

# GOOD TIDINGS

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Write "Good Tidings" 236 N. Mary St., Lancaster, Pa. or Frank E. Eshelman, Business Manager, R. D. No. 7, Lancaster, Pa.

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## EDITORIAL

### NEW YEAR THOUGHTS

The New Year is beginning; the old year is ended. We are impressed with the passing of time. Our lives are interwoven with it. We know as the years pass we grow older; and finally our days come to an end. Our natural life has had a beginning and so it shall have an end.

As the New Year we are just entering, has a beginning, so have all things natural and physical. The Holy Bible begins with this indisputable fact: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." As this vast and wonderful creation has had a beginning so it shall have an end. This is proved by many Scriptures. Christ said in closing the interpretation of the Parable of the Tares: "So shall it be in the end of the world." Matt. 13: 40. The apostle Peter said: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the things therein shall be burnt up."

Time, which is the measure of duration, and by which all the events of the

world are recorded, too, had a beginning and shall have an end. "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and things which are therein, that there shall be time no longer." Rev. 10: 5, 6. Since all things we see, touch, taste, and handle are subject to change and decay; and as our lives are uncertain, and are but as a "vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," how should we rejoice in the advent of the New Year, that time is yet allotted unto us to prepare our immortal souls to inherit a world of glory and happiness which shall have no end!

By nature we are all in bondage to Satan. We are all captivated by the things that are temporal and carnal, and are powerless to change our condition or extricate ourselves. We are spiritually lost. We need a Savior, and God in mercy and love ordained Jesus from eternity for this purpose. "He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3: 16.

Salvation is a work wrought in the soul and perfected by Christ Jesus. By His holy life, His Suffering, death, and resurrection, He expiated our sins and restored the life that was lost. Though salvation is an everlasting condition, it only has a beginning in us when we yield to grace and accept the Savior. We must repent and pray for forgiveness, then Christ sanctifies our hearts and gives peace and rest to the soul. We thus become qualified to enter His everlasting kingdom. We become partakers of that glorious salvation which the Lord by the Prophet said, "shall be forever

and my righteousness shall not be abolished."

Since salvation is a work of God in us, its preservation depends upon our continual yielding to grace, by prayer and watchfulness; for we possess the treasure in an earthen vessel subject to temptation. So let us in the New Year endeavor to be wise unto salvation, by taking up our cross daily and following our Savior. He is our Shepherd "who will ever lead us in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." The Aspostle says: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12: 28, 29.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

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The past year records the death of our aged and beloved brother in faith, Levi H. Weaver, of Lancaster, Pa. He served the church faithfully in the capacity of minister for many years. May the good seed which he has sown bring forth spiritual fruit in the hearts of those with whom he associated and labored, and may we all endeavor to follow the worthy example of those gone before and strive to be faithful witnesses of the truth.

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### THOUGHTS ON SCRIPTURE SUBJECTS

#### TWO KINDS OF SINNERS.

"There is none righteous, no, not one." Rom. 3: 10. This charge, both by the prophet and by Paul, was against the whole race. The Jews had a law of statutes and ceremonies which when they kept it promised them temporal blessings, and when they broke it bodily penalty was inflicted. The Gentiles were not under that literal law. Both Jews and Gentiles, however, were under the

same inward spiritual law which condemned them both of inward sin by the motions of sin in the flesh, so that neither was inwardly righteous.

The present-day moralist who takes comfort from his correct life to secure saving mercy is as verily an Israelite as the disciples of Moses were, who hoped to be saved by their works. Persons who are satisfied with their moral works are as far wrong as those Jews were of whom Paul writes, "that they had a zeal for God but not according to knowledge." Not having the true spiritual knowledge, by submitting wholly to God, they were unsaved; and so is the moralist now unsaved who cherishes a hope while he is "ashamed to confess Christ." He is a sinner equally with the Gentile in his immoral state. Both classes must "repent and be converted" and be willing to obey wholly Him of whom it is said: "This is my beloved Son: hear him." Mark 9: 7. The church-member may be only a moral person with his worship, his benevolence and his natural honesty, if he does not in all things abide in the spirit of the Gospel. Our disposition is to be satisfied with a good life, and if a profession of religion is added to it the satisfaction is fuller, but with both these supports we may yet be moral sinners.

It is hard to believe it, but the Savior gives more hope for the conversion of the depraved sinner than He gives for the moral sinner, in saying to the chief priests and elders who were the heads of the Jewish worship, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Matt. 21: 31. He illustrates His meaning by the parable that a man had two sons whom he asked to work in his vineyard. The one said he would, but did not, the other refused, but repented and went. The application is: A professor who is not fully willing

to obey, promises, but does not do it, while one who makes no profession has yet made no promise, and will sooner repent than the one with a false hope.

It is impressive that "Jesus said to those Jews which believed on Him," after some conference with them, "Ye are of your father the devil." John 8: 44. This He said when they resented the saying. "If ye continue in my word \* \* \* the truth shall make you free." John 8: 31-32. They felt they were free, but their sin was that they rejected Him. They evidently did not believe sincerely or they would not have rejected His word of reproof. We who profess—do we continue in the spirit of His word as devotedly as we should?

\* \* \* \*

#### SINNERS DEFILE THE CHURCH

"Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20: 28. This charge Paul gave to the elders of the church, who were called from Ephesus to meet him, while he was on his way to Jerusalem where he was apprehended and finally carried a prisoner to Rome to appear before Caesar. He met his fate by being beheaded at Rome. The Holy Ghost witnessed to him that bonds and afflictions awaited him. His expression was: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus." Acts 20: 24. His zeal should inspire every one of us to cherish loyalty for a cause to which the founders of the Church, and thousands of others, sacrificed their lives! Are we sacrificing all that we should for the blood-sanctified cause? God gave "His only begotten Son" for us. Could the price be greater?

Christ built the Church, and he is called "the Head of the body, the

Church." Col. 1: 18. That in the text is meant the visible Church is positive, for the address is to men who were to feed others, evidently with true doctrine, for the speaker said: "Of your own-selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them." Acts 20: 30. The same apostle says, "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." Titus 3: 10. To reject means to refuse. How refuse such an one? The instruction is to a minister. He had nothing to refuse him but the fellowship of the Church. The Lord's supper, which is the symbol of fellowship is to be refused subverted members; not only the Lord's supper, but transgressors are to be true believers like "an heathen man and a publican." The Hebrews, to whom the Savior gave the last named command, did not eat the natural meal, nor have company with that class of persons.

As Christ is the Head of the Church which was to be fed, according to our text, does any one think that Paul meant that they were to feed sinners in the Church by doctrines which they were not willing to receive? Surely no one can be fed that refuses to eat.

It is said, "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another." Rom. 12: 5. This is applied to the visible Church, for the different gifts of the members are stated. When known sinners are retained in the Church they are acknowledged to be one with all the rest. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" 1 Cor. 6: 15. Can the members of Christ be joined in church fellowship with sinners? We read "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." 2 Cor. 6: 14. When we hold known unbelievers as members of the Church are we not unequally yoked together, if we claim to be righteous? If we do, is it

not the absolute fact that the whole body becomes leavened? 1 Cor. 5: 6.

Variance, strife, seditions, envyings, drunkenness, revelings, and such like, are classed with murder. Gal. 5: 20-21. We are forced to the conclusion that to hold sinners in the Church makes every member that has knowledge of it a transgressor, and that to commune with them is partaking of the table of devils. 1 Cor. 10: 21. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6: 7.

\* \* \* \*

#### BELIEVING

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John 8: 31.

Two kinds of believers are in view in the text. The one kind seemed to be convinced that He was the Messiah, yet they resented His instruction, necessitating Him to tell them the truth that they were of their father the devil, because they did his lusts. The other kind were willing to continue in His word. Some people believe strictly what is written in the word and hope sometime to obey truth, which is trifling with chances that their prudence would not allow them to do in any natural thing; others believe fully enough to make an open profession of religion, with the reservation that the doctrine is hard and need not strictly be complied with, as God in His mercy does not want to deprive us of every liberty; and they, in a self-compromising way, make themselves a hope toward God. Such believe; as we read, "The devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" Jas. 2: 19-20.

The faithful believe that what is forbidden in the word is at enmity with God, and that to violate the spirit of any of God's commands is to array our

minds against Him, which puts us outside of all promises. To continue in His word means that when we have fully accepted our part of the spiritual covenant we wish, by the grace of God, to perform our vow. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." John 15: 4. Believing is doing. When we actually believe the Scriptures it will follow, unquestionably, that we endeavor to understand them that we may do them in their full sense. We will not anymore provoke strife, nor resent evil, but will cherish meekness and lowliness of temper and practice; will keep separate from a carnal life, and from unsound worship, for both belong to the world—thereby losing friendship and reputation among many of the worldly-minded and particularly among those who are re-proved, as our Savior too was treated.

