

# GOOD TIDINGS

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

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## EDITORIAL

The "Resurrection" is a subject much dwelt upon at the present time. It can fittingly be applied naturally as well as to the spiritual life.

One interpretation of "Resurrection" by the International Cyclopedia is, "A springing again into life or vitality." As Spring-time advances we see in the plant-life evidences of awakening from a dormant state "springing again into life or vitality."

We can with propriety apply the term resurrection to those who are raised from the evils of the world to a higher plane.

When mankind pass from childhood to years of accountability, from innocence to guilt, all suffer from a disorder which terminates in spiritual death. The pure life in which we were created and the spiritual power that would fit us for salvation is lost.

The moral law can be literally fulfilled by living honorable, upright, commendable lives. Great effort is made to improve conditions, politically, physically, socially and morally; every endeavor is used to raise mankind to a higher standard—in every walk of life, whether rich or poor, high or low, and the accomplishment is considered a noble

achievement. Maintaining such a high standard and endeavoring to faithfully follow this code of ethics is to be greatly admired, yet such attainment consists only in what can be accomplished by natural power and wisdom and does not bring mankind to the true object of life. This is attained by a lively sense of the gravity of sin, and the resurrection from "dead works to serve the living God."

By the annals of history we learn that over nineteen hundred years ago our blessed Savior was born, His life, suffering, death and resurrection, all are very impressive. The spiritual resurrection is a mystery; though it is a subject that interests many, it cannot be comprehended by the wisdom of this world, only by revelation in obedience, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery." Jesus answered the disciples, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

In this issue of "Good Tidings" will be found subjects well defined, that are both interesting and instructive. Our wish is, that all who have the opportunity might read and reflect. May God's blessing attend the efforts of the writers, and be a source of knowledge to the readers.

We are thankful to all contributors for their writings, and we ask a continuance of their efforts. May our united labors and the interest of our dear readers combine to further in our souls the great cause sanctified by the love of the Father in His dear Son!

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### SPRING-TIME

"Lo, the winter is past." "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds has come." Thus we welcome the glad spring-time as of old. The flowers appearing in their glory,

appeal to us though our hearts may have become hardened in sin, and by living "without God in the world."

Our thoughts find expression in the language of the poet:

"O, wherefore, wherefore were they made,  
All dyed with rainbow light?  
All fashioned with supremest grace,  
Up-springing day and night?"

The singing of the birds and the springing into growth, beauty and usefulness of seeds, buds and blades of grass, bring renewed comfort, and hope for ample provision for our temporal wants. We are also impressed that in them all are the manifestations of God's infinite wisdom and love, as we see His provision and care alike for all, just or unjust.

The disposition is to have and enjoy the material provisions for our comfort and well-being without serious meditation on the fact that "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above." Recognizing these as we should, as precious gifts bestowed upon us, we owe gratitude and expressed appreciation to the Giver.

In our failure to so live, that our lives reflect gratitude, honor and glory to our Creator, to whom we are thus indebted, we the crowning part of all the visible creation, tarnish this pure and inspiring scene, which in the glory of the flowers and in the singing of the birds appeals to every heart.

In the social relations of life we frown on ingratitude for service rendered or gifts bestowed. How much more important that our gratitude for these noble gifts upon which depend our comfort and sustenance in life,—in fact our very being,—may not merely be a meaningless expression of the lips. May our gratitude find a more effective expression in love and service to the Lord, our God. May His grace and love in our

hearts enable us to live in abasement and self-denial, and in obedience and submission to His will. Shall we not then glorify our Creator, as He is glorified in the pleasing panorama that spreads before us in this glad spring-time of the year?

The beauty and glory that impresses us in this spring-time scene may well represent the awakening of spiritual life and growth in all who open their hearts, that the warming influence and sunshine of God's grace and love may enter, and the good seed, as in the Savior's parable, falling into good ground, may spring up, flower and yield fruit. Then it can truly be said: "Lo, the winter is past!" Men and angels can render songs of thanksgiving and praise in contemplating the glory of the Creator manifest in the pleasing scene.

