

GOOD TIDINGS

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EDITORIAL

We welcome the glad spring-time!
We witness a marvelous awakening!
The return of warmer sunshine, copious showers and softer winds, awaken dormant nature into life and beauty. There first must be an awakening to start energy and activity whether in natural or spiritual accomplishment. If not morbidly indifferent, one cannot fail to imbibe the awakening and life-giving influence of spring-time—it seems to infuse new vigor and fresh courage into mind and soul.

The human mind, however, is more strongly impressed naturally than spiritually. According to nature all persons admire and love themselves and all temporal and natural things more devotedly than the Creator of all things—God. This is a perversion of the purpose of man's creation; and is the result of the moral disability inherited through the fall of our first parents. In other words, man is asleep and indifferent to the interests of the soul and, according to Scripture teaching, is "dead in trespasses and sins"; "having no hope and without God in the world."

To realize this deplorable condition, man must be awakened by God's grace.

The Apostle says: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Light reveals the peril of the soul; it also reveals human weakness and insufficiency, and therefore the need of a Savior. Everyone who prayerfully follows this light will be led to Jesus the Savior and Redeemer; He invites such souls: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest." He also said: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Herein is the happy consummation of the spiritual awakening—eternal life!

Although nature's awaking in the spring-time is beautiful, bringing the green fields, the flowers and foliage and later the delicious fruits and life-sustaining cereals, yet, since these are all perishable and only provide sustenance and comforts for the body which also shall perish, how much more beautiful and glorious is the awaking of a sleeping and lost soul! Souls that have turned to God and thus become interested in the things which are eternal, have hope toward God and through Jesus have obtained rest and peace; and if they continue through unfeigned love and faith to the end of their earthly pilgrimage, they shall be heirs of that inheritance which is "incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

CAUSE OF PERSECUTION

"If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." * * * "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." St. John 15: 20; 15: 18; 1 John 3: 13.

When Christ established His Kingdom there were two classes of worshippers.

The one class held to the Law of Moses with many of their own traditions; the other class were idol worshippers, who were largely in the majority. He confined His labors to Palestine, where the Law of Moses was revered. His work was to teach a higher doctrine than that inculcated by the Law of Moses, as the change of precepts in the Sermon on the Mount indicates. He never violated the Law but did not conform to additions and perversions which had been made.

The people attached such sanctity to the Sabbath that acts of mercy done on that day were condemned by them. For a wise purpose He did much of His healing on the Sabbath day to the offense of those who clung to that perversion. He sharply reproofed them for pretended holiness. His reproof embittered them and led them to conspire in council against His life.

Prejudice in our carnal nature makes us impatient, and dwarfs our finer instincts. True Christians do not persecute nor hate any one. False worshippers in Christ's time incited persecution, as they did in previous and later times leaving thereby a dark spot on their claims to godliness. The Savior said, "They will also persecute you." This prophecy was fulfilled. His Apostles, and thousands of His disciples in many centuries had to give their property and lives on the altar of "the faith once delivered to the saints." Jude 3.

After the Savior, the next martyr was Stephen. He was one of the seven deacons appointed at Jerusalem in the beginning of the Church. He did great wonders and miracles among the people, but the prejudice of some Jewish sects was so bitter that they encouraged stoning him to death. Acts 6: 9. We should not get the impression that all the Jews were reprobate, for in connection with this painful circumstance the fact is stated, that "a great

company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

The first of the Apostles to suffer martyrdom was James, the brother of John. He was beheaded by Herod Agrippa, A. D. 45. All the Apostles gave their lives for the Christian cause, with the exception perhaps of the Apostle John, for neither history nor the Scriptures inform us of his death. According to history both Peter and Paul were executed at Rome by the Emperor Nero about the year A. D. 64. At that time the greater part of Rome was burned. The suspicion was that it was done by the Emperor, who wanted a more splendid city, and to turn the blame from himself, he charged it to the numerous Christians there, and this charge brought persecution on them. During the lives of the Apostles there were many plots and political disturbances among the Romans, and they caused the Christians to be held under suspicion, for it was claimed that the crowds which the Christian miracles drew were dangerous factionists, and that their extermination was justifiable.

Persecution was not in every case prompted by malice against the doctrine. Through the influence of the Christians, it was said, the Pagan temples were deserted, and that provoked persecution.

The Christian religion was corrupted by the introduction of forms and ceremonies and many innovations which the true followers of Christ refused to accept. Then persecution was tried to compel the conscientious to conform to their church usages. After the so-called Reformation in the beginning of the sixteenth century the different sects at different times led by learned men inflicted the loss of property and life on the conscientious to compel them to baptize their infants and to attend the established worship. As those reform-

ers compromised their religion for the favor of worldly rulers, their faith was worldly and they could not refrain from war. It is clear that the simple, non-resistant followers of Christ could not worship with them. The true Christians in witnessing against false worship brought persecution upon themselves.

For various reasons persecution was inflicted upon the God-fearing from the beginning of the first to the end of the seventeenth century. Since then toleration has been shown the worshipers who do not want to corrupt their religion with politics. But even in this age the Christian is looked upon with disfavor for refusing to join in worldly worship, to vote, or to take up arms in time of war. •

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

APRIL

The buds of April now appear
To show that spring is drawing near;
While song birds in melodious lays
Are warbling forth their Maker's praise.

In nature too, a change we see,
The earth, from icy fetters free;
The grass and fields of grain are seen
In varied shades of verdure green.

The sunny sky and warmer air,
Invite us out their balm to share.
Perhaps no season of the year
Reveals God's power as shown here.

O happy cheering April days,
God's whole creation chants His praise.
In nature we can see the plan
To thus reveal His love to man.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

WHY SO MANY RELIGIOUS OPINIONS?

This is a reasonable question which disturbs the minds of many inquirers after truth. There is but one Gospel and all who profess Christianity claim it to be their guide. This Gospel so emphatically demands unity, fellowship and peace that many worshipers view

with alarm the many divisions and opposing sects. Others claim it cannot be otherwise since there are "many men of many minds," who in reading the Scriptures will adopt different views. This they claim affords opportunity to make choice of a sect that embraces a worship agreeable to their views. Such reasoning is carnal. It is the result of the human mind endeavoring to interpret the Gospel by natural wisdom. It is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" * * * "hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world." 1 Cor. 1: 19, 20. Paul also says: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2: 14.

The Gospel represents and proclaims the new or spiritual dispensation which Christ Jesus instituted and established. Being spiritual, man must be born again and receive the Spirit of Christ before he can fully comprehend the teachings of the Gospel. Through repentance and conversion all are taught by the Spirit of the Lord and they will be united in worship and there can be no divisions. This power was exemplified on the day of Pentecost. Impressed and convicted by the preaching of Peter, "They that gladly received His word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Acts 2: 41. This number was soon increased to five thousand and it is said, "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." Here was manifested unity of belief and practice and here the Church was organized of which Christ said, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Is it not self-evident that if men in seeking the truth would have continued to follow the example of those multi-

tudes, who, by repentance and conversion received Christ's Spirit and lived in unity, love and fellowship, constituting the one only true Church, there could be no divisions or sects today? The inevitable conclusion is that all those who are divided in views and practices relative to religion are outside of the spiritual Ark, Christ Jesus. He came to "gather into one the children of God that were scattered abroad." He came to restore the lost love in the heart of man. This love always triumphs over all discordant views and overrules all adverse power. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" and incites obedience to all Gospel commands.

Let us then deplore divisions and earnestly pray that unity and fraternity may be preserved in the Church. And if a foreign spirit should manifest itself in any believer, let us in a humble spirit discharge our duty as outlined in Matthew 18, and thus promote unity and purity in the Church. "So that He might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5: 27.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. K.

NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Matt. 6: 24.

Moses was declared to be the servant of God. The Lord spoke unto Joshua and said, "Moses my servant is dead" and, after assuring him that He would be with him and that not a man should be able to stand before him He said, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my

servant commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." Joshua 1:7. Strength and courage coupled with faith were the essential qualities which enabled Joshua to be an obedient servant. These only have the promise of success. As long as the children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt they were the servants of Pharaoh. When their burdens became too great they cried, "and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage, and God heard their groanings, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and looked upon the Children of Israel, and God had respect unto them" and sent them a deliverer in the person of Moses and they fled from Egypt and were led finally into Canaan.

All mankind inherit a fallen nature and are in bondage to the spiritual Pharaoh, the devil, and will remain his servants until they consent to the pleadings of their spiritual Moses, Christ Jesus, who will deliver them from the bondage of sin and lead them out of this sinful world. They are then no more servants of Satan but servants of God, with Christ as their leader and intercessor.

Every thoughtful person will perceive that there is a vast difference between the servants of God and the servants of Satan, and that no one can serve both at the same time; to all such souls the words of the Prophet will apply, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Everlasting life or eternal death are set before them. They will realize that to be a true servant of the Lord they must come to a full decision and they will be in agreement with the Apostle when he says, "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto

death or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." A great change takes place when one who was the servant of sin becomes a servant of righteousness. Sin is defined, "as any thought, word, action, omission or desire, contrary to the law of God." Righteousness implies holiness of life and conversation. Since no one can serve two masters and there are only two to serve, it is highly important that we know certainly who our Master is.