True faith has a spiritual quality which is as opposite to the worldly life as God and Satan are opposite. Scripture belief is called light, and as little as light and darkness can mix so little does true faith and unbelief agree. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." 1 Peter 1: 8-9.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

#### THE BELIEVER'S RELATION TO GOD, TO ONE ANOTHER AND TO THE WORLD

All mankind are in a state of spiritual death, under the power of sin, and unable to do anything that is spiritually good. To them the Spirit says, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Eph. 5: 14. All who are willing to heed the call will arise from their dead state of sin and receive the light. "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Eph. 5: 13.

Those who are thus awakened and truly repent of their sins will cease to walk in darkness and sin, and they will receive the Holy Spirit, which will enable them to walk in the light. These are called new creatures, being born again and are entitled to the name of Believers. They will not only walk in the light, but will also confess before the world that Christ is their strength, and acknowledge with the apostle Peter, "And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." John 6: 69.

The spiritual eyes having been opened, the understanding enlightened, a great sense of unworthiness will move the believer to acknowledge himself utterly undone. Viewing a crucified Savior as an intercessor, his relation to God will be one of unconditional surrender and a willingness to follow wherever He may lead. He will be as a little child and gladly embrace the Gospel message and walk in obedience to all that is taught therein. He will draw nigh to Him and pray for strength and courage to prove by his walk and conversation that he truly holds the relation of a child. "If children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. 8: 17. "If ye love me keep my commandments." John 14: 15.

The relation then all believers hold to God is that of love and obedience, and this relation is maintained by a continual submission to the leading of the Holy Spirit and a perfect willingness to abide

in the doctrine of Christ. Neither will this be a hardship because God has promised to be with his children and care for them under every trial. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Psalms 103: 13-14.

The relation of the believer to God is very different from his relation to his brethren, since his brethren, like himself, are fallible and imperfect men, while God is infallible and perfect. The relation the believers hold to one another is that of submission, one to another. It should be very clear to every candid mind that all true believers will be brethren, and as a consequence will have a care one for the other. The Church, being composed of believers and provided with a faithful ministry whose office it is to feed the flock and to labor in love to preserve the life that comes from God alone, must be a united body. The relation the members hold to one another and to the ministry is plainly stated in 1 John 4: 7-8: "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."

When this spiritual life is endangered by the assaults of Satan who is ever striving to disturb peace and love in the Church, by causing brethren to lose confidence in one another, the faithful who have knowledge of such danger will come to the rescue. A faithful ministry will always use every possible means of love to effect reconciliation. If the spiritual life has not been extinguished, peace will be restored and God will be praised.

All believers are members of the body of Christ and hold the same relation one to another as the members of the natural body do. "But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye can-

not say to the hand, I have no need of thee: Nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." 1 Cor. 12: 20-21. The most feeble members are necessary. "And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon those we bestow the more abundant honor; . . . . . that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another." 1 Cor. 12: 23-25. No language could more plainly set forth the relation of believers one to another. Every member of the Church like the members of the natural body will work in harmony for the welfare of the body, and when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Should a member of the natural body become diseased, every effort will be made to restore it to health, but if the disease is incurable, then the member must be severed from the body lest the whole body perish. Just so with believers—when one consents to sin or false doctrine and will not respond to all the efforts of the Church to restore him, there is but one course to pursue, and that is to remove the leaven lest the whole lump or body be leavened.

The relation believers hold to the world is that of strangers, since they have been called out of the world. Believers will have such love for the unsaved that they will testify against all the unfruitful works of darkness, and try to win souls to Christ, but since men love darkness rather than light, such efforts may not be appreciated. The Savior said "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15: 19. Christ came not to condemn the world but to save the world, yet the world hated Him and sought to destroy Him. The term *world* as used here is to be considered in a

rather restricted sense and to mean all those who are yet unregenerated.

The relation then of believers to God is that of love and reverence, with a perfect desire to walk in harmony with the teachings of His Son, Jesus Christ; their relation to one another is one of submission, esteeming others better than themselves; and to the world, kindness, forbearance, returning good for evil, and a prayer for the salvation of all souls.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. L. K.

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### THE GROUND OF FAITH

“Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” John 6: 67, 69.

This conversation took place in the synagogue as Christ taught in Capernaum the next day after He performed the miracle of feeding the vast multitude with five barley loaves and two small fishes. He took this opportunity to impress them with His power and authority, and to prepare their minds to receive the spiritual truth, that to attain eternal life they must have the Spiritual Food, which the Father will give to all who desire it and ask for it. That the true bread of life was His flesh, which He will give for the life of the world. In most of His teachings He used natural things to prepare the mind to receive spiritual truths; hence He spoke in parables, and performed miracles before them. His question to His disciples might have been prompted by a feeling of personal discouragement, but rather probably to bring out an expression of their faith in Him. Peter's question, “To whom shall we go?” was proof of his faith, and indicated that there was no other means

of salvation. Men however, will seek other ways or means. A certain historian says, that for some time after the Church was organized they remained in the light; but little by little they departed from it: then they evolved a system of theology, and the farther they got away from the light the more they needed their theology. As we depart from Christ He will withdraw from us, and then, feeling the need of a leader as Israel did when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, we may do as it is said, “The people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him. Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.” (Ex. 32.)

Peter's confession was a seal to that faith which bringeth eternal life, confirmed by Jesus; “And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17: 3.) Such knowledge implies intimate relation and association, and such confession can only be made through true and living faith in Him. Those who turned back were like the seed that fell upon stony places, that endured for a while, but had no depth of root, and withered away. Paul writes, (Rom. 10: 10) “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” It requires courage to confess Christ before men, with the knowledge that our friends may no longer regard us with the same respect and consideration as formerly, and perhaps revile us.

When Jesus told them, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled, they began to be resentful and spoke of the manna which their fathers did eat

in the desert, as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." Jesus said unto them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. \* \* \* Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." His counsel was spiritual, and He only used natural examples to prepare their minds and lead them on to receive it. There are those in the world, and have been at all times, who only seek Christ and follow Him for worldly profit and natural gain, even "supposing that gain is godliness." And if they are prospered in their natural undertakings, they regard it as an evidence that God is pleased with them, and that it is a reward for their faithfulness. In the days of the prophets and patriarchs they indeed often were rewarded for their faithfulness by natural prosperity and wealth, and David in the first Psalm says, "All that he doeth shall prosper." This was before the coming of Christ into the world, and before the true Light was revealed. The manna which the fathers did eat in the wilderness served its purpose then, and was figurative of the Bread of Life which should come into the world, and which was brought within their reach and ours. It requires careful examination of one's self to ascertain whether our desires are only for personal comfort and convenience, or whether the motive is pure, that we indeed seek to enhance the praise of God and His Christ. There is no other place to go, no one else to appeal to. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4: 12)

Landisville, Pa.

C. S. N.

### FEET-WASHING

Among the ordinances commanded by the Savior is that of Feet-washing, the authority for which is found recorded in 13th chapter of John's Gospel.

An ordinance is a ceremony, intended to remind Christians of an event, or a duty, or to strengthen them in faith. It is an indirect means of salvation. The blood of Jesus Christ is the only direct means of salvation; but Church membership, observance of ordinances, prayer, spiritual conversation, non-conformity to the world and separation from unfaithful worship, are all helpful in sustaining the divine life in the soul, begotten by repentance and faith in Christ's merits.

It is not the intention to discuss here the purposes of the various ceremonies observed by the Church, except to make the point that Feet-washing, like the others, is of great benefit when we can understand the underlying principle, and can fitly set forth the condition it represents.

All will agree it is a menial service, requiring a surrender of pride, and, as such, it teaches humility. Many, however feel that they need not engage in Feet-washing as a public ordinance, but can show their humility in other ways. Other ordinances are accepted by professing Christians, because their observance is more agreeable, yet we believe the Savior's command, recorded in John 13th, is just as definite and binding as any other. If we believe He actually did wash His disciples' feet, we must believe He did it to teach them something. If the precept were sufficient, then surely the Lord of Glory could have taught with greater power than we, and would not have needed to take the basin of water and the towel. But He said, "I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed

your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

Evidently the disciples, at that time, could not comprehend the meaning of the lowly act. Peter said, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" The answer was, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter refused to permit such condescension until told that, without this washing, he could have no part with his Lord. Then he was willing to be washed,—“not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.”

If we would construe the Savior's words as referring only to the literal washing we would miss His true meaning. Peter's soul would not be affected by the washing of his feet, nor would his hope of Heaven depend on his "putting away of the filth of the flesh." Water cannot wash away sin, nor is God glorified by any work of man's doing. It is only the faithful motive prompting obedience that is pleasing to Him. Peter truly did not know at that time why he needed to be washed by his Master, but he did know thereafter, when he found himself ashamed to confess Him before a servant girl.

