

GOOD TIDINGS

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

Entered as second-class matter September 26, 1922, at the Post Office at Lancaster, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Subscription, 50 cents per year, in advance. Sample copies sent free on application.

Send all contributions to Frank E. Eshleman, Business Manager, R. D. No. 7, Lancaster, Pa. Subscriptions should be sent to "Good Tidings," No. 236 N. Mary St., Lancaster, Pa.

Remit by check, P. O. money order, or U. S. postage stamps.

VOL. X

OCTOBER, 1931

NO. 2

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NOTICE OF DISCONTINUANCE

GOOD TIDINGS, first published July 1, 1922, has been printed continuously for ten years. Since there is now sufficient material to make two large volumes of 640 pages each when the separate numbers are bound, the question of the advisability of discontinuing the publication was presented, and the subject was recently referred to the Ministry of the Church in the United States and Canada who decided, after considering the matter in all its bearings, to discontinue for a time its publication with the July, 1932, number.

There is now a large supply of Church literature to be read and reread. The Ministry recommend especially the reading of the Bible, particularly the New Testament, for both instruction and edification, also the works of Menno Simon, John Herr, Daniel Musser, Martyr's Mirror and Christianity Defined. Christianity Defined and all Church literature in pamphlet form will be sent free on application.

Three more numbers of GOOD TIDINGS will be published—January, April and July, 1932. There is sufficient surplus in treasury to pay for publishing these numbers, therefore subscriptions will cease with the present number, and the

three months will be sent free to all persons whose subscriptions expire with this number. We also offer to send these free of charge to any one, and ask subscribers to send the names and addresses of friends that may be interested.

AUTUMN THOUGHTS

The Autumn season marks the passing of glorious Summer and the inevitable approach of Winter. The harvest of the earth has been gathered in, the seasonal activities of nature have been about spent, and will soon go into the dormant state. The gorgeously colored foliage of shrub and tree, though beautiful to behold, is only a hectic flush on the fair face of nature, and betokens the early falling of the leaf to the earth, there to decay;—an emblem of our mortality. The prophet says: "We all do fade as a leaf."

These marked seasonal changes and the passing of time are intimately linked together. We should be soberly impressed, for our lives are only a limited portion of this passing time. We are in the current and are irresistibly carried along. We are transient creatures but highly endowed, and are accountable to God who has given us life and being. Are we fulfilling the purpose of our being? Are we faithfully discharging every duty according to the talents entrusted to us, thus glorifying our Creator through obedience and love for His commands?

It is highly essential that we are always awake to our responsibilities. The Apostle says, "Awake to righteousness and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God." To be spiritually awake is a safe and healthful condition, for then we are watchful and susceptible to grace. The prophets warned Israel to awake: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city." Isa. 52: 1. Since Zion and Jerusalem may be a type and figure of

Christ's kingdom or Church, the warnings would apply today with equal force. The beautiful garments may represent the righteousness of Christ, or of the saints, and this coupled with the divine virtues of love, peace, and humility must be zealously preserved in His Kingdom.

There is, however, danger of again falling asleep, and becoming drunken with the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of sin. The Apostle says: "They that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night." This would indicate that such delinquent ones have lapsed into darkness or spiritual night. So the Apostle further says: "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation." 2 Thes. 5: 8. We first must awake if we would be saved; for we are all, by nature, asleep and dead in trespasses and sins. The Apostle Paul prescribes the positive rule: "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." But O, if we would not awake! If we do not heed the grace of God, then we frustrate the object and purpose of our creation; then Christ for us will have died in vain, and His glorious plan of salvation will be null and void. Then the words of the prophet will forcibly apply: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

THE CHURCH AND THE GOVERNMENT

Through Christ's atonement and triumph over death His Church came into existence. As a means to an end He emphasized the new birth. This is in effect making the tree good that the fruit may be good. He did not teach or authorize a system of ethics for the moral and social reformation and uplift

of the world. He recognized but two classes of people—the believer and the unbeliever. Those who were willing to hear and obey Him He recognized as Believers and those who rejected His counsel as Unbelievers. The Gospel is designed for believers who are chosen out of the world and who are separated from the spirit that controls the world. These constitute His Church and Kingdom, which are founded on love, and of which He is the head, ruling them by His word and Spirit. He did not interfere with worldly government. He did not dictate to Kings or Emperors any governmental policy, neither did He suggest reforms in the laws. He was even unwilling to sit in judgment upon the case of two brothers who disagreed as to the division of an inheritance.

The Church is the fruit of Christ's love. It is His witness to confirm His atonement and redemption by demonstrating in word and deed the power of regeneration. The Church neutralizes the evil in every community where it exists by its circumspection of life. It stands in defense of the brotherhood of all Christians, regardless of nationality or whether they are rich or poor, learned or unlearned. It maintains by doctrine and life these virtues: love, purity, patience and domestic peace. Negatively the Church witnesses in doctrine and life against dishonesty, cruelty, lying, intemperance, avarice, extravagance and vain display. There can be no compromise with sin. The Church stands in opposition to sin. Whenever it loses this position it ceases to be the Church of Christ.

There is no authority in the Gospel for the Church to enter the arena of politics. The office and position of the Church and that of civil government is clearly defined in the New Testament, the one distinct from the other, with different aims and ends. The first to

teach and practice love, truth and righteousness, and the other to enact laws founded on justice, to restrain the vicious, to guard the weak and protect the good, to which end the sword is given the magistracy to be used in case of need.

All civil laws are supposed to be founded upon justice and, in case of disobedience, forcible means must be used to uphold the integrity of law and justice. Therefore the Church cannot consistently mingle with politics, such as the electing of officials and dictating policy and laws, although of a reformatory character, since force may be necessary to the obedience of the laws, which no Christian can consistently use. The Church, by its life of love, peace and purity appeals to the world without respect of person, to come to Christ and be saved.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

THOUGHTS ON SCRIPTURE SUBJECTS

JOSEPH'S FIDELITY—The Scriptures say, God is no respecter of persons. We can see why; because he made us all: all gifts come from Him. Yet He needs people for different uses in His great plan; He has made variety in His great realm for different purposes. We should not say in our hearts to the Supreme Maker, "Why hast Thou made me thus?" Rom. 9: 20.

We need rulers and there must be subjects. We should be thankful for the place we fill, and, if it should be an important one, it were a sin to be puffed up for that which God has done for us; and it is said He will abase those who exalt themselves. Matt. 23: 12. The Savior abased Himself and invites us to learn meekness of Him. Matt. 11: 29. To esteem with thankfulness what we have is an honor to the Giver, but to try to grasp by unfairness and

greed that which belongs to another is the sin of covetousness.

Joseph was loved by his father, we believe, because by good conduct he made himself worthy of his father's love. God also loved him for his faithfulness and knew He could trust him, for He gave him some dreams foretelling his future. His brethren hated him for his dreams, as those who succeed often are envied. Therefore those who are favored should not yield to pride, as if by their own power they had accomplished more than others. Deut. 8: 17.

Affliction came first to Joseph, then prosperity. Gen. 37. He stood firmly for virtue in temptation, and God was with him to bring him to usefulness and honor, and we find no trace of high-mindedness, or hatred against his brethren for the wrong they had done him. He could have punished them when they came under his power; instead he forgave them, loved and favored them, giving them the best of the land. He gave God the praise for the good he could do to others. Gen. 50: 20. We should give God praise when we are kept from the excesses, the abuses, the follies, the many wrongs which are done by sinners, in the present evil world. Gal. 1: 4.

Joseph forms a spiritual portrait of the Savior in that he was hated, was tempted, was sold for a price, was like one dead to his father, was appointed of God to be a savior of life. We see how virtue counts with God.

Examples of worth should be an inspiration to all to follow a pure, just, useful, honorable, moderate life, for our own happiness, and to meet the design of our Maker in creating us with capability for forming such a noble character. "As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined." We should begin early in life to form the best possible habits, that

correctness may become part of our nature, and through life we should never relax good efforts, for disorder easily creeps upon us. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you," is a true maxim, for he is the author of all disorder.

The spiritual qualities are not acquired by cultivation. They are gifts, yet we are taught to "follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts, * * * give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

ESAU AND JACOB—These sons of Isaac and Rebekah were twins; the first born was rough, the second smooth; their difference evidently indicates a spiritual distinction, as we are told that such examples are for our learning, upon whom the ends of the world have come. Gen. 25. We may interpret Esau's roughness as an example of the severity of the Law from Sinai lacking the spirit of love, condemning every violation unsparingly and inflicting death for every gross transgression.

Esau was shortsighted in living for present gratification. When he came home from the field and saw his brother's pottage he coveted it, saying, "Feed me I am at the point of death, what profit shall this birthright do me?" And he sold it to Jacob for a mess of pottage. It is said he despised his birthright but that he afterward bitterly repented.

Those who lived under the first law, of which Esau is a figure, had in view temporal advantage in the assurance of the promise: "It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep." Deut. 28: 1-4. The spiritual blessings were not given them, because regenera-

tion was not embraced in that early covenant. The precepts and statutes then taught, pertained to this life. Moral people now fulfill the conditions of that law, only that some moral people profess religion and others do not.

The consistent aim of those in the moral life should be to advance to the state of regeneration, according to the scriptures: "The Law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." Gal. 3: 24. Both Moses and John the Baptist lead to Christ, but neither of their missions is as high as the mission of Christ.