The glory of the flowers in this spring-time scene will soon fade and disappear; and the fruitage, serving our temporal needs will be forgotten; but we have the comforting assurance that the fruitage of that good seed, in hearts well prepared, in "some a hundred fold, some sixty and some thirty," will endure and serve us throughout a happy eternity when these scenes of temporal beauty and glory that appeal to all, have receded into oblivion!

Doylestown, Ohio.

C. W.

### SPRING.

(Sonnet.)

How wonderful thy coming, gentle spring,  
The fragrant balmy air tells us thou'rt near,  
The warbling songsters fill our hearts with cheer  
And nature's voice with melody doth ring.

The trees, the grass, the flowers with vines that cling  
All clothed with verdure new will now appear;  
Beneath our feet what treasured plants are here,  
They come each year a harbinger of spring.

Oh what is man that he unmoved can see  
The power of God that here doth life bestow?  
Man cannot make the smallest seed to grow  
But round him God's creative power is shown.

Lord, may our hearts with reverence turn to Thee

That through Thy works Thy goodness may be known.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

### GOD MANIFEST IN NATURE

Winter with its chilling blasts has passed and given place to spring. The balmy air and the light and heat of the sun's rays have revived nature and brought forth to renewed life the dormant vegetation. The swelling buds on the apparently lifeless branches, give promise that the trees will soon again be clothed in their beautiful foliage. Even the tiny blades of grass springing from the cold earth are interesting and wonderful. The mountains seen in the distance are beautiful, when passing clouds cause lights and shadows to play over the tree tops, delighting the eye with their delicate shadings. The birds returning again to greet us, seem to vie with each other in singing the Maker's praise.

Everything in nature speaks of a great Creator. The broad canopy of the starry heavens in their sublime grandeur, display the handiwork of Him who calls them out by name and by number. The revolution of the planets in their order, the succession of day and night, the morning dawn, the setting sun and the evening twilight, all are mysterious and wonderful.

The declaration of God's glory pervades all creation. Day unto day declares it and night unto night records it. The heavens with all their wonder have for six thousand years declared the eternal narrative of Him who created them. Revolutions and natural changes have come over the earth but the order of God's laws has not altered.

We are deeply impressed with the goodness and love of God, in creating such a beautiful world for man's pleasure and comfort. With the Psalmist we would say, "O Lord! how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom Thou hast made them all." Looking upon the works of nature as we now see them, we are led to wonder what perfection there must have been in the beginning, when God looked upon the creation and said, "It is very good."

When our first parents were placed in the Garden of Eden, they were happy and walked with God in sweet communion. We think of the Garden of Eden as a place of delight. A perfect abode for man, who was created in God's own image. There was then no curse upon the earth, no thorns nor thistles grew and man did not need earn his bread by the sweat of his face. There was no depression of spirits, no weary aching limbs. Man was in accord and harmony with his Maker.

What a change came after man's disobedience and the entrance of sin. Most sad the fall, from a state of innocence to a state of guilt, from that sweet fellowship and communion with God his Maker, to a state of fear and condemnation! Adam was led by fear to try to hide from God's presence. When God called, "Adam, where art thou?" Adam replied, "I was afraid because I was naked." Sin and guilt had robbed him of his innocence and seemed to have also taken away his judgment, or he would not have attempted to hide from an all seeing God.

Shame and fear were the first fruits of sin, and sin has produced these fruits invariably from Adam's time until now. It has brought disruption and violence in its train, and death came as a final result of the fall.

How abominable must sin be in the sight of God, when it has not only de-

faced His image from the soul of man, but has become a source of natural and moral evil throughout the world.

But thanks be to God, provision has been made for man's renewal to the divine image. This provision was in the Divine Mind from the foundation of the world, and the promise was made to Adam that the woman's Seed should bruise the Serpent's head.

The Apostle declares, "That where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." But man in his fallen state closes his eyes to the light of truth and hardens his heart to God's convicting grace. The human mind is wonderful, so capable of improving natural conditions, but so incapable of fathoming the designs, or accepting the teachings of the Lord. God's plans are not in accord with carnal reason, and man cannot change or improve them. Men's efforts along this line will fail and result in unbelief and confusion.

