

GOOD TIDINGS

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THE REFORMED MENNONITE CHURCH, FOR THE
PURPOSE OF DISSEMINATING SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

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EDITORIALS

The passing of the Old and the opening of the New Year suggest the thought that time is a measured portion of duration and remind us that our days are numbered and that all of the vast multitudes that now people the earth will soon be carried over to the great beyond by the relentless flood of years. In the language of the poet, "There are they who toil, and they who strive, and they who feast, and they who hurry to and fro; the flood sweeps over them and they are gone." In the words of the Psalmist, "A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past," . . . "Thou carriest them away as with a flood," . . . "We spend our years as a tale that is told."

With the beginning of the New Year many persons resolve that they will make such changes in their habits and practices as will tend to further their worldly interests and natural well-being. To all of us who read and ponder over these columns, we would say, let this New Year be the beginning of days to us; let us resolve to give due consideration to the real purpose of our being. Life's brief day is a time most precious, given us that we may attain life eternal and become qualified for the heavenly association.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. Isaiah 9: 6, 7.

We take the opportunity at this time to thank those who have been active in creating a wider circulation for GOOD TIDINGS, and we are pleased to report a substantial increase in the number added to our list of subscribers through their efforts.

The increase in circulation is also a manifestation that the paper is appreciated and this should be an incentive to those who have been contributing, to continue the work with renewed zeal.

It is the aim of those who compile the articles for publication to have a goodly supply on file, as it allows more time for digesting and preparing the matter for the printer. When there is ample material to select from, the work of the committee is greatly facilitated and the furtherance of GOOD TIDINGS is assured.

We therefore encourage those members who write to take advantage of the long winter evenings which afford an opportune time for preparing matter for publication.

Subjects for discussion and explanation may be suggested to writers by constant reading and prayerful study of the Scriptures.

Attention is especially called to a very interesting and instructive treatise on "The Parable of the Sower" written some years ago by Bishop Jacob S. Lehman. We believe his explanation of the parable will be greatly appreciated by our readers.

THOUGHTS ON THE OLD AND NEW YEAR

The Old Year lives only in memory. What a multitude of events memory brings to the mind! What varied exercises and experiences has the Old Year wrought among the children of men in its flight to the eternity of the past! To

many it brought prosperity, joy, and happiness; and to many sorrow, afflictions, adversity and pain. Many, too, have not lived to see its close. Homes have been desolated and hearts saddened by the great Destroyer entering and claiming for his own near and dear ones. How impressive that in one short year death has cut off from many souls time and opportunity, and that they must meet judgment and eternity. They shall then reap what they have sown. Some have met death suddenly by accident and other unforeseen causes.

Storms and floods have devastated parts of our country during the past year, causing great loss of life and property; demonstrating unto us the great power of God, and our helplessness and insecurity in this mortal life. Yet, God has bestowed many blessings for which we are thankful. He has moved the hearts of the multitudes to contribute of their means to provide food, clothing, and shelter for the many destitute, rendered so by these catastrophies of nature.

The Old Year has again proved unto us that death observes no order—the babe in its mother's arms, the youth, the middle-aged, the aged, the rich, the poor, the high, the low—all are subject to thy behest, O Death! We know not how, we know not when we must answer the summons. God is no respecter of persons and He has not promised even the saint immunity from disease, affliction, or disaster that may cause sudden temporal death. He has, however, warned all men to be ready to meet death: "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh," Matt. 24: 44; and He also has offered salvation to all the ends of the earth. For this purpose, "He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3: 16. In this regard

God is no respecter of persons: "For in every nation He that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." Acts 10: 35. Amidst all the vicissitudes of the Old Year, this promise of salvation remains steadfast; for it is sealed with the precious blood of Jesus, of whom it is said, "He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever."

The Old Year has gone, and gone forever. Memory may bring to mind duties neglected, failures, resolutions not fulfilled, and perhaps stifled convictions and lost opportunities—these leave a blot on the pages of the Old Year that cannot be erased. It is impressive when we consider that we cannot restore a moment that has passed, or retrieve a lost opportunity. Wealth lost may be regained; our house may be demolished, but it can be rebuilt; friendship may be broken, but it can be renewed; but what power can restore the moment that has passed, the day whose sun has set, the year that has been numbered with the ages gone!

What a blessing is the glad New Year, for it opens unto us new possibilities and inspiring hopes! We in the faith should earnestly resolve, by God's grace, to keep its daily pages clean, and covet good gifts and a closer walk with God. We should be happy, and rejoice in the truth that God still reigneth, and that He has promised never to leave nor forsake us; and that if we appeal to Him with an humble heart He will grant grace to overcome. We shall meet trials and failures in the New Year, but may they excite our prayers, animate our faith, tune our hearts to His praise, and make His love to our souls more evident and more precious to us. Let us be inspired to say with the Psalmist: "Yet the Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime and in the night. His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life."

To our friends who perhaps during the passing of the Old Year have broken good resolutions, or neglected the precious opportunity of accepting salvation, we would kindly say, do not despair. Take courage in the advent of the New Year and appeal unto God for mercy and forgiveness. It is yet the accepted day of grace. "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear." The Psalmist says: "The Lord is nigh unto them who are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." O do not longer delay! for we have only promise of the present moments of the New Year. Solomon said, "Boast not of to-morrow for ye know not what a day may bring forth." And "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Sad would be our fate if the words of the Prophet would apply unto us: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

THE ACCEPTABLE GIFT

At this season of the year when we commemorate the birth of Christ, how many of us realize the true meaning conveyed by these familiar words—"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16.

This was the first Christmas gift on earth. What a sacrifice to give one's only son! But to give that Son to a scornful, unappreciative world required a love beyond human conception. Such a sacrifice is supreme.

Throughout the Scriptures, wherever mention is made of giving, the sacrifice we make appears to be that which is im-

portant in the act. This was the teaching of Jesus. He told His disciples that the poor widow who cast two mites into the treasury gave more than all the others, because they, out of their abundance, put in a little, while she, in her penury, gave all the living that she had.

The Christmas season brings peace and happiness to us because of the gifts that we bestow; and out of the fulness of our hearts we feel the truth of the words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

But what is it that God would have us give to Him? When we give to the poor, Is that a gift to God? How can it be? Our worldly wealth belongs to Him. He gave it and He can take it away. We are but His stewards. Those passages, "I was hungry and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, naked, and ye clothed me, sick and in prison and ye visited me," simply mean that we, as His just stewards, are required to distribute with judgment that which belongs to Him.

Many deluded souls may feel that they are making gifts to God by building beautiful edifices in His honor, by making grand displays, giving freely of their time and money in behalf of the church. Is that the acceptable gift to God? How can they give Him that which has always been His own? Our worldly goods are not the acceptable gift in His sight. He wants that which, alone, is ours to give. He wants our hearts. He wants our humble obedience to His will.

Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend," and then He adds, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." If we do what He commands, we lay down our lives; not necessarily our natural lives but that which, perhaps, is more than life itself.

Have we pride in dress? We lay it down. Have we pride in holding a good position in society? We lay it down. We leave father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife and children for His sake. We cannot serve two masters. He wants our undivided love. We must choose. We must lay down our lives for Him.

How dark and gloomy seems the future until we realize the meaning of God's holy sacrifice that we might have eternal life! Love fills our hearts, and how gladly we give our all without a thought of reward. Reconciled to God and filled with His Holy Spirit, lo! such happiness is ours that it is past all understanding. Truly, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and the peace and joy of bringing an acceptable gift to God fills us with unmeasured happiness.

Shippensburg, Pa.

M. E.

SONNET ON THE NEW YEAR,

1928

All Hail, New Year of Nineteen Twenty Eight!
Thou'rt spread before us as a volume new,
Unlike the year that's past, where we review
A history of events both small and great;
This book is sealed, we cannot penetrate.
We know that day and night their course pursue,
For God still rules in wisdom kind and true;
He will direct if we but trust and wait.

All Hail, New Year! come thou with kindly cheer,
And may thy coming find us brave and strong,
That useful lives be ours throughout this year.
When books are closed that to this earth belong,
How blest the Master's welcome voice to hear,
Ye Faithful, come, and sing that wondrous song.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

BIBLE NOTES

The kindness done to others is sometimes forgotten by them. The chief butler of king Pharaoh, whose dream Joseph was able to interpret favorably, was asked by Joseph to remember him when he comes before the king after his release from imprisonment, which they both shared innocently, but in his

freedom the butler forgot to be grateful. However, God did not forget his faithful servant when no one else could interpret the king's dream. When called, Joseph meekly said, "It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." The answer convinced the king that "the Spirit of God is" in Joseph and he appointed him governor over all the land, except in the throne, by which providence the nation was saved from destruction in the famine that was forecasted in the king's dream. God's people should so live that sinners may believe that "the Spirit of God is" in them, for sinners need the example of light.

Joseph's dream was fulfilled in his father and brethren doing him homage when the famine drove them to him for food. If any similarity can be seen between Joseph and Christ, it is that both were sold for a price, they both were hated by their brethren, both made sacrifices, stood the test of temptation without wavering, and the luster of their virtues still shines. Joseph did not immediately reveal himself to his brethren to bless them, so Christ allows the sinner to suffer penitence and brokenheartedness before He reveals Himself to bless him with peace. When Joseph made himself known to his brethren he comforted them by saying: "God did send me before you to preserve life." God often works mysteriously in our affairs when we give Him place to lead us into the spiritual life. When his brethren left Joseph he gave them this reasonable counsel: "See that ye fall not out by the way." Such counsel is wise for Christ's disciples.