By deceit, Jacob supplanted his brother Esau in obtaining the blessing from his father. Such deception is not countenanced in the New Covenant, for Christ says, "A good tree cannot bring evil fruit." Matt. 7: 18. When we have a purified conscience we will always speak the truth, and will perform it in all our affairs. Jacob lived before the Law was given to Moses, and long before Christ taught a new birth. Of the license allowed by Moses the Savior says, that leniency was because of the hardness of their hearts, but it was not so intended in the beginning, giving evidence that He came to restore life to what it was before mankind had fallen under the hardness of sin. Matt. 19: 8.

Taking Esau to be a type of the severity of the law of Moses, and Jacob, the smooth man, to be typical of the Gospel of love and mercy we can see the design of Jacob receiving Esau's birthright. As the promise of eternal life is in the Gospel and not in the Law, so naturally Jacob supplanted Esau as the Gospel supplants the Law. Moses could not inherit Canaan, that coveted land which is the symbol of the Christ-life. Moses could see the land from Mount Pisgah, giving symbolic evidence of the spirit of the Law looking forward to Christ, the True Righteousness.

The young generation that grew up in the wilderness during the forty years of wandering are the ones who inherited Canaan and who built the Temple for true worship after they had purged the land from idolatry. God was with them when they were loyal, and prospered them; when they were disloyal He withheld prosperity.

The young generation may symbolize those who accept the new birth in Christ. We see some relation in these two classes, confirming the prophecy of Moses that the Lord will raise up another Prophet whom we shall hear, who is the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that in his Seed all the nations of the earth are to be blessed; that is all who seek the blessing. He "is the Prince of the Kings of the earth."

PRECIOUS ETERNAL LIFE—What good thing shall I do to obtain it? Matt. 19: 16-20. The Savior answers, "Obey God's Word." The querist asks, "What part of it?" The reply from Him who knew the heart's secrets was, detach your love from your worldly riches, part with your idolatry, be more compassionate to the poor in using the gifts which are God's, if you would be perfect in grace.

If we, like the young man who came to Christ, would base our hope for eternal life on our moral virtues without contrition, we would come short of that promise, for "The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy." James 4: 5. No one in works fulfills the spirit of all commands, or we would be justified without Christ.

To be perfect the young man was to deny the covetousness which made him cling to his riches. For stewards who carry out the spirit of loving others as themselves have so many opportunities of sharing the gifts of God with others

that they do not lay up riches as do the extortionate votaries of the world.

The profession of religion does not deliver those who lack the life hid with Christ in God, since they abuse the blessings entrusted to them by their grant of talent and opportunity. When the young man was told to distribute what he wrongfully held, he went away grieved and left his blessed Teacher, for the same spirit which made him rich held him captive under mammon.

Such are all professors who feast on worldly lust. The Savior commented on their erring example by pointing out to His disciples the danger of loving unduly this present world to which we are naturally inclined, and in which Satan offers many enticements.

The symbolic principle in riches is fullness. Whatsoever worldliness we are full of is the same evil as to be given unduly to money. The evil may be conceit; jealousy against those who excel us; too much desire for bodily comfort and show; a discontented mind, which prevents appreciation and gratitude for our daily blessings; a want of interest in others, crippled by too much love for ourselves; an indulgence of ease when we should be of service to promote the good of others; catering to an impatient disposition which by grace we should subdue; being unwilling to bear reproof and to make full amends for our failings, to which failings we are to a certain degree subject.

When Paul speaks of a law in his members being opposite to the law of the Spirit, he does not mean that we should obey the law of sin, for he says, "If we live after the flesh we shall die." Rom. 8: 13.

Whatever the Savior meant by a camel passing through the eye of a needle, the disciples understood by the illustration: "Who then can be saved?" A full submission to God will save us,

whether we be Jew or Gentile. Rom. 2: 14.

We have departed from obedience, and the perfect willingness to obey Christ will bring us into the adoption and make us heirs of life everlasting. John 6: 37. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. 8: 16. The Word, our conscience, and our lives must be in harmony. The Savior ascribed to God the accomplishment of that which might seem impossible to us.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

THE WAY OF LIFE

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. 7: 13, 14.

The above text is from the One who had all knowledge and supreme authority. We may think of God, Christ, and Holy Ghost as being distinct and separate nevertheless they constitute the triune God.

The apostle John says, John 1: 5, 7, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." In the first chapter of John's Gospel he said, "The Word was made flesh, (Christ) and dwelt among us."

Although, in the infinite mind He was slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. 13: 8, all that was foretold, pre-figured and prophesied of Him was fulfilled; hence He could teach as one having authority.

His power was displayed when the afflicted were restored whole, the dead raised to life, and the evil spirits had to depart at His command.

Witnessing miracles performed by the Savior did not enlighten the Apostles

relative to the nature of Christ's Kingdom. Though they believed He was the Christ, this did not change them at heart as we notice when they asked Him whether they should command fire to come down from heaven and consume their adversaries, even as Elias did. The Savior's rebuke was significant. They knew not what manner of spirit they were of, nor for what purpose He came into the world. "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

The spirit displayed by the Apostles is proof that they were yet under hardness of heart and a covenant of works. While they respected the Savior, they were, at heart, traveling where the gate is wide and the road is broad. It was yet their privilege to love their neighbor and hate their enemy, as the Holy Spirit had not yet come which would bring "Life and immortality to light through the gospel."

This Gospel changed or unhinged the whole Jewish economy. It changed dead or outward works, to a spiritual service, since "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

By virtue of Christ's sacrificial offering and ascension into heaven, it is possible for mankind to render an acceptable service to God, and in His justice He can demand it. He winked at their ignorance before Christ came, but since He brought the message of peace, light and wisdom, all mankind are placed under obligation, and they are called upon to repent and,—“Hear Him.”

Christ established the strait and narrow way which leads unto everlasting life, or the kingdom of heaven, and invites all to enter. He so plainly said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

The Savior said, the gate is wide, and the way broad that leads to destruction, and many enter that way, and, because the way unto life is strait and narrow, few there be that find it.

It is manifest that God permitted privileges on the broad way, such as litigation, divorce, and demanding justice, which are denied to those who are on the narrow way. All who accept Christ on the Narrow Way, realize that there is no room for worldly privileges or liberties, contentions, litigation, and war, neither do they desire them as they have been born of the Spirit and are in perfect accord with His nonworldliness and His peaceable Kingdom.

The Savior said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." These births being directly opposite from each other, naturally the fruit will be as distinct.

As the tree is known by its fruit, so mankind are known by their life. So long as men love the world with its idle pastimes and indulge in them, it is evident that they are not on the narrow way.

We have reason to believe that there are persons who are seriously exercised about their soul's salvation, but they are unable to reconcile themselves to either the broad or the narrow way, so they try to satisfy themselves by choosing a way of their own, one which seems reasonable to them, not realizing that they are still on the broad way. They fail to realize that Christ's way or the Narrow Way is the only way of safety.

On this way selfishness is subdued, and the faithful, seek not their own, but every man another's wealth. 1 Cor. 10: 24. This promotes love and confidence which characterizes the children of God and qualifies them for the Strait and Narrow Way.

Lemoyne, Pa.

J. I. M.

A MESSAGE TO SCATTERED BELIEVERS

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.” Col. 2: 6.

God's children whether organized in church fellowship or scattered abroad, are ever in need of encouragement, instruction and admonition. Since this message reaches some of the believers who seldom have the opportunity to hear the word preached or to converse with the brethren, we desire to encourage them to be faithful. Experience reveals this truth that unless those who have received Christ Jesus, continue to walk in Him they will soon drift away and eventually lose the precious gift entrusted to them, walking with the world as they formerly did. This truth applies to all believers but would perhaps especially serve to warn those who do not have the opportunity to attend church services and who do not have the support, or encouragement of any brethren in their community. Nevertheless if they are willing to walk in Christ there is no power that can overthrow their faith.

In the spiritual as in the natural life we do not stand still, we will either grow in grace, the evidence of which will be a love for the brethren, a desire to read God's word diligently and to confess our faith freely before all men; or we will become cold and indifferent, lose interest in the brotherhood, neglect to read the word, and as a consequence fail to confess our faith to those around us. Confessing our faith is walking in Christ, which implies obedience to His teachings, humility, non-conformity to the world, a faithful witness against all doctrines not in harmony with the Gospel message, and a true adherence to the simple life in all we do.

Those who are isolated from the

Church, may not be able to confirm their faith by attending public worship and admonishing one another to faithfulness, and they may sometimes be denied the privilege of partaking of the Communion emblems, yet these disadvantages will not hinder them from walking with their Savior, neither will they be charged with neglect of duty, as would be the case where there is an organized Church. Every one who has truly received Christ will long to associate and worship with the fellow-believers and will avail themselves of such opportunity when it is convenient; they should also seek spiritual encouragement through correspondence with those of like faith.

Those who receive Christ and walk in Him can receive no spiritual encouragement or comfort from unbelievers, neither can they be in fellowship with those who claim to believe and do not walk in Christ. It is possible for one to be baptized, to attend church services regularly, to read the Bible daily, and to converse about spiritual matters and still not possess the Christ-life. This life is secured only by the renewing of the mind brought about by the new birth, which transforms the sinner into an obedient child of God. To all obedient children the admonition is, “Beloved let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” 1 John 4: 7-8.