Briefly, the ordinance of Feet-washing reminds us that we, like Peter, are weak, and unable to persevere without help. The believer has been cleansed from his old sins, and need not "lay again the foundation of repentance from dead works." Having partaken of the new birth, he longs for a perfect walk, and seeks not to please himself, but the Lord. In this he meets with opposition. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, and is clean every whit." As the feet soon become soiled by contact with the earth, and require frequent ablution if the entire body is to be clean; so the humanity of the believer, inclined to the earth and earthly things, interferes with his perfect submission

to the will of God. His mind and motives become contaminated by unholy thoughts; sins of weakness are committed, and remorse of conscience is the result. To whom shall we go? Jesus alone is the Author of faith and grace and redeeming love. He is our "Advocate with the Father," interceding for our infirmities. If we confess our sin He is merciful to forgive, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The child of God must come bodily to the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. His feet are washed, so to speak, when he thus seeks forgiveness for his daily errors. So we confess, in observing the ordinance, that it is only by humble submission to the workings of grace that we can have hope in Christ. He has said, "Without me ye can do nothing."

The ordinance further reminds us of the duty we owe to one another, "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." In showing our willingness to stoop to wash and be washed, we not only testify that we want to engage in this ceremony, but that we want to be helpful to one another in a spiritual way.

The Church on earth, as compared with the Church Triumphant, in Heaven, is as the feet to the body. Once the redeemed enter their heavenly home they will be freed from sin; but so long as they are upon the earth, they are subject to defilement. To keep the Church pure, instructions were given by Christ and the Apostles. The 18th chapter of Matthew describes a perfect plan for the maintenance of order and peace.

If a brother or a sister yield to an impure influence, those who notice the transgression will go to the erring one, in the spirit of meekness, and will endeavor,

by the application of God's Word, to make him sensible of his condition. If they are thankfully received and the matter is remedied, they go on again, in perfect confidence:—they have washed their brother's feet. What a great blessing the Church is! Love will admonish, rebuke, instruct, forgive and seek forgiveness.

The Son of Man, our perfect example, laid aside the heavenly vestments, took upon Him the form of man, and became as a servant. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Just so, His followers will not "exercise lordship" upon one another, but will, in lowliness of mind, esteem others better than themselves. They will watch over one another's souls, and minister to one another's needs, in true charity.

The ordinance of Feet-washing, then, is a solemn simple service. To observe it with proud and carnal hearts would be hypocrisy. But when it is performed with prayerful minds, by those who truly feel needy and willing, it will have the effect Christ designed.

May the witnessing of this ceremony also impress our dear friends that we should see the necessity of Feet-washing, if we wish to keep all the commands of Christ. "If ye know these things, happy are ye *if ye do them.*"

Stevensville, Ont

W. I. T.

### RELIGION VERSUS CHRISTIANITY

It has been said, "We have enough religion, what we need is Christianity."

It is generally accepted that when religion is spoken of it has reference to worship which is in accordance with God's will. But in that which purports to be religion there is a vast difference in the objects that are worshiped, and also in the worship itself.

There is a disposition with men to

worship, and there is a strong propensity in them to follow their own judgment in their worship.

At no time was there more than one object that merited worship, which was God alone, and while He so frequently demonstrated His power and His will, yet mankind so soon forgot and substituted their own object of worship. Any service which He did not command was an abomination in His sight regardless of the worshiper's zeal.

While there are many so-called religions, yet there is only one true religion, the religion of Jesus Christ.

The religion of Christ and Christianity are the same. They are inseparable, hence the worship is the same in all times and places.

False religion has its origin in the flesh while true religion or Christianity has its origin in the Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The fruits of these two births are as distinct as are the births themselves.

Paul defines the fruit of the flesh and of the Spirit, and says, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

All have a desire to live in future happiness and are impressed that something is required of them. Too often the result is the acceptance of a religion which makes salvation dependent on works, and consequently is void of the Spirit. Such worship is not acceptable to God, since He recognizes only spiritual worshipers whose works are a fruit of living faith. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Worship which is not commanded is idol worship from which all truly enlightened souls withdraw.

The command is positive to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly. 2 Thes. 3:6. If it is a duty to withdraw from disorderly brethren, there could be no excuse to worship with those who have a form of religion, but deny the power thereof.

Separation characterizes the whole creation of God. As light and darkness are distinctly separate and cannot unite, since one dispels the other, neither can spiritually enlightened souls unite in worship with those who are not separated from the world.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

Lemoyne, Pa.

J. I. M.

### GOD'S GIFTS AND BLESSINGS

How many the blessings and gifts to us given  
By the goodness of God, our Father in heaven.  
With health of the body and a mind that is  
sound,  
We should reverently praise Him with thanks  
most profound.

Good health is a blessing we most highly prize,  
Our enjoyment of life on it greatly relies.  
But most of us find as the years glide away  
Our ills are more frequent, more transient our  
stay.

A gift most supreme to man, only, is given,  
A soul that's immortal and destined for heaven;  
When we feel of its drawings by grace, let us  
go  
And consecrate all to His service below.

The Savior has promised us peace from above,  
And happy are we when we taste of His love.  
This gift will sustain, as we journey along,  
And His grace make us worthy to join the  
sweet song.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

### OBEDIENCE

Obedience is the evidence of love dwelling in the heart. Love is the greatest of all virtues. Our first parents were created in the image and likeness of God, and we believe were in possession of divine love. But through disobedience they lost the image and closed the way to the tree of life. It is written, “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside. They are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one.” Psalm 14: 2, 3. In this condition all were outside the promise and without God and hope in this world. But God promised a redeemer who was Christ the Lord.

Before Christ's coming all who were obedient to the law and looked forward in faith were under the promise. Noah obeyed God and built the ark as he was commanded. He was called a preacher of righteousness. Abraham was obedient and offered the sacrifice of his only son, because he considered Him faithful that promised. He was called the father of the faithful. “Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after.” “But Christ as a son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Heb. 3: 5, 6. “For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.” Rom. 5: 19.

It may be instructive to refer to Samuel, the inspired prophet, who directed King Saul to obedience. The Lord told Saul to destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they were consumed. Saul re-

turned and told Samuel, "I have performed the commands of the Lord." Samuel said unto Saul, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" But the people took of the spoil, which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord at Gilgal. Samuel said, "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity, and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." And Saul said unto Samuel, "I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commands of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice." 1 Sam. 15.

Obedience is love in action. Many examples of blessings bestowed upon those who faithfully discharged their duties could be found. We see the importance of heeding the law of God, which will reveal sin and unrighteousness. The Mosaic law acts as a schoolmaster to lead seekers to Christ. It teaches that for every transgression, and disobedience, there was a just recompense. How shall we escape if we are disobedient and neglect the great salvation offered in Christ. We might have knowledge of God's word and yet try to evade His convicting grace. We might endeavor to hide or conceal our guilt as did our first parents, but the truth will be made manifest and we would stand guilty before our Creator to whom we have to give an account of our stewardship.

The plan of salvation is plainly described in the word of God. And the invitation given by the Savior is, "Come unto me." In Christ's time many followed Him not on account of the

miracles, but because they did eat of the loaves and were filled. The Savior said, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." Then they said unto Him, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God," Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." John 6: 27-29. Faith in Christ may be called the work of God, and it is that attitude of obedience, to which the Jews were called in order that they might obtain the blessing of eternal life. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted unto the righteousness of God." Romans 10: 3.

Human nature is the same today as it was in the days of our fathers. The words of Solomon, who was termed the preacher, are still fitting, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Ecc. 12: 13, 14.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. J. T.

#### BRIEF NOTES

The disturbed economic and business conditions have increased anxiety and care for many in their worldly interests. Those who are endeavoring to live consistent Christian lives may not be wholly exempt from their cares and worries but they consider the interests of the soul which reach beyond the present life of greater importance. Under all the adverse conditions in life they can still rest in faith and trust in Him who overrules, and each one could say with the poet, "I only know I cannot drift beyond His love and care."

Concerted prayer has been offered for rain in time of drouth and for relief from distressing conditions.

When the Christian Spirit controls one his desire will rather be to accept the dispensations of Providence submissively and thankfully with faith and trust in the Heavenly Father who knows his needs and cares for His own, and is able to make "all things work together for good to those who love Him."

\* \* \* \*

We have a fuller knowledge of our insignificance when we view God's presence in nature everywhere. Well may we say with the Psalmist: "Whither shall I flee from thy presence."

While individually we are a small part in the divine economy, yet God has a place for each one of us to fill and His purpose can be fulfilled in us when we are willing to yield ourselves to Him. Then we can say with the Psalmist, "Thy hand shall lead me and thy right hand shall hold me."

\* \* \* \*

It is said that when Gandhi saw Buckingham Palace all illuminated, he exclaimed: "What an extravagance for a country trying to balance its budget!"

This is only one of the many instances affording a contrast that always exists between the simplicity and humility of Christ's Kingdom and the show and extravagance of the world. Christ has called his followers from worldly extravagance and display to His rule of simplicity and love.