Seventy members of the household of Jacob located in Egypt. When Pharaoh asked Jacob's age he replied: "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life

been." Joseph got all the money, the cattle, horses, lands, and the persons of the Egyptians to be servants to Pharaoh, and he agreed that one-fifth of their increase shall be paid to Pharaoh.

Jacob called all his sons to bless them; but Judah, from whose lineage the Savior was to come, received an especial blessing. Jacob's body was embalmed and was buried with great ceremony in Machpelah, in the land of Canaan, where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah were buried. Joseph desired to be buried with the fathers.

After Joseph's time another Pharaoh arose in Egypt who was fearful of the strength of the Israelites, and to check their increase he directed that all their male children should be cast into the river. Imagine the cruelty of such royalty! Moses was a Hebrew child hidden by his loving mother until he became too old to be concealed when she placed the little babe into an ark of bulrushes to float in the river, straining the extremity of mother love. God preserved the child as He may care for us. The king's daughter found him weeping in his little float, and the watchful mother's love was rewarded by becoming his nurse to rear him. When, in older years, he avenged the injustice of one of his people he had to flee for his life, but God remembered him and called him to be a deliverer of his people from their bondage.

"The groaning of the children of Israel" reached the ears of the Lord, and He used His servant Moses to distress the people of Egypt that they should give the chosen people freedom. The last affliction brought upon them was the slaying of the first-born in every Egyptian home. No one can conceive the desolation spread over that land of death. The Hebrews were commanded to show obedience by sprinkling the en-

trances to their homes with the blood of a spotless lamb, seemingly to indicate that our hearts are to be sprinkled by the atoning blood of the Lamb slain for us. Where this token of obedience was found the first-born was spared. The lamb was to be prepared and eaten entirely. Christ was prepared for us to accept His doctrine entirely. Over the disobedient, judgment hangs with dreadful omen!

In this time of sorrow the chosen people escaped. Sorrow for sin brings the slaying of our first-born, carnal will, which works our deliverance from the Egyptian, worldly bondage. The Israelites escaped with the enemies following them, as Satan follows us, but the Lord caused the overthrow of the enemies, over which disaster they rejoiced as the redeemed may rejoice in their spiritual triumph.

The yearly slaying of the Paschal Lamb was to be to them a continued memorial, lest they would forget the deliverance God had wrought for them. So the Lord Jesus has appointed emblems in the Lord's Supper to remind us of the body and blood offered for our peace. The followers of Moses had conflicts and failings, and as long as we are in this sinful body we feel the law of sin in our members warring against the law of the Spirit, keeping us to a degree captive that we cannot be as holy as we long to be, and impressing us that salvation is by grace, and is not attained by our perfect life. Works of obedience follow the redeemed through the influence of grace, making works the evidence of being saved, not the means. The Holy Spirit, by its workings in the redeemed, strives for the state of holiness which is to be enjoyed in heaven. Life here is the forerunner of the immortal state, whether of holiness or unholiness.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

"Behold a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside and the fowls came and devoured them up; some fell upon stony places where they had not much earth, and when the sun was up they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up and choked them; but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold." Matt. 13: 3-9.

A parable is a representation of spiritual things under the similitude of natural things to aid the understanding to comprehend them more fully. This parable is of a prophetic character, foretelling the effects of the preaching of the Gospel until the end of time.

A husbandman is represented as sowing good seed; but as he sowed some of the seed fell by the wayside, probably a road lying across a field where the ground was not cultivated but was trodden under foot of man and beast. The seed remained uncovered and so the birds came and picked them up. Another part fell into ground underlaid with rocks, the soil had not much depth and the seed being partly covered soon sprang up and looked promising, but when the summer sun in its noonday heat shone upon it, it was dried up beneath the root and it soon withered away and died. Another fell upon ground which had not been cleared of thorns and weeds. This also sprung up and promised fruit, but the thorns and weeds choked it, so that it could not bear or yield any increase. But the rest of the seed fell into good ground, fertile, and well prepared, and thus produced abundant increase, some as much as thirty times what was sown, some sixty and some an hundred times as much as was

sown. This alone answered the purpose of the sower and rewarded his toil.

The sower represents the Savior in His personal ministry, as also all those who through His Spirit preach the Gospel until the end of time. The seed sown is the Word of God. The ground upon which it is sown is the heart of man.

As the natural ground must be broken up, cultivated and fertilized in order to be fruitful, so must the heart of man be broken by the law from Mount Sinai; be made humble and contrite, to fit it to receive the good seed of the Word of God unto fruitfulness. The wayside hearer represents those who hear the word with the natural ear and recognize it as a message from heaven, but as their hearts are filled with pride and worldly projects they do not pause and reflect upon their unsaved state. They walk after the sight of their eyes, and in the evil ways of their hearts; they love the world and the things that are in the world, such as the esteem and praise of man. Those of mature years and of middle age are busied about making provision for their families and old age. The youths are filled with prospects of natural enjoyments in their diversions, pursuits, and schemes; their youthful aspirations bear them onward in the thought of what is pleasing to nature, and highly esteemed in the world. There is another class which have yielded to the indulgence of their animal propensities, who are represented by those who dwelt among the tombs, who make night a covering for their misdeeds; their minds are occupied with thoughts of indulgence of their evil desires. They are slaves to their passions. All these are represented by the wayside hearer, who understand not the word because they have no desire to understand it.

The birds represent the wicked one who catcheth away that which was sown by suggesting worldly thoughts. The

good seed, or word, is not protected; there is no hedge around it; its exposed state represents the absence of the fear of God and a true understanding of duty. It is a lamentable state, yet it is the attitude of thousands upon thousands of precious souls. The appeal from heaven to them is, "Awake thou that sleepeth, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light."

We have limited our observations to the written word as representing the seed and the sower, Christ and His Apostles and their successors. This is manifestly the primal meaning of the parable, but I would not limit God's gracious calling to the written word.

God manifests His wisdom, power, holiness and love through the creation of heaven and earth and all things therein. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race." "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." There is sufficient evidence manifested in the creation and government of the material world to convince every person that the Creator and Ruler is God. The Eternal, Almighty, Omniscient, Underived One. Worthy of adoration and obedience. Independent of the written and spoken word there is not only the visible creation to bring conviction of duty to every intelligent creature, but also the ministration of angels, who, led by the Divine Spirit, minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation; and especially the strivings of God's grace through the

spirit of Christ knocks at the door of every heart and asks for admittance. From these last observations we are encouraged in the belief that the Creator and Preserver of the race of mankind has made provision for the salvation of all. Since He "has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations; that they should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; for we are also His offspring." Sin is the effect of disobedience; hence the language of the Apostle James, "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin." From this we infer that knowledge of duty impresses responsibility, and that in the absence of knowledge responsibility does not exist, and therefore man is only responsible for his acts to the extent of his opportunity of knowing duty and his ability to perform it.

THE STONY-GROUND HEARER

This class represents those who hear the word and accept the message of salvation offered by grace through faith, attracted by the promise of eternal felicity in heaven. These are advanced beyond the wayside hearer. Luke records our Lord's words as follows: "These have no root which for a while believe and in time of temptation fall away."

These believed and fell away; evidently fell away from the faith they had. The wayside hearer did not believe. The stony-ground hearers are those who desire to be saved but are without an abiding depth of conviction of their own guilt and depravity, the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, the real need of a Saviour. They do not

manifest godly sorrow, brokenness of heart, tenderness of conscience, nor consistency of conduct.

The language of the Saviour in the parable implies that the stony-ground hearers fell away from the faith because they had no root; this was manifestly owing to the want of depth of earth. Simon the sorcerer believed, but there was a manifest lack of depth of conviction. The stony-ground hearer clearly represents a class of persons who have not fallen under the millstone of God's holy law; their hearts are not broken, there is no true contrition of spirit, there is no new birth.

THORNS OR NOXIOUS WEEDS

This class receive the word, they assent to it, they make profession of it, which the wayside hearers do not, but they bring no fruit to perfection. We infer that this class continue to make a profession of religion. If such are in the church of Christ they are unfruitful branches; they are cumberers of the ground, and we are led to believe by authority from the Saviour that they will be revealed and separated. "Every branch that beareth not fruit he taketh away." They may also unite with a sect and receive the ordinances from those who promise peace where there is no peace; but one thing is evident, there is no peace for them in the church of Christ; if such are there they entered unawares and are not members of the body of Christ, since they attempt to serve God and mammon. Their great concern is to obtain competency in this world. Worldly riches are eagerly sought for by them for the aggrandizement of themselves and their families. Their wealth and honor is their treasure and their hearts are filled with worldly cares. While we may not be able with a certainty to locate the stony-ground

and thorny-ground hearers, of this we may be sure that they are advanced beyond that of the wayside hearer. The stony-ground hearer believed the message of salvation but fell away; that is, fell away from that which he had embraced. The stony-ground hearer brought no fruit to perfection; although the seed took partial root and grew, it was checked with cares, riches, and pleasures of this life that it could bring no fruit to perfection.