If a believer should be surrounded by worshipers who fail to obey Christ's teachings, having pastors who comfort them in a worldly, carnal life, we would say do not be discouraged; you will be given grace to confess your Savior and to reprove all unfaithful worship and to walk in love toward all mankind. When Elijah was brought before a multitude of false prophets the Lord was

with him and he was moved to say, "If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." Elijah was a true servant of the Lord and he made no compromise with Baal, and God answered his prayer when he prayed Him to show who the true God was, yet Elijah became much discouraged and felt that he alone was left to uphold God's word. "I even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away." 1 Kings 19: 14. But the Lord comforted Elijah with these words, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." verse 18. Later the Lord comforted Elijah with the still small voice that caused him to wrap his face in his mantle and to hear a voice, "What doest thou here Elijah?" Surely the Lord will visit and comfort his children if they but call upon him in the midst of opposition.

A husband or wife, a parent or child may be led to accept Christ by reflecting upon the good counsel received from parents or friends in early life, or by reading the Bible and other books that awaken a conviction of sin. A convert may be highly respected and greatly esteemed on account of his or her faithfulness in natural duties and yet may receive no encouragement from loved ones to take up the cross of Christ. "My grace is sufficient for thee, is the message that comes to every one who receives Christ Jesus and resolves to walk in Him, regardless of his situation. We would say to all who are taking up the cross, faithful is He who has called you, for He will undoubtedly uphold you if you continue in prayer and remain unwavering in your undertaking. Do not become weary or slothful as did disobedient Israel who longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt. Since you have been called to this high calling, may the

Lord graciously preserve you from all unrighteousness, guard and guide you and protect you from your opponent, the devil, who goeth about like a roaring lion seeking to devour.

I exhort you as my fellow-workers and contenders for the faith once delivered to the saints, that you watch inwardly and outwardly over yourselves, that you continually pray God to purify and sanctify your hearts with His Holy Spirit. When opportunity affords, exhort and reprove one another, curb evil thoughts and impure motives, subdue evil lusts in the fear of the Lord. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Matt. 5: 8. Whatever God has commanded, do it without murmuring, live that none may truthfully complain of you, be as obedient children of God, "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." even as a light in a dark night. Take the Lord Jesus Christ as an example and follow His footsteps, endeavor to walk as He walked. You are guests called to the table of the Lord and have come to the marriage of the lamb. You are a part of His bride, therefore hear His voice. Adorn yourselves with simplicity, be faithful unto death, and beware of false doctrine; dedicate yourselves wholly unto the Lord that He may be your bridegroom, and may teach, reprove and lead you by His Holy Spirit and Word, so that His perfect work may be in you. Fear not, for He is a faithful king and will be your shield and great reward; doubt not, and do not fear persecution or ridicule. The Messenger is now at the door who will say to all the faithful, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." Matt. 25: 34.

We are all taught of God and realize that we can advance nothing new, yet

love has prompted us to write this admonition, to warn those who may be tempted with unbelief, and to comfort those who may feel forsaken or cast down, that they resist evil and draw nigh to God. Remember, your Savior said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." John 16: 33. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Phil. 4: 13. David said, "By my God I have leaped over a wall." 2 Sam. 22: 30. May the merciful Heavenly Father preserve us all in the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. L. K.

THE RAINBOW

When we see in the heavens the rainbow so fair,
We gaze with a sense of delight.
In this emblem is seen God's handiwork rare,
Revealing His power and might.

The storm laden clouds have drifted away,
The lightning and thunder roll by;
The sun and the rain reflected we see
In tints of the bow in the sky.

Perpetual this covenant God has declared,
As long as this earth shall remain,
No deluge of water again shall destroy,
This sign of my word is the same.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

JOY

Naturally there is satisfaction and pleasure for man when he can peacefully labor and God blesses his efforts abundantly for the sustenance and comforts of this life. There was joy in Israel when the mighty men of war of the different tribes were of one heart to make David king over all Israel, and they could bountifully partake of the good things with which God had blessed them. 1 Chron. 12: 40. Spiritually, joy is the delight and satisfaction of the soul in its union with God in Christ, for in that union one receives the great

est and highest good and can truly rejoice in that which is for one's eternal welfare and for the honor and glory of God.

Although God provides so abundantly for man's temporal welfare, life is full of disappointment and sadness through sin. But He has so constituted man that he can be submissive and through grace can overcome the trials and temptations of life and can finally rejoice in the Lord.

Since God "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" it should not be hard for man to realize that he is unqualified to dwell in the presence of a righteous God and if he were dependent upon his own resources he would be shut out from eternal felicity. To have true joy now and a hope of eternal happiness he must take advantage of the provision made through Christ to redeem all men who truly repent.

"Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance. Luke 15: 7. By refusing to yield to a conviction of sin, or if favor with God is sought through any other means than by the merits and suffering of Christ, heaven cannot rejoice. By accepting Christ and His word in its entirety, sinners are redeemed and to them the words of the prophets apply, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. 35: 10. "Thy words were found and I did eat them and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart for I am called by thy name." Jer. 15: 16.

Let us consider the circumstances of the night of the passover when the Lord

instituted His memorial service and washed His disciples feet, when the shadows of Gethsemane and Calvary were heavy on His heart, when He was facing the betrayal and all the agonies of the death of the cross, yet for the victory, glory and joy that were to follow. He despised the shame and patiently endured the cross. Knowing that the hearts of His disciples were troubled and knowing how hard it was for them to understand that this was the way to the kingdom of God, He sought to cheer and comfort them and promised them that a place would be prepared for them. He revealed to them that after His crucifixion and death they would have His spiritual presence, His Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which would come to them and testify of Him and teach them all things and give to them a power and communion that they could not have while He was present with them in person. This He illustrated by the beautiful parable of the vine and branches, and in His tender exhortation gave the promise, "Abide in me and I in you." Then He said, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full." John 15: 11.

Heaven rejoices with the children of God, with them who are in fellowship with God through Christ, with whom the presence of His Spirit dwells, keeping them in peace and fellowship with one another, and to whom the Psalmist referred when he spoke in prophecy, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

The Savior said, "I will not leave you comfortless." Truly His followers can rejoice and be comforted by the knowledge of His promised Presence through all the suffering, temptations and anxieties of life for He is able to sustain and support them, and they who suffer with

Him, shall reign with Him. The apostle Peter encourages the believer, "Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter 4: 12.

The counsel of the apostle James is, "Brethren count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations, knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience, but let patience have its perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing." James 1: 2-4. Through human nature, which cannot inherit the kingdom of God, the child of God is subject to various temptations, but if, by grace, he meets them, looking to his Heavenly Father for strength to overcome, he will realize that all things work for good to help him to know his own weakness and frailty and to depend upon God alone, for the Savior says, "I am the vine * * * without me you can do nothing." Truly then the believer can rejoice in temptations when he realizes that they are the means of keeping him in touch with the great source of life.

If in all the difficulties of this life the believer patiently and faithfully does his duty, he can trust God that He will provide, as the Psalmist said, "I have not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread." But greater than all the comforts of this life, he that endures has a treasure in heaven where thieves do not break through nor steal and neither moth or rust can corrupt.

May God's loving care and providence awaken in the hearts of many of our dear friends, the need of turning to a Savior who invites them to come and partake of a joy that is full.

H. G.

Baden, Ontario.

TO THE FAITHFUL IS THE PROMISE

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life.” James 1: 12.

The words of the apostle James above cited are worthy of consideration. They direct our minds to a condition that every human being of rational mind desires, that of being blessed. Inasmuch as God loves us, He would not direct our minds to blessedness unless He also provided a means by which we can attain unto it.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation. Since the enduring of temptation brings the promise of blessedness, the yielding to temptation will bring the opposite result. The first record we have of the tempter was when he made his appearance to our first parents in the garden of Eden where he tempted them to partake of that which God had forbidden. We are all well acquainted with the result, they did not endure temptation, and consequently man became a sinful creature. They fell from that condition of blessedness wherein they were created, for they were created in the image of God.

The result of the first transgression we experience in our everyday lives, and in reading the record we have of man, the effects of his fall are clearly shown in every age. Cain was tempted and became envious of his brother because his offering was rejected and his brother's was accepted. Had he pondered the cause, it would have humbled him; he could then have endured temptation and consequently been blessed. But he yielded to the tempter and the curse was upon him.

We find that the tempter so swayed the hearts and minds of men that they forgot God, and it repented Him that he had created man, and He purposed to destroy him from the face of the earth

with a great flood. Yet here we note that God still loved man, in that He did not fulfill His purpose without giving him ample time, warning him by the preaching of Noah, and providing a means of escape for those who should believe His word and avail themselves of the means He provided. Only eight souls were found righteous in the sight of God. The entrance of Noah and his household into the ark is a representation of the family of God in this age of the world entering the spiritual ark, Christ Jesus. The dire effects of sin and disobedience were everywhere evident, even as they are in our day.