As long as we are the servants of sin, we have no delight in the Gospel message which teaches us to deny self and take up the cross of Christ. If we acknowledge Christ as our Lord and Master and continue to live carnal, worldly lives, and are disobedient to His teachings we give evidence that we are not the servants of God. If we wage war, contend at law, resist him that is evil, if we omit any duty or consent to any desire that is at variance with the Gospel, and justify ourselves in it, we commit sin and our professed faith in God and His word will only be a form.

Jesus Christ who is Lord of Lords could well have assumed the title of Master over his redeemed, but in great humility he addressed them as friends. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." All who truly come to themselves and return to the Father, as did the Prodigal, will say with him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." To such will be bought the "best robe," the robe of righteousness. Here is displayed more than master and servant.—"friends," signifying equality, "for all

things I have heard of my father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." * * * "These things I command you that ye love one another." Such souls, thus wrought upon, will plainly indicate to all the world whose servants they are.

Our text can be applied to the natural affairs of this life, as many who employ servants can testify. A faithful servant is of great value to his master, likewise a kind and considerate master is much to be appreciated by the servant. There will be mutual interest between a true master and a true servant. A kind master will be very considerate of his servant and will demand nothing of him that is beyond his strength or ability to perform. Should the master return after a stated period of absence and find that the servant had failed to complete certain tasks laid upon him, he would conclude that some unavoidable circumstance prevented the completion of the work, knowing that the servant would give him a true statement of all his affairs. Likewise the servant has such confidence and regard for his master that he performs his work in the best manner with all the ability he has; he aims to use all his talents for the benefit of his master. A faithful servant will never attempt to deceive his master or conceal his errors. The best earthly master may fail and sometimes judge his servant wrongly, but our dear Lord and Master is able to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart and will judge righteous judgment.

Let us hate sin with all its promptings and bow in humble submission to our dear Savior and prove our love to him through obedience. The true servant of the Lord having an eye single to the glory of God will be armed with such

spiritual weapons that will enable him to stand and look "calmly upon Satan with all his rage, the world with all its allurements, and the flesh with all its lusts." Nevertheless such servants are only weak men and women and susceptible to temptation. Although they have been armed with unfailing weapons, and have attained to the new birth which quickens them, they still need to come daily to the throne of grace, and ask for strength to be faithful. Moses and Joshua armed with the word of the Lord went out boldly against the idolatrous nations around them. The Christian has a very different struggle, he is combating subtle foes who are concealed in every conceivable form in his sinful flesh.

Humility is essential in the Christian life and can only be maintained by prayer for grace and by watching over the evil promptings of the heart. A child of God, through faith, may indeed overcome Satan, the world and the flesh, but he will realize that they are only subdued, and that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and may appear in humble countenance, plain garb, and in a non-worldly manner; he may by his subtlety draw the unguarded from the only true saving faith. The world may appear to have no allurements for one strong in faith, and he may with Peter say, "I will go with thee unto death." But "Let every one who thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." There is ample testimony in the Scriptures to show that it is very unwise and unsafe for persons to conclude that they are so well established in the faith that they may not again consent to the enticements of this world. We should not place ourselves in the way of temptation. We should cherish humility, and practice moderation in furnishing our homes, in dress and business affairs, and be simple in our enter-

taining, avoid foolish conversation, read only edifying literature, and at all times acknowledge by our acts that we are not of the world.

Perhaps there is no avenue in which Satan may work so successfully as through our sinful flesh. In the world many persons bring shame and reproach upon themselves and their families through yielding to the lusts of the flesh. Believers are admonished to be modest in apparel, but outward modesty does not fully exempt one from temptation and all should be warned against exposing themselves to any form of temptation prompted by the lust of the flesh. The Bible records reveal that some persons who had been faithful in performing God's word, fell through temptation of the flesh and brought great reproach upon themselves.

Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. Those who serve mammon possess the spirit of the world and though they may not be guilty of gross sins, if there is a stronger desire for earthly possessions, or worldly honor than there is for God and His word, they are serving mammon, and cannot be servants of God.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. L. K.

COMMUNION AND FELLOWSHIP

Communion and fellowship signify concord, agreement. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?"

All who are truly awakened from sin, and have accepted Christ as their salvation, find comfort, consolation and encouragement in the Spirit, and find enjoyment in spiritual conversation.

Mankind are so constituted that they have greatest pleasure in conversing on those subjects in which they are most interested. The unconverted man is

interested in the things pertaining to this world—naturally so, as he is of the world. The worldly-minded aspire to excel one another and the result is strife and contention. The converted man, realizing that all that is in the world, and the world itself will pass away, has his hope and comfort in that which is everlasting. There is but one thing that is everlasting—the life which goes with us into the spirit world.

There is one of two conditions awaiting every one, either everlasting peace and joy, or everlasting punishment. Our future state is determined while we live. The Apostle said, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." It will be everlasting death or punishment. "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," or have everlasting happiness.

Wasting and destruction are the fruits of living after the flesh, and communion and fellowship are lost. Christ came to give power over this destructive spirit which was imbibed through the transgression and continued till Christ gave power to overcome it. Only those who come to Christ receive this power.

When the Apostles asked whether they should command fire to come down from heaven, and consume the Samaritans who would not receive Him, as Elias did, they manifested the same spirit that all mankind do according to nature, but the Savior rebuked them, and said: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

God's purpose cannot be frustrated. The Kingdom referred to by the Holy prophets, in which the swords would be beaten into plow shares and the spears into pruning hooks, was ushered in on the day of Pentecost. All that entered this Kingdom at that time, and ever

since, and all that will enter it till the end of time will have no use for those deadly weapons; they are equipped with weapons which are not "earnal but mighty through God," by which they can withstand all the fiery darts of the enemy. The fruit of this is the same in all who accept it, which results in communion or fellowship.

The Savior authorized the partaking of the bread and the cup called sacrament, as an inspiration to a closer communion and fellowship with Him, and with all who partake of the emblems. This service is an outward expression of their faith in Him, and their love and confidence in one another. It is a very solemn service, since it is a representation of His broken body and shed blood upon the tree of the cross, and no child of God can engage in the service without giving due consideration to what it signifies. They understand that it was alone by Christ's sacrificial offering that such a relation of love, unity and confidence could be established.

All who accept Christ by faith, stand in the power of His death, and are willing to give expression to their faith, not only in partaking of the emblems, but in their life before the world.

The communion service is very edifying and profitable to all who engage in it, as they enter into an examination of themselves, whether they stand in the power of the Savior's death. His death means the destruction of Satan's work to all that accept Him, and if one sees that he has yielded too much to a foreign influence, and has not been a proper light to the world, he cannot represent the Savior's death; He will refrain from communing until he has made restitution. He may have to be reproved by the Church if the offense has caused reproach. This he will accept as an act of love if he is truly sorry. If he re-

pents and asks forgiveness, he will be restored, which will again open the way for him to commune, and all will cheerfully extend confidence toward him.

It is very clear that where there is lack of confidence and love, there can be no fellowship, and condemnation would result by partaking of the emblems in this condition.

Lemoyne, Pa.

J. I. M.

BENEFICIARY ORGANIZATIONS

We are frequently asked to join certain charitable organizations, or mutual benefit societies, or to contribute to their support. To help, or not to help, is sometimes a perplexing question. The cost is usually secondary: what will exercise the believer's mind is whether or not he can conscientiously lend his aid, without going contrary to Gospel teaching.

There are societies founded for purely charitable objects, such as the relief from suffering during time of war, famine, flood or storm. The Red Cross is such an organization. It represents no religious creed and does not promulgate any religious teachings. It is simply an organized system of supplying the destitute with the necessities of life, and the believer could feel free to contribute as his means permit.

Many other organizations have their beginning in some religious society, or have been formed to encourage interest in a certain line of endeavor. They may assist in distributing knowledge of the Bible; may point the way to a life of morality, peace and honor; may acclaim many Christian virtues, and, in general, aim to make good citizens and honest neighbors of the people with whom they come in contact. Their members may be very zealous, willing to rescue the

most degraded mortals from the gutter or the brothel, to bring about reformation of life. Here the believer is confronted with a different situation. Although most of these societies profess to be non-sectarian, it will usually be found that they incline to certain beliefs, and that they teach and practice only part of Christ's Gospel, and this without a proper knowledge of the underlying principles. To assist here would be encouraging something not in accord with what the believer has received of the Lord. If he could not bid Godspeed to their efforts, then he could not give financial or moral support. Their intentions may be good, and their works productive of much benefit to their fellow mortals, but the God-fearing cannot encourage anything done in the name of religion, except it be in the true religion of Jesus Christ.