THE SEED WHICH FELL UPON GOOD GROUND

Though so much of the seed is lost or thrown away, it is not all lost. The good ground represents the "honest and good heart." Naturally ground is made good and productive by good plowing, thorough cultivation and fertilization. Spiritually the heart becomes fertile and productive by the grace of God which appears to all men. It teaches those who receive it to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

Grace reveals to persons their unsaved state by bringing the hitherto dormant law into life, awakening the conscience and bringing guilt upon it; the heart is pricked and a true awakening ensues; then persons realize the purity and holiness of God, the spirituality of the law, and their lost state. Such persons, penitent, humble of heart, contrite in spirit, call upon the Lord for mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ who died to save sinners. These hearts are penitent, humble, contrite, pure, peaceable, merciful, and may properly be called "honest and good." They are prepared for the good seed of the Word of God. This preparation is from the Lord. A good conscience results from faith in Christ. These honest and good hearts are not condemned when they hear the Gospel preached or seed sown, because

the heart is influenced by the fear of God and a desire for His favor; it values forgiveness more than worldly enjoyment; it abhors sin, it is willing to have the light enter, and to know the truth; it is willing to separate from evil desires, from sinful thoughts, and from the follies and idle pastimes in which the people of this world indulge. In such hearts the law of God is written by the Spirit of the living God. This law is in accord with the Gospel. The presence of the Holy Spirit is what makes the heart fruitful; it sheds abroad the love of God which is the motive that prompts to self-denial. Thus God is glorified and the world has a witness to the truth in these sanctified hearts. Hearts in this state desire to know the truth and to be preserved from prejudice and error. Such are diligent in prayer and in godly conversation, in meditation, and are in harmony with the beautiful language of David, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."

It is manifest that where such humility of heart, contrition of spirit, and love for the truth (as it is in Christ Jesus) exists, there the seed takes deep root and Satan cannot destroy it by deceit or persecution; even in the year of drought the fruit will not fail, because faith lays hold on all promises, none of which can fail. But while all who receive the good seed will manifest by their actions that they are begotten from above by producing such fruits as goodness, temperance, meekness, and godliness, yet they are not alike fruitful. The gifts of the Holy Spirit differ as to degree but not as to nature. The gift of grace and of faith is given by measure. To one is given one, to another two, and to another five talents, to each one according to his several ability, but all will manifest spiritual fruits, which

give evidence of humility and faith in Christ. This is the fruit that is valued by the sower of the seed.

The good-ground hearers are those who count the cost, who realize that it is better not to vow than to vow and not to pay. "Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." They have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and that He gave himself for them that He might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. That these continue fruitful they must bear in mind their redemption, the price paid for it, and the comfort enjoyed through it, the joint heirship with Christ, the peace of mind that is above all understanding, and the assurance of everlasting life. One of the essentials to fruitfulness is faith; faith that worketh by love, that begets unwavering confidence in God as Saviour, Protector, and Preserver. Evangelical faith begets trust, reliance, submission, and obedience. The fruit is denial of self, separation from the world, love for the brethren, love to all men; service of love to all men, especially to the brethren; temperance in all things, non-resistance of evil, abstaining from litigation and war. Unity of Christians is evidence to the world of Christ's Messiahship, and loving one another is evidence of their claim to be Christians.

In the parable the people are divided into four classes, and as it defines the position of each class and their relation to the world to come, it is of especial interest to all, since we stand in one of the four relations presented. If we are of the wayside hearers our situation is a grave one because we are spiritually barren, our hearts are desolate, we are with-

out a well grounded hope of entering the joys of heaven. Are there those of us who are of this class? If so, let us reason together. Will we miss the opportunity? The seed is being sown bountifully. "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely."

Ample provision is made for the heart to receive the good seed. The grace of God appears to all men; if they respond to its pleadings and open the door it will enter, and beget humility and contrition of heart; faith will be begotten through the workings of grace, and fruitfulness will follow.

We have friends who tell us of the loss of the opportunity of their life in failing to embrace the offer of what resulted in great advantage in the way of worldly success, but the disadvantage is only temporal. Death will soon close their career so that even if they had met with great success, the benefit would only have been during life. No benefit will be realized from earthly treasure in eternity. Failure to appreciate present worldly opportunities may result in having less of this world's goods, but neglect to avail one's self of the pearl of great price is a loss, the effect of which will be everlasting.

The presentation of the parable is a very forcible one to us. Yet of the strong man armed his armour has not yet been taken from him and our deliverance has not yet taken place. Are we a stony-ground hearer? Do we profess the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ and yet seek to serve God and mammon at the same time? If so, let it be known that we are unsaved. Are we a good-ground hearer? If so, then happy are we; for happy is that people whose God is the Lord. We are, however, not unmindful that even as a good-ground hearer we are in danger of becoming too

much occupied with the things of this present world. Many deep convictions and serious purposes may be defeated of their aim and end by the intrusion of worldly desires which are encouraged by worldly minded associates. We are naturally of like passions as all others and unless we walk in the light and follow in the footsteps of the Master we will get upon erring ways.

We have noticed that all seed falling into good ground will not be alike fruitful, some will bring thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred fold. We infer from this that there are different degrees of fruitfulness among true Christians, according to the measure of the gift of faith. It is the Father's will that we bear much fruit. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." John 15: 8. The fruit desired is love or charity, "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth." In the quotation I have used the word love instead of charity because the German translation is love, and also the revised English translation. Love is the foundation of the church of Christ. God is love. All true obedience, self-denial, humility, meekness, pureness, hungering after righteousness and the exercise of mercy is the fruit of divine love. Every act of our lives at variance with love is not good fruit. It is a serious inquiry how we shall bring fruit, if not an hundred-fold, then sixtyfold, and if not sixty-fold, then thirtyfold. In order to be fruitful we must realize that we need the presence of the Lord.

When we awake in the morning we should draw nigh unto the Lord and commune with Him in meditation and in prayer. We should converse with our Saviour and ask Him to abide with us during the day we have entered upon, as we know not what may be in store for us during the untried day. We should ask His counsel, guidance and protection. By diligence in reading, prayer and spiritual conversation hearts are kept fruitful, and peaceable fruits of righteousness will be produced. By these means there will be the spiritual growth and fruitfulness the Psalmist foretold, "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forever more." The dews that fell upon the mountains of Jerusalem caused them to be fruitful in rich pastures; they are typical of the blessing of the Holy Spirit descending upon humble, penitent hearts.

As an illustration of the growth in grace we cite the exercise of brotherly love in helping the erring brother right; by that means an awakening and restoration is effected, a multitude of sins are covered, love is strengthened, grace and peace are multiplied. This is a real increase of fruitfulness.

Beloved brethren and sisters, be careful to cherish love, to walk in love toward one another and toward all men, and have peace among yourselves so that the end may be peace. Those of us who profess to fulfill the figure of the good ground should manifest the same to the world by our spiritual fruitfulness, which we can only do by subduing the unfruitful conditions of our nature and bringing our members into agreement with the life and teachings of Him who spake the instructive parable.

Our conversation and conduct will then witness that our affections are set

on things above and that we are sincerely desirous of doing the Master's will; thus giving evidence that we have the same mind as Him who said, "I came not to do mine own will but the will of Him who sent me." In this we give further evidence in our separation from the worldly life with its follies and pride. Another evidence of the fulfillment of the figure of the good ground and its manifold increase in fruitfulness is adherence to the truth, in walking in all the commandments of the Lord as revealed in the Gospel of Christ, and taught in the epistles of the Apostles; thus walking with God and using the world as not abusing it, receiving every creature-need and comfort with thanksgiving, thus fulfilling God's design in our creation, that of being fruitful in good works.

To our dear brethren and sisters, in deep humility, we say, strive to be fruitful in walking humbly before the Lord. To those of our dear friends without, do not delay, to-day you can come, to-morrow may be too late.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

THE SIN OF DISOBEDIENCE

Adam, through the temptation of the woman God gave him—she having been seduced by the serpent—aspired to attain a better condition than that in which God had placed him. The serpent infused discontent and by false reasoning induced them to disobey God's command. Instead of becoming more happy, fear and remorse seized upon them; they lost the divine life and forfeited the happy union with and companionship of their Maker. A curse was pronounced upon them, and finally they suffered natural death. Even the ground was cursed because of Adam's disobedience: "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee."

Adam a son of God, became through disobedience a servant of sin; and also transmitted that sinful, selfish disposition to all his posterity. This disposition manifests itself in all mankind.

Cain, the first-born gave evidence of this spirit of evil by slaying his brother Abel. Seth, Cain's brother, was born later, and was a God-fearing man. Man at that early age had no written law, yet God by His spirit made known to him His will. The obedient were blessed and cared for. The lineage of Seth were not to commingle with the lineage of Cain. Many disobeyed, for it was said, "The Sons of God took wives of all whom they chose." This grieved God and He said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he is also flesh."

This sin of disobedience resulted in man's destruction by the deluge of water. Eight souls—Noah and his family, were found righteous, and were saved by entering the ark, which God instructed Noah to build. The flood subsided; Noah's family multiplied and God assured them by setting His bow in the sky, as a token or covenant, that He would no more destroy the earth with a flood. God also promised them, through mysterious ways, by prophets and angel-visits, that if they would be obedient, He would bless and preserve them.

Later on, of the line of the righteous, Jacob, one of the Patriarchs was born, to whom God gave special promises. Finally through famine in their country he and his family were led into Egypt. Here began the history of the children of Israel. They were subjected to hard taskmasters and were greatly burdened, and God through Moses delivered them. By signs and wonders, ending in the death of the firstborn of all the Egyptians, Pharaoh was compelled to release

them; he said, "Go serve the Lord as ye have said." They began their journey. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud; and in night by a pillar of fire, to give them light." They miraculously crossed the Red Sea and entered the Wilderness. After some time they became dissatisfied with God's way. They murmured and disobeyed, and suffered severe judgments. Through disobedience they were made to wander for forty years until all who had left Egypt, died excepting Joshua and Caleb.