On the other hand we note that God always blessed them who endured; we might cite many, as Noah and the Patriarchs. Abraham was asked to offer up his only son through whose seed the nations were to be blessed. He might have been tempted with the desire to withhold his son, but he had a living faith in God and by it he endured. Likewise faithful Job, when all was taken from him, his health impaired, his flesh afflicted with grievous sores, when his friends, who formerly had confidence in his integrity, tried to convict him of sin, and finally his wife allied herself with Satan and advised him to curse God and die, exercised the power of a living faith in that he could look beyond all his earthly miseries and trials and say, “I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

Christ who came in due time to redeem us from our fallen state was also tempted, but without sin; and consequently a blessed condition resulted. We now through Him can also overcome; the power of the tempter is broken. Yet we are permitted to be tempted, to prove our faithfulness. Christ was tempted as we are but He endured. “After He had fasted forty days and was anhungered, Satan tempted Him saying,” “If thou be the Son of God

command that these stones be made bread." But Jesus answered and said, "it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." Jesus did greater miracles than that which was here asked of Him; but had He complied with Satan's suggestion He would have become the servant of sin, for we are the servants of him to whom we yield ourselves as servants to obey. Do we not see in the world, and also in our experience, and in our own trials, the effort to live by bread alone? That is, by an outward declaration of Christ, prone to deny His power by not accepting every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God, as declared through Christ.

And again Satan took Him to the Holy City and set Him on the pinnacle of the Temple, and saith unto Him; "If thou be the son of God cast thyself down, etc.," But Jesus answered, "It is written: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." In this present day, by remaining outside our great city of Refuge, Christ, or in reaching out too much into the world, out of which he has called us, we may expose ourselves to its dangers and tempt God. May we earnestly strive to endure and be blessed.

Again he taketh Him up into an high mountain and showed Him all the kingdom of the world and the glory of them and saith unto Him: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Then Jesus saith unto him, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." This temptation which Christ so faithfully endured, is one to which we are all subjected. The things of this world are very dear to the carnal mind; wealth, honor, fame, are very gratifying to our proud and selfish nature. But

we with Christ, must also say, "Get thee hence Satan:" for we are now not of this world even as He is not of this world. Then the tempter leaveth Him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto Him. Christ has triumphed; as He has overcome so shall we also overcome. The strong man armed is taken captive. Satan is bound a thousand years, which time may well represent our day of probation. But he is bound only for those who accept Christ as their righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

W. J. R.

Archbold, Ohio.

BRIEF NOTES

The summer is ended. Many of us live in sections of the country that have been blessed with a fruitful season. The great drought of last year taught a lesson of gratitude for favors, that to many, are so common they are never rightly appreciated. But we do not forget there are others in distress over the lack of the necessities of life. There is a harder lesson in this. Our sympathies go out to them with the hope that the winter ahead may not be as hard as they fear. Whether there is plenty or poverty we may turn to our God who intends that all things in life should be a training for our eternal good.

We are reminded of the blessing promised the righteous of old when they sought to worship God with faithful hearts. The Psalmist said the Lord hath chosen Zion for His habitation. "I will abundantly bless her provisions, I will satisfy her poor with bread." This no doubt had a natural meaning in those days and we like to feel it is still so. But we do know the spiritual wants are always supplied. Provision is made that we can go in peace if not in plenty. But we should be careful that we "Do not spend money for that which it not

bread, or labor for that which satisfieth not."

* * * *

In the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians we are told that the Lord "gave gifts unto men." How true it is that we have nothing but what we receive from the Lord. There is no room for pride with any of us. Humility and gratitude only are becoming to man.

But having gifts it is our duty to use them. There is a work for us in this life. We have different gifts and capacities for duty, learning and helpfulness, but each is given power to live the higher life no matter what the tendencies of our nature are.

In making comparison we feel some are more fortunate in their endowments. We admire in others the fruits we should like to have appear in our own lives. But wisdom teachers that first of all we should strive to live to God's honor and glory and not for the commendation of our friends. We could stand among the good and great of earth and yet never render the right kind of service to receive the Lord's approval. He alone knows the heart and the real use that is being made of the gifts given us. The parable of the talents illustrates the reward there is for those who use their gifts well. So if our gifts seem small to us we should not despise them or cease to make the best possible use of them. It is faithfulness that commends us to our God and He never asks more of us than we can give.

* * * *

"Early in the morning our thoughts shall rise to Thee."

How fitting that our waking thoughts should turn to our Creator who gives us restful sleep and the ability and desire to arise to meet the obligations of the day. The duties of life often press

hard, anxieties and burdens are awaiting our return to them, but how it lightens the day's work to spend a little time in communion with God. It is a preparation of spirit fitting us to strive to do more faithfully and patiently the things that are required of us. And when evening comes may we be able to compose ourselves and say, "I will lay me down in peace and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety."

* * * *

We are impressed with the necessity of being deeply rooted. In the growing things about us we see this. Our gardens and fields are a failure if proper rooting is lacking. Cultivation, sunshine and moisture are needed. In many cases, like the orchards, pruning is needed too. It is only the diligent that have success.

Our hearts are just like gardens. Like with a seed bed we need the waters of grace, the fertilizing influences of love and faith and hope. The sunshine of encouragement as well as clouds of disheartenment are also needed. It is often the storms that make good rooting and too much sunshine often scorches the tender growth. We have a perfect Gardener if we give our hearts to God. He alone can bring us to the fruiting season.

* * * *

It has been well said that "no man liveth to himself." We all influence each other in our association, and it is a good aim in life to be a blessing and an encouragement rather than the reverse. When love rules the higher life is always encouraged. We feel it in our own experiences that those who help us most are those who believe in us, whereas indifference to us and our interests destroys courage and disheartens us.

Here, as always, comes the thought of God's great love to us. We may

falter and fail and be disloyal, but always He draws us back to Himself with the cords of love. If we yield to His gracious promptings our feet are set on the upward path, and if He cannot, according to our finite reasoning, believe in us, He takes us as we are and patiently tries to make us vessels fit for His use. The words of the old hymn express our comfort:

“O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul on Thee.”

* * * *

The apostle Peter is an interesting character study. He is an example of impulsive love and unexpected weakness. He even tries walking on the waves at night when he sees Jesus do so, only to find himself sinking with fear in spite of his boldness. In his strong faith, he declares, if all others forsake the Savior he will not, only to find himself denying Him before a servant girl next day. No wonder he slipped away to weep bitterly.

Our own experiences give us an understanding sympathy for Peter, and our desire is when we fail that the Lord's mercy may be extended to us as it was to him and that our weaknesses may be as gently dealt with by the Master we want to serve. How it must have cheered him to have the angel at the tomb say to the women that they should go tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus was risen. Before the ascension Christ verified Peter's loyalty thrice by asking if he loved Him. With grief he answered, “Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest I love thee.” May we have the same deep sincerity in the repentant love that must so often fill our hearts.

When we think of our high calling as Christians, the ideals and the goodness that are included in such a profession, we have reason to be discouraged with

the lives we live. But comfort comes in the way God has provided for our shortcomings in the blessed Savior. If we are humble and repentant “the power of Christ” may rest upon us and we can say with the Apostle “when I am weak then am I strong.” “His grace is sufficient.” Here is our hope and our glory. We may not hold positions of honor or renown in the eyes of the world but we can accept Christ and stand for Him in this world of sin.

THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST

“Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.”
2 Cor. 3: 2, 3.

A certain writer has said, “An epistle is a written statement whereby one communicates his mind to another.” Therefore Paul, in the above text would say, “Since you by your walk and conduct give evidence of the Christian life, and are accounted to be followers of Christ; and since your conversion is the result of our labors or ministry, you communicate to others the truth that the mind and spirit we have, and the doctrine we teach are the same as Christ's, confirming the fact that we are true ministers of Christ.”

To every person this should be a subject for meditation, for we are communicating to others the mind and spirit we possess, and the Scriptures clearly reveal that mankind are actuated by one of two influences, namely, the Spirit of Christ or that of antichrist,” for we can not serve God and mammon.

God is one undivided Spirit and those that serve Him must serve Him in Spirit and in truth. John 4: 24. The spirit of antichrist confessed (Mark 5: 9) “My name is Legion: for we are many.”

The apostle John also says, "Even now are there many antichrists. 1 John 2: 18. "Beloved believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are 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 confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." 1 John 4: 1, 3.

These are impressive Scriptures. They make us accountable for the Spirit we manifest, and they show that we must prove all who teach or minister, and know what Spirit they are of before we unite with them.

We should consider carefully what the mind and Spirit of Christ is. He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but humbled Himself, bore our sins, and died a cruel death that we might live, has taught by example and precept, humility, love, submission and subjection to the will of the Father. We are told to follow His example if we would see the kingdom of heaven. He said to his disciples, "I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit." John 15: 16. He also said, "If you were of the world the world would love his own, but because you are not of the world but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15: 19.

It is also said (Eph. 5: 26, 27) that Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word so that it may be pure. In the 18th chapter of Matthew we have such clear instructions, such a perfect plan to maintain this purity: I would say beloved in Christ, here we have such a clearly defined duty, may we read it

carefully and prayerfully and meditate upon it and fear God's displeasure if we knowingly neglect to discharge our duty.

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5, 6, 7) we have in clear and simple language an outline of what is required of a Christian. It is the keynote to the New Testament, as all the rest harmonizes with it as do the prophetic Scriptures referring to Christ's kingdom. Isa. 2: 4; 11: 6, 7, 8.