Do not we all, at some time in life, hear God call, "Adam, where art thou?" May we heed God's call of convicting grace, retrace our steps and walk in obedience. Then we need not fear to hear God's voice. Communion and fellowship will be restored between us and our Creator.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

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## RESURRECTION

The bodily resurrection of Christ and His ascension completed His work on earth. The mission of His lowly birth and condescension, His obedience, humiliation and death, ended in triumph in His resurrection. The work which He came to do, He accomplished. The glory He had laid aside, He recovered. His flesh saw no corruption. He had power to lay down His life and take it up again, and He could now say, "I am He that was dead, and am alive forevermore."



The fact of the resurrection, is recorded in all of the four Gospels. An ignominious death, and one which even His disciples looked upon without hope because of their "unbelief and hardness of heart," was followed by the empty sepulchre guarded by angels. He appeared first to those women, whose pure love and devotion led them to be "last at the cross and first at the tomb," saying to them, "Go tell my brethren." Afterward, in the forty days, He appeared a number of times to the other disciples and apostles, and St. Paul says, "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once," demonstrating to them fully "by many infallible proofs" that He was the Lord Jesus, risen from the dead. These were the earthly witnesses of His resurrection; and the power of their faith, of their spirit and testimony, was such that "multitudes believed on Him;" and on Paul's last visit to Jerusalem it is said, "many thousands believed on Him." Finally, He gave to His apostles the commission to go and preach the Gospel to every creature, and to baptize those who believed, to proclaim His Kingdom and organize His church on earth, which, in the last age of the world and to the end of time should become a perpetual witness and proof to men that "Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God." John 17: 23.

His resurrection is the type and earnest of our own spiritual resurrection. "If Christ be not risen," the Apostle says, "your faith is vain and ye are yet in your sins;" for it was the victory over sin and death and over "him who held the power of death, that is the devil." The strength of sin is the law and all were in bondage,—Christ's work brought our release, and is the means of our spiritual resurrection, from the death into which our sins had brought us, to a life which is a gift from God and is eternal. Jesus said to Mary

Magdalene, "Touch me not, go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God," signifying that human affection and earthly companionship between them had ended, and that henceforth there was to be one family in heaven and on earth united by His Spirit through whom they all have access to one Father, and a relationship formed by which He would be nearer to them than ever before, in a fellowship closer than human ties can give, with "an understanding that we may know Him, that is true," better than words can impart, and a faith that can look at "the things which are not seen," giving peace in solitude when entirely alone, and in the hour of darkness. It is a relation which only the words of Christ can define: "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow Me and I give unto them eternal life."

Christ became the first fruits of the resurrection from the dead, and this is the pledge and assurance of our bodily resurrection, fulfilling the hope of mankind. In a life so short and unsatisfactory the hope of immortality has been the consolation of many:—for the aged who are conscious of declining years, in the homes where affliction has entered and death seems near, and in the time of bereavement it is the one hope that can comfort and console; in times past of persecution and torture, and under crosses and trials in all ages, it has sustained the faithful, uniting them in a common hope and a common rejoicing. This faith sheds a new light on life and on death, and helps to solve the mysteries they hold for us. Life's meaning may be understood only by the promise and hope of a future life, and its purpose fulfilled by a preparation for that life; and the afflictions, sorrows, temptations and trials common to this life, in the providence of God, tend to that great end, for

“we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” And death, that which the worldly man looks upon with dread, and hopes for its delay, is spoken of as a sleep for the believer and a rest from labor, and the assurance is given that in the resurrection, “that which is sown a natural body shall be raised a spiritual body,” and “when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’ ” I Cor. 15.

Lancaster, Pa.,  
R. F. D. 4.

M. H. M.

### SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION

“Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen” Luke 24: 5, 6.

Our Lord Jesus came to do the will of His Father—coming as a lowly babe, being subject to parents, He lived after the manner of those for whom He came to be Prophet, Priest and King. He could realize the trials, the troubles, the vexations of spirit, the utter helplessness and inability of the Jews to keep the law which God had given to Moses upon Mt. Sinai. He could realize the temptations which satan placed before His people Israel, because He tasted all of them, yet without sin.