Then there are secret societies whose members make strong vows of loyalty, obedience and secrecy. Most of these societies give benefits to their members and dependents in case of sickness and death. They are founded upon principles of sociability, benevolence, kindness and temperance. The defense is sometimes made, "A lodge is as good as a church." Insofar as they follow the virtues referred to, they do much good in the world; but those who make this defense do not rightly understand the purpose of the Church. Lodges do not require their members to possess regenerated hearts, nor even to obey the Gospel. Usually they require only confession of a belief in a Supreme Being, and the name of Christ may not appear in their rituals, although there is no salvation outside of Him. They accept only the physically fit, their order is maintained by laws, and membership is forfeited if dues are not paid. They cannot be called charitable organizations, be-

cause their benefits are paid for, in much the same manner as insurance is handled in the world. We can look upon them only as worldly societies. They provide only for man's temporal happiness, and offer no consolation to the soul who is "dead to the world, but alive in Christ."

Certain clubs and societies are formed for the purposes of study and advancement of knowledge in science, history, geography, art and literature. Others seek to improve business and working conditions, and hold exhibitions, competitions and consultations, that progress may be made in natural affairs. Labor unions to protect the rights of workers; athletic associations to control recreation; business and agricultural societies to exchange ideas, fix prices, and promote interest and good-will—all have a purpose in modern civilization. These organizations are quite proper in their sphere. It is conceded that the world could not have attained its present height of achievement if it were not for the co-operation afforded by the thousands of such concerns in every civilized country.

We cannot discover the motive which prompts the Christian to stand aloof from these gatherings, until we are able to separate the kingdom of this world from the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. His Kingdom "is not of this world," but is of a spiritual nature, and His subjects enter through the door of repentance and faith in His merits. Christ's followers receive His spirit—a spirit of love, meekness, peace, gentleness, brotherly kindness. As He is not of the world, they are not of the world. They have been chosen out of the worldly element, where there is much pride, haughtiness, emulation, contention, strife and vanity. They are seeking the eternal city, and are here as pilgrims and strangers, a "peculiar people," endeavor-

oring to shine forth as lights in the wilderness of this world. Their desires have changed: they no longer aspire to high stations in life. They "condescend to men of low estate," and their first concern is ever for their immortal souls. Worldly interests detract from the desire for eternal things, and become a snare to those who are too much engaged in them. The believer's delight is in spiritual conversation, heavenly association and pious meditation. Every candid person will admit these ends are not attained by running hither and thither engaged in the varied activities of the organizations we have tried to describe.

In the kingdom of this world much good is done by these organizations, whether of social, business or intellectual development. They are part of what is called civilization, and no worldly person can be condemned for participating. We do not wish to speak against them, as they pertain to the world; but we wish to follow the example of our Master, who left the world as He found it. He did not interfere with its government, took no interest in its affairs, left no instructions for believers in positions of worldly power and honor; but all His teachings are to the end that individuals comprising the world should "repent, believe the Gospel," become new creatures, and separate from the worldly spirit and all unsound doctrine. This is part of the cross His followers are called to bear.

These considerations come to the believer when he is asked to support any of the different societies seeking aid. A good test is, "What would Jesus do if He were here?" A renewed conscience will usually direct him safely, and when in doubt it is well to choose the course outlined in Jer. 6: 16—"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good

way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." In refusing aid we ought to be able to give a Gospel ground, so that we are not suspected of being penurious. Love will prompt us to give to the needy, but we will seek to find other channels than those formed by religious bodies with whom we are not united in faith and doctrine. Especially will the child of God do good to them of the family and household of faith. Both the spirit and letter of the Gospel would direct us to care for those who are bound to us by a bond that is stronger than death, and closer than the ties of kin. We suffer, weep or rejoice together. A departed brother has written, concerning the solicitude of one believer for another, "He would share his last crust with a hungry brother."

Stevensville, Ont.

W. I. T.

PRAYER

Prayer is a petition offered to God for mercies desired, and is also thanksgiving and praise for blessings received. It may be either audible or inaudible, private or public, for ourselves or others to ask that good things be provided, or that evil be prevented or removed.

If any one has a knowledge of God and feels his own need, a form of words in prayer is unnecessary. The Scriptures do not confine one to any form. The Savior required only "after this manner pray ye," when He gave the great pattern, "The Lord's Prayer."

It is more natural that God, who is infinitely merciful, should answer the prayers of His children than that earthly parents should grant their children's needy requests. Yet it is possible that a prayer can be made under an evil impulse that "ye may ask and receive not because ye ask amiss."

Of the prayers on record under the Mosaic dispensation there is one outstanding, which was made by Solomon on the occasion of that impressive ceremony, the dedication of the temple to God. At the time of the dedication, Solomon "stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel and spread forth his hands towards heaven" and praised and thanked God for the fulfillment of those things which He had promised to his father, David and petitioned Him to hearken unto his prayer: "That thine eyes may be open toward this house day and night, even toward the place of which thou hast said, 'My name shall be there' * * * And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant * * * and what prayer or supplication so ever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, * * * that spread forth their hands toward this house, then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place and forgive." 1 King 8.

In times of national calamity, in drought, or in times of war or pestilence, the people especially looked toward the one temple in prayer. Individually every man that knew the plague of his own heart was to spread forth his hands toward that one place of sacrifice and pray, and God would forgive and deliver him. In this present age every individual who submits to the effect of the grace of God, which appears unto all men, will be made conscious, more or less, of a plague in his own heart. God will forgive and deliver if he is willing to turn his face toward that which the temple typified—peace, fellowship and unity. But there are always evil promptings that keep the soul from looking toward the spiritual temple. Naturally men are of many minds, they have different views and opinions and if they are unwilling to submit to

divine guidance they will be confused by the many divisions in the religious world.

As there was one temple, so there was only one high priest and only one altar, and sacrifice could be offered only on the altar at Jerusalem. Christ is the Christian's altar where all sacrifices and services are to be brought. He is the only high priest, who has entered the heavens, and is set over the house of God. His prayer was that His followers "all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in thee that they also may be one in us. John 17: 21. We must conclude that to countenance or consent to any other teaching would be to turn our faces away from the temple and that all our prayers, no matter how pleading and impressive, would not be heard or answered. Cain undoubtedly brought his offering with the thought that it was something of his own efforts and with the same selfish thought that prompted him to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" God had no respect for his offering.

The bread offered upon the altar at Jerusalem was without leaven typifying the sinless life of Christ offered for man's reconciliation and redemption. It may typify also the offering of a perfect desire, a sincere faith and a worship of God that is free from all pretense and hypocrisy. Christ's counsel is "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother and come and offer thy gift." Matt. 5: 23, 24.

But as time passed the children of Israel "rejected the covenant and statutes of the Lord, did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God, and they set them up images and groves in every high hill and

under every green tree. * * * The Lord rejected all the seed of Israel and afflicted them and delivered them into the hands of spoilers." 2 King. 17. Hence at different times they were, because of disobedience, taken into captivity. In one of these sieges Daniel was taken captive. He was highly blessed by God with intelligence because he obeyed God, and he was highly favored by the King of Babylon and placed in a high position. When the King signed a decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man save the King, would be cast into the den of lions, Daniel disregarded the decree, went into his house and "his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime." Although he was accused and cast into the lion's den yet God protected him.

May every child of God in presenting his prayers or offerings at the altar of grace, be prompted by a pure heart, for if he should entertain any motive prompted by jealousy, malice, vengeance, hatred, deceit, pride, partiality, evil imaginations or anything of a similar nature, his offering will not be accepted nor his prayer heard. The Apostle James said, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;" and also counsels the believers to pray for one another, and especially should they remember the feeble-minded, the aged, the infirm, the isolated ones, the unfortunate, the weak, and all conditions of life. The Apostle Paul said "Pray for us"; this is the request of every sincere laborer in the household of faith so that he may faithfully discharge his duty, in the fear of the Lord and alone to His honor and glory.

Baden, Ont.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." John 18: 36.

Christ's kingdom is a separate one in practically all its appointments, and does not interfere with the worldly kingdom in its ministrations of justice, nor follow after it in its pleasures and pastimes. The quiet separation of Christ's people from the world is often the occasion of criticism.

Jesus says, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own," and again, speaking of His disciples, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Jno. 15: 19-17; 16. Christ's people occupy a peculiar position: living in the world, enjoying the protection of its government, sharing the nation's prosperity, dealing freely in the open markets, contributing to its expenses by paying taxes, obeying its laws so far as they do not conflict with Gospel teachings, yet not assisting in making laws to preserve order by punishing the evil-doers, nor yet in such as would increase the comfort and prosperity of its people, even when their own welfare and that of their children is involved; for those who assist in making laws are in duty bound to assist in enforcing them.