In St. John 17, Christ says of His disciples, "I have given them thy word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world. I pray not that thou should take them out of the world but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil," and further, "Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

Since Paul says Christians are the epistle of Christ it follows that their life and conduct must reflect Christ's Spirit and mind. Can we claim the name consistently and yet sanction a divided Church? or take part with the world in its pleasures and vanities? or in establishing or taking part in government which belongs to the world to punish evildoers and maintain order with the sword or by force when Christ says, Resist not evil, and love your enemies? Will they not have to separate from the world and leave it with its pleasures and governments, as Christ taught by word and example so they can bring forth the fruits of the Spirit which are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

May we as believers be seriously impressed with the thought that by our

life and conduct at home and abroad we are to reflect the mind and Spirit of Christ. And since it is our duty to teach the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ, and leave to the present generation a good example, may we use diligence and with Paul rather forego and not use such lawful liberties as may weaken confidence or be a snare to our soul or to that of others, and may God grant us sufficient grace to rule over our weaknesses in the flesh and keep unspotted from the world, for we are to be the Epistle of Christ.

Humberstone, Ont.

A. C.

GIVING OUR ALL

“For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even her living.” Mark 12: 44.

In the example of the widow who cast all she had into the treasury as recorded in the closing part of the twelfth chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark, the Savior teaches a lesson which is instructive.

Casting into the treasury as it is here used may, under present conditions, be compared to making a profession of religion. The only acceptable offering is that in which we give our whole life, without reservation, and not merely of our abundance. The apostle Paul says, “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Romans 12: 1.

The Savior was not impressed by the large contributions of those who were rich and cast in much, because, as He said, they cast in of their abundance. Some persons are favored with such natural dispositions that it is comparatively easy for them to live in such a way that their lives are admired and commended by men who only “looketh

on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”

We can therefore understand that when prompted by a sincere desire for truth together with willingness to obey the Spirit, a life which may appear to lack much, but which shows sincerity, may be more acceptable to God than an outwardly beautiful life which is only the result of a more favorable natural disposition.

How comforting it is then to realize that our Savior fully understands our every situation. He knows what to expect of His followers, and will not ask more than He will enable us to do. We have no right to conclude that our natures are so unfortunate that we cannot live in accordance with His will. He was tempted in all ways like as we are, and will sustain us unto the end if we but fully trust and obey Him.

Obedience to the Divine Will includes the testing of our faith, as we learn soon after we decide to serve God. The spirit of this world, which according to nature rules our lives, is not easily dethroned, and constantly interferes with that complete obedience to the prompting of the Spirit which brings true comfort. The result is a more or less constant struggle that the Holy Spirit may retain the ascendancy.

As we meet these varied experiences, we learn that “tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.” Romans 5: 3-5. We may feel comforted, even elated at times when we appear to have been favored by the support of the Spirit in certain experiences, and may feel that we have endured or sacrificed a great deal. Let us be guarded then lest we conclude that

we have cast much into the treasury, because if the true light is in our hearts, we shall always be impressed that we have done little, and that in an imperfect manner. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things that were commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Luke 17: 10.

Though we may feel that our lives are comparatively insignificant, let us remember that we are all precious in the sight of God who "desires not the death of the sinner," that our Savior gave Himself for us, and invites us to come unto Him. It, therefore, is our duty to give evidence of the humble devotion and confidence shown by this poor widow by yielding ourselves in true obedience to the will of God.

Mountville, Pa.

J. H. F.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." John 5: 39, 40.

These words may have several applications. In the first place they were spoken to justify and defend Jesus' position as One who had received authority from heaven. The envious Jews could not bear to see any one who was afflicted, so miraculously restored as the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. They hated Jesus, therefore they took occasion to accuse Him at every opportunity, and they felt they had a strong occasion in the case of the impotent man because He had broken their traditions of the sabbath, a thing which He had done on numerous previous occasions. In Matt. 12: 7, He says, "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the

guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath day." He commended them for trusting in the Scriptures, and encouraged them to search them carefully. The Scriptures which they had at that time was the Old Covenant, the New had not yet been given.

Now that Jesus lived and died and His deeds and teachings have been recorded, we have much more instruction in the way of righteousness than had they who lived before the Gospel age; and the words of the text appeal forcibly to us, for counsel, comfort and salvation. The Scriptures contain instruction to duty, warning against danger, and promise for obedience. The more our minds are occupied with any thought, the more familiar we become with it; and, inasmuch as the tempter constantly approaches us with all manner of evil, it requires the utmost diligence to retain the true spirit of love, humility and purity. As "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17: 9), we must ever be watchful to rightfully discern the thoughts that come to our minds and withstand them that war against our souls.

When Paul and Silas were preaching in Thessalonica the unbelieving Jews moved with envy, gathered a company of the baser sort, and set all the city in an uproar, and even followed them to Berea and stirred up the people. The Bereans were more noble, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so. Acts 17. We can always profit by searching the Scriptures if our motives are pure. The Scriptures present new thoughts to our minds, they enlarge the vision and they prepare us to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of our hope, with meekness and fear. They fortify us against the evil that comes

from so many sources, both without and within, and they fit us to be serviceable to the world that His Spirit may shine through us so that men may see our good works, and glorify the Heavenly Father. They give us discernment and courage to detect the crafty suggestions of evil and stand against them.

The Jews, who knew the Scriptures, could not fail to see that they pointed forward to Christ, and in a measure they believed that fact; but many of them could not understand that His Kingdom was spiritual. They could not comprehend how a king could be able to fulfill his calling without using violence to control and regulate his subjects. The carnal mind cannot receive the things of the Spirit, and the world today cannot see the propriety or consistency of standing aloof from the government and of refusing those duties which, when well done, tend to make the world safer by holding the evil-doer in restraint. That Christ's people are chosen out of the world and that they have no place in discharging the duties of its government are two facts that are largely overlooked.

The Prophet Isaiah foretold, "Government shall be upon his shoulder; and he shall be called * * * The Prince of Peace." Government and control are in the hearts of His subjects; there the conflict is waged, and when the victory is won, then there is peace with the outside world, and charity and forbearance are in evidence. The carnal mind cannot attain to the life of the Spirit and can hardly comprehend it. A man of the world may admire the life of the non-resistant Christian, especially when he has been benefited by it, and may strive by his own power to imitate it and to a certain extent he may be able to profit by it and enjoy a degree of comfort in consequence; but he cannot

receive the fulness of the Spirit except he resign himself completely and walk in obedience in all things. These things are taught in the Scriptures, and these are the things we should with all diligence seek for; they will lead under the cross, and in the way of self-denial, but finally to eternal life.

Landisville, Pa.

C. S. N.

THE SURE FOUNDATION

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ."

Both in the Old and the New Testaments Christ is called a foundation. Long before He came it was said through the mouth of the prophet, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." The promise of a Redeemer was given soon after the fall. He was the foundation of all the hopes of Old Testament believers and is the source of all spiritual comfort and happiness enjoyed by New Testament believers. He is the foundation of the covenant of grace on whom His people securely rest; the only mediator between God and man.

His kingdom of peace was also foretold in the following beautiful language, "The government shall be upon his shoulder, his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." He is the sure foundation on which the spiritual building—the Church stands. He is that tried stone, that precious corner stone that binds the building together into one.

It is inspiring to read that part of the Scriptures which tell of the Jews and Gentiles who were at enmity for ages, how that all those who were converted and established on the founda-

tion Rock became so completely and closely united that it was said by Paul, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Conditions could not be more adverse to unity, peace and harmony than in the days of the Apostles, because of the legality of the Jews on one side and the liberality of the Gentiles on the other. We might conclude that such strong prejudice as existed would have been irreconcilable, but when the heart is changed and we get on a secure foundation, spiritually, as our text implies, divisions are impossible. When our faith is grounded upon the doctrine of Christ, and built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets we shall be of the same mind and judgment and the oneness for which the Savior prayed will be realized and maintained.

The temple of Solomon at Jerusalem is frequently referred to by scripture writers as a type of the Church of Christ. It was a magnificent building, bound together by its carefully hewn timbers and dressed stones into one great structure, many of its parts being overlaid with gold.

The material in its rude state typifies man by nature, unprepared and unfit for use in the spiritual building—the Church. As the material for the building of the temple was prepared and shapen by the builders before it became a part of the building that neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron was heard in the house, so the heart of man must be changed by the influence of grace that he may be fitted for membership in the Church of Christ.

With Christ our foundation and chief Corner Stone, the Church made up of many parts as was the temple of Solomon, becomes a unit or body "fitly joined together, and compacted by that

which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, which maketh increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love." Eph. 4: 16. According to the Scriptures which we have quoted it is clear that an organization of which Jesus Christ is the head and foundation can not be divided.

In the epistle to the Corinthians of which our text is a part, Paul earnestly counsels against divisions, stating clearly that Christ is not divided, and that where contention and discord exists we give evidence that we are not building on a sure foundation. Some time after he founded the Church at Corinth the apostle Paul was informed by the house of Chloe that some among them had become contentious. It is manifest that the object of this epistle was to warn against divisions. He earnestly pointed them to Christ in whose name the Church was established, "Now I beseech you brethren in 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. "For while one saith I am of Paul and another I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?"

Paul was endowed with a great measure of spiritual wisdom while Apollos was noted for his eloquence. It is obvious that the contention and strife which had sprung up in the Church was because of a preference for one or the other of those who had the care over the Church. The severe reproof which the apostle Paul promised those who caused strife and division should impress every Bible reader that division was not tolerated then and dare not exist today in the true Church of Christ. It is generally held that Christ is the sure foundation on which the Church stands; then to be consistent we should also accept His sayings which plainly teach unity.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. J. T.

LITTLE FOXES

“The little foxes that spoil the vines.”
Solomon’s Song 2: 15.