\* \* \* \*

The Apostle instructs his brethren to "Let every man bear his own burden." The true Christian would always be in harmony with this counsel toward himself. Elsewhere the Apostle says, "Bear ye one another's burdens." This is the practical expression of sympathy and helpfulness toward fellow believers and

others and is prompted by the love of God.

\* \* \* \*

One of the popular writers calls attention to the "inconsistency and the tremendous conceit of man," when both sides engaged in war, pray for help to the same God, under the same profession of Christianity. He sees such prayer as nothing short of blasphemy. The indictment is not against Christianity but against men who profess to be Christians but do not live Christ-like lives.

The Christian's prayer ever is for a fuller knowledge of himself and for light to reveal the motives that prompt his every act. When he does not entertain the desire for revenge but strives to replace it with love to God and man, his life will be consistent with his profession.

\* \* \* \*

The Bible is not a book of social, political or economic maxims and theories, but it stands apart and above all other books, in that its teachings are concerned about a living and eternal principle.

It has been stated that obedience to the teachings of the Bible would be "the end of hard times, of poverty, injustice, wrong and war." This happy condition could exist if every one would accept the heavenly principle as the ruling power in his life. For the Kingdom of heaven is in the heart of the converted and their hope is in the happy culmination and full fruition of their faith when every element of discord is removed amidst the angelic throng.

\* \* \* \*

A young man just came to me from some distance to acknowledge a wrong and ask forgiveness and make restitution for what seemed a very trifling matter. He felt that he had wronged

me some years ago, without my knowledge.

It is easy to look upon such a matter as being too trifling to bother about and there are those who would justify indifference in regard to it. But it is by doing violence to their sense of duty in small matters that men become hardened in sin, until finally, though they know what is just and right, they will not admit it. Though they see the truth they will not confess it. The result is that they neither think honestly nor act honestly towards themselves or others.

The Apostle declares that "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." It is dangerous to trifle with, and to disregard the appeals of that grace however small the wrong is. But to yield to God's grace and confess our wrongs and to make every possible restitution, open to us the way of life.

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### SELF-DENIAL

The self-denial which Jesus taught is not to be looked upon as a great burden or a heavy yoke of bondage. They who bear the whole cross find His words true, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." Although sacrifice is required, there is compensation. For every denial which love demands there is a richer blessing, a fuller life.

The question was asked, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The world has little to offer. Its pleasures do not satisfy, its honors soon pass with time, wealth is insecure and often debases, material things bring no lasting joy, and happiness is not found in the realization of earthly desires. Of all

that we can gather of this world in possessions or enjoyment, we have nothing to take with us into the world beyond. We should seek peace for the soul, the gift brought within our reach by the great sacrifice of Christ. He said, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly."

To secure the life which Christ promised, self-denial is necessary. The giving up of our self-will and submission to the will of God. And throughout the Christian experience-it is a daily work. Evil is ever seeking to overcome good. And the life of the Spirit is opposed by the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The world surrounds us—the world of men and of things. Naturally we love the world and the things which are in the world. We love the esteem and praise of men. For this reason we may too readily incline to make compromise with the false standards of the world, and in a degree sacrifice principle to policy, yield consent or deference to worldly opinion, or suppress the truth in fear of being looked upon as narrow-minded or of losing the approbation of our fellow men. To be truly sincere one must disown false principles, and separate from all forms of error. Often men are deceived and deceive others, advancing theories of life and conduct that would undermine faith and lessen the sense of responsibility and of duty. "The world by wisdom knew not God." The Scriptures warn against religious deception that would "seduce if it were possible, even the elect." Therefore it is written, "Beware of evil-workers," "Beware of men." Not now of what they may do, but of what they say and write.

The things of the world appeal to us. To many the appeal is very great as is evidenced by the superabundance of

material things, so fatal to the simple life. Human wants are almost endless; they increase as they are gratified. "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase." Yet the fault lies not so much with things as in the opinion we hold, and the uses we make of them. To regard them too highly and to use them in a way to gratify our vanity are both childish and sinful. To appraise them rightly and to use them in the manner and for the purpose they are intended is the problem.

The Christian life is one of self-denial, but not one of exclusiveness or austerity. Faithfulness in the duties of this life is strictly enjoined. Our Lord did not withdraw from the people. He honored labor, sanctioned motherhood, formed close ties of friendship. He sanctified human life by living it. We use what tends to our good; we deny the things that do us harm.

The things of this world then divide themselves into those which are lawful and edifying, and those which are not. Our duty is plain in regard to the things that do but gratify the sensual nature, but in the use of things which are necessary and right, difficulty often arises. Many things may be used to a certain extent and are a blessing, which when used to the extreme of self-indulgence become an evil. This is true of food, clothing, money,—all useful and right in their places, while gluttony, pride and avarice are classed as deadly sins.

To find the line which here divides and to make the proper adjustments are duties frequent and delicate. The conscience, that inward Monitor must be our guide. If faithful to its promptings we will not be blinded as to right and wrong or misled by the temptations of the world. Our appetites will be governed by moderation, our innate love for

natural things will not draw our affections from spiritual things, and our interest in the things we use and possess will not dull our perception of the relation we should hold to them. "That they that buy (be) as though they possess not; and they that use this world as not abusing it." 1 Cor. 7: 31.

"Let us beware of falling under the power of things," is the thought of a writer of a former article in *GOOD TIDINGS* which should never be forgotten. The blessings of this life, so abundantly given us to enjoy are intended to serve us, to serve our brother, and, received with thanksgiving, to glorify God. And the purpose of our denials is that we might preserve the spiritual life within, and brotherly love and fellowship.

Of the works of the flesh St. Paul says they are manifest, and in the fifth chapter of Galatians he names them. To these we must die, for to "live unto God" is "to die unto sin." Self-denial here is complete. Not only the act is to be denied but it is wrong to cherish the desire. We are living either after the flesh or after the Spirit. To deny in part the life of the flesh is not sufficient, to deny it entirely is essential. The carnal life is satisfied and kept alive by small indulgences. "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee."

Yet sin is so deeply seated that the tendency to it is always present. Rom. 7. And sorrowfully we know that we may, through unwatchfulness, be brought under its influence for a time; but, since justification is not by works, if we through grace are awakened to its guilt and are penitent, God "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." The sin is not a wilful one, or habitual, but of infirmity. They are blessed who through self-denial have escaped the miseries and woes of a sinful life.

The influence of the Evil One is admitted by Scripture. His influence, no doubt, is felt in all kinds of temptations, but we think of it especially in those suggestions which come from the mind, and which are, perhaps, more entangling, delusive and destructive than any other.

We think of his work whenever there is strife, when pride is wounded and the feelings are stirred by uncharitable thoughts and imaginings which, increasing as they are indulged, arouse those evil tempers and dispositions that embitter life and disrupt families and the ties of brotherhood. Again in the reasonings and questionings which lead to false conclusions, assumptions, heresies; in unbelief; in that pride of opinion which is intolerant of others and from which come "perverse disputings," discord and schisms. Above all do we think of his work in Spiritual pride and self-righteousness, from which it is so hard to recover one's self, and which was manifest in those Pharisees to whom Christ said, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Eph. 6: 12.

In these mental conflicts we are impressed with the importance of denying evil suggestions at their source before they gain a foothold; "of taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

Fortunately no one is tempted with every kind of evil. We have our besetting sins which we learn to know, and self-denial is not so difficult or complicated as it may appear. It is the continual yielding of our self-will in submissive obedience to the will of God. The Christian disposition is to follow, to hear the voice of the Shepherd and to follow Him. Then in all circumstances duty may be known, for there is a Voice speaking within, saying, "This is the

way, walk ye in it." This blessed relation is revealed in the words of Christ, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch can not bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." This is the source of our power and the means of our safety..

As a work of merit, no denial however severe is of value; rather it tends to pride and self-righteousness. On the other hand, since the right motive is love, denials that spring from love can not be called legal. The outward life is the effect of the life within. Therefore it is said, "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." When love rules, self-denial is no burden, for love renders a willing service.

If we cling to the old life and are unwilling to deny it, the life of self remains with us and we are not fit for the kingdom of heaven. By holding to the one we lose the other. Jesus said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; but he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

This life of self-denial may be narrow and restricted in the things of this world but it is far richer in all that is worth while, in faith, hope, charity, and the peace which the world can not give. Perhaps not one of us but would esteem slightly the sacrifices we are called on to make if at the close of life we could have the hope which the Apostle expressed: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8.

Lancaster, Pa., R. No. 7. M. H. M.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WILL

"Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." Eph. 5: 17.

God has revealed His will to mankind in all ages of the world. We read in the Epistle to the Hebrews 1: 1, 2. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." We, today, have the written Word which teaches us what God would have us believe about Him, and what duty He requires of us. It contains all that is necessary for us to know for our salvation. His will, revealed through His word, is so plain that the most illiterate person is capable of comprehending it. "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Isa. 35: 8.