Jesus says, Matt. 5: 39 "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil;" and in chap. 26 v. 52, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." If the disciples were not privileged to fight for their Master, surely that privilege is denied them for a less worthy cause. If a man slays his adversary, he cuts short his day of grace, and his time for repentance. The men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of

H. G.

Jonah. When James and John inquired whether they should command fire to come down from heaven and consume the Samaritans who would not receive Christ, He turned and rebuked them and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village." Luke 9: 55, 56. Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles when the Jews contradicted and blasphemed. They quietly left and avoided those who were not willing to receive the message of salvation, and went to others who held it more precious. Jesus did indeed cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and said unto them, "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." Matt. 21: 13. In John 8: 59 it is said, "Then took they up stones to cast at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them and so passed by." He never resisted for personal benefit, but always made a quiet escape until He had finished the Father's work; then He submitted. He opposed only those who tried to hinder such as sought to know and obey the Lord's will. He sharply rebuked the Pharisees in many instances.

Peter says, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Peter 2: 9. If we by our own powers, and the intelligence with which we are endowed, could attain to the favor of God or the salvation of our souls, then would Christ not have had need to come into the world: but He came for a more noble and sacred purpose than to improve worldly conditions. For if the ministration of condemnation

be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. In Heb. 8: 7 it is said, For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. The Gospel believer accepts the second or new covenant, and is therefore no longer subject to the old, except in obedience to the civil laws, as before stated.

Having been chosen out of the world and into the kingdom of Christ, "Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5: 17. The new life embodies more than submissiveness to insult or injury; it calls for separation from the vain practices of the world, their amusements and pastimes which are not edifying to the spirit, nor food for the soul; if the mind is filled with thoughts of an unprofitable nature, the spiritual life and light from heaven are crowded out, and the heart becomes barren and unfruitful. All these things are comprised in the blessed Savior's words, "My kingdom is not of this world."

Landisville, Pa.

C. S. N.

UNITY

The doctrine of Church unity is fully established by the teachings of Christ and His Apostles. In neither matters of faith nor manner of life are we left uncertain; the supreme authority is God's Word. Yet a literal obedience will not fulfil the Gospel, for it is not a law that one may do it and live thereby. In every precept and commandment there lies a divine principle and, for their fulfilment, this principle must first be established within the soul.

The unity which the New Testament teaches can not be brought about by man's efforts; there is nothing in human nature capable of producing it. Only

after the ascension of Christ, and after His promise given to the disciples of the "baptism of the Holy Ghost"—"the power from above"—was realized could the Church be organized. In former times men "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," but now the Spirit is to dwell with the believer as an abiding Presence. Then "death reigned," but "Christ brought life and immortality to light." Unity is the effect of the Divine life and Spirit, of spiritual union with Christ.

The experience which leads to the receiving of this power, the special gift of the New Covenant, is an individual experience and the lessons we learn from it are similar. As all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, all must become awakened to a sense of sin by the quickening power of the law. This law of righteousness is unchanging in its moral standard, and to each alike it says: "Thou shalt not covet," revealing that, whether in the act done or in the thought cherished, sin separates from God. Its effect is contrition, a sense of helplessness and a desire for a righteousness better than our own;—the one cry is, "What must I do to be saved?" The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

Repentance, so fundamental in the religion of Christ is one in its effects. It involves the separation from sin, from the world, the denial of self. All are made honest, just, generous, and brought to one level. They enter the strait gate and go on the narrow way, and finally they follow one Leader.

All Spiritual light comes from one source, it is of the same nature and teaches the same thing. Jesus said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Pride destroys, and makes unity impossible. By reason of His divinity Christ bore witness and said,

"I am the truth." His word is not yea and nay; but yea, yea, nay, nay. To it nothing may be added and from it nothing taken away. He did not divide it into essentials and non-essentials, but He told His Apostles to "go and preach the Gospel to every creature * * * teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." As God is one, the Gospel which declares His will has no double meaning, and every ordinance and precept is based on the one principle of love.

This principle of love to God and our neighbor is begotten in the heart of the Christian. It is the basis of fellowship with God and with one another. It brings us into agreement with all New Testament teaching. Without it we make of the Gospel but a moral code and of religion a formality. Between the commandments and the conviction of duty there is no conflict, as it is written, "I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts. * * * And they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me from the least to the greatest." And with the enlightened conscience and the purified heart there comes to each the power and effectual working of the Holy Spirit: "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth. * * * He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." John 14: 16.

This Christian experience, so uniform in its effects and these divine gifts bring unanimity of conviction in Christian duty. The same doctrine and the same rule of life are impressed upon all. There is one Teacher, and truth is ever one and the same because it is eternal.

One Spirit interprets and guides into all truth, bears the same manner of fruits in all who have received it, and unites them without compulsion or constraint by the bonds of love. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentile, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink of one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12: 13. The result is a Church, visibly united and capable of fulfilling the entreaty of the Apostle: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 1 Cor. 1: 10.

Although organic unity results from this work of God's grace and Spirit in the individual, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels" and unity is a tender plant requiring care and cultivation. For the maintenance of unity, confidence is essential; without it there can be no union of hearts. Suspicion and doubt must be disallowed; or should they arise they must be removed by greater freedom in social intercourse, a more intimate acquaintance and a fuller understanding of the actions and motives of others. The consideration we wish for ourselves should be accorded others and the most charitable construction, consistent with Christian principles, placed upon the conduct of fellow-believers. Above all, judgment should be withheld until wrong-doing has been proved by the evidence. Though offenses will come, they may not remain in the Church of Christ. No commands are more specific or given in greater detail than those referring to trespasses (as in Matthew eighteen), and unity can not be preserved when they are violated or neglected. In all Christian duties there is a guide, but faithfulness is requisite. Strict adherence to

duty and discipline are essential to unity; and only in one, united Church can these be observed.

The Scriptural grounds for unity have been often stated. Briefly they are in part: Christ prayed that His disciples and all who should believe on Him through their word might be one. Evidently it is the design and will of God; no proof can be stronger than that. One of the purposes for which Christ came was that "He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." "For God is not the author of confusion but of peace." When Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church," He did not say, "My churches," and no one would assume that He founded more than one church. The idea is excluded when He said, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." He commanded submission to the Church He founded when He said of the offending member, "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

The names applied in Scripture to the Church imply its oneness. It is called a house—"the house of God," the household of faith, a city, a building. The Church is called the bride of Christ and under the Gospel but one wife is permitted. Our Lord likens it to a sheepfold and says, "There shall be one fold and one shepherd." No more fitting illustration could be made. Sheep flock together, they go in one path, they feed together, they follow one shepherd, they know his voice and they flee from the voice of a stranger. So the members of Christ's Church live together in peace, seek each others company, are nourished by the same truths, and flee strange doctrines and false teachers.

The Scriptures condemn divisions and schisms: "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. "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." 2 John 1: 10. They urge unity: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Eph. 4: 3. They reprove contentions. 1 Cor. 3: 3. They uphold one doctrine and denounce heresies. Tit. 3: 10, Eph. 4: 4, 5, 14.

Unity is set forth in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It is a communing together, professing harmony, agreement, one faith, and is expressive of union. As the individual grains are ground and kneaded and baked into one loaf, and the berries are crushed and flow together into one wine in the cup, so the members of the Church are brought together by the working of God's grace and Spirit into one undivided body. "For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." 1 Cor. 10: 17.

The visible Church is fitly compared by the Apostle Paul to our natural bodies. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Rom. 12: 4, 5. "He gave some, apostles; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers * * * till we all come in the unity of the faith." Eph. 4: 11, 13. The individual members differ in gifts and calling but they work as do the members of our body in concert, under one head: Though many, and from widely different parts of the country, when they meet their spirits are one and flow together, they commune together, rejoice and suffer with one another. "For as the body is one and hath many

members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." 1 Cor. 12: 12, 13. "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."

The proof of a truth is in its demonstration. The Church throughout the long era of persecution, scattered and often few in numbers, has given evidence of oneness. The primitive Church made up of Jew and Gentile, nations widely separated by reason of their deeply rooted prejudices and traditions became "one in Christ Jesus." Unity is the proof to the world that Christ was sent, that His work of redemption is effectual. Unity is a mark of the true Church.

Lancaster, Pa.

M. H. M.

BRIEF NOTES

In advancing years we especially welcome the approach of the pleasing springtime, though it is another milestone along life's pathway. As each successive season passes, the time becomes increasingly precious.

When we reflect upon the past we have sorrows and regrets. We wish that the future would be more fruitful in accomplishment and spiritual progress.

Truly the awakening forces of nature should be an inspiration and incentive to us for a more humble and devoted service to our God, that our lives may be characterized by growth in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, and by a stronger faith and trust in the Lord. We can then rejoice in the promise for that future life when our sorrows and regrets will be replaced by joy and rejoicing forevermore.

* * * *

The common experience in Christian living is, that our pathway often lies

through benighted regions, and it is necessary for us to realize with the Psalmist that "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

We learn that this circle of light about our feet and on our pathway is sufficient in the darkest night; and if we remain upon the pathway, the happy destination will unfailingly be reached, where this "lamp" will have served its purpose and be no longer needed; for, "There shall be no night there."

* * * *

When we can see and comprehend the humility and simplicity in the mind of a little child, then, as it has been said, we can see far away, into the fields and among the gardens of the Infinite Realm.