After many conflicts, they subdued or destroyed the Gentile nations and finally entered and occupied the land of Canaan. These people were the literal Israel, a type and figure of the spiritual Israel, under the reign of the spiritual Moses, Christ Jesus.

The experience of the literal Israel impresses us with the truth of the Apostle's words that "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;" and also that those things "were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." We should therefore be warned against trifling with the counsel of Jesus the Mediator of this new covenant, God being the same "Yesterday, to-day and forever." His rewards for the faithful and punishments for the disobedient will continue under the new dispensation.

Therefore, in contemplating God's goodness and mercy in the past to the obedient, we should be comforted and encouraged. God preserved Daniel though he was cast into the lion's den; also Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace; John the apostle in the caldron of boiling oil. These examples, and there are many others, should inspire faith and a fervent desire to keep on the "narrow way which leadeth to life."

It is lamentable when man through self-love, worldly wisdom, and philosophy, seeks to modify and even ignore the cross, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Many, evidently are not impressed with God's dealings of righteousness and judgment from the beginning, and the need of a Savior and of obedience to His commands.

Many profess to "know God but in works deny Him." They formulate a worship, organize churches, observe the ordinances, but with disunited hearts. In their communion service they cannot discern the Lord's body therefore they eat and drink condemnation to themselves. 1 Cor. 11: 12. Their fruits testify that the tree has not been made good—that they have not been converted, have not accepted Jesus, and have not separated from the world and the ungodly. They practice self-defence and resistance of evil, even to the extent of going to war. They are proud, ostentatious and frivolous and in their delusion bid each other God-speed and claim a brotherhood; thus they are disobedient to Christ's teachings, for He taught fellowship, peace, love and unity. John 17. They are under condemnation and the wrath of God, for, "He that transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God." They do not love their enemies and return good for evil, which is the fruit of a good tree, or a heart cleansed and sanctified by Christ.

It should be apparent to every thinking mind that divided worship cannot be acceptable to God, and is not sanctioned by His word, which will be our judge in the last day. Many worshipers see the necessity of unity, and make ineffectual efforts to attain it. They are no doubt sincere, but their sincerity may be based upon carnal reason and human judgment, not upon the word of

God and therefore is not reliable. True unity can only be attained by a body of worshipers when it is the result of an individual heart work wrought by the Spirit of the Lord in each member.

Unity is a fundamental principle and without it fellowship and love cannot be maintained. Without unity worship is only idolatry, and the true worshipers are commanded to separate therefrom. "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you and be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6:16, 17, 18. Since all disobedience is sin we cannot worship God in spirit and in truth unless we repent and accept Jesus, receive His spirit in our hearts, and obey all His commandments. Jesus said not in vain, "Strait is the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Lancaster, Pa.

J. K.

BRIEF NOTES

"And the place thereof shall know it no more." Thus spoke the Psalmist of the grass and the flower that grows, blooms, fades and disappears; to which he compares the life of man. Truly, how soon, when we have passed out of this life, the place we occupy will know us no more!

* * * *

At this season, while vegetation is dormant and the earth is bare and unfruitful, and unsightly objects are in evidence, how beautiful the falling snow, which covers, hides and obliterates them; just as, by the Savior's merits our failings, sins and imperfections may be covered or removed, so that we may stand

justified before God and our hearts made "whiter than snow."

* * * *

With the swift passing of time there are many occasions where mercy, love and helpfulness are needed; in which, if we do not discharge the duties devolving upon us, the opportunity is forever lost; for we "shall not pass this way again." If it be only a kind word, a gentle appeal, a helpful act, as the occasion may require, when it is rendered in the true Christian spirit it has its reward.

* * * *

The close of the year is again a sharp reminder of the passing of time. With wonder and awe we may ponder and meditate on the ages of the past, on the present time, and on mysterious futurity. Finally, "Time shall be no longer," as declared by the mighty angel in Revelation. How fraught with importance is our passage through the brief period—time! and only the present in which to think, act and live our lives as the great Creator intended that we should!

* * * *

In contrast with the turmoil and strife, and the unhappy conditions and situations in evidence with those who live their lives according to their worldly desires, how appealing to us is the happy condition foretold in prophecy, of Christ's Kingdom: "My people shall dwell in a peacable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." In Christian living this state is always verified in obedience and submission to the word, spirit and providence of God, even though it brings us under self-denials, reproach and suffering, for, "Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."

* * * *

It is thought by many that the angelic proclamation of "Peace on earth, good

will to man," is nearing fulfillment in the establishment of an economic peace which will make future wars impossible between the nations of the world.

Though this end should be reached, the meaning of the peace proclaimed by the angelic song at the Savior's birth can only be comprehended when we become willing to deny self, and follow the Savior in meekness and lowliness of heart. That angelic song to us will then have a new meaning, and its echo and refrain in our hearts shall never die.

* * * *

A very wealthy groom, in a recent marriage remarked: "I will spend my money to make my wife happy." "We both look forward to a life of ideal luxury and bliss."

What a pitiful delusion when happiness and bliss is sought in luxury and the spending of money! For the highest measure of terrestrial bliss and happiness in the married state, can only be attained when under the influence of God's grace, both husband and wife are moved to render devoted love and service to God, in obedience to the teaching of His word and Spirit. There is then the highest degree of happiness which the close companionship and association affords. No need then to travel to distant lands in quest of happiness, for it can be found in an humble home.

* * * *

The expression is often made that "There are many who lived in a way they honestly believed to be right, who, when you get to heaven, you will find there, however much you may have disagreed in religious profession and practice."

The expression is not a consistent one, as heaven always implies harmony and accord; and to expect happiness by being ushered into a place where it exists, can only be a delusion; because

heaven primarily is a condition rather than a place. The Savior said, "For, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you."

Heaven cannot exist without unity and accord resulting in joy, peace and happiness. This can only be brought about by each, individually having come into possession of divine love—Christ's Spirit—the Kingdom of heaven within us.

That principle maintained and kept active in individual hearts will unfailingly result in the unity and Christian fellowship which characterizes heaven, culminating in such fullness of joy, peace and happiness as can only find its full expression amidst the angelic throng.

* * * *

A preacher in one of the popular churches, it is reported, recently said: "The day will come when the knowledge of the Lord's will, unperformed, will be a perilous possession." He also stated that "the church has fallen to a professing institution rather than a doing one."

A knowledge of the Lord's will, in the performance of Christian duty, is conveyed in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. The Savior there outlines the course of true love, in laboring individually for the restoration of one who has failed to perform or has trespassed. When this course is not pursued, as in much of the present day profession of Christianity it is not, the Lord's will is not and cannot be performed; and in the very admission made in this case, where individual performance of the Lord's will is lacking, and has resulted in a church that professes but does not perform, it can only bring condemnation upon those who comprise it as by this preacher's own admission. It is self-evident, then, that when the Lord's will

is performed, Christ's church never was and never can be "a professing institution rather than a doing one."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Did Menno Simon and his followers unite in worship with other worshippers?

A. No, they faithfully protested against divided worship on the ground that it was unscriptural.

Q. In what sense were Moses and his people Israel a type and figure of Christ and His followers?

A. Moses effected a natural deliverance by leading the children of Israel, God's chosen people, out of bondage in Egypt at the command of the Lord, typifying the "spiritual Moses," Jesus Christ, who effects a spiritual deliverance from the bondage of sin for God's spiritual children, who like the children of Israel call upon Him and allow Him to reign in their hearts.

Q. What is meant by the scripture, "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years?" Rev. 20: 4.

A. This scripture may apply to those souls who experience the first resurrection in Christ. They now reign with Christ during the full period of the day of grace, represented by the thousand years, this being from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost until Christ will come again.

Q. What did Paul mean when he said to the chief captain, "But I was free born?" Acts 22: 28.

A. Paul was of Jewish descent, of the tribe of Benjamin, but was born in Tarsus, which was made a free city by Augustus Caesar, due to the activities of its people in the civil wars. This placed its inhabitants on an equality with the Romans as to the privileges of citizenship, therefore it was not inconsistent for Paul to say to the chief captain when

they were about to bind him—"But I was free born." It was his privilege to appeal to Caesar, having inherited the rights of Roman citizenship.

Q. What scriptural authority does the church have to excommunicate unfaithful members?

A. Divine love and enlightened understanding impels the God-fearing to counsel and reprove every disobedient and unfaithful member of the church regardless of his social relation or standing. If he heeds the counsel, then the purity of the church is maintained; if he heeds not the counsel of the church, then the purity of the church can be maintained only by separating him, which is authorized by Christ. "If he shall neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Matt. 18: 17.

The same doctrine is taught by the apostle Paul, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them." Rom. 16: 17. "Deliver such an one unto Satan that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Cor. 5: 5.