Nevertheless, great confusion exists in the religious world today as to what the will of the Lord is. Many religious structures, built on different schools of thought, have arisen, each professing to proclaim God's will. Doctrines are propagated which are contrary to each other, and at the same time their promulgators claim to be branches of the invisible church of Christ, carrying out His will. This will not stand the test even of sound reasoning and is in direct opposition to the teaching of God's Word as we find recorded in 1 Cor. 1: 10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." God's will is perfect, the same yesterday, today and forever. It is the same for all mankind, and is just as applicable to us, as to those of the Apostolic age. Two schools of thought directly opposite in

their teachings cannot both be right. Must we not conclude then that much error prevails in the religious world today.

Multitudes are led to believe they are doing God's will. We see much zeal manifested. There is much crying of "Lord, Lord," but this will not avail anything if we are not carrying out His will as revealed in His Word. Jesus said, Matt. 7: 21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." It is possible to believe we are in the service of God, professing to have undying love, untiring zeal for Him and a full assurance of faith in Him, while at the same time we may be in the employ of the enemy of all good. Some may say, if this is possible, then God is not love, or He would not allow His creatures to be deceived in believing they are serving Him, when in reality they are not. God has no pleasure in the death of the sinner but wills that all might turn to Him and live. If man has been deceived it is because he is willing to be deceived. It is the unwillingness of man to surrender his will entirely to the Lord's will that leads to deception and falsehood. Paul, before his conversion, was very zealous, and thought he was doing God service by persecuting and consenting unto the death of the Christians. He afterwards said, "I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." He saw he was in error, and became obedient to God's voice. In writing to the Thessalonians he says of those who were unwilling to heed God's voice, "they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, and for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thess. 11: 11, 12. Being unwilling to

bear the cross, man gives ear to carnal reason, and accepts a way which seems right to him, "but the end of which is death."

Every one may come to a true understanding of God's will. But first of all we must come to a knowledge of self, of sin, and our inability to save ourselves. We must feel the burden of sin, and desire to flee the wrath to come. Then we will cast aside all preconceived ideas, together with carnal reason, and desire that we might know His will as revealed in His Word. To such, the way is open to the Fountain of Truth.

A right understanding of God's will is essential to salvation. Man may believe what he will, but he cannot change the immutable Word of God. His Word will be our Judge at the last day, and will either condemn us or speak us free. May we ever pray with the Psalmist, "Teach me to do thy will, O God."

Buffalo, N. Y.

C. S. N.

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### A GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE

"The queen of the south shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon and behold a greater than Solomon is here." Matt. 12: 42.

These words spoken by the Savior to the scribes and Pharisees are recorded for our profit and instruction. Unbelief is unquestionably one of the greatest obstacles to entering the kingdom of Christ. It is said that seeing is believing, yet many who witnessed the miracles performed by Christ did not believe in Him. He frequently spoke reprovingly to the scribes and Pharisees on account of their unbelief. They were fa-

miliar with the Old Testament scriptures in which the prophets had much to say of Him and the kingdom which He would establish. They sat in Moses' seat as teachers of the law; they were a religious people, yet they were not willing to honor Christ even as the Queen of Sheba and the Kings of the earth had honored Solomon.

It is well to observe just how the scribes and Pharisees stumbled that we may profit by their error. They had many advantages for acquiring scriptural knowledge and understanding and we would reasonably conclude that they would have been first to accept Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world, but they took every occasion to oppose Him. It is noteworthy that much learning or knowledge of the letter of the scriptures does not always contribute to our spiritual understanding. Through the multiplicity of Bibles, Bible schools, and institutions of theological research a thorough knowledge of the letter may be acquired, but to enjoy a sure hope of salvation we must come to Christ and confess before men in word and deed that He is our Lord and Savior.

In the Savior's effort to establish His authority and draw men unto Him He wisely directs our attention to the Queen of Sheba as an example. It is said that she did not believe all that she had heard of Solomon's fame, but in her desire to know the truth she dispelled doubt and unbelief by coming from the uttermost parts of the earth to prove what she had heard. She said to King Solomon when she beheld his great wealth and wisdom, "It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not their words until I came and mine eyes had seen it and behold the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me." 2 Chron. 9.

Great honor was bestowed upon Solomon by the kings of the earth. And the Queen of Sheba came from her far distant realm to hear his wisdom; this is probably one of the most outstanding examples of faith and courage recorded in Bible history and Christ's use of it may serve as a reproof to every one who will not come to hear and learn of One who is greater than Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba had great possessions and it is evident that she had pride in her wealth and high position, for when she saw how Solomon's riches and wisdom exceeded her own, it is said, "there was no more spirit in her." She was humiliated. Her possessions and high position may represent our self-love and conceit and her journey from her own country and visit to king Solomon may represent the seeker after truth who leaves his own selfish views and opinions and comes to Christ.

The Queen of the South laid aside her doubts, rose up and came to Solomon to prove what she had heard. She might have concluded that she was too far distant to come to Solomon but she ventured. We may conclude that we have become so hardened in sin and have wandered so far away from Christ that we cannot come to Him, or we may be unbelieving and allow carnal reason to overrule the entreaties of grace and thus miss the blessed opportunity given us to come and prove God's love. A greater than Solomon is here and to enjoy the riches and greatness of His wisdom we must displace doubt and unbelief with thoughts of active duty, we must arise and come to Him and learn of Him, otherwise we cannot know whether the report we have heard of His wisdom be true.

The Queen of Sheba was greatly rewarded for her coming to Solomon. "She communed with him of all that was in

her heart and Solomon told her all her questions and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not." This passage is a beautiful representation of Christ's love for those who come to Him and commune with Him of all that is in their heart. He answers their hard questions, soothes their heartaches and comforts their troubled souls. He has done more than Solomon could do. "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53.

Through the power of His Spirit the heart is filled with love. Truly the greatness of His wisdom and love cannot be appreciated nor understood by those who stand with the scribes and Pharisees questioning His authority, refusing to recognize Him as their Savior and Counsellor.

The queen's report of her visit to king Solomon is significant in this, that she found among his men and servants happiness and contentment. "Happy are thy men, happy are thy servants which stand before thee and that hear thy wisdom." The happy state of Solomon's men and servants may be taken as a symbol of the peace, harmony and love enjoyed by those who come under the rule and reign of Christ. The peaceable reign of Solomon contrasted with the war and bloodshed under the reign of his father David may typify the glorious state of those who enter the kingdom of Christ in contrast with the strife and confusion in the kingdom of the world.

The Old Testament narrative of the Queen of Sheba coming to Solomon may be considered as a figurative portrayal of the spiritual relation enjoyed by those who come into Christ's kingdom, which

is sublimely beautiful and glorious. It should awaken in us an interest, and stir up our unbelieving and sluggish hearts that we may have the courage of our convictions and witness to the truth of the report we have heard of this One who is greater than Solomon.

F. E. E.

Lancaster, Pa., R. D. No. 7.

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### LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD

In His ministry Jesus came first unto His own people, the Jewish nation. To those who came unto Him He began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria and great multitudes of people followed Him. In tender compassion Jesus cried unto them, "I am the bread of life. He that cometh unto me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. . . . The bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world." Many of those who thronged about Him said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet," others said, "He is the Christ." The Pharisees and those who through envy strove to destroy Him sent officers to take Him. Jesus asked, "Why go ye about to kill me?"

In parables our Savior sought by natural illustrations to reveal the spiritual truths of the kingdom He should establish. In one of the parables (Matt. 20: 1-16), He likens the kingdom of heaven unto "a man that is a householder which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard, and when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day he sent them into his vineyard."

Since this was a common condition which was familiar to them, our blessed Lord used it as a comparison that the multitude might understand that Jew and Gentile should alike be heirs of the kingdom. Since the householder agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, we infer it was the usual wage for the laborer at that time. The penny referred to was perhaps the Roman coin, denarius, worth in our money about seventeen cents. The first hour of the Hebrew day which is 6 A. M. by our reckoning, was the hour the first laborers entered the vineyard.

"And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the market place and said unto them, go ye also into the vineyard and whatsoever is right I will give you: and they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour and did likewise." The third, sixth and ninth hour of the Hebrew day correspond to 9 A. M., 12 o'clock noon, and 3 P. M., respectively, in our reckoning of time. It was customary for the unemployed who were seeking labor to stand in the market place.

"And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when the even was come the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers and give them their hire, beginning with the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour they received every man a penny. And when the first came they supposed that they should have received more, and they likewise received every man a penny. They murmured against the goodman of the house saying, These last have

wrought but one hour and thou hast made them equal unto us which have borne the burden and the heat of the day."