All that we may thus behold that is pleasing, impressive and beautiful would still go for naught if we fail to apply the practical lesson in the Savior's declaration requiring that we humble ourselves as a little child, and accept this condition as a positive requirement for entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.

* * * *

The constant endeavor of the Christian is to render obedience to the prompting of the Divine Spirit possessing the heart; for the prompting from within is, to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." With this consecration of the energies of body and soul, there can be no half-hearted endeavor nor will it be without results. Worldly effort and gain will give place to the endeavor to honor and serve God.

* * * *

The phrase, "Be of good cheer," on the various occasions it was used by the Savior, is significant, instructive and comforting to his faithful followers in all time.

"Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." That was the comfort-

ing pronouncement to the palsied sinner with faith in Him who is "mighty still to save." To the woman who had faith to believe that if she could only touch the border of His garment, she would be healed, again, it was, "Daughter be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

The precious significance in the miracle lies in that "Thy faith hath made thee whole"; and in her willingness to then declare her faith "before all the people."

There are conditions on which comfort, good cheer and peace, as in the Savior's declaration, are based. When these conditions obtain with us, we shall be able to comprehend the depth of meaning and the import of that last tender and loving discourse to His disciples, declaring, finally, "These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

* * * *

As we grow older and become more accustomed to the experiences of life we do not want to become insensible to the finer feelings, so the humility, the tender affection, forgiving disposition and innocence of childhood may well impress us as nothing else can.

When death suddenly removes the innocent from our midst, after they have so tenderly endeared themselves to us, we may be led to exclaim, "Why, O why?" But the answer may be found in accepting the sorrow and loss as God's way of drawing us nearer to Him.

When He reveals His purpose to us in calling them home unto Himself, after their brief stay with us we can try to bow in resignation and see them as it were, beckoning unto us in a glorified state from the celestial shore and reflecting to us the sunshine of heaven.

They can be a constant reminder and

incentive for us to humble ourselves as little children, qualifying for entrance into the Kingdom of heaven, willing to deny ourselves, bear His cross and do His will.

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24: 44.

The text refers to the second coming of the Savior for they are words spoken by Him while here on earth before His suffering and death. He declared that when He comes again, He will sit upon the throne of His glory, and judge all nations, and divide, as a shepherd, the sheep from the goats, each being rewarded according to their lives. Matt. 25: 31-46. Paul refers to this in Rom. 2: 6-8, God "will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath."

In the beginning, God created man in His own image, and it was His design, then as now, that he should be happy, and should glorify his Creator by obedience to Him. In his first estate, he had communion and fellowship with God, having all his needs provided for, but through disobedience to God's command, he fell under the penalty of the broken law, which was spiritual death. In this condition, he could not be happy nor glorify God, for by disobedience he became the servant of sin. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness?" Rom. 6: 16.

God's love for man was so great that

He did not leave him comfortless, but gave him the promise of a Deliverer. This promise was renewed from time to time, and God directed His people by various means. When faithful and obedient to His requirements, man was blessed, but when disobedient, he was reprov'd and chastened. However, by virtue of faith in the promise of a Redeemer and by true repentance he could again be brought into favor with his Creator. Faith was just as essential under the law as under the Gospel for it is written that without faith it is impossible to please God.

Under the law, God required many sacrifices and ceremonies, but these only brought a remembrance of sin and pointed to that which would be accomplished at the coming of the Redeemer. While the observance of the law could not deliver them from sin, yet if observed in faith, they could enjoy the promise of redemption when the Redeemer should come. Under the law as well as under the present Gospel dispensation, God does not require more of man than he is able to do.

Our text applies directly to mankind in this age. The Savior came to restore that spiritual life that was lost, and to gather together the children of God. The spiritual relation of the unbeliever to his Creator is the same to-day as it was under the law. By accepting Christ, we can again enjoy communion and fellowship with God although we are hindered in serving Him by our unconverted flesh which is ever inclined to the things of this world.

Regardless of our parentage or station in life, we are all in favor with God until we reach years of accountability. By disobedience we become the servants of the spirit of darkness, and our transgressions separate us from our Creator; but the love of God has not diminished,

and He follows us with His convicting grace. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." When we give place to His grace, we can see our condition, and with those on the day of Pentecost can say, "What shall we do?" The reply was to "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2: 38. This implies submission and subjection to the will of God, even though it may mean suffering, persecution and death.

The Savior came to do and to reveal the Father's will, the essentials of which are briefly outlined in the Sermon on the Mount. We find them in direct opposition to our humanity for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2: 14. As "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," (Rom. 8: 7) we, therefore, see that to be ready for the time referred to in our text, a change must take place within us; for we have become spiritually dead through our own disobedience. The Savior said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3: 3. He also said, "if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me." Luke 9: 23.

May we, therefore, as believers endeavor to follow the admonition of Peter, and use diligence to make our calling and election sure; "for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom

of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1: 11.

May those, who have not yet received the spirit of adoption in their hearts, heed the counsel, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." Submit yourselves to God. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you, draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you," so that you may become partakers of His grace and mercy, and not of His wrath at the day of judgment; for we must all render an account of the deeds done in the body. "Therefore, be ye also ready."

Humberstone, Ont.

A. C.

THE FRIEND OF GOD

This was the compliment given Abraham by the Apostle James. What a beautiful thought and what a weight of meaning to be truly a friend of God. Nothing finer could be said of any one.

Most of us know the joys of friendship in this life. Among the pleasures and deep satisfactions nothing counts more with us. To love and be loved fill a need of our nature. We see it in children and it follows to old age. Selfish as we are, our aspirations and labors are usually mixed with the thought of those who are dear to us, whose sanctions we appreciate. It is one of our finer qualities that sacrifices are willingly made that we may more fully enjoy the favor of our kindred and friends, not only encouraging their love for us, but enlarging our own hearts while so doing.

There is much advice found in our reading about making and keeping friends, and it has well been said that a man is known by the company he keeps. We are influenced very much by those with whom we associate. Their thoughts have a way of giving color to our own. This fact makes us feel the need of

choosing our friends wisely. Who of us but know how the heart has been lightened and the way ahead made appear more attractive by the kindly interest of those who care for us. We often need to talk things over with good friends to give us balance in our thinking, something that is difficult for most of us to keep.

There have been many provisions made for our human needs if only we can use them wisely. But "to err is human," and friends can count too much with us if we are not careful. This thought is well expressed in the lines, "We seek the counsel of our friends too much, and fear too much the censure of the world." We can have many friends and yet live on a lower plane forgetting that God should come first.

While human friendship adds to the sum total of happiness in this life, there is a richer experience in being a friend of God. The thought of an overshadowing Spirit or Presence with us at all times, knowing our inmost desires and needs, goes beyond the best there is in human relationships. Explanations are unnecessary; misunderstandings are unknown. He knows us as we are and His love is unchangeable.

It rests the tired spirit to think of all the words of comfort recorded of God's understanding love for His creatures. "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." Ps. 103: 13-14. This comparison is made stronger when we think of the words of Christ, where He told his disciples how to pray and that if they asked they should receive, saying, "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to

them that ask Him." Such a friend He is to us, open and waiting to give us better things than can be had from any earthly source.

There is no doubt that God is our best friend for this has been established by testimony and experience, but it is for us to see that we are true friends of His. It was said of Abraham that "he believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God." James 2: 23. It was his faith that made him worthy of this praise. So with us it is our willingness to live a life of trustful obedience that establishes our friendship for Him. We will want to stand for the things that He approves. We will be honest and upright in our lives, cultivating purity and peace, and charity for all, avoiding evil and its very appearance. We will accept Christ as our Savior and strive to live according to Gospel counsel in all we think and do, not building our hopes on our own righteousness or good works but on what He has done for us. We remember the parable of those disappointed ones who found the door shut even though they thought they ate and drank in His presence and that He was the teacher in their streets. Luke 13: 24-30. We should be anxious that we are rightly prepared for the final reckoning of true friends.

Jesus told His disciples that He called them not servants but friends, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." "If a man loves me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him and we will come and make our abode with him." What a picture of happiness and safety to have Him living in our hearts. What a fruitful source of a sanctified life. How worth an earnest daily effort on our part to keep ourselves worthy of such companionship. How willingly we should divest our

hearts of pride, self-seeking, worldly ambition or any other interest that interferes with the cultivation of an humble, receptive attitude of encouragement for spiritual communion.

The Patriarch Abraham showed his friendly association with God and his great faith by accepting without question His decrees, many that on their face value seemed impossible. His heart must have been right before God or he would not have been cited so often as a pattern of faith, or have been given the best compliment of all, that he was a friend of God.

The prophet Isaiah referred to this friendship of Abraham and to God's choosing from the ends of the earth men to whom He could make promises like this: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Isa 41: 10. No wonder these chosen ones could say to each other: "Be of good courage."

We believe this promise is for us too if we have the love and faith we should have. Our desire to be worthy of such protection should show in a life so characteristic that it can be said of us as of the Apostles in those first days after Pentecost. "They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." Our lives too may tell our sincere friendship for God even if they are attended by many human weaknesses that call for the regenerating influences of grace.