At the age of twelve years, He began to display some of the wisdom with which He was endowed, but was still willing to abide with His parents and be subject to them, and increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

John the Baptist bore testimony concerning Him, saying, “I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptize

you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable.”

Jesus also was baptized, and the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, “Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased.” This Scripture testimony proves the origin and mission of Jesus to have been from heaven. We are aware that many men are not willing to credit these things, however, whether we choose to accept them or not, is for us to decide, and whether we do or do not accept them, does not change or nullify their truth, nor does it detract from the power of Jesus, which was given unto Him, not by man, but by the Lord God Almighty. This power was given unto Him, that He could be the Savior, and He used this power for that purpose as subsequent events prove, and in so doing glorified both Himself and the Father.

Mankind almost entirely fail to comprehend the plan of salvation, fail to fathom redeeming love. Our finite minds cannot comprehend the vastness of this earthly sphere upon which we dwell, nor can we understand the power which causes it to revolve daily and yearly, but regardless of our limitation, it does not cease to do as the wisdom of God provided it should; just so our lack of understanding and appreciation does not cause a cessation of the work of grace. This lack on our part will, unless we become awakened and comply with the requirements which have been imposed upon us, debar us from receiving the benefits which God desires we should receive.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom

and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" The Apostle was one of those who had been taught worldly wisdom at the feet of Gamaliel and was a Hebrew. This wisdom and learning, did not keep him from persecuting those who loved and followed Jesus. This wisdom of God, of which Paul wrote, caused Jesus at the time appointed, to go upon His mission of revealing His Father's will. He was given power and wisdom far above any man, so that He was able to turn water into wine, feed multitudes with a few barley loaves and fishes, He spake to the wind and waves and they obeyed Him, healed the sick, caused the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, lepers to be healed, the dead to be raised, to speak as never man spoke; yet this did not convince the Jews, His own people, that He was the Son of God. They took counsel to destroy Him, for they said, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles, if we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

The rulers of the Jews looked for a king, who would have great temporal power and authority, who would make of them a great nation to overcome its natural enemies, and since they realized that this Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, would not do this, they wished to destroy Him before all men would believe on Him and follow His teaching of non-resistance of evil.

After the destruction of His life had been determined upon, as He well knew beforehand it would be, He continued to fulfill His mission, kept the passover with His disciples, instituted the breaking of bread and drinking the cup in remembrance of Him, washed His disciples' feet and commanded them to do likewise, comforted His disciples, com-

manded them to love one another, told them He had chosen them out of the world, and prayed the Father in their behalf that they might be one as He and the Father are one.

What sorrow in His death must they have had who were with Him, who believed on Him, who loved Him, saw Him die and be laid in the tomb, He who had done so much for them, who had given so much comfort, healed so many distresses! They did not realize that He was fulfilling the requirements of God's holy law, which man could not do, that He was tasting eternal death for souls that were dead in trespasses and sins, that He was becoming sin in their stead, He who knew no sin, that they might be clothed upon with His righteousness.

Here we behold the love of God, who so loved us that He sent His only begotten Son into the world that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The Father gave the Son power to lay down His life and to take it again, which He did according to the Father's will, and now the joy, the blessedness, the life, reaches unto us, unto you and me and to whomsoever will come to the Fountain of living water. The condition is that we believe on Him; whom the Father sent; if we believe on Him, accept Him as our sacrifice, our great High Priest, if we love Him because He first loved us, then we will strive with all the power He gives us, to do His will and not our own, to follow Him whithersoever He leadeth and accept His word as our counsel and guide.

Oh! the wonderful love of God, love which passeth all understanding, redeeming love revealed, love extended freely to the broken contrite heart, hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto those who become as little children, willing to learn at the feet of the Master those great lessons of truth which will free the soul from the blight

of sin, and enable us to obtain eternal life.