For more than two thousand years Israel had been God's chosen people. It could well be said they were called at the first hour of the day. Through His servant Moses, God gave them the law, which precepts they were required to keep and obey. Not having the love of God in their hearts they trusted by their works to be rewarded. They were angered that the Gentiles who were uncircumcised and outcasts, should partake of God's blessing. The time of the Mosaic ceremonies may be considered the age in which they had "borne the burden and heat of the day." The Jews fondly imagined that as they had been God's chosen people they should continue to be the sole object of divine favor. The preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles was an excuse for their rejecting that Gospel. They murmured that the Gentiles were made partakers of the kingdom of heaven. "But he answered one of them and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong. Didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is and go thy way. I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good? So the last shall be first and the first last, for many be called and few chosen."

As the householder, our blessed Lord, lovingly called the Jews to enter the kingdom. During the three years of His public ministry, the object and aim of His preaching and miracles was the salvation of this disobedient people. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." He came unto His own and His own received Him not.

At the eleventh hour, or five o'clock,

there was but one more hour before the end of the Jewish day. The last called entered in the cool of the evening. They heeded the call and entered the vineyard. There was no agreement what they should receive, "whatsoever is right that shall ye receive." Those who entered at the eleventh hour were primarily the Gentile nation. Until then they stood idle because no man had called or hired them. With this sad condition before Him our blessed Lord testified, "So the last shall be first and the first last."

Our blessed Lord testified, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day." His work was finished, redemption of fallen man was accomplished. In the new day of the Gospel dispensation He established His everlasting kingdom where He reigns in the hearts of all His children.

The life of man is but a day. The days of our years are but a tale that is told. In youth a Savior calls us to "come." He strives to gain entrance and abide with us. If we do not heed He will again call, His grace will continue to strive with us. It may be the sixth and ninth hour. But the day of grace, man's time of probation to accept the gift of salvation will close. The pearl of great price, the gift of salvation is within reach of all who open their hearts to a Savior's tender call of grace. It may be the call comes at the eleventh hour to enter, but if it is heeded, the reward, the unmerited gift of salvation is freely given.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. S. L.

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### NIGH AT THE DOOR

There is much said and written nowadays about the signs of great world changes. There seems to be a rush about things, sweeping the whole world

on to a climax. Each day is replete with events which previously would have taken years for achievement. It is said that we have entered the rapids of time. The impression given is that the world is living to-day on the edge of the precipice.

With the alarming disregard for laws, the future is viewed with lessened confidence. It is said if men cannot be regenerated nothing remains but to pool the world's power for the enforcement of a form of righteousness, which may lead to persecution of true worship. There is contention, great perplexity among nations, confusion, strife and general unrest. This has been more or less its character in all ages but probably not so universal. How different in Christ's Kingdom! Here is love, unity, peace and safety. Believers in Christ need not concern themselves unduly; they need not fear, for the promise is: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." Christ left worldly conditions alone and directed all His powers to the saving of souls.

There are varied opinions taken of the Scriptures. Some people think the Redeemer is yet to come; others think that He failed to establish His Kingdom when here. They do not comprehend His Kingdom as being Spiritual and thus expect that upon His coming He will establish an earthly Kingdom and reign with His people a thousand years. This period is referred to as the Millennium.

Many wise men of the world regard the Bible as antiquated, and not adapted to our time, probably because they interpret the Scriptures by their natural reason. The spiritual meaning, and what the prophecies represent and typify, is hidden from them; for all Scripture is discerned and understood

by the wisdom and Spirit of God which He imparts only to His elect. It is written: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." 1 Cor. 3: 18. This conveys the idea of the necessity of spiritual wisdom which tastes and realizes (in part) that which "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." 1 Cor. 2: 9.

Christ prophesied of the end of the world (Luke 21: 25-27) and it would appear that some of these prophecies are being fulfilled; that it may be approaching midnight and who knows how soon will be the call, "The Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him." The parable of the fig tree reminds us "when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Matt. 24: 32, 33. However, Jesus also said "Heaven and earth shall pass away . . . but of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Matt. 24: 35, 36.

How beautiful to believe that Jesus came over nineteen hundred years ago, established His Kingdom in spirit and truth to exist within the hearts of those who become His spiritual subjects; those having spiritually arisen from the dead state of sin, and now live and reign with Him. This period from the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ unto His second coming in the clouds of heaven embraces the time of grace. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, He opened the way for all men to become free. He makes it very clear that we remain in bondage under the power of

Satan, if we do not repent and accept His way of truth and love. He says, "Ye must be born again." The mystery of being spiritually born is incomprehensible. Jesus compares it to the wind, you can hear the sound—but "canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." The effect of the Spirit is noticeable in the form of a surprising change in the life of the happy subjects—even though they be but babes in the Kingdom: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power. . . ." Rev. 20: 6.

In conclusion, we do not know, nor is it required of us to try to decide when the time of the second advent of Jesus shall be. It is helpful spiritually to observe and meditate upon these things. The confirmation of the prophesies of the Bible stimulate our faith and hope directing us to Jesus Christ, our Strength and our Redeemer.

Death to the body brings an end to this world for all of us—this we know we will experience. "Set thine house in order, for thou shall die and not live." Our chief concern and question should be, are we ready for the Reaper who may be standing at our door? All the rest will be cared for rightly.

Lancaster, Pa.

M. H. B.

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## MEDITATION

The Psalmist represents the righteous man as one who meditates: "His delight is in the law of the Lord: and in His law doth he meditate day and night."

The mind functions through the mysterious faculty of thought. All our acts, whether good or evil, have their inception in thought. Therefore all the

activities of this life are governed by thought. There is no cessation to this wonderful faculty of the mind, for thoughts incessantly come and go without any apparent effort on our part—we cannot prevent their coming or their going; but by the exercise of our will-power we can in a great measure direct them into proper and useful channels. It is, however, only by the grace of God, that we are enabled, as the Apostle enjoins, "to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

When the mind and heart are sanctified by the Spirit of God, which Christ imparts to all them that believe in Him, then we are fitted for spiritual meditation. Of course we must make the effort and exercise our minds. We are never absolved from doing our part, for being highly endowed we must apply our talents and meet the responsibility. When we once see with spiritual eyes and hear with spiritual ears, there are many incentives to spiritual meditation.

In contemplating the works of God surrounding us, we behold omnipotence, the wisdom, the goodness, the mercy and love displayed! The glorious Sun coming forth from his chambers in the East, radiant with light and heat, and at the close of day apparently setting in the West, often illuminating the clouds with varied and gorgeous colors, reminds us each day of God's faithfulness, love and mercy; for by the Sun the earth is not only beautified, but it is made fruitful, and our temporal wants are supplied. It also typifies the Sun of Righteousness. Christ Jesus, the Day Star, who arises each day in our hearts, ministering unto us grace, the spiritual water of life, and the heavenly manna, the bread of life to nourish our needy souls, making of us fruitful trees.

We are thus impressed that each day

is a new beginning, and that the present time only is ours, for we "know not what a day may bring forth." We are reminded also that God not only created all things, but that He maintains and continues all the varied processes of His vast creation, with fixed laws and systems—all in accord with His promise that the covenant He made in the beginning is faithfully fulfilled: "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

It is very profitable and inspiring to engage in meditation; it is often alluded to by the Psalmist, and the Apostle admonished Timothy: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear unto all." What a lovely theme for meditation is God's plan of redemption and salvation; it is a theme that the "Angels desire to look into!" That He condescended to give His only begotten Son to accomplish this great plan, manifesting such love and mercy that we cannot fathom its depth. The Psalmist says: "The Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works."

We ever feel ourselves unworthy which tends to humility and condescension, and to increase our love and fidelity to Him who first loved us. Especially so, when we consider the provision that God has made to preserve us in the faith, by ordaining Jesus a merciful High Priest to intercede for us; for though we are redeemed and converted, we are liable to fail through the infirmity of the flesh, which remains unconverted. The Apostle says: "Little children I write unto you that ye sin not, but if any man do sin we have an Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous."

Another worthy subject for meditation is that Jesus authorized His disciples to organize the Church, as a haven and a home for believers, where peace, love and fellowship unite them for mutual helpfulness, encouragement, and safety. We can, of course, in a measure, by application and concentration train and cultivate our minds to meditate worthily; but according to nature man is so defiled by sin and self-righteousness, that he is incapacitated to think soberly and righteously. This condition does not only apply to the habitual sinner, but it includes those who profess religion and are not obedient to all Gospel commands.

The Apostle says: "Unto the pure all things are pure; but to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being disobedient and unto every good work reprobate." Titus 1: 15, 16. Surely if their mind and conscience is defiled, their thoughts are likewise.

The fountain of the mind and heart "cannot send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter." Solomon says, "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." How important then that we yield to the grace of God, accept Jesus the Savior, become regenerated in mind and heart, and become qualified to think soberly and righteously. By diligently reading the word of God and meditating thereupon we occupy safe ground, for therein we are reminded of our duties and also how to avoid the dangers that beset us in our pilgrimage. Our faith, love and devotion is stimulated and we can look "for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

### TAKE HEED

If we were as wise as God would have us be, caution would be the watchword of our lives. We are in a world full of perils both to body and soul. There are many things to heed or regard with care. We should be cautious about the dangers and besetments that surround us and be more serious about the consequences that follow our way of living.

