burnt and peace offerings to the Lord and gave presents of food to the people who then returned to their homes.

King David now had rest from his enemies and felt that it was not proper that the Ark of God should rest in a tabernacle covered by curtains, while he himself dwelt in the house built by Hiram, King of Tyre. He sent for Nathan, a prophet, and told him of his desire to build a temple to Jehovah in which the ark could rest. Nathan gave David encouragement to do so, but that night the Lord revealed to Nathan that as David was a man of war, he should let the building of the house of the Lord to his son who should rule after him and whose reign should be one of peace. The Lord promised to build David a house by establishing the succession, and granting to his posterity an eternal kingdom. The prophetic promise seemed to be understood by David, or at least he had some conception of its meaning since he expressed gratitude and asked the blessing of the Lord upon his house and upon the people of Israel.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

THE STORY OF PAUL'S SHIPWRECK

I have told you some of the wonderful experiences of St. Paul. He stands out as a remarkably strong man. His great zeal in telling the people about Jesus and his appeal to the rulers in defending his faith in Jesus are among the most learned and valued speeches that have ever been made.

He was treated unkindly and imprisoned and finally was sent to Rome to appear before Caesar.

At that time the seas were not known as they are now, nor were the ships large and fit for voyaging on stormy seas. The season for sailing was past, making it still more dangerous, when Paul with others set sail. He said to them, "Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives."

But they did not heed his warnings, and it was not long until high winds arose and they were tossed by a great tempest, so that they threw over board most of their cargo to lighten the ship, and gave up all hope of saving their lives. Here again we read, "Paul stood forth in the midst of them and said, 'Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete; but now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not Paul, thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore,

Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island.' "

After some days of peril and stormy sailing they feared they had fallen upon rocks, and became discouraged, refusing to eat. Paul then told them to take some meat for their health, that there should not an hair fall from the head of any of them. Paul took bread and gave thanks to God in presence of them all, and when he began to eat, they too cheered up and began eating. After this they felt better and made the ship lighter by throwing the wheat overboard into the sea.

Soon, however, the ship fell into a place where two seas met, and the forepart of the ship stuck fast and could not be moved and the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. There were two hundred and eighty-six persons on the ship.

We, who have never been in a leaking ship, in a storm lasting for days and nights can not imagine their distress, seeing neither sun nor stars for many days.

Here the soldiers advised that they kill the prisoners, lest any of them swim out and escape. But the Centurion who had charge of the prisoners, willing to save Paul, kept them from doing that, and said, that they, who could swim should first cast themselves into the sea, and get to land: and the others some on boards and broken pieces of the ship, swam to shore, so none perished.

At another time I would like to tell you what happened on the island where they landed.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.