Q. Why is it that, "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called?" 1 Cor. 1: 26.

A. According to our natural conception, it would appear that these people should be the first to embrace salvation; for it is only reasonable that they should use their superior talents for such a worthy cause. Salvation should be to all men the first and most important consideration, however, worldly wisdom and high station in this world are directly opposed to the plan of salvation and hinder men from accepting it. They have a tendency to exalt man in his own estimation and lead him to seek the commendation and applause of his fellow-

men. They who are "wise in their own conceits," and refuse to surrender their will to God's will, cannot embrace the Gospel principle of humility and self-abasement. God's way is too simple, too self-denying, too humiliating, too unpopular. Such, therefore, are "Not called to the marriage supper of the Lamb"; they rather formulate a worship more agreeable to their exalted minds and take for doctrines the commandments of men, which is only idolatry and gives no promise for the soul in the world to come.

THE NEW YEAR

Time has passed and again we enter a New Year. May it be to every one a happy and prosperous year is our earnest wish.

We are impressed that we are upon the threshold of new opportunities and we plan what we may accomplish in the coming days and weeks. Our natural duties or responsibilities vary as do also the natural tastes or desires of mankind. The business man plans for another prosperous year as he at this season takes inventory and counts his gain. The scientist and student in their search for advanced knowledge hope for reward or gain for their earnest toil. In the natural world man is ever striving for material gain which will increase his comfort and well-being. Man has been permitted to develop the forces of nature and we marvel at his discoveries and inventions. There is a natural tendency with man to take honor to himself, to glory in his achievements. Man is so capable yet so limited. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands," yet "what is man that Thou are mindful of him" since "all things come of Thee and of Thine own have we given Thee."

As we look back over the year now past we review our blessings. We are a

favored people. The seed sown has brought forth bountifully as seen by the abundant fruit and grain in store. The rich harvest reminds us of a Creator's care for His creature. "Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits."

Perhaps it is common for man to plan, "To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain." To-morrow is so rich in promise, yet we know not what may be on the morrow. The loving counsel is given, "We ought to say if the Lord will we shall live and do this or that." God in His wisdom reveals to-day only. He mercifully hides from our sight the events of to-morrow. To-morrow has not been promised us. This should lead to serious thought and impress us to consider what is life? "It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away."

In the passing events of the year serious disaster has brought suffering and destruction to many parts of the earth. Our sympathy is ever with the afflicted who suffer loss. Many homes mourn the loss of dear ones whose loving hands were long active in the duties of life.

Adversity and pain form so large a part of human existence. We long for health and shrink from pain and suffering. We naturally count health and happiness among the most valued blessings, but they may fail.

In the joy of natural prosperity God in His wisdom permits adversity and change to come to man reminding him that he is a transient creature, that his days on the earth are as "A shadow and there is none abiding." Afflictions or natural loss may seem severe and often unkind but oftentimes it is God's blessing in disguise. Thus the things of earth which are cherished by man are blighted that man's heart may be drawn to things eternal.

With loving kindness God's grace appears to all. If man heeds the call of grace he earnestly desires light and guidance that he may apply his heart unto wisdom. It is only then that there will be a true understanding of the value of this time of probation. To this awakened soul the Savior tenderly calls, "Come unto me," and he enters His fold. "I am the good Shepherd who giveth His life for His sheep." As an unworthy recipient of His tender love and continued mercy, he turns to Him desiring to follow Him on the narrow way. To every faithful follower His loving counsel is "Ye are not of the world as I am not of the world." All He requires of His children is an earnest desire to obey His word. The fruit of love and devotion is true obedience. "If ye love me keep my commandments."

"Old things are passed away, all things are become new." We seek wisdom, that is knowledge of God's revealed will and knowledge of our humanity. We desire growth and an increase of love and faith. Before entering Christ's kingdom we desired gain or advancement in worldly attainments. These pastimes or interests are accounted by the children of this world as necessary to happiness. But in the Kingdom of Christ they are not to be desired, for they are often unprofitable and a hindrance to the spiritual life.

Here are we but sojourners clothed for a season in flesh and blood, living for a little while in this time of grace that we may have the opportunity to attain the blessing of eternal life. Would that all men should awake to the knowledge of the truth and live, that their names may be written in the Lamb's book of life. This is the true gain which insures manifold blessings in this life and in the world to come,

"The blessing even life forevermore."
Hagerstown, Md. E. S. L.

THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOR

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And takes the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel." Eph. 6: 14, 19.

The Apostle aptly and properly compares the Christian's experience in life to a warfare; he must be properly equipped with weapons for so important a conflict.

The girdle is no protection against weapons, but it is a covering which conceals; and it might represent that our inward experiences and exercises of mind need not be known to all, lest some who are weak might be discouraged, although many might derive comfort in the knowledge that others also have their trials.

The breastplate protects the heart, the vital part, which, if wounded would result in death. The heart is also regarded as the seat of all emotions, love and hatred, joy and sorrow, courage and fear, and must be most carefully guarded, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man." Matt. 15: 19, 20. If the thoughts are not taken captive to the obedience of Christ, they may lead us into many evils. Judas had a knowledge of Jesus' places of resort, John 18: 2,

he had witnessed His miracles, had enjoyed companionship with Him, was familiar with His teaching, even dipped his hand with Him in the dish, and finally betrayed Him into the hands of sinners. One who is provided with a soldier's weapons, and equipped with a soldier's training can work much harm if he turns traitor, and uses his advantages against his comrades. It must also be guarded from without lest it be robbed of those virtues which adorn the Christian's life; love might grow cold, courage become weak and faith fail in the presence of a wily and powerful foe.

The shield is carried in the hand or on the arm, and may be moved to any position to protect the whole body from the fiery darts which may be hurled by the wicked; which may include sharp criticism, ridicule, or bitter scorn from those who do not love the truth.

The means of defence are only a protection for the front; there is none for the back, signifying that we must never retreat, but "press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3: 14.

The helmet encircles the head, and protects it from attacks from all directions, even when bowed in the attitude of prayer which is most needed in the fiercest conflicts.

The sword is the only part of the equipment with which harm can be done to the foe; "For the word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword," Heb. 4: 12; but it must be kept in the hand, for if once it is let go the enemy may pick it up and use it against us. When Moses cast his rod on the ground it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. Ex. 4: 3. Goliath had his sword in the sheath, and when he fell David ran and took it from the sheath and cut off his head therewith. 1 Sam. 17: 51.

The Gospel is a message of peace and the weapons of the Christian are spiritual, standing out in strong contrast to the natural weapons just mentioned. When Jesus was born there was a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2: 13, 14. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10: 4, 5. Peace is promised to man, but not without conflict; the warfare is against the evil spirit that would rule man. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Prov. 16: 32.

Although equipped with the best means of defense the most fervent prayer and supplication and perseverance and watchfulness must be exercised, for the conflict is for life or death; and we need not only our own prayers, but the prayers of all the saints, and they should also be offered in behalf of those who are called to make known the mystery of the Gospel, that with boldness and gentleness and spiritual wisdom they may declare it.

Landisville, Pa.

C. S. N.

GOD'S LOVE

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." 1 Jno. 4: 8.

God the Creator and ruler over all things, visible and invisible, has order in His power and maintains order in the things which He has created.

Who can say, God has created the earth, and caused man to inhabit it,

without recognizing the wonderful order in the creation? Do we not behold order in the change from day to night; is there not order in the change from winter to spring; spring to summer and summer to autumn? They follow in their respective order from the beginning as God established them.

His creative order is beautifully shown in first, the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; so also with the tree, the leaf buds, then leaves, fruit buds showing their varied coloring, then the blossoms with all their fragrance and beauty, after them the embryo fruit, which develops and finally ripens into luscious fruit, all in order established from the beginning.

Were it not for the order which the Lord established, were the cold of winter and the heat of summer to mingle, vegetation would be destroyed, with no fruitfulness of grain or tree.

We behold the power of God in the loosing of the elements; how the violence of the wind uproots trees, destroys life, tears away buildings and destroys property; so also with fire and water, the earthquake and the volcano. Can we also behold the love of God, how these things admonish us to remember, "Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before Me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goat out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is Mine and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High; and call upon Me

in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." Psalm 50: 7, 15.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Eecl. 12: 13. God is love; our duty therefore is to love God, and the Lord Jesus said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." John 14: 15.

Can we understand the purpose of God in creating man, and in endowing him with many faculties? Was it not that man should love Him with all His powers? So when he through sin lost the power to honor his Creator we can also understand that the purpose of the Savior's coming into the world was not to judge the world but to save it. Here is God's love for man reflected through the Son seeking to save, seeking to restore to man that love which he had lost, that man could become an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ and enjoy God's eternal love and happiness.

These questions arise: is this relationship obtainable by man? Are the requirements of God such that man can comply with them and find comfort and hope? "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3: 16, 17.

The blessed Savior came to make known the Father's will to a fallen race, and since God is love and loves man with unfathomable love, it follows that those of a pure heart and contrite spirit will heed truth as revealed by the Savior and His word; wherefore the Savior said, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended,

and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." Matt. 7: 24, 25.

Behold the love of God, for God is LOVE and His love constrains those who love Him to walk in newness of life. They are not conformed to this world but are transformed by the renewing of their minds, that they may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Romans 12: 2. They greet each other with the kiss of peace, they are willing to labor one with another to cleanse from the defilement of sin, they warn one another in time of danger, they help in time of trouble and need, they are united in the bond of spiritual love which is the strongest bond found upon earth; should this bond be broken and one continue not to hearken to God and His love, he is cast forth as a dead branch, that the body may be preserved in the bond of peace. Love constrains them from taking part with the world in its pleasures, fashions, frivolities; neither do they take part in worldly government, to vote or hold office.