What peace, what joy, what gratitude should fill the heart toward God, for this greatest of all gifts, the bursting of the bars of death, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, thus giving unto us the privilege of becoming heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ, of the glory He had with the Father from the foundation of the world. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city," where the living will not be among the dead but be separated throughout a glorious eternity.

Glen Elder, Kansas.

E. F. S.

### RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

When our Savior was here the resurrection of the dead was one of the principal questions among the Jews. He arose from the dead to give proof of our future resurrection.

"They said among themselves, 'Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?' and when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away." Mark 16: 3, 4. They expected Jesus to establish a kingdom on earth but in their disappointment, sorrow and sadness filled their hearts.

The disciples at this time were not sensible of what the Savior told them: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." By His ascension the work of grace was completed for all who look to Him by faith. We are dead in sin by transgression. The stone of condemnation is very heavy. How shall we remove it, for it is very great? Simply by believing in Christ.

"The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son

of God: and they that hear shall live." John 5: 25. This verifies the truth that we are spiritually dead, and that unless we hear, obey, and receive the new life, there is no promise of eternal life. For example, our Savior raised Lazarus from death to life, but not to spiritual life. The spiritual life was dependent upon His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Martha saith, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. . . . Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again." Martha saith, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus saith, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11: 21, 25. When we die to our sins and are laid in the grave of repentance the grave-clothes are around us. Jesus calls, "Come forth," He commands the grave-clothes to be removed. We now hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.

This is the first resurrection. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power." Rev. 20: 6, 14. The first resurrection is the new life, or being born again. The second death is death to the soul, where "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Christ was delivered for our offences and raised for our justification and is now at the right hand of the Father, pleading for us. We are to die to sin, which is the worldly life. What evidence have we that we are dead to sin if we continue in the old life, going with the current and tide of the world? John tells us plainly not to love the world. "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2: 15. We should love the Father, for He first loved us. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13: 35.

Christ is the only source of spiritual life. He was the first fruits from the dead, the only means of our salvation. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5: 28, 29. Then all must appear before Him, to be judged. May we be wise, and not as the foolish virgins lacking the oil, when the Bridegroom cometh, that we may enter before the door is shut!

Lancaster, Pa.

E. J. T.

### REDEMPTION.

Our blessed Redeemer, thro infinite love,  
Forsook His bright mansion, in heaven above,  
And came upon earth, to atone for our sin;  
Gave up His blest life, our salvation to win.

O, great was the suffering on Calvary's tree!  
He paid the redemption for you and for me;  
His blood there was shed, 'twas for us He was  
slain,

But thanks to the Father, He liveth again.

He conquered the vict'ry o'er death and the  
tomb,

And came forth triumphant from darkness and  
gloom,

Ascended on high, to heaven's bright throne,  
To make intercession and plead for His own.

He dwells with the Father, and there will  
prepare

A home everlasting, which we too may share;  
O, glorious prospect, so filled with delight,  
To be ever with Him in splendor so bright.

Fayetteville, Pa.

C. J. M.

### DIFFICULT SCRIPTURES

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away." Matt. 5: 42. "Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again." Luke 6: 30, 34.

To understand obscure parts of a writing we are aided by the general sentiment of the subject treated. On difficult scriptures we follow this rule. The passages quoted belong to the new state of tenderness of heart, which our Savior introduced to take the place of the hardness of heart, which is common to us in the carnal state. The law, "An eye for an eye," was to exact amends from those who committed willful injury or by carelessness. This law was adapted to human nature as it was before the time of regeneration, and was probably intended to prevent personal revenge on offenders, by appointing judges to settle differences; as civil law now is a means to end strife. But civil law does not end embitterment of heart.

The precepts, statutes and ceremonies of the Law of Moses were intended to maintain moral order, and those who took to heart, "remembrance again made of sins every year," in their worship, would be moved to repentance, while the indifferent would have no benefit. From this cause there were then two classes of worshipers among the literal people, as now worshipers do not all seem sincere.