When we think of "the spirits of just men made perfect," "the cloud of witnesses" that the faithful have been down through the ages, we see the fruits of heeding the counsel of God, of obeying the instruction available, and living God-fearing, upright lives. Prophets, priests and kings, lowly disciples, martyrs and believers in all ages show the power of obedience to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

There are always danger signals and warnings as we go along and much trouble is avoided where thoughtful care characterizes all we think and do. Our bodies are so constructed that we must regard the laws of health if we would be well. If we are immoderate in eating we suffer. If we overtire ourselves we pay the price. If we allow our emotions to disturb our poise of mind and throw extra strain on our nervous system we know the consequences. There are wise provisions of nature to help repair injuries but it is better to take heed in the beginning.

In going about our daily activities there are rules that should govern us that we may escape accident and death. Safety first is a universal instinct that preserves man and beast from fatalities. The faith that comforts us with the thought that God overrules and cares for us does not absolve us from the duty of carefulness in conducting the affairs of

life. Life has been compared to a highway. There we have the lesson of warning at crossings and curves, of guard-rails where there is danger and the traffic regulations that insure safety if followed. These are figures of protection and so in life where heed is given to the rules, life will be a benefit and pleasure.

In the spiritual realm, the world within us, there is even more caution needed against dangers. Selfish, deceptive and vain promptings are always intruding to hinder our doing what is right in word, deed and thought. Selfishness, jealousy, impatience, lack of kindness and love are among the many indications of our weakness. We need the gracious influences of the Christian spirit. Where these are lacking we form habits of mind before we realize it that are entirely out of order.

How well it would be if the young people could realize the opportunity as well as the responsibility of training their minds in the right way. We would not take the joy away from youth but then is the time that habits are formed and ideas nurtured that make life hard or easy. It seems difficult for us to realize that as we sow we shall reap. If pleasure was expected from higher sources and Christian ideals were followed what a different world we would have.

Take heed is especially good advice to the Christian. With him the one great desire is to follow the Master but still he is confronted with many dangers. He may even be tempted to get away from the plain teachings of the Gospel. Truth and falsehood are much mixed. There is a leaven of unrighteousness working under the cloak of charity in a way to deceive many sincere souls. We are taught that the kingdom of Christ is

separate from the world, but natural reasoning finds this difficult to accept and would have it different. This is a place to take heed, for according to God's word we cannot give our chief interest to the world and then expect the approbation of a loving Father who said, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven," and who in His requests—knowing what is best for us—tests our loyalty and love. "If ye love me keep my commandments."

To love and obey is indeed the true test, and to accept Christ as our Savior without hope of any other commendation from Him is the way provided for erring man, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Christ Jesus." 1 Cor. 3: 11. "But let every man take heed how he buildeth there upon" . . . "every man's work shall be made manifest." The Apostle may mean manifest in the last day when there will be a final reckoning for us all, but he may also mean that our life here will show by walk and conversation what spirit we are allowing to guide us,—that, while striving to be devoted to God, we will also try in all our associations to be a good light, and walk in love and peace. We will encourage self-knowledge, self-control and humility. We will be kind and thoughtful of others and remember the distressed and unfortunate, ever striving to be a help and comfort to those around us, and with all these efforts we will watch that we do not build on good works but alone on faith in Christ with these manifestations as a fruit of the same.

These are among the necessary things to heed as we go through life if we want to do our duty and have God for a friend and also have a hope that reaches beyond the grave. Joshua advised his people, "Take diligent heed to love the

Lord your God and to keep his commandments and to cleave unto him and to strive to serve him with all your heart and all your soul." Josh. 22: 5. And the apostle Paul wrote, "We ought to give more earnest heed to the things we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip." "How shall we escape if we neglect."

Waynesboro, Pa.

M. C. S.

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### OBSERVATION

If we only look and listen,  
As we journey day by day,  
Singing birds and flowers unfolding  
We shall find along our way.

Though the path seem dark and dreary,  
Things of beauty oft are near  
If we look a little closer  
Or be still that we may hear.

Voice of bird or streamlet rippling  
Speak of God's great power and might,  
Telling that in love and mercy  
He is watching day and night.

God in love is often speaking  
Through the things about us here  
If we can but understand it  
And attune our ears to hear.

Unto man it seemeth foolish,  
For with natural eyes we see;  
And we cannot understand it  
'Til the "Love of God," have we.

For we need the Holy Spirit  
To discern the way our Lord  
Has prepared for all His children  
Who obey His living word.

God in love has sent these blessings  
As His peace comes from above,  
But not all can understand it  
Any more than His great love.

If we follow as He guides us  
Using light as it is given,  
We will find the "Path of Service"  
Which in time leads up to Heaven.

Chambersburg, Pa.

S. S. R.

### WHY SPEND AMISS

The Prophet Isaiah appealed to his people in a very pleading way, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not." Isa. 55: 2.

In the same chapter he counsels, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon." Could there be words more inviting? Pardon to the penitent. How comforting that this appeal reaches out to this present age.

As we look about us we see the lavish use of much time and money, but are they spent for the true Bread of Life or for the honor and esteem of man? The Savior counselled those who followed Him, "Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." John 6: 27. In this same chapter He said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, Moses gave you not the bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven; for the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." The people said unto Him, "Lord evermore give us this bread." He answered and said, "I am the bread of life: He that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. The Jews murmured among themselves. They could not understand why He said "I am the bread of life." They knew not the mission of Jesus, that He came to establish a spiritual Kingdom in the hearts of men. He was proclaiming the Father's will. He further said: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak

unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Verse 63. But their understanding was darkened as in one instance the Savior used the following words, "Having eyes see ye not, and having ears hear ye not?" Mark 8: 18.

A sad condition, but how often do we see this in the world today, that having eyes they see not and having ears they hear not. The love of the world is so strong, but let us mark John's words, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2: 15. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Cor. 2: 14. The enlightening Spirit of God has to enlighten the darkened heart of man before he can understand the deep mysteries of God.

Oh, why spend for that which is not bread? Why labor for that which endureth not? Why comfort ourselves with a doctrine which will not stand? Many make a profession of religion but one of the most impressive passages of Scripture is, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7: 21. The Savior said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 6: 46. We read in the second epistle of John, "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." In Hebrews, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4: 12.

Will we console ourselves that God is merciful? We read in Exodus 34: 6, 7, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." How pure are the all-seeing eyes of God! We have to meet the same God as did the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Yea, even for ten righteous would He have spared the city, but how lamentable! there were just four. How impressive the words, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 1 Peter 4: 18.

God's children are called as witnesses to God's truths, to proclaim His truth by word and deed and to warn souls of the great destruction of all who do evil. Noah was called a preacher of righteousness, and he preached and warned people to turn from their evil ways. But they did not give heed. But, oh, the truthfulness of God's promise, the waters descended and all outside the ark perished. Can we hope for more mercy if we are not found in the true Ark of Safety, Jesus Christ?

Oh, why spend for that which satisfieth not? Why console ourselves outside of God's promises? Conforming to His will in part is of no avail. James wrote, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all." Jas. 2: 10. What folly to deceive our poor souls. God requires a true and entire submission to His will. We must sell all that we have, divest ourselves of all self-righteousness and buy of Him gold tried in the fire which is the true Bread of life. We must become as clay in the hands of that great Potter, who can form out of us vessels for the Master's use. We are called to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is but our reasonable ser-

vice. Rom. 12: 1. We are admonished, "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind; that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God." Romans 12: 2. We are no more our own but are bought with a price, the precious blood of Christ.

The Preacher, the Son of David, left such wise counsel, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Eccl. 12: 13-14.

Baden, Ont., Can.

M. R.

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### GOD THE SOURCE OF ALL POWER

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Psalm 121: 1.

This beautiful quotation is worthy of our thought, indeed the whole Psalm directs us to the Maker of heaven and earth. He neither sleeps nor slumbers. His protection is by day and by night, to preserve from all evil even now and forevermore.

In our busy lives, anxious and engrossed in an effort to secure a livelihood, we need reminders to look to the source from whence cometh our help.

Bunyan in "Pilgrim's Progress" tells of the man who could look no way but downwards, with a muckrake in his hand, raking to himself the straws, small sticks, and dust of the floor, while over his head there stood one holding a celestial crown in his hand, offering to exchange the crown for his muckrake, but the man failed to see his opportunity. We too often make the same mistake in not looking higher than earth, when we should look up, even unto the Maker of the hills whence cometh our help.

O! that our hearts and the hearts of all men could be drawn closer to the God of heaven. If the knowledge and fear of God had a stronger foothold in the minds of our youths, how much sin and how many of the awful crimes committed would be averted. It would appear as though the enticements of sin were greater, and sin itself more deadly in effect than in past years, the record of which causes our hearts to ache.