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; For God is Love." Do we know God? do we love Him and strive to keep Christ's commandments? If you have not loved God and know Him not, it may not be too late to heed the words of the Prophet, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Isa. 55: 1, 2.

Glen Elder, Kan.

E. F. S.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Some time ago the writer's young daughter inquired, "What is God?"

To answer this question in a manner which could be understood by the childish mind proved to be quite perplexing, and also brought forth the thought that, after all, our mature intelligence is not much greater than that of the child, and must be very small indeed in the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

It is almost impossible for man to describe that which he has not seen, and no man has at any time seen God. 1 John 4: 12. Like the wind, which is known only by its power, and the effects it produces, so our impressions of the Deity are formed by the evidences of His work, and by the proof of His power, as revealed through the spiritual part of our being. God possesses such purity, holiness and light that no man could look upon Him and live. Ex. 33: 20.

With this we need not be concerned. Our duty is rather to become acquainted with the *will* of God. The Saviour said, John 17: 3, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Since our attaining to life eternal depends upon a knowledge of God's will it is most essential that we endeavor to have that knowledge.

All of the visible creation testifies to the existence of a Supreme Being. When we contemplate the starry firmament above us, attempt to fathom its hidden mysteries, try to comprehend the endless distances of space, and note the wondrous order in which all of the heavenly bodies move, our finite minds are lost in admiration and wonder. We cannot grasp the magnitude of the scene before our eyes, but we are forcibly impressed that some great, ruling Power keeps these heavenly bodies, and the words of

the Psalmist come to our minds, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." The wonderful perfection of the various forms of life upon the earth, from the tiniest insect to the largest animal; the provision which has been made for the growth, preservation and reproduction of all of the innumerable subjects of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, all bespeak the presence of One whose wisdom and knowledge are past finding out. Rom. 11: 33.

We perceive that God is an all-powerful, self-existing Being, from everlasting to everlasting, Creator of all things, visible and invisible. That He is a God of love and mercy we learn from the visible creation, which provides for the support and comfort of man. Many of His other attributes we learn from His Word, and from the effect produced in our hearts, when we accept it in faith.

This Word, His only begotten Son, became flesh, and dwelt among us, John 1: 14, being like us in all points, sin excepted. He declared the last will and testament of the Heavenly Father, and by His sinless life, His perfect sacrifice, He fulfilled the Father's holy law, appeased the Divine wrath which rested upon man because of transgression, unbarred the way to life everlasting, and ascended triumphant into Heaven.

The written Word (the Old Testament and the New Testament) is a revelation of God's dealings with man, and of His plan of salvation. The Old Testament reveals that He is a God of justice, requiring the strictest obedience to His commands, and rewarding liberally those who are faithful. Though man fell from his first estate, God did not leave him without a hope, for there are many promises, prophecies, types and figures in the Old Testament, foreshadowing the coming of a Redeemer. When Christ

came, He gave a new command,—to love one another, to return good for evil, and to seek justification before God through His atonement and by obedience to His Gospel. This superseded the law of justice and equity given under the Old Testament, and the New Testament is now our guide. The Saviour said that His words will judge man at the last day. John 12: 48.

Christ promised that the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, would descend upon His followers, and this occurred on the day of Pentecost, after His ascension. This Spirit still comes to those who accept Jesus as their Saviour, and submit themselves wholly unto God. It is the believer's teacher, his assurance, and the spirit of adoption, which bears witness with the Spirit of the Word, when we are the regenerated children of God.

The possession of this Spirit further reveals to us the infinite compassion of God; captivates our hearts in love to Him, and teaches us to fear Him, as the mighty Lord of creation, who will require of man an account of his stewardship here, and will either reward or punish him eternally for the just recompense of his deeds. All that we need know of God is thus taught by His Spirit, for "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

At best we see as "through a glass darkly here," but hereafter all eyes shall behold Him face to face, and we shall know Him, even as we are known. Those who are faithful to Christ's commands shall attain to a blessed state, beyond our power to imagine, or describe; and those who are heedless and impenitent shall realize, too late, that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Let us follow the Saviour, that where He is, there we may be also.

Humberstone, Ont.

W. I. T.

THE PASSING OF THE YEAR

When the night is swiftly closing
O'er the landscape far and near,
And the daylight softly dying
Like the passing of the year.

Then our thoughts ascending upward
To our Heavenly Father's throne,
Feel His Spirit drawing near us
Telling us we're not alone.

Not alone! No, Christ our Savior
Promised us, that He would come
And receive us to His Mansions
In that far off glorious home.

And we feel His presence near us
As we journey on the way,
And His Word's the lamp to guide us
To the realms of endless day.

Arkona, Can.

S. D.

LOOKING FORWARD

"This one thing I do forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3: 13, 14.

These familiar words of the Apostle were written when he was well advanced in years, and nearing the end of his earthly pilgrimage, wherein he encountered many severe trials, and endured hardships which severely taxed his physical endurance.

The epistle of which these verses are a part, was written when he was in captivity and awaiting trial at Rome; the outlook for the future was far from hopeful. There appears no shadow of discouragement or wavering, the ardor and enthusiasm so characteristic of his ministry is very evident, and he seems little concerned as to what may happen to him in the future. Advancing years have not lessened his fervor, and he seems as zealous, and alert in his watchful care of the church when nearing the close of his ministry as at its beginning.

The calm assurance with which he meets this trying ordeal, and the quiet

resignation to his fate, whatever it may be, mark him as an example worthy of imitation. An inspiration to those of his day, and likewise to the wayfarers of the present day, less inured to hardships, and not required to bear trials of so severe a nature; but no less in need of a courageous spirit and unwavering faith. Doubt had no place in his thoughts as the following verse would imply, "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayers and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1: 19. There was no question in his mind, but he had absolute faith in the overruling power of God in directing the course of his life and work to the best end.

The gift of faith engenders hope under all conditions, enabling its possessor to look forward "rejoicing in hope" of better things to come, "forgetting the things which are behind." This is a most desirable attainment. The Apostle had reason to regret much in his past life, but he did not allow this to hinder him in the work assigned to him, but looked forward, concentrating all his energies in the attainment of the prize of which he speaks.

Our earthly pilgrimage is compared to a race, and we are advised to lay aside every weight so that we will not be hindered in running. Living among the shadows of the past, dwelling in thought upon past mistakes and failures would be equivalent to carrying a weight, and therefore would hinder progress. Keeping in mind the prize to be won, the consummation of our hope of better things to come, the past may well be left to sink into oblivion.

Looking forward implies a hopeful attitude, and an interest in the future, wherein lies the fulfillment of all worthy aspirations, clearly set forth in the following verse: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge,

shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Hagerstown, Md.

A. K. H.

THOUGHTS ON TOLERANCE

One hears and reads often and much about tolerance. It may be profitable to spend a little time in considering the subject and its practical application in our daily lives.

Tolerance, according to Webster, implies an attitude of forbearance with reference to views, opinions and actions with which one is not one's self fully in sympathy.

The followers of Christ are taught in the Gospel to have forbearance and patience, both of which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit implanted in the heart. This and much more is embraced or taught in Christ's sermon on the mount, and in that great chapter on charity, 1 Cor. 13. These teachings extend more deeply than to mere outward endurance and forbearance; they include an intellectual and spiritual tolerance. "Charity thinketh no evil." We know very well that the enemy of all good is ever trying to give us evil thoughts, to make us intolerant. Suspicion, unkindness, selfishness, one-sided views of things and subjects, not giving the other party a fair chance, and many other thoughts contrary to godliness, constantly appear within us and clamor for recognition. The grace of God is sufficient to subdue all of these. Prayer and a close attention to the spiritual life are the only safety for those who would live an enlightened Christian life. The light and warmth of God's love in the human heart consecrated to Him will go down to its depths and drive out the hidden things of darkness within it. Just as, in the natural world, the glorious sun in the firmament is the center of all natural

life, both vegetable and animal, and its rays are needed everywhere to preserve it.

It appears that Christian tolerance is to be exercised in two directions: towards ourselves and towards our fellow-creatures.

What shall or may we tolerate within ourselves? In our relation to God we tolerate within ourselves nothing but to love Him above all His works—above everything in this world. Christ himself said, "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." St. Mark 12: 30. So if we should find within ourselves a growing attachment to any person, thing, idea, or opinion, which attachment causes us to waver in our devotion to God—that would be idolatry, and we may not tolerate it in our hearts. Idolatry is one of the most grievous sins. God wants our whole heart.

In our relation to ourselves, we tolerate our own fallen imperfect nature; we accept it with forbearance, as our heredity from our ancestors back to Adam and Eve, and we do not blame them for it. Although we long for perfection, we may not fret and say, in our hearts, to our Maker, "Why hast Thou permitted me to be made thus?" We accept our human nature, not to *indulge* it, but as a means of grace to teach us our dependence upon God, and with God's help in our struggles with it, to develop in us the highest and best of which human beings are capable. Solomon, the wisest of men, said, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Let us now consider tolerance towards our fellow-creatures. In our relations to them, the word teaches only love. After Christ had given the first and great com-

mandment He said, "The second is like: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' there is none other commandment greater than these."

For convenience and clearness we will divide our fellow-creatures into two classes: those who are without and those who are within the fold. We love both classes and have an especial duty to them that are within.