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Savior in referring to the Law and the Prophets says, I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets: "I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." As He was the object of all earlier dispensations they ended with His coming, "who abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; . . . blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing it to His cross." Eph. 2: 15; Col. 2: 14. This testimony asserts the end of the law of condemnation to those who accept Christ. Our obligation to the letter of the law has ceased, but the spirit of the law is the substance of all the New Testament



teaching, as sanctioned by the Savior: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, . . . and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Obedience to God and love to our neighbor are the real elements of godliness.

The Savior withdrew from the multitude to the mountain where He taught His disciples what others are not willing to do. He taught them to be humble; to mourn over their sins; to have a desire for righteousness, mercy, purity of heart, peace; patience in affliction; not to be angry with a brother; if in worshiping should remember that a brother hath ought against him, he should first be reconciled, then worship; not to cherish evil lust; to cut off all desires offensive to the conscience; and that there is only one cause for divorce. Again He taught that their word should be binding without an oath; under injustice they should not resist evil; and that they should give to him that asked them, and from him that would borrow of them they should turn not away, . . . and should lend hoping for nothing again. Christ's disciples are not to ask for goods that are taken from them.

If we are His disciples we shall love our enemies; bless them that curse us; do good to them that hate us, and pray for our persecutors. We shall not do our good works to have praise of others; our prayers shall come from the secret closet of the heart. We shall not attach our hearts so much to the things here that we cannot part with them; we cannot do double service. We shall see the Divine care in the works of nature and be inspired with trust in God's providence.

We shall not be hypocrites in judging others while we wilfully indulge in sin ourselves, but shall cast out the beam of sin in ourselves that we may see clearly to "judge righteous judgment." As we

are constantly receiving blessing from God we shall be willing to impart to our neighbor. As the entrance to the way of life is called "narrow" we shall keep within the limit that is fixed. We shall "beware of false prophets" and shall know them by their fruits,—“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,”—such build on the rock.

We have quoted some of the qualities of the new religion as set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. The aim of the new Lawgiver is to establish in us a character similar to His own. He proved by His acts the principles of His religion; so we shall do. He reproved wrong by precept, not by punishment—in this He differed from Moses. The resentment which His reproofs brought upon Him, He bore passively, and prayed for His persecutors. We shall "follow His steps."

He said to His disciples, "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you." This power controls the redeemed, giving evidence that they are "transformed by the renewing of the mind." As the mind governs the body, superior actions of love manifest themselves in Christ's disciples. His commands to them are adapted to that which they are qualified to do. The commands cited in the text are not defined, as is the case with some other sayings, and with most of the parables. He said to His disciples, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." Therefore it is safe to follow the use made by the Apostles of the Savior's dark sayings.

Their charities were applied to the needy. When the widows in Jerusalem were in need, men were appointed to care for them. Paul charged Timothy to have the church care for a certain class of widows and to direct others to provide

for themselves, teaching that idleness among young widows tends to mislead them. Believers in general he "exhorts by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." He commanded the churches to lay together for the poor saints "as a matter of bounty and not as of covetousness; . . . so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Liberality in giving to the needy is commended, but not to encourage idleness. "From him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." This is in line with giving to the needy, which are the only class that we are taught to relieve. "To lend hoping for nothing again" is giving in the spirit of making a gift, and according to examples applies to the needy who cannot pay back. The righteous who can pay back will, from a sense of right, do so. "Christ died for the ungodly," and those who have His spirit of love will serve all classes as He served all. In the words of Paul: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Gal. 6: 10.

"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" gives us license to use scriptures on like subjects to fix a conclusion when the meaning is dark. "Of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." This might be imposed upon us unjustly, by a legal verdict. We shall not contend against the verdict by litigation. It might be by extortion. We shall not contend to compel restoration. It might be by theft. The harmless "sheep" would not follow the "wolf" to wrest from him the "goods." Nor would love prompt the "sheep" to send officers after the thief to use the violence that would endanger life. If the goods were taken by persecution the example is given: "They took joyfully the spoil-

ing of their goods knowing in themselves that in heaven they had a better and an enduring substance." Heb. 10: 34.