With us all there is a deep gratitude for the many blessings of this life and above all for the friendship of God that transforms our higher relationship. Surely we can say, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

Waynesboro, Pa.

M. C. S.

RELIGIOUS DECEPTION

"Jesus answering said unto them: "Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Matt. 24: 24.

This is an impressive declaration for Jesus was addressing disciples, and since He said many shall be deceived it is doubly impressive.

The evil spirit of deception had its inception in Eden when the serpent beguiled Eve—he mingled lies with truth. It is obvious then that the Devil is the author of deception; and all through the ages it has been practiced by him and his emissaries. Though Christ exposed the lying deceitfulness of Satan, and gave His followers power to resist his devices, yet they are warned in many scriptures to take heed lest they fall a prey to deception. Paul warned the Ephesians: "That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Eph. 4: 14. This scripture applies as forcibly to our day as it did to the Ephesians; for the Scriptures were written for all time.

If believers take heed, and are "sober and watch unto prayer," faithfully appealing unto the "Throne of grace for mercy and grace to help in time of need," they cannot be deceived. The Savior said: "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect." Matt. 24: 24. This expression would indicate that it is not possible to deceive the very elect. So long as they remain in Christ Jesus, the saving Ark, they cannot be deceived. Christ said: "My Father which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." It is only when believers cease

to watch, and the light within them becomes darkness, that they are subjects for deception, and may fall a prey to the false prophets, who pervert the truth and falsify Christ's doctrine by ignoring the cross.

True worshipers have an infallible criterion to determine deception in worship. Christ said: "Ye shall know them by their fruits: do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" The Apostle John says: "Beloved believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets have gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." 1 John 4: 1-3. If the spirit of anti-christ and deception was manifest in the world at that early day, when the Apostles were performing miracles to inculcate Christ's doctrine, and when they taught repentance and conversion with such great power—what may be the condition of the world today? Centuries have come and gone since that visible power was displayed by Christ and the Apostles upon the children of men, yet today we have their word as our guide and therefore have the same opportunity to be saved, and no excuse if we are deceived. That word is an unerring guide. It is equivalent to Christ himself, for "the word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." John 1: 14. By obeying this "grace and truth," and praying God for spiritual guidance, having a willing mind, all persons would be led

to Jesus, "who is the way, the truth and the life." He would impart His Spirit and sanctify the heart. He would empower them to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Him.

How then can there be religious deception? It is because not all men are willing to take the way God has prescribed in His word. Many are so strongly imbued with the spirit of the world, seeking honor and wealth, ambitious to excel and be esteemed that they evade the cross and deny the Savior; in their religion they "teach for doctrines the commandments of men." Though they have built powerful organizations, their fruits bear evidence that they have never experienced conversion or the spiritual birth. True, many of them live beautiful lives, and possess many worthy traits of character; they are benevolent, charitable and do much to ameliorate the condition of the poor and unfortunate. These are worthy and commendable works, but without being coupled with true faith in God and obedience to Christ's doctrine, they fall short of true religion, and may only tend to deceive. All that live carnal lives show by their fruits that they do not possess Christ's spirit and their worship therefore must be carnal and not spiritual. All who profess to be Christ's followers, but fail to confess His name, and practice His self-denying, non-resistant, non-worldly doctrine, to such Christ's word can not apply where He says: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven."

May not this great religious fabric that has been reared in the world, be the anti-christ of our day? And since there is confusion of doctrines and disunion of hearts, may it not represent the spiritual Babel prefigured by the tower of Babel of old, "whose top, they said, may reach

unto heaven," when their language was confounded and they were confused and scattered over the earth. These would-be builders of a spiritual tower to reach unto heaven are also confused and scattered in their worship instead of being united by one Spirit into one body, where there is obedience, love, and peace, which must characterize the true worshippers.

We cannot censure any one if we are deceived, for, being highly endowed we are accountable and responsible for our manner of life, and eternal destiny. The poet aptly describes our condition:

"We weave the mystic web of life
With colors all our own;
And in the field of destiny,
We reap as we have sown."

Therefore we deceive ourselves; we make the choice; we are free agents and choose whom we will serve.

The Prophet of old lamented the condition of deceived Israel. He said: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Truly an impressive question, "And what will ye do in the end thereof?" Can it be otherwise but that those who continue in this religious deception will be included among the many who will come in that day and say: "Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Matt. 7: 22, 23. Deplorable and forsaken condition! for their destiny is then sealed to all eternity! no more grace, no more mercy will be granted them forever! God is just, as He is

merciful, and judgment will be pronounced according to His eternal word. The Apostle gives the solemn warning: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he find to reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

KNOWLEDGE

This is a familiar word, one with which we are all acquainted, and is defined as meaning, "A clear perception of a truth or fact; information." It is frequently used throughout the Bible wherein we find clearly outlined, two classes of knowledge. The one is divine and enduring, the other is that which pertains to this world and with the world shall vanish away as we are taught in Cor. 13: 8, "Whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away."

We read that the desire for knowledge had its origin in the garden of Eden after our first parents were told by the serpent, that if they would eat of the forbidden fruit they would attain to knowledge, knowing good and evil.

In a normal person the desire for knowledge and understanding is apparent very early in life, and as the mind develops, this desire leads out in many different channels.

A certain degree of knowledge is needed in order to perform the duties of this life. It is one of God's gifts and blessings to mankind, for by it they are enabled to accomplish much good in the world, in providing the comforts and necessities of life, relieving suffering, and so ordering and directing its affairs that the result is a degree of peace and good-will among the people.

We might through the gift of knowl-

edge aspire to prestige and power, fame and renown, but the apostle Paul tells us; "though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge" it is nothing if our hearts are devoid of charity, or the love of God. We should not forget that every good gift comes from God, to whom is due all glory and gratitude, as the words of Jeremiah testify: "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth, glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me; that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jer. 9: 2.

When Solomon was chosen king over Israel, God appeared to him and asked him what He should give him; his answer was,—“Give me wisdom and knowledge.” Because he did not choose wealth or honor, God was highly pleased and said, “Because you have chosen wisdom and knowledge, I will also give thee riches, wealth and honor.”

It is written of Solomon that his wisdom exceeded all the wisdom of Egypt and the East country, and his fame was in all nations. “God also gave him largeness of heart even as the sands of the seashore.” But Solomon finally came to the conclusion that all his fame and renown were as nothing compared to the knowledge of sin and its effects, and an understanding of the purity and holiness of a just God who cannot look upon sin with allowance. Therefore he was moved to say, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,” and he followed by saying: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

Do we not realize this saying of

Solomon's in our own experience when we yield to the conviction of God's grace and allow His Spirit to take possession of our hearts? It teaches us humility and self-abasement and also what He requires of us as obedient children. Then as the glorious plan of salvation unfolds to us with all its beauty and harmony, there appears to be so much to learn, that whatever we may have attained in the way of natural or worldly knowledge we esteem lightly as compared to that light which is revealed to us, when “old things have passed away, and behold all things become new.”

In contemplating the all-seeing eyes of God, His ever present Spirit, His mercy and protecting care, King David was moved to exclaim, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high. I cannot attain it.” Psalm 139.

The Apostle Peter admonishes us to add to our faith, knowledge. We believe what he had in mind was that the knowledge which we receive by obedience and submission to the divine will leads into all truth and enables us to discern light from darkness, giving us a clearer perception of our human frailty, so that we realize the need of a power superior to our own to lead us safely through this world with its allurements to our home beyond.

For us the Savior made the great sacrifice on the cross. May we cherish the same spirit and through His help and the knowledge He imparts, be enabled to overcome the spirit of darkness and unbelief so that by example we may encourage others to obey the Light which leads to the Lord, our Creator: “Who by wisdom hath founded the earth, by understanding, hath he established the heavens: by His knowledge the depths are broken up and the clouds drop down the dew.” Prov. 3: 19.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. E. F.

SUPPLICATION

Dear Savior guide my erring feet
So that they do not stray,
And keep me in Thy path secure
While on the narrow way.

Oh, lead me in the pastures green
Where the still waters flow;
Thy Holy Spirit though unseen
The path to me doth show.

Lord, keep me in Thy loving care
Where harm can ne'er betide;
Be Thou my light, my life, my all,
My ever-present guide.

And when the shades of death do fall
To close my weary eyes,
Receive my spirit in Thy care,
In safety to abide.

Arkona, Ontario.

S. D.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

God's purpose of a Church was for all mankind and salvation was meant for all, as proclaimed by the prophets and poets of the Scriptures in such passages as these: "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;" "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth;" "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Heb. 2: 14.

What Jesus began to do and to teach in the Gospels is continued in the Acts of the Apostles. When the Greeks came seeking Him, what did He tell them? "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." Evidently, He spoke of his death and resurrection.

Jesus said to his followers: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth."