We will first consider them that are without. Here we find many of our nearest and dearest ones. Every human being who has come to years of understanding, and this implies a sound mind, is responsible for his and her own views and conduct. If either of these do not agree with our ideas of right and wrong or of propriety, we exercise tolerance. We love people's souls, we love our friends. Should they hold or cling to views that we cannot accept, and should they take a course that we cannot conscientiously follow, we still love them and treat them with love. We exercise tolerance towards their views, but not to the point of giving them approval or accepting them. Our guide, the word of God, says, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." So if any doctrine, view or opinion, be brought to us, which, according to the light we have received, is not in harmony with the word, we reject it as being to us a foreign and dangerous influence. We have forbearance with our friends and loved ones who hold these views. We do not battle with them, nor make life miserable by constant arguments. We try, in our weakness, to live consistently with what we profess and to follow the teaching of the word in 2 Timothy 2: 24, 25—"And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

What shall we say of our relation to the conduct of them that are without? There is little to say of this excepting that we see to it that our own conduct is above reproach. We are not responsible for the actions of them that are without. Jesus came not into the world to condemn but to save. Hated of men because He testified of their works that they were evil, their condemnation was by their own conscience as in the circumstance of the woman taken in adultery. Neither would He pass judicial sentence nor exercise the authority of the civil magistrate. We have forbearance with the sinner, but not fellowship with the sin. Remembering, however, another scripture: "Evil communications corrupt good manners." 1 Cor. 15: 33. We all are human, and cannot entirely escape the influence of our surroundings. This idea is well expressed by Alexander Pope—

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen,
Yet seen too oft, and once familiar with
her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Let us then, as far as in us lies, be careful in the selection of our daily associations. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

We now come to the last division of the subject, tolerance to them that are within the fold. Christian tolerance is far-reaching. In the church—the great christian family of which Christ Himself is the head, much tolerance must be exercised by the members of the family towards each other—allowance must be made for differences in nature, in gifts, in bringing up, in circumstances in life. We all need often to think of this Scripture, "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou hast not received?" 1 Cor. 4: 7. Because my brother or sister in faith does

not think as I think on all points, I may not feel offended or think he has lost the Divine Spirit. There is more than one side to every question. If we ourselves are in the Spirit, we will be willing to consider from all possible points of view any matter that may arise. We may find that we are mistaken. In matters of right and wrong the word is our guide. Christ said, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Peter said to Christ, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus saith unto him, "I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven."

According to nature we would be inclined to lose confidence in one of the faith who would so often offend, and we think we could scarcely be tolerant to such an one. But Christ's teaching is almost unlimited tolerance and forbearance where there is repentance, and we are bound to obey it.

In matters where right and wrong are not involved, and concerning which believers differ, we again need tolerance. St. Paul says, "One believeth that he may eat all things, another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth, for God hath received him." Romans 14: 2, 3. Christ said, "Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged."

Is there a limit to christian tolerance? The word teaches that there is. We may not tolerate in the church anything that is contrary to the spirit and the teaching of Christ. In case anything of this nature should be found, the word gives ample directions how the lay members and the heads of the church are to proceed. In regard to tolerance between

believers some one has in few words happily expressed the spirit of the Gospel, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." This quotation has heretofore appeared in GOOD TIDINGS, but the thought is so well expressed that it will bear repetition.

Lancaster, Pa.

L. L. F.

WHAT IS REQUIRED TO BE A CHILD OF GOD⁴

Christ came to fulfill the will of the Father, to atone for our sins and open the way to the tree of life. As the Savior of mankind, He restored the lost image in the heart and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. He taught a new doctrine, one of love and humility. Those who followed Him and accepted His doctrine, He called Disciples. We read that after His ascension to the Father, they were first called Christians at Antioch.

The true followers of Christ have been loyal to Him under different names, during the past centuries. Whatever the name given them, or assumed by them, they were "born not of blood" or distinguished ancestry,—for example, the Jews' claim of being the children of Abraham, did not entitle them to the blessings of the New Covenant. Neither were they "born of the will of the flesh," —anything that the heart of man could purpose, and would permit, such as defending their rights and gratifying the desires of the flesh and mind. Nor were they "born of the will of man," even though baptized in infancy, they could accept only one baptism, that on faith as instituted by the Great Teacher himself. They could not accept the faith of their parents without comparing it with His teaching, nor could they accept any doctrine at variance with His precepts even though it had the sanction of many apparently sincere souls.

A true believer cannot accept man's theory that God will not be so cruel as to banish from His sight a people that He has created. Nor will he consent to the belief that a good moral life gives promise of heaven, without self-denial, separation from the works of darkness, worldly interests, and from unfaithful worship. Nothing that another may be disposed to do in one's behalf can avail here, as salvation has been made possible alone by Jesus Christ. The new birth must come by the will of God, through His boundless mercy.

A true follower of Christ will love the Lord above all else, "For no man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." He should have his affections centered on high and be renewed in the spirit of his mind, deny self, separate from the world and follow all the commands of the blessed Savior, and live to the praise of his Creator. He will then have his sins forgiven, stand in favor and fellowship with God, having His image enshrined within his heart. He will then enjoy peace of mind, being no longer under condemnation, for he has been reclaimed and redeemed. As one of God's dear children he is under His guidance and protection, with the promise that over such, the second death shall have no power. When the scenes of this life are closed, his soul can wing its flight to God who gave it, there to receive his reward, rest in peace and be with God and the holy angels in a glorious world without end.

Should we not all desire to become true children of the Lord?

Williamsville, N. Y.

W. S. N.

nocency prevails. But as soon as we arrive at years of understanding our spiritual responsibility begins. How important that we ponder the path of our feet and let our way be established. The apostle John testified, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." The gentle calling to follow Him, the inward prompting against inbred sin and the conviction that we owe a duty to our Creator—these are certain proofs of His love for us. Because of our waywardness, impatience or even rebellion may have a place in our hearts but then the realization comes that we cannot go on without a consciousness of a work undone, a duty unfulfilled.

They who enjoy the music of our songbirds go with listening ears about their tasks and are rewarded by the inspiration the sweet music affords, though it may be unappreciated by heedless ones. So with the voice from heaven. *Each* of us has heard it at times, lovingly entreating us to turn from the path of sin and let Him who loves us show us a more excellent way. Oh! how precious are these calls and how careful we should be to maintain a listening attitude, that we may not let unconcern deprive us of the joy that is promised to those who draw water out of the wells of salvation.

We must learn to know Christ before we can partake of the blessings. For it is written, "And this is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." If we grieve the Spirit by continual rejection of the free offer of salvation, we cannot know Him. The apostle Paul writes, "But even unto this day, when Moses (the law) is read, the vail is upon their heart." That is they do not understand their own Scriptures. "Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away." By following the injunction, "O taste and see

THE CALL OF THE CHRISTIAN

When we are too young to discern between good and evil, the state of in-

that the Lord is good," we gain that inward experimental knowledge so dear and precious to the heart of the believer. The great antitype has appeared and the Gospel is not announced in types and shadows. The old dispensation and the new are understood by the Christian, for a Divine light shines into his understanding through the Spirit. There is no veil over the glorious truths revealed nor on the understanding.

The invitation to come to Christ is extended to all who are in the day of grace. If we do not allow Him to enter our hearts now and rule there, we may lose the opportunity of doing so, and may share the punishment with the wicked servant of the parable in which Jesus said, "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should rule over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

From the example of Thomas, we learn how commendable is the faith that accepts without waiting to "see" and "feel." Though one of the twelve who followed Jesus, he did not truly know his Redeemer. How great must have been the surprise to such a self-proclaimed doubter when the Convincing Evidence appeared suddenly and miraculously to the disciples as they were assembled with the doors shut—the Voice bidding Thomas to both see and feel the nail-imprinted hands, to thrust his hand into the side and be not faithless but believing! After Thomas' confession, "My Lord and my God," Jesus saith unto him, "Thomas, because thou has seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." What a lesson for us all that we trust without reserve, committing ourselves into His loving care. We cannot have the outward proof of our Living Savior as did Thomas, but we can profit by this example as it is meant that we should. We must not allow human shortsightedness to prevent us

from believing and confessing our Savior. The enemy of our souls has power to make the way appear difficult to us, but all who accept Christ in faith receive a blessing as the Savior told Thomas. For He strengthens and upholds, comforts and cares for His children to the extent that the happy condition prophesied by the Psalmist is fulfilled in the heart of every believer: "My soul shall be satisfied . . . and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips: when I remember Thee upon my bed, I meditate on Thee in the night watches."

How well if all would obey the call when it is given. A gifted poet has expressed this counsel for us very impressively, as follows:

Though heralded with naught of fear,
Or outward sign or show;
Though only to the inward ear
It whispers soft and low,
Though dropping, as the manna fell,
Unseen, yet from above,
Noiseless as dew-fall, heed it well,—
Thy Father's call of Love!

Chambersburg, Pa.

C. L. R.

MEEKNESS

The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is of great price. The Christian possessing a calm and gentle spirit radiates the meekness and humility of the life received from Christ. This life is a power which sustains the soul under all perplexities.

"Behold the Lamb of God"—the mightiest and holiest Being that ever lived upon earth was the meekest. He left heaven and its glory and became a pattern to us in humility. He pointed to a little child as an example and said of such is His kingdom.

The innocent lamb was His emblem, also the dove. The anointing Spirit which came down upon Him in the form of a dove was significant of His meek and gentle spirit which He manifested

throughout His life—a pattern for His followers. He had the wealth of worlds at His feet, but all this earthly glory had no fascination for Him.