One would suppose that some fierce, large animal would be most destructive to vineyards as such animals could easily crush all the vines and ruin the vineyard. But Solomon, the wisest of men, knew better. Vineyards are generally planted where the more ferocious animals have been subdued. But the little foxes remain.

How do these little foxes spoil the vines? We read that they burrow around their roots, and under the surface of the ground, make homes there for themselves and their cubs. Thus they uproot the vines so that the vines wither and die because they do not get the necessary nourishment and moisture which the fine roots draw from the soil. Besides this the foxes are very fond of the ripe grapes and eat them freely, so that the little foxes are much dreaded by those who cultivate grapes in the eastern countries.

Can we not draw a lesson from this? The vine may be compared to our spiritual life in Christ Jesus. Ferocious beasts may be compared to great sins from which all believers would shrink and turn away. Little foxes to minor sins or transgressions not so clearly defined, nor so greatly feared.

What are little foxes in the spiritual life? Are they not little liberties, little sins which, if indulged in, will grow to greater ones, and destroy the spiritual life? We have all met these little foxes. Perhaps all, or at least most of us have been more or less harmed by them. Ah, they gnaw at the roots through which we get our life—they destroy our foundations. They are as much to be dreaded as great sins, for they are so mixed with the appearance of good that they may do us serious harm before they are recognized.

Let us pray earnestly for light and understanding, for the wisdom that cometh from above, that, before our eyes are blinded to their true nature, we may discern the workings of these little liberties, these little foxes that spoil the vines.

Perhaps each one has a different little fox to contend with. It may be “the sin that doth so easily beset us.” So each believer knows, or will soon find out where he or she has to be most on guard.

One person may have a tendency to not tell the truth; not exactly to lie, but to create a false impression by not being particular as to the accuracy of his statements, or even to act a lie, without saying anything, if self-interest is in the case. Such a tendency, if not checked, will, in time, lead to actual misrepresentation. Another may be tempted to be proud, and with only God to know of it, gratify himself or herself in one way or another until the simple life of self-denial, which was so earnestly begun may be entirely overthrown, and the once enthusiastic convert may have become worldly minded much to the satisfaction of the enemy of all good, whose great work is to destroy souls.

Bad habits are also little foxes. Let us stop and think. Habits of carelessness and thoughtlessness. Perhaps only a little here and there. We may think it will do no harm, but “you know it is constant dropping that wears the hardest stone,” and our spiritual life is by no means so well set that it can be compared to the hardest stone. “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”

Selfishness is at the bottom of thoughtlessness for others. It is so easy to the flesh to settle down and be comfortable, and do what you enjoy doing without thinking of what the others of the family are doing and what must be done if the family is to be properly cared for.

Another bad little fox is the habit of complaining. Instead of making ourselves, our family, and our friends uncomfortable and even miserable, by dwelling on the unpleasant things in our lives, let us try to find the pleasant things, think of them and thank God for them.

Another little fox is neglect of reading the Word and meditating upon it and trying to apply it in our daily lives. We are not apt to neglect taking the nourishment that our physical body needs. Most of us are ready three times a day for our food, and sometimes even demand it. Our spiritual food is the Word, the Gospel, the Good News which our dear Savior brought us. Our spiritual life cannot grow, nor can it be preserved if we do not nourish it, any more than can our natural bodies live for any great length of time without food.

If we have little time to read, let the Word come first. Let us not take up a work of fiction, whether in book form, or as a continued story in a magazine, however fascinating either may be, for they divert the mind from the main object of our life, and occupy our scant time which might and should be more profitably spent. Besides, the ideas and suggestions of evil found in the current literature of the day, may linger in our minds and do us positive harm.

Finally let us cultivate charity, for uncharitable thoughts are so apt to come, even though we do not want them. Increasing years and experience should broaden our charity, both in thought and in word. St. Paul says, "and now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity." 1 Cor. 13: 13.

Can we not infer from this that the habit of thought most dangerous to the believer, and least like our lovely pattern, Christ Jesus, is want of charity?

Let us watch closely for the inroads of this much to be dreaded "little fox."

The still small voice that speaks within, warns us. Prayer is our great need, for it is the means by which and through which we can reach our Divine Helper, Jesus. He was here on this earth in the form of a human being, but Divine in nature. Though tempted in all things as we are, He never sinned. He is always ready to hear and to help those who call upon Him in humility and who desire and try to follow Him.

Even the sly little foxes, and they are very sly, cannot harm those who obey Christ's teaching, "watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation." When a matter comes up about which one is doubtful, if one must make an instant decision, it is better to err on the safe side and not indulge until one has had time to reflect and ask Divine guidance.

Lancaster, Pa.

L. L. F.

THE ELDER BROTHER

"He was angry and would not go in" . . .
Luke 15-28.

The narrative of the prodigal and the elder brother is comprehensive; we find in each brother sin in a different aspect. Sin lurks in all men. The spiritually-minded, sorrow for and correct their failings, but the self-righteous, satisfied with their condition, have not that degree of contrition.

Man who judges by outward appearances is impressed by the sinfulness of the younger brother who seemingly was guilty of all that is worst in a human character. With this in mind, thought will be given at this time, principally to the emotions of the elder brother who gave no evidence of knowing himself as did the younger brother who penitently said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight and am no more worthy to be called thy

son." Our serious thought then, should be, do we truly know ourselves? True knowledge of sinfulness works deep abasement and inspires effort to purify ourselves.

Who is it that would not rejoice with one who realizes he is a sinner and repents? Jesus said, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." The moralist sees virtue in his good deeds; the spiritual see in their best endeavors only duty. May it not be that the elder brother was one of the ninety and nine, unconsciously guilty of sin so subtle as not to reveal to him the jealousy, pride, smug self-righteousness that dimmed the vision of his true self?

The elder brother, we have concluded, outwardly was a model man with good morals, especially when contrasted with his improvident younger brother; but can we imagine the effect of this act of the supposed exemplary elder brother upon the prodigal son? He may have temporarily regretted returning home, feeling that he would have at least been happier with his unrighteous associates, than with this self-righteous man. At least his former friends were "good fellows" and probably more honest. However that may have been, we are impressed with the contrast between our own righteousness and the righteousness of Jesus Christ which suffers long and is kind, not easily provoked, does not behave itself unseemly, beareth all things, and thinketh no evil. Charity creates in us a meek and patient disposition; it envieth not because it wishes everyone well; it seeketh not her own for love tempers our selfishness to treat others as we wish to be treated.

A man cannot pray to God to have his own sins forgiven until he is willing to forgive his brother who trespasses

against him. It appears as if the greatest sinners have the least knowledge of themselves and consequently are the most uncharitable. We can easily understand that if we have hatred towards anyone, we are sinful and our morality does not save.

This industrious, hard-working, moral elder brother may have been blinded by what men thought of him and did not realize that he needed repentance. However, the sketch ends in Luke, Chapter 15, with the sinner (shall we say of the body?) inside of the father's house and the elder brother, the sinner (of the disposition), outside. Jesus said to characters like that of the elder brother, "The publicans and the harlots, go into the kingdom of God before you." If our morality blinds us to our need for spirituality; for our need of a personal Savior, it would be far better that we experience the realization of the younger brother.

" . . . Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 18—but we *must* be willing to "go in."

Lancaster, Pa.

M. H. B.

CONVERSION

The term conversion means a change of heart—the desires and affections being so changed that we love the things we formerly hated, and hate the things we loved. By nature we "love the world and the things which are in the world," we seek its pleasures, our life is here; and we hate the ways of the Lord, having no enjoyment in them. Jesus said to His disciples, "I have chosen you out of the world," and the Scriptures teach separation from the spirit of the world. If we have not experienced this change we can not claim conversion.

Conversion is distinct from repentance. The turning away from evil and sorrow for sin in repentance prepares the soul for conversion. John the Baptist preached repentance, but he pointed to Christ who would take away the sin of the world. Repentance is of no avail without conversion; and without the Christ-life, a chaste walk, living no more in sin and disobedience, there is no evidence of conversion. Those only who are truly converted and have turned from disobedience and sin to obedience and righteousness and truth are fitted for the kingdom of heaven.

The effect of this change was manifest when the Spirit was poured out on the disciples at Pentecost. As Peter preached with great power, many of the assembled multitude were pricked in their heart, repented, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and received the Holy Spirit. On that occasion the Church of Christ was established and the number increased in a short time to five thousand, of whom it is said they were all of one heart and of one soul. Acts 4: 4, 32. Led by one Spirit they became one body, a body of believers of the same faith, with Christ as their head and shepherd. For, as our natural body is composed of many members, so is the body or Church of Christ, every one members one of another, recreated, born again, seeking not their own but another's wealth and who live no more after the spirit that is in the world, but after the Spirit of Christ, well knowing that "if ye live after the flesh ye shall die." Rom. 8: 13.

The prophecy of Ezekiel, 47th chapter, where he speaks of water issuing from under the threshold of the Temple which, at first was ankle deep, then to the knees, to the loins and finally a water that could not be passed over, is a beautiful type and symbol of the life-

giving Spirit in regenerated souls. As the water here mentioned constituted one, united body, those who are converted are united and inseparable. Of such souls is the Church of Christ composed; it is built upon a rock, Christ being the chief corner-stone. If we are true to this type, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him that we may also be glorified together." Rom. 8: 16, 17.

Of the state of glory it is testified, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. 7: 16, 17.

Williamsville, N. Y.

A. M.

A PRICELESS POSSESSION

"Buy the truth and sell it not." Prov. 23: 23.