This Spirit of truth, which is the Holy Ghost, came on Pentecost. It was on that day that a multitude of pilgrims

crowded into Jerusalem: proselytes as well as Jews from every part of the Roman Empire, came to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. There were Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea, in Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the districts of Lybia around Cyrene, as well as visitors from Rome, Cretans, and Arabians." Acts 2: 9, 10, 11.

Each person present heard the Apostles speaking to him in his own tongue. What did it mean?

"Are not these Galileans who are speaking?" they exclaimed.

This miracle resulted in three thousand converts, who, returning to their homes, carried news of the new-born faith into the remotest corners of the Empire. This occurred in 29 A. D. In the year 312, the Roman Emperor, Constantine, affixed the sign of the cross to the standards of his legions.

This rapid spread of the Gospel was not without strong opposition. Ten great persecutions are recorded in which the Roman Empire sought to stamp out the new faith.

The first persecution took place in 64 A. D., by the order of Nero, and the last one by Diocletian, 303 A. D.

Rome, before the advent of Christianity, had been tolerant of all forms of religion; but the Christians refused to join in the worship of the Emperor, while they valiantly opposed the evils of paganism. So, as soon as Christianity was recognized as anything to be feared, it was persecuted with the greatest ferocity.

Christians were hunted like wild beasts; they were thrown to the lions in gladiatorial combats; they were sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, and set afire as torches. They were flogged, tortured, crucified. They were deprived

of their property, driven from their homes, turned out by their families to die.

We read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the writer's rehearsal of the hardships of a former generation, which actually happened to succeeding generations of Christians, too: "Others again bore trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, even of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, persecuted, tormented — of whom the world was not worthy— wandering in deserts and mountains and in dens and caves of the earth." Heb. 11: 36-38.

Yet, the more the faith was persecuted, the brighter burned its light. Men counted themselves fortunate to suffer for Christ, and went to their death singing the triumphant hymns of the Church. Young girls and even children, endured their martyrdom with divine fortitude.

In the catacombs of St. Sebastian in Rome rest the remains of 174,000 martyrs, and this is only a part of the number who sealed their testimony with their lives. From every part of the Roman Empire, for two and a half centuries a mighty host of martyrs gave their all for Christ. Thus, ten generations of Christians watched and waited and prayed and held true to Him who laid down his life for them. Precious stories of their heroism survive: Ignatius, who was born in the year 80 A. D., and martyred in 117, said: "God's grain am I to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be turned into the pure bread of God." Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, (who may have known the beloved disciple, John, when very old), was offered his life if we would deny his Lord. He answered, "Four score and six years have I served Him and He has done me no wrong. How, then, can

I speak evil of my King, who has saved me?" (166 A. D.).

Justin Martyr, a notable convert eighty years after the death of Jesus, was born in Samaria of a wealthy pagan family. His conversion resulted from seeing some Christian martyrs die with calm and joyous victory. In 106 A. D., he said, "We who hated and destroyed one another . . . pray for our enemies; we endeavor to persuade those who hate us unjustly, to live conformably to the beautiful precepts of Christ."

The Roman historian, Tacitus, has recorded the story of the persecutions of Christians by Nero, as follows: "Christus, the founder of that name, was put to death as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius; but, the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again not only through Judea where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome, also. . . . Accordingly, first, those who confessed that they were Christians, were seized; next, on their information a vast multitude was convicted, not so much on the charge of burning the city, as of *hating the human race*. In their death they were also made the subject of sport, for they were covered with hides of wild beasts and worried to death by dogs, or, nailed to crosses, or, set fire to and when day declined, burned to serve for nocturnal lights. Nero offered his own gardens for that spectacle, and exhibited a Circensian game, indiscriminately mingling with the common people in the habit of a charioteer, or else, standing in his chariot. Whence a feeling of compassion arose toward the sufferers, though guilty, and deserving to be made examples of, by capital punishment, because they seemed not to be cut off for the public good, but to be victims to the ferocity of one man." (Via Christi.)

The last period of persecution by the order of Diocletian in 303 A.D. was followed by the reign of Constantine, who was chosen emperor by the soldiery in 306. His conversion ended the bloody period of the early Church. In 313, together with his brother-in-law, the eastern emperor, Licinius, Constantine published the memorable edict of toleration in favor of the Christians, and subsequently declared Christianity the religion of the state. His after life, however, does not attest to the reality of his conversion, although the Church was protected from violence.

The Greek language, in which the New Testament was written was the universal language of commerce and of business, and this aided its spread, while the very nature of the Gospel came like a fresh wind into that hard, hopeless Roman world. To men sunk in sensuality, it proclaimed a Savior from sin; over the hopeless cynicisms of the world it placed its deathless affirmation of the love and companionship of God, while His followers preached "Christ, and him crucified," and the transforming Gospel of the Cross of Christ, and the Resurrection.

It has been stated authoritatively, that "All who bore the sword were rigidly excluded from the number of catechumens, and Christians who voluntarily became soldiers were excommunicated." Irenaeus, (120-200 A. D.) declared that the prophecy of Isaiah about beating swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks had been fulfilled by Christians of his time; he said, "They have changed their swords and their lances into instruments of peace and they know not how to fight." Tertullian declared that not a Christian could be found in the Roman legions, and the testimony of the historians Dymond and Gibbons amply corroborates this statement.

For two hundred years at the constant risk of life, Christianity continued to bear witness of the Gospel of Love in a world of force. With the increase of wealth and numbers, the Church began the compromise that dragged the pure Gospel of Christ in the mire of war. Other liberties followed, until the true believers were but a mere handful, who, in time separated themselves from the rest in order to live as Christ had commanded.

That which had power to bring new life to man, in the first century, has the same power today. That peace which was taught to the early Christians is still a mark of true Christianity.

Christ loved the Church and gave his life for her. His sacrifice will not be in vain. Adown the ages, from the great day of cloven flame, with much opposition and many sore persecutions, the Church of Christ has continued. She cannot die. Her destiny sweeps down the future to the day when heaven and earth shall pass away. Then, resting on His changeless Word, made pure and perfect through faith in Him, she shall meet her Lord, His spotless bride.

Shippensburg, Pa.

M. E.

STAND STILL

"Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Exodus 14: 13.

These words were spoken by Moses to the children of Israel after their deliverance out of Egypt and prior to their crossing the Red Sea. With the sea before them and their enemy, the Egyptians, close behind them, their faith in God weakened. They murmured, and were much alarmed by their situation, but then came Moses' words, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." God then said unto Moses, "Lift thou up thy rod and stretch out thine hand," and the waters parted so

that Moses and the children of Israel could pass safely through to the opposite side. When the Egyptians tried to follow, the waters closed in upon them, and they perished.

What a wonderful illustration this is of the believers' experiences. We sometimes meet difficulties that appear as impassable seas before us, and we become greatly alarmed, and may even murmur because of our situation, but if we lift up the rod of faith, God will enable us to pass safely through the experiences.

As long as we are carnally minded, our natural interests are uppermost in our minds. We may aspire and attain to high social positions, honor and wealth, but "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." If we heed that still small voice, we are enabled to see our true condition. We see that we are without God and without a hope in the world so long as our hearts are under the influence of the enemy of all good. If we "stand still" in our busy lives, and yield ourselves wholly to God, we find that the enemy loses his power over us. We look to His blest promises in faith, and rejoice that He has given us the precious opportunity of coming to Him, and desire that all mankind might experience the true richness of His great love.

The faithful prophets under the old dispensation, all at times, stood still, and waited on the Lord for guidance. Abraham, when complying with the command to offer up his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice on Mt. Moriah, was questioned by his son, "But where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "My son, God will provide himself a

lamb." When Abraham took the knife to slay his son, an angel of the Lord called to him saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad." A ram caught in a thicket was provided for the burnt offering. Noah and all those who believed on God entered the ark in accordance with God's command, and were saved from the deluge, while those who remained outside the ark were destroyed.

All those who unconditionally yield their will to God will be enabled to pass safely through the seas of temptation. They will "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." In sickness, sorrow and tribulation, they will wait upon the Lord, who has promised never to leave nor forsake them. Temptations and sorrows will teach them to cast their cares more and more on Him, who is willing to share them. The believer is restored to spiritual peace and happiness by the great power of inexpressible love that binds their hearts and souls into one. As long as they remain on this earth, their walk will be encumbered by their sinful flesh in which dwells no good thing. Satan is ever endeavoring to lure them into by-ways which would lead them away from God.

May we as believers try to run our race faithfully so that when our pilgrimage through this world is brought to a close, we may enjoy the eternal peace and happiness prepared for the faithful.

Kitchener, Ontario.

A. M. Y.

CHASTENING

"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" Heb. 12: 5-7.

The Apostle Paul admonished the Hebrew brethren that they had forgotten the exhortation which spoke to them as children. We too may forget or become rebellious under trial or temptation. It is well to call to mind that we are not to despise the chastening of the Lord or faint when rebuked by Him. We are all weak and likely to fail, but we should strive, through God's help, to bear our afflictions with patience. Thus we can show forth the light of truth to those who are about us.