The Tempter from the high mountain tried to seduce Him, but He resisted the adversary and spurned the suggestions which he offered. Arraigned before Pilate's judgment seat, in great meekness He suffered wrongs and indignities; suspended on the cross, He uttered only words of forgiveness and showed no resentment. By this example He taught all generations. "Learn of Me," He said, "for I am meek and lowly of heart."

Reader, strive to obtain this ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, adorned with gentleness and humility. Follow not the fleeting shadows in this vain world of sin; they will mock you as you grasp them. "Condescend to men of low estate." Speak kindly, act gently; with respect to others, honor their gifts, contemplate their good works in order to imitate them.

There is no happiness greater than that experienced by the meek, who, if faithful, are promised life eternal. They are called blessed, for they shall overcome earthly trials. They are not easily affected by real or imaginary injuries, but put the best construction on the motives and actions of others and by a gentle answer disarm the assault. May we ever be guided by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

Lancaster, Pa.

A. A. G.

SOLOMON, KING OF ISRAEL

Solomon ascended the throne with divine approbation while David, his father, yet lived. He was only twenty years of age and probably no monarch ever ascended the throne with greater advantages. The heathen nations were

subdued and the Hebrew tribes were at peace among themselves and it was said, "that every man dwelt under his own vine and fig tree."

But Solomon soon discovered a plot by which his brother Adonijah designed to secure the kingdom for himself. Both Joab and Abiathar, the priest, were in sympathy with, or at least were aware of his design. As Adonijah had earlier been forgiven conditionally, he now by this act forfeited his life.

Joab was also put to death and the priest Abiathar was relieved from his sacerdotal duties, and the curse which had been pronounced upon the family of Eli was now fulfilled, as Abiathar was the last of that family to serve in the priesthood. This prediction was made to Samuel when a child many years before.

Shemei, who had shown some disaffection and was known to be seditious, was being watched as David had advised Solomon to do. He had been forgiven conditionally if he remained in his house in Jerusalem. He remained there for two years, but disobeyed when he went after two servants who had run away, and thus forfeited his life.

One of Solomon's first acts recorded, was to marry the daughter of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. Whether she forsook the idol worship of her people and accepted the Hebrew faith we do not know, but it is said Solomon loved the Lord and walked in the statutes of his father David.

It seemed remarkable that the Israelites should have arisen to such importance that an alliance should be formed with the great nation which had formerly held them in bondage.

Solomon, accompanied by all his court, the elders of the people and a vast multitude, went to Gibeon to worship. In the midst of this great assembly the King presented one thousand sacrifices

upon the altar of the Lord. That night the Lord appeared unto him in a dream and asked what he desired to have and it would be given him. Solomon seemed to realize his youthfulness and want of experience and said, "Thou hast made Thy servant King instead of David, my father, and I am but a little child. I know not how to go out or come in. Thy servant is in the midst of Thy people which Thou hast chosen, a great people that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge so great a people?"

The Lord was pleased with Solomon's reply and said, "Because thou hast asked this thing and has not asked for long life, nor riches, nor the lives of thine enemies, but has asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment . . . Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou has not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then will I lengthen thy days." Solomon awoke from his dream and offered sacrifice to the Lord.

His wisdom was soon to be tried when two women came before him with two babes, one of which was living, the other dead. Both women claimed the living child. They lived in one house and slept in the same bed. One claimed that while she slept the other put the dead child in her arms and took the living child. Solomon asked for a sword and proposed cutting the living child into two pieces and giving half to each

woman. The one who objected, preferring to give up the child rather than have it killed, Solomon decided, was the rightful mother and gave the child to her.

Solomon reigned over a vast country. He seemed to have possessed all the land that God had covenanted with Abraham to give to his posterity.

He had a great number of guards and servants to attend and care for the thousands of horses; there were forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. There lacked neither food nor shelter. It is said that the food required for Solomon and his household for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, three score measures of meal, thirty oxen, one hundred sheep, besides harts, roebucks, fallow deer and fatted fowls. The Lord gave Solomon great understanding excelling all the wisdom of Egypt. His fame was known in all nations. He spake three thousand proverbs and his songs were more than one thousand. He knew of trees "from the cedar tree of Lebanon, even to the hyssop that groweth out of the wall." He also knew of the habits of beasts, of fowls and creeping things. He was the first natural historian of whom we have any knowledge.

Solomon desired to begin building a house for the Lord. Hiram, King of Tyre, who had been a friend and lover of King David, sent congratulations to Solomon, who then requested Hiram to furnish expert men to cut down the cedar, fir and aljum trees of Lebanon and to help prepare the lumber. Hiram also sent artificers to design and prepare the gold, silver, brass and other metals to be used in the building; also men skilled in dyeing, embroidering in tapestry and the manufacture of fine cloth. Solomon had seventy thousand men that bore burdens, and eighty thousand hewers in the mountain, also more than

three thousand men to rule over and direct the workmen. His men also dug out and hewed costly stone to use for a foundation for the house.

Three years were spent in preparing material and in the fourth year of Solomon's reign the foundation was laid. In the eleventh year was the building finished. Everything was so carefully made ready before it was brought to the place of building that "there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor tool of iron heard in the house while it was building."

The finished house of the Lord was magnificent. The priests carried the Ark which contained the two tables of stone with the law written thereon, which had been given to Moses from Mt. Sinai and placed it in the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim. The mercy seat was overlaid with gold, as were also the cherubim whose outspread wings covered the ark. All the congregation of Israel assembled with King Solomon and at the feast they sacrificed sheep and oxen that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. The priests with great joy brought the ark from its former place in the city of David, and deposited it in the "holy of holies." The Levitical choirs thundered forth their harmonious voices, accompanied with thousands of musical instruments singing the Psalm of "Praise Jehovah for He is good, His mercy endureth forever." This song no doubt was transcendingly beautiful, as it echoed and reechoed from hill to hill about Jerusalem. The Lord showed His approbation by filling the house with a thick cloud so dense that the priests were unable to continue their services. Solomon addressed the people, saying the Lord had said He would dwell in the thick darkness, and they being honored by God's presence accepted this symbol as a manifestation of His approbation, and of His acceptance of the temple as

His home, since His presence had entered to inhabit it.

The King stood on a brazen platform in front of the altar and explained to the people the origin and purpose of this costly and beautiful building. He then spread forth his hands toward the heavens and addressed the Lord in prayer. This prayer is one of the most sublime compositions in the Bible. He rehearsed the promises the Lord had made to his father David. This promise was now in part fulfilled by the Lord's accepting this building as His house since He had honored it with His presence. But Solomon then seemed to be impressed by the condescension of the Lord to dwell with men and said, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded." He implored the Lord that His eyes might be open toward this place and that He might hear from His dwelling place on high and forgive their trespasses. He referred to many cases where the Lord's mercy and intervention were necessary, and prayed that if the people asked forgiveness, praying toward this temple that God would hear and forgive. He referred to those who would sin by trespass; when they were smitten by their enemies; when the heavens were shut up that there would be no rain; and in times of pestilence, blasting, mildew, locusts or caterpillars, that the Lord would hear their prayers. If they were besieged by their enemies and carried away captive, he did not ask that the people should be delivered from captivity, but that their captors might be compassionate, and if the people repent and make supplication unto the Lord, that He would hear their cries and forgive their trespasses.

He also asked for the stranger not of the people of Israel, who would desire to become a proselyte to the true religion,

that he might be protected and blest. If in any or all of these conditions the people would turn to the Lord, that He might hear and forgive, and teach them the good way wherein they should walk.

His prayer exhibited a most exalted conception of the omnipotence of God and His overshadowing providences.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

THE STORY OF PETER'S SHADOW

My dear little children:

We are led to think that St. Peter's usefulness and obedience to His Master only really began after the Savior had arisen from the grave and ascended to heaven.

Jesus told His disciples to tarry at Jerusalem, and they would be given a special power from heaven to tell why He came on earth and that through Him all men could be saved. This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and at that time Peter stood up and spoke that most convincing sermon; we read: "They were pricked in their hearts" and said, "Men and brethren what shall we do?"

A certain man had always been lame. The people carried him each day to the temple, to ask help from all who went in at the gate called Beautiful. This man seeing Peter and John going in asked an alms. Peter looking at him said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk," and his feet and ankle bones received strength and he walked and praised God.

The boldness and courage of Peter in telling of Jesus and the wonderful cures

he did in the name of His Master, caused great numbers to believe in Jesus.

We read that they brought the sick on beds and couches into the streets, that even the shadow of Peter passing by might cure them and they were healed every one.

Jesus had given His disciples a special or supernatural power to heal the sick, and that is why even Peter's shadow could cure them.

A certain great writer in writing about the shadow of Peter, says that we too cast shadows without our knowing. He compares them to our influences whether they are good or bad. We do not know how they effect those who see them. In this way a good man casts a shadow, or exerts an influence that is a blessing.

I have no doubt my dear little children that you have often watched the length of your own shadows, perhaps as you walked on a road or pavement. They show in what direction we stand to the sun, or any bright light.

I remember when I was a small child my father of an evening would amuse us by throwing shadows on the wall or any plain surface. By holding his hand, fingers and thumb in certain positions, the shadows would resemble queer animals, or even birds picking at something, and we had great fun telling what they resembled.

I have now told you in this and former letters some of the wonderful events in St. Peter's life, and no doubt you may wonder how he ended his career. History alone tells us that he was crucified as His Master, but that he asked that it might be done with his head downward.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.