The word "truth" is one which is used in various ways in Scripture. It is taken for the pure unadulterated doctrine of the Gospel. Jesus, in speaking of the Word of God, said, "Thy word is truth." He also said, "I am the truth." It might fittingly represent the whole plan of salvation, which if followed will bring hope and comfort to us.

It is of inestimable worth. Nothing on earth can compare with it. We value things in dollars and cents, but here is something offered, that all the silver and gold of this world can not buy. This priceless possession may become ours by accepting the terms on which it is offered. Its great value lies in its ability to deliver us from the bondage of sin

and to extend to us a hope of salvation. Jesus said on one occasion, "The truth shall make you free." Man is a sinner and as such is unable to free himself of its bondage. In such a condition he is without God and without hope in the world. Only the truth can make us free. Nothing can become its substitute. If we obey the truth we will be led to the Fountain of truth, namely Jesus Christ. He has opened a way of salvation for all mankind and grants it to every sincere seeking soul. By obeying the truth we are led together upon the narrow way which leads to eternal bliss and happiness. To all who become partakers of this great possession He holds out rich blessings and comforting promises, which are only partially realized in this world, but in the world to come, "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." This possession may be to us an everlasting one. When we leave this world we are necessitated to leave all our earthly possessions behind, but this precious treasure will give us admittance to a Haven of Rest, a Home of many mansions, which shall be ours throughout the endless ages of eternity. Without it the rich man is poor, but with it in his possession, the poor man is rich.

We are counselled to buy the truth, from which we would infer that a price must be paid for it. Man by nature is self-willed and inclined to follow his own sinful ways. In order to come into possession of the truth we must submit our hearts and wills to the Lord's will. He has said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny self, take up his cross and follow me." By nature we love the world with its allurements. We love its pleasures, wealth and praise. In order to become a par-

taker of this great inheritance we are counselled to set our hearts and affections on things above and not on things on the earth. We are counselled to lay up our treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves cannot break in and steal. Let us notice how men of God valued this possession. It is said of Moses that "when he was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Paul says, "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ." We must be willing to suffer persecution from the world. Paul said, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The Jews sought to kill Jesus because He told them the truth. He told His followers that the world shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Further it is said that "evil shall be spoken of the way of truth." The true child of God finds this to be the case. He is called foolish and narrow-minded and the doctrine he professes is called antiquated and not fitted for this day and age. This is only the fulfillment of prophecy and should not discourage us. When we consider the value of the great possession, we ought to be willing to make every sacrifice in order to obtain it.

Like worldly possessions, this possession may be lost or sold. We may sell the truth in various ways. We may set our hearts and affections too much on natural things. Our humanity is prone to do this and if not kept under check will crowd out the desire for spiritual things, as we read in Matt. 13: 22:

“He that receiveth the seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.” When we do not give ear to our conscience we sell the truth. An enlightened conscience is a safe guide but if we refuse to hear this voice of God in the soul and begin making compromises, we sell the truth. We may sell the truth when we embrace doctrines which we know are not in accord with the truth, because they offer an easier way, with less self-denial and sacrifice. The ways of error are many. Many offers of salvation are held out to a dying world, but when we examine the conditions upon which this great possession is offered we discover that they are not upon the conditions that God offers it to man. “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ.”

To have been in possession of the truth and then to have sold it, is a grievous sin before God. Peter, in speaking of those who once had been in possession of truth and then parted with it, said, “It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” By “selling the truth” we seal our final doom, and have nothing to look forward to but an eternity of misery and wretchedness.

May we then follow the counsel of the wise man, Solomon, and “buy the truth,” and having it once in our possession let us “sell it not.”

Buffalo, N. Y.

C. S. N.

HUMILITY

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 18: 4.

What wisdom Jesus displayed in

thus answering His disciple’s question: “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” It was a mild rebuke to any aspiring motives they might have entertained. They were faithful followers of their Lord and Master, but were yet unconverted, consequently they could not subdue the natural promptings for honor and preferment.

The Savior by saying that the greatest in His kingdom only attain membership by humbling themselves as a little child, no doubt impressed them that there are no exalted stations in His kingdom. All must enter by humbling themselves; for on another occasion Jesus said, “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven, as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” Mark 10: 15.

Since humility is essential to entering Christ’s kingdom, all must possess this meek spirit after they have entered; so, relatively speaking, there can be no greatest (unless it be Christ Himself) for there will be no spirit of pride or exaltation to cause such a condition. The Apostle says: “But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” Some may say that there are sometimes evidences of pride and emulation in the subjects of Christ’s kingdom. There may be, but it can only happen through temptation, or a temporary revival of the selfish spirit in the heart—it does not belong to Christ’s Church or kingdom. Therefore in order that such foreign spirits should not persist and ultimately defile or leaven this glorious Church, our Lord made provision in His holy word to preserve its purity and glory. Matt. 18: 15–19. He also authorized His Church to use the keys of the kingdom of heaven to bind or loose its subjects according as the case may require. Matt. 16: 19.

By nature we all lack humility. Pride, which is the opposite, seems to affect all mankind. Its baneful effects can be traced back through all ages even to the fair Garden of Eden. Through pride our first Parents fell from humility into transgression. Their posterity inherited pride and its numerous offspring—emulation, envy, jealousy, hatred, variance and strife. These passions, dominating man, have caused a long train of suffering, sorrow, persecution, and war; and have stained the annals of history with blood, destruction and desolation.

The most marvelous and impressive example of humility is Jesus Christ. He forsook the glory and happiness in heaven, came on earth to serve us, bore the sins of the world, and finally suffered death upon the cross. His vicarious sacrifice should impress every son and daughter of Adam. No wonder that this was a theme that the angels desired to look into. He came not only to redeem, but He is a faithful shepherd and High Priest to lead His little flock safely through this vale of tears to that celestial home which He has gone to prepare. He said: "I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am, there ye may be also."

To accept Jesus and share the blessings, man must first humble himself. Pride, self-love, self-sufficiency, esteem of the world, carnal pleasure, carnal reason, self-righteous works—all these must be sacrificed upon the altar of humility. To humble one's self constitutes repentance, therefore it is the first step in salvation. It is an individual work—simply to obey grace, give our heart to the Lord, and in self-abasement put our trust in Him; and by "prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let our requests be made known to God."

The word in many places emphasizes humility. The Apostle Peter says: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble"; "humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." 1 Peter 5: 6.

To be faithful subjects of Christ's kingdom, humility is indispensable. To discharge every duty faithfully requires a humble mind; otherwise believers could not submit themselves one to the other in the fear of the Lord. "Yea all of you, be subject to one another clothed with humility." 1 Peter 5: 5. "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." Col. 5: 12.

Humility is a temper of soul that prepares us for faith, which reveals to us our insufficiency and our dependence upon the Lord. It stops all curious inquiries concerning things in the Gospel which are unsearchable and mysterious. It vanquishes carnal reason, and promotes contentment, happiness, and the blessed hope in the promises of God. It impresses us that we are not "sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." 2 Cor. 3: 5. It brings us into harmony with the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus taught: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth."

Therefore to worship God in spirit and in truth, humility and its attendant fruits must be manifest. It is not only one of the fundamental principles of true worship, but it is one of its safeguards. So long as humility is cherished and practised there is safety and peace. Without it there can be no

unity, no true fellowship, no true love. The Lord by the Prophet emphasized its importance when He proclaimed: "For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. 57: 15.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

MEDITATION

When the mind is prepared by an atmosphere of quiet without and within, then it is in a fit condition to concentrate on spiritual values through meditation. It requires relief from hurry and impatience which often attend the performance of our daily tasks and duties.

The conditions which disturb our peace, and disqualify us for profitable meditation, center in our mind's not being sufficiently stayed upon the Lord, to trust in Him, as the Prophet declared, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

In the 119th Psalm it is written, "Princes also did sit and speak against me: but Thy servant did meditate in Thy statutes." When our trust is fully in the Lord, then the inward peace of the soul is not disturbed, even when princes also do sit and speak against us, and under such exercises we can still grow in grace, and there is hope of attaining "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

David speaks of meditating "on Thee in the night watches." Also, "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate on Thy word." One who is as eager as David to meditate on the word of the Lord, will find time to do so, rather than spend it in

activities which do not contribute to the welfare of the soul.

Further, David says, "I meditate on all Thy works: I muse on the work of Thy hands." We cannot fathom the knowledge and power of the Almighty, we look out on the stars at night and see their order. In the day we know not how each organism grows. To muse and meditate on these things should humble our exalted minds and bring only feelings of self-abasement.

The Psalmist writes that the man is blessed whose delight is in the law of the Lord, in which he meditates day and night. "O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day." The Apostle Paul writing to the Philippians, counsels them that whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report; "if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Our profiting will be apparent if we follow the Apostle Paul's counsel to Timothy, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them." Doing so cannot help leaving its mark on our character and conduct. Unconsciously we then become a power to influence others to serve the Lord, and thus become instruments in His hands to promote the honor and praise of His high name. And finally, what better prayer can be offered than that of David, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."

Waynesboro, Penna.

B. F. M.

FRUIT-BEARING

"He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some an hun-

dredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Matt. 13: 23.

Fruits have been cultivated from the earliest historic ages. Apart from the garden of Eden and the vineyard which Noah planted after the Deluge, we find in the books of Moses evidence that the cultivation of fruits was much practiced before the time of the journey of the Israelites from Egypt under Moses and we know it has continued to the present time. Our Lord in His parables made use of familiar things to illustrate great spiritual truths.