We love to recall the words of the Hebrew lad when under a great temptation, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Sometimes through sorrow and the trials of life, we are given a brighter vision of the hills of God, and happy are we when looking up to the Maker of the hills, we receive assurance that His everlasting arms are beneath us, that He alone is the source from whence our help cometh.

Lift Thou mine eyes unto the hills,  
Thy majesty to see;  
And in my heart this truth instill.....  
Help comes alone from Thee.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Who is a true believer?

A. A true believer is one who having been burdened by sin seeks refuge in Christ and becomes regenerated, brought from death to life through true living faith. He accepts the word of God as divinely inspired and through the power of the Holy Spirit strives to honor God in word and deed. He desires through love to walk in humility being subject to the spirit and mind of Christ, and after having done all he counts himself an unprofitable servant and confesses that it is alone through the mediatorial service of

Jesus Christ that he can attain salvation.

Q. Who is an unbeliever?

A. One who rejects God's word; one who is controlled by the carnal mind and is unwilling to acknowledge himself a sinner and to accept deliverance through the regenerative power of grace. Also one who claims to believe in God and in his Son Jesus Christ and is unwilling to obey Him.

Q. What is most likely to disturb the peace of believers?

A. Self-love. Resenting reproof. Self-justification. Possessing something or consenting to liberties that we know will grieve our fellow-believers. Neglecting to speak to an erring brother reminding him of duty.

Q. Can any one be excommunicated from the Church unless there is evidence of spiritual death?

A. The Church can receive no one as a member unless there is evidence of spiritual life. Neither can any one be excommunicated unless there is evidence of spiritual death.

Q. How can we test and prove our faith in God?

A. By examining and proving ourselves by the word. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." 2 Cor. 13: 5. By a willingness to humble ourselves, confess our sins and failings, patiently endure persecution, and forgive those who trespass against us. To deny ourselves and bear the cross. To love not only the brethren but our enemies:—then, we will suffer the word to judge us, and "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. 8: 16.

Q. What are the evidences of a justified hope?

A. Obedience to all of Christ's commands. Showing "love out of a pure

heart, and of a good conscience and faith unfeigned." Manifesting the fruits of unity, fellowship and peace; renouncing secret and open sin; separation from the world, in its excesses, vanities, and pastimes, also from all worship not true to God's word. If these fruits are not in evidence the hope is vain and deceptive, and will only bring shame, confusion and sorrow in the end. The Apostle says: "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." Rom. 5: 5.

Q. Why do the Reformed Mennonites refuse to worship with other religious bodies?

A. The Reformed Mennonite Church claims that the Church is a united body and that divisions are condemned in God's word. 1 Cor. 3: 3. If they would worship with religious bodies that sanction divisions, they would not bear out this claim, but would by their actions sanction a divided Church.

True worshippers of God are united by the Holy Spirit, and possess the "mind of Christ." 1 Cor. 12: 13. Phil. 2: 5. Consequently to unite in worship with those who feel it is not necessary to walk in humble obedience to all the teachings of Christ, would be coming together with divided hearts, which is at variance with the teachings of Christ.

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### THE PROPHET JONAH

Jonah, the son of Amittai, was a Galilean and the time of his prophecy seems to have been at the time when Joash was king of Judah.

Jonah was told to go and cry against Nineveh for the wickedness of those people had become so great that the Lord purposed to destroy the city.

Nineveh was one of the largest and most ancient of the cities at that time.

Jonah seemed unwilling to deliver this message and thought possibly if he would flee some other person might be asked to deliver the message. So Jonah undertook to flee from God's presence and went to Joppa where he found a ship going to Tarshish: he paid his fare and went on board.

They were overtaken by a great storm and the vessel was in danger of being lost. The sailors were alarmed and began each one to cry unto his god, and cast their lading overboard so as to lighten the vessel. Jonah was fast asleep and the captain awoke him, saying, "O sleeper arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us that we perish not." They must have thought the storm was sent because some one on board had done wrong, for they cast lots and the lot fell upon Jonah. They then inquired what he had done and whence he came. He replied he was a Hebrew and feared the Lord God of Heaven, and had fled from God's presence when he had been asked to go and cry against Nineveh. The sailors, greatly alarmed, asked why he had fled from God's presence and what they should do that the sea might become calm. Jonah said, "Cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

The sailors unwilling to cast him overboard rowed hard to bring the vessel to land but failed in their efforts. They then cried unto the Lord that innocent blood should not be laid upon them, as they cast Jonah into the sea. The waters at once became calm. It would seem as though these men must have become converts to the true God as they offered sacrifices and made vows to the Lord.

The Lord had prepared a great fish which swallowed Jonah. He was alive three days and three nights inside the fish and he cried unto the Lord as he realized the depth of his disobedience, and God's mercy. The fish in obedience to God's will swam to the shore and vomited Jonah upon dry land. Jonah moved with thankfulness wrote a prayer of thanksgiving for his recovery. The history of Jonah has been questioned and is regarded as a fable by many persons. But our Savior referred to Jonah on several occasions in His gospel. When the Jews asked a sign of Him to prove His mission, He replied that no other sign would be given them than that of the prophet Jonah who was three days and three nights in the fish's belly, so should the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Thus He foretold His burial and resurrection. Again the Savior said, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah and behold a greater than Jonah is here."

Much of the account of Jonah is miraculous, but God's power is unlimited and can meet with no impossibilities. By divine power Jonah was preserved in the stomach of the fish and at the end of three days that fish was led by the unseen power of God to eject the prey it could neither kill nor digest.

The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time and he was told to go to that great city and declare God's message. It was supposedly a three days' journey for him to walk around the city proclaiming its destruction. Jonah obeyed and cried as he went saying, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

The people became terror-stricken,

proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the least to the greatest. The king came down from his throne, put on sackcloth and sat in ashes. He published a decree that neither man nor beast, herd nor flock should eat nor drink. They were to cover themselves with sackcloth and cry mightily to God, and every one was to turn from his evil ways that thereby the Lord might repent and turn from His fierce anger.

Jonah had made a booth outside the city where he could sit and see what befell the city. He was displeased when he saw the city was not destroyed. He excused his conduct in fleeing to Tarshish saying, "For I knew that thou art a gracious God, merciful and slow to anger, of great kindness and repentest thee of the evil, therefore now, O Lord, I beseech thee, take my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live," The Lord asked. "Doest thou well to be angry?"

The Lord prepared a gourd that grew over Jonah's booth and shaded him from the hot sun and was a comfort in his distress of mind. The Lord allowed a worm to destroy the vine that it withered and Jonah fainted from the heat and longed to die. He seemed to feel his honor was at stake and that he would be considered a false prophet.

The Lord again asked, "Doest thou well to be angry?" Jonah replied that he did even unto death.

The Lord then said, "Thou hast had pity on the gourd for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night, and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?"

Many useful lessons can be learned from this short history. The Ninevites were on the verge of destruction but as they repented, God's judgment was withheld. They relapsed and some one hundred and fifty years later the prophet Nahum was sent to predict the destruction of the Assyrian army, and also the total destruction of Nineveh which took place about 606 B. C.

Jonah was a prophet but showed the weakness of his humanity, and yet he no doubt repented of his wrongdoing as his honest confession to the sailors who threw him overboard gave evidence. His prayer is beautiful and shows a real conception of God's love and mercy.

We do not learn of his laboring in a prophetic mission at any other time. Some of the minor prophets seemed only to be sent on special occasions to warn of God's displeasure on account of disobedience.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

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### A CHILD'S STORY

My dear little Children :

I sometimes wish I could see the dear children who read these stories, but they are scattered over a number of states and some are living so far away that I fear I shall never have that pleasure.

We are in the beginning of a new year and I may tell you some things about it in this letter, that perhaps you have not known or thought of. But first of all I will wish that you may all have a very happy new year.

Do you know there was once a Year One? Strangely too it did not begin at the beginning of the years, for the world

was already very old, no one knows how old.

At the beginning of the Year One, a most important event happened, a new King came, and it seemed as if all things began new, and even now we think that was the most important of all dates. When we say that this present year is nineteen hundred and thirty two we mean that the Year One was just that many years ago.

In this Year One we read that in a small village there lived a fine young woman named Mary. We are given to understand that she was good as well as beautiful. An angel appeared to her and told her that God had blessed her. She was frightened but the angel said, "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God." The angel told her of the Savior or new King coming to earth and that she should call his name Jesus, and that she would be the mother of Jesus.

You are all learning to read and I know you will want to learn more of what happened in the Year One, when Jesus our Savior was born. We have an account of His life, He came as a little child, grew up as all children do and, by living our life, He teaches us how to live, so as to be happy now and still more happy when we meet Him in heaven. One of His parting messages when He went back to His home in heaven was this: "If ye love Me keep my commandments."

A few days ago we celebrated Christmas and I know you had a happy time. Christmas helps us remember the time when Jesus was born in the Year One, and did you ever think that before He came into the world there was no Christmas.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.