God in love chastens us that we may draw nearer to one another, and to Him, that we may truly be His children. Our natural fathers chastised us that we might be better children, and we revered and obeyed them. If, then, it was for our good that our fathers according to the flesh rebuked and chastened us, is it not also for our good that our Heavenly Father chastens us?

So long as we are mortal we are subject to temptations, even as Christ was tempted for our sakes. But He withstood temptation, and having "suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Before He was offered up for the sins of the world He spoke to His disciples saying: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16: 35. He will help us to overcome if we will let His Spirit work in our hearts. When in our striving we come to a place in which everything seems dark, and our path is obscured, the best we can do is "be still and know that I am God." Ps. 46: 10. He alone can lead us to more pleasant pathways. We would say with the Psalmist, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Ps. 23. 4.

When we endure chastening then are we sons in truth, "heirs of God, and

joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together." Rom. 8: 17.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth joyous but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." Heb. 12: 11. Chastening is often very grievous to the natural mind; but we should endeavor to submit to God's will, whatever it may be. If we can have faith to lay our burdens at Jesus' feet they will seem lighter. Then we can press on with renewed zeal in the path trod by Christ, and with the well-grounded hope that we may be among those to whom it will be said, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25: 34.

Chambersburg, Pa.

S. S. R.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What did the apostle Paul mean when he wrote "Unto the pure all things are pure?" Titus 1: 15.

A. We learn from the context that in this Epistle, Paul was instructing Titus to rebuke sharply some who had wavered in the faith, had taken up a legal spirit and had again reverted to Jewish fables and commandments of men. They no doubt had been seduced by false teachers, who were prejudiced against the truth of the Gospel, relative to clean and unclean meats, drinks, and other ceremonial rites which were observed under the law, but which were no longer binding under the New Testament dispensation. Then Paul sums up the matter by comparing the two conditions of purity and impurity by saying that, "Unto the pure are all things pure, but to the disobedient and defiled is nothing pure." Paul evidently meant that to him whose heart and conscience are sanctified and

purified by the blood of Christ all outward, tangible things for necessary bodily use are pure. Even meats and drinks which were forbidden under the law, could be lawfully used; for Christ fulfilled the law with all its ordinances and ceremonies and made all things new. The distinction between the pure and impure, is not in the things themselves, but in the disposition and character of those who use them. If lawful things are used with thanksgiving and not abused, they are pure; the wrong use or abuse of them leads to sin which corrupts and defiles the heart. Again in Romans 14: 20, Paul taught: "All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence."

Q. Are feelings an essential part of religion?

A. Religion is defined as love and obedience to God. Our feelings originate chiefly in our humanity or the senses, and are therefore not a safe guide. They who wait for a particular or godly feeling to serve the Lord, may wait in vain; for in such persons self-love may yet prevail instead of a humble, willing mind. The religion that puts its chief stress upon feelings, as if they were the essence of religion, cannot fail to be a delusion. There may be inspired feelings in the Christian experience, which are very consoling and encouraging; but the basic principles as well as the safe-guard of pure religion, are a humble mind, faith, obedience, love, and prayer.

Q. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, what is represented by the Elder Brother?

A. The elder brother might represent the pharisaical Jews. They commended their good works, and justified their formal worship. They were no doubt moral, honest and faithful in their natural duties and obligations, but this

without the love of God is only self-righteousness. The elder brother was dutiful and obedient to his father; he served him faithfully. He said, "Lo these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends." He commended himself and was envious and jealous of his penitent brother: he was unforgiving and reflected on his brother's wayward life, showing his lack of love and brotherly kindness. The Pharisees were also envious and jealous of Christ and His disciples, and they too served for a reward, for they "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." The elder brother might also typify a worship, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and not based upon obedience to Jesus and His Gospel. Such worshipers commend themselves and trust in their good works, or the arm of the flesh, and are only servants and are under the law; and like the elder brother look for a reward and do not humbly acknowledge as the true worshipers do that, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which is our duty to do." Like the elder brother their fruits testify that they lack the love of God.

JEHOSHAPHAT, KING OF JUDAH

We have for some time followed the kings of Israel. We will now return to the kings of Judah and the reign of Jehoshaphat, son of Asa. I have spoken of him in a previous chapter.

Jehoshaphat is said to have walked in the way of his father Asa, who had put an end to open idolatry. Jehoshaphat instructed the princes and priests to go through the land with a copy of the law and teach the people in all the cities.

In this way the word of the law was made known to those who were too careless to acquaint themselves with God's word. To make it more effectual Jehoshaphat went in person to see that his orders were carried out in full. He was not only faithful in directing his people in their duties to their God, but he made the law their text-book and the people received it as such. As they were obedient to the laws of the land, and to the words of the law, they prospered and were happy and contented. The surrounding nations were inspired with fear for the God of the people of Judah and were not inclined to annoy them or to provoke them with any cause for war.

Some of the Philistines brought tribute money and the Arabians brought flocks which seemed to be an annual tribute to purchase and preserve peace. Judah would naturally prosper under such a ruler, and in walking in obedience to the words of the law.

But the King affiliated himself with Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, by taking Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab to be the wife of his son Jehoram. Ahab made a great feast and proposed to Jehoshaphat to join forces with him in recovering of Ramoth in Gilead. The attempt was unsuccessful and resulted in the death of Ahab as I have related in a former article.

Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem in peace and was met by the prophet Jehu, who said, "Shouldst thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land and hast prepared thine heart to seek God."

Jehoshaphat placed judges in all the cities of Judah, urging that the fear of God should rule their conduct.

The fact that he had assisted and failed with Ahab in recovering of Ramoth, seemed to arouse hopes in the neighboring tribes who came to attack Judah. A message to Jehoshaphat told of a great army coming to attack him. In great distress he sought the Lord and proclaimed a general fast. The people came from all the cities to ask help of the Lord. Jehoshaphat stood in the presence of the assembled people and offered a beautiful and earnest prayer to the Lord for help. He referred to God's might and power, and his promises to Abraham and also referred to Solomon's petition that the Lord would hear when they cry for help from this place. As their enemies had come to seize their inheritance and cast them out he concluded his petition with these words, "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee."

Jehoshaphat was then given assurance of help by one of the Levites who said, "Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid nor dismayed, by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God's. . . Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you."

Jehoshaphat and all the people bowed down before the Lord while the Levites stood up to sing their songs of praise to the Lord. The invading army was made up of different tribes and they fell into disputes, quarreling among themselves and utterly destroyed one another. When Jehoshaphat went out to meet them he encouraged his men to have faith in God's protection, and appointed

singers to go before the army and sing, "Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth forever." When Jehoshaphat and his army came to meet the enemy they found only the bodies of the slain, and they were three days in gathering the spoil of precious jewels, raiment and arms. On the fourth day they returned to Jerusalem, but first held a solemn thanksgiving in the King's dale or valley of Barachah.

The fear of the Lord was upon all the kingdoms around Judah, when they heard how the Lord had protected His people. So Jehoshaphat had a quiet, peaceful rest. He later consented to join with Ahaziah, king of Israel, to build ships and send them to Ophir for gold. King Ahaziah, who earlier had married the daughter of Jehoshaphat, did wickedly and Jehoshaphat was warned by the prophet Eliezer, that as he joined himself with Ahaziah the Lord would destroy his work. The vessels were lost and Jehoshaphat attempted nothing further. He died after a reign of twenty-five years and his son Jehoram reigned in his stead.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

THE MOTHER'S OF THE BIBLE

My dear little Children:

I am going to write you a story about Mothers. I know you will be interested in knowing about the mothers of whom we read in the Bible. You have mothers whom you dearly love, so my subject will not be a strange or new one to you.

The Bible stories tell us the blessedness and holiness of motherhood and in this way we know how God Himself would have us regard it. We read of

the mother of Jacob, the mother of Moses, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and many others. In the New Testament above all others is Mary, the mother of our Lord. When Jesus was dying on the cross, He saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by; He said to His mother, "Behold thy Son"! and to the disciple, "Behold thy mother"! From that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. This touching incident in the closing of the life of Jesus tells us how much He loved and revered His mother.

We all owe a debt of gratitude and affection to our mothers, greater than we can ever repay. When we were little, helpless babes, no one could quite take a mother's place. Recently I called on a mother whose little children were ill. The eldest was lying in a room by herself, all she said was, "Bring me a drink"; the little babe was crying for its mother, and the two-year old, held out his arms saying in a pleading voice, "Mama, take me; Mama, take me." Fortunately these children were not dangerously ill, but were only very uncomfortable. But it showed the helplessness of infancy, and what mothers are doing every day for their children.

Most men who have been helpful in the world's history have had faithful and wise mothers.

A day has been set apart as Mother's Day; I do not doubt it has led many people to think of their mothers in a more kind and tender way than ever before.

There is a respect or reverence that every child owes to his mother, and is one of the most beautiful tributes of affection; it especially emphasizes nobility of character in boyhood or manhood.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.