Naturally, men seek good soil, prepare it carefully and sow good seed. If this is not done and they are not diligent in cultivating and caring for the crop, failure will result. This is true spiritually. The good seed is the Word, to which one must give due heed that it may quicken the heart and prepare it for the bearing of good fruit.

All are conscious of guilt. This knowledge comes by the spiritual influence operating inwardly when it is allowed to operate through the yielding of the will. The saving grace is a spiritual gift given to penitent souls who receive this spiritual nature upon which God operates. It requires a breaking up of the natural state within us to prepare the heart for spiritual fruit-bearing to glorify the Heavenly Father whose children we are if we are born again.

The bodily life may grow feeble as a neglected fruit crop may become impaired, but the newborn creature possesses a life that does not lose its strength with the decline of the body unless the conscience is seared to make one "dead while he yet liveth."

If disregard of a sense of duty agonizes us now, will it not trouble us forever when we have trampled under foot known duty?

Everlasting life is a present possession and becomes a part of us who possess it, showing itself as fruit on the tree and harmonizing with what God's Word or the Voice from heaven teaches.

Obedience to the spirit of God's Word shows the fruit of having escaped the corruptions which are in the world through lust. Yet sin lurks in all flesh and causes infirmity in all. Everything that is contrary to the Word of God and to the dictates of the Spirit of Jesus Christ is sin.

Lancaster, Pa., R. 1.

A. B. W.

LIFE IN CHRIST

With life in Christ we journey on
Upon a narrow way;
Beset with snares on every side,
To lead our souls astray.

Our Captain, who is great and good,
Has fitted us for war;
And clothed us in an armor strong,
Which Satan cannot mar.

This narrow way is rough at times—
Oft strewn with cruel thorns;
Our Savior kind has shod our feet,
And 'gainst all evil warns.

And as our journey nears its close
And dark the shadows grow;
Our faithful Guide will grasp our hand,
And lead us safely through.

And as upon the brink of death,
In armor clad we stand,
He says, "Look up, thou trembling one;
Thy journey's at an end."

Arkona, Ont., Can.

M. L. M.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Is the possession of wealth always a blessing?

A. No; it is often a temptation and a snare, bringing sorrow, care, trouble

and anxiety; and sometimes it ruins body and soul. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many hurtful and foolish lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." 1 Tim. 6: 9.

Q. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is the sincere desire of the heart uttered in simple words, or unexpressed; prompted by an humble heart and the Holy Spirit, and presented through Jesus Christ. A petition for mercy and forbearance, with praise and thanksgiving to God the Father. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph. 5: 20. "But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known unto God." Phil. 4: 6.

Q. What is self-pity?

A. Self-pity is a fruit of self-love, and if indulged in knowingly, it will pervert and endanger the spiritual life. It may originate from thinking too well of ourselves and too much of our own petty grievances and the often imagined slights of others. If instead of being free and open-hearted in speaking to those who have offended us whether the offense be real or imagined, we harbor such grievances, they finally will supplant faith and love and destroy confidence and fellowship. Self-pity is innate in us all, and it requires constant watching and prayer to suppress its seductive influence. We should always endeavor to follow the Apostle's admonition: "not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Rom. 12: 3.

Q. In what way is God a consuming fire?

A. The Scriptures teach that God is a consuming fire to the sinner. When the sinner repents and accepts Christ he may still fail, but, through prayer and supplication, the fire of God's love will consume all evil emotions and lustful desires which are prompted by the sinful flesh. It is obvious, then, that God on one hand is a consuming fire to the destruction of the wilful sinner, and on the other a fire that will ever consume the "wood, hay, stubble," which according to the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. 3: 12, represents the imperfections of the New Testament believer.

AMAZIAH, SON OF JEHORAM, KING OF JUDAH

When Amaziah came to the throne his first act was to slay his servants who had murdered his father Joash. He did not slay their families, but did according to the law of Moses where the Lord commanded that children should not die for the sins of their parents, but every man should die for his own sin.

Amaziah went to war against the Edomites and not being able to raise an army of his own men sufficiently strong, he hired one hundred thousand valiant men of Israel to assist him. A prophet was sent to tell him he had done wrong as these men of Israel were tainted with idolatrous worship. The prophet said, "O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee for the Lord is not with Israel. . . . But if thou wilt go, do it, be strong for the battle, God shall make thee fall before the enemy for God hath power to help and to cast down." Amaziah asked what he should do as he had already paid the men of Israel for their services. The prophet said, "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this." Amaziah then obediently sent the men of Israel home but they departed in anger and on their

homeward way they attacked several towns of Judah, destroyed the inhabitants and obtained much spoil.

Amaziah was successful in the battle against the Edomites, but this victory seemed to have been his ruination, as he brought home with the spoil of battle the gods of the Edomites and they proved to be a snare. He became a worshipper of the same gods that could not deliver the Edomites from destruction.

Amaziah probably resenting what the Israelites had done to his people, determined to make war against Israel and punish them. The prophet Zechariah was sent to Amaziah to say, "Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?" Amaziah told the prophet to forbear, asking, "Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why should thou be smitten?" The prophet said, "I know that God hath determined to destroy thee because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel." But Amaziah was determined and sent a message to Joash, king of Israel saying, "Come let us see one another in the face." Joash recognized this challenge and replied, "The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife, and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon and trod down the thistle. Thou sayest thou hast smitten the Edomites and thine heart lifteth thee up to boast. Abide now at home, why shouldst thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldst fall and Judah with thee."

But Amaziah was not to be deterred. The two kings met in battle and Amaziah was defeated, his army routed and he was taken prisoner. Joash pursued the fleeing army to Jerusalem, plundered the city, took the sacred things of the temple and broke down part of the wall

of the city. He later restored Amaziah to his kingdom, but a conspiracy was formed against Judah's king by his own people. Amaziah fled to Lachish to which place he was pursued and was slain there. This conspiracy may have been induced by the disgrace he had brought upon his own people. He reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem and when he died his son Uzziah was but five years old.

The people waited until Uzziah was sixteen years of age before they publicly anointed him king. He received instruction from Zechariah the prophet and he did that which was right in God's sight. As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. He built towers and dug wells in the desert, for he had many cattle and he also had many vine-dressers and husbandmen. He loved husbandry but also maintained a large army and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. His prosperity caused him to feel elated and his destruction followed. He went into the temple meaning to fill the office of the High Priest and offer incense in the Holy Place where none but the priests were allowed to enter. The high priest Azariah and eighty of the other priests followed him, warning him of his trespass but he seemed to be made wrathful by their opposition and took the censur, meaning to offer incense. At that moment he was seized with leprosy, the marks of which appeared in his forehead. Seeing this the priests thrust him out and he hastened to leave the place. From that day he was obliged to live apart as a leper and his son Jotham attended to the affairs of the kingdom. Uzziah reigned fifty-two years. It is supposed that it was during the reign of Uzziah, or about the time of his death, that the prophet Isaiah received his appointment in the prophetic office. It is thought probable that the prophets

Amos, Hosea and Joel also began their prophetic missions about this time.

Jotham continued to reign after his father's death and continued to rule as his father had done. He was a good and prosperous ruler and reigned sixteen years. His son Ahaz succeeded his father to the throne of Judah.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

My dear little children:

When Jesus was here and lived on earth as we are living today, He noticed not only men, but He called the attention of those around Him, to the smallest objects to teach great truths. He spoke of the beauties of nature, the grass, the flowers and the birds. "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them."

I feel sure that many of you, my dear little children, who are readers of these stories, are interested in birds, and could tell me many nice things you have found out by watching them, for bird life is a most interesting study for all of us.

Those of you who are fortunate enough to live where there are large trees, and a stream of water close by, will have the best opportunity to learn the habits of birds, for most of them prefer to build where shade and quiet surround them.

I have found pleasure in watching a pair of woodpeckers, commonly called flickers. They are a strong, beautifully feathered bird, with a tuft of bright red on top of head, and have a strong, sharp bill. They work somewhat like a carpenter, for they work with wood instead of soft materials. We can hear

them hammering at a tree until they make a round smooth hole large enough to pass through, and then Mr. and Mrs. Woodpecker take turns working, until they have hollowed out a nice nest. It is interesting to see how they carry out their chips as they work, throwing them out over their heads, until the ground beneath will be covered over with chips. They have a habit of sounding the tree with their bill to find out what condition it is in. They prefer one that is not too entirely sound. Once they start to make a nest, they teach a lesson of industry and perseverance.

In some ways the birds are like us humans. The mother bird has great anxiety and trouble in caring for her fledgelings, many of which seem to leave the nest before they are old enough to fly or care for themselves, and in this way many young birds fall a prey to cats or other destroying enemies.

Then there are many tragedies too in bird life. Once a pair of flickers outside my window had started a home, and were a model pair of home-makers. I was wakened at early dawn by hearing a loud and most plaintive call. The mother bird showed great distress, and lingered around for some time, but her mate never came back. Other birds went to the nest, and threw out the eggs. After some weeks the bird came back with another mate, not quite so large nor finely feathered; he may have been a younger bird.

I was indeed glad to see them begin as at first. They cleaned out and refurnished the old nest and succeeded in raising a fine family. I saw three young birds leave the nest. I am happy to be able to tell such a fine sequel to my story.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.