"The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." John 14: 24. The word is sacred and we should bring the parts spoken by the different witnesses on the same subjects into agreement.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

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### WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

Some say a Christian is a consistent member of any church regardless of his faith. We learn from Acts 11 that Christ's disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. They were willing to obey the counsel of their Teacher, whom they accepted as the Prophet foretold to deliver us from the bondage of sin. He is called the "Repairer of the breach," the Messiah, the Anointed of God. In Him all the prophecies and promises center. They saw in Him and His works evidence of the Messiah which inspired them to love and obey Him.

Those who followed Him as chosen witnesses were to go forth to promulgate what they had heard and seen of their Master; of His suffering, death and resurrection; but not before they were endowed with the fulness of His promised Spirit and the power to live worthy of the name of Christian. Then they were capacitated to go forth to preach repentance and forgiveness of sin, faith in Christ unto regeneration, love and obedience to God, as a fruit of faith; and to love God supremely, and "our neighbor as ourselves." The love of God in the Apostles prompted them to suffer like their Master at the hands of persecutors; to suffer bodily hardships and death, as an evidence of the firmness of their faith; and for the enlightenment of others, and honor to Christ, whom they loved.

Conversion means changed into another state, and this spiritual change is as distinct as the difference between darkness and light. Those who are changed are commanded to let their light "so shine before men that they may see their good works." Christ says, "If a man love me he will keep my words." John says, "If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness (in the way of self), we lie and do not the truth." 1 John 1: 6. When the true believer fails, he acknowledges his fault and tries to make amends. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point is guilty of all." James 2: 10. This means that transgression brings us under guilt. True penitence brings us pardon.

To the redeemed it is said, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." 1 Peter 2: 9. The Israelites were a type of the redeemed. They also were chosen and as long as they were faithful God prospered them, and their enemies could not harm them. They too were a peculiar people in that they had no fellowship with other nations in worship, in marriages, in association and general dealings. When we compare the separation of the Israelites from the surrounding nations with the separation of those in Christ, from the worldly life, there is much similarity. They were a chosen nation. The disciples of Christ are a chosen people, distinct from the world, and all unsound worship.

All that will come have promise. Some of the Apostles were poor fishermen. God's spirit seeks all, though none but needy sinners are willing to be chosen. "The sick need the physician." God dwelling with His Spirit in the faithful makes them a royal nation to live the true life, regardless of the opinion of others. They show meekness, love, and non-conformity to the world in all its

vanity and self-gratification. The words of the Savior are: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John 7: 16. In losses, abuses and wrongs they do not appeal to worldly Courts for redress. Their natural rights and interests are less to them than their obedience to Divine command. They are thankful for the worldly power instituted to preserve order in the world. They are conscientiously loyal to the ruling powers, but will not take part in acts of violence. They are in Christ's service to obey His doctrines. They return good for evil. When worldly rulers commanded the founders of the church to cease teaching such doctrines their reply was, "We ought to obey God rather than men." They suffered the penalties by imprisonment and death, for Christ's and the Gospel's sake.

The present divided sentiment in religion is evidently not from Christ, for divisions are termed carnal by the Scriptures. "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular." 1 Cor. 12: 27. As He is the head, the whole body of members under Him will act as unitedly as our physical members act in agreement under our physical head. In this illustration the human body is made a type of the church. "I beseech you . . . that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, and that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." 1 Cor. 1: 10. While this appeal was made in settling a difference in preferring leaders, without reference to doctrine, how much more serious is the matter when there is disagreement in doctrine! The Lord requires separation now from unfaithful worship as God required of Israel. God changeth not.

The Savior reproves pretenders, appealingly: "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 6: 46. In line with this sad com-

plaint the teachings of the Savior and Apostles are positively plain, that an obedient child of God is not to take part with, nor to give any evidence of encouragement to worshipers who do not in their conduct and church relations conform to sound doctrine, lest they fall under the same condemnation which awaits such in the day of Judgment. As the testimony is: "He that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds." 2 John 11. 2 Cor. 6: 14, 18. Rom. 16: 17. If we join in worship we give consent to it, and bid it God speed. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God." 2 John 9. Withdrawing from unsound worship is the sacred duty of every true worshiper. How can any one hope for an heirship with Christ, who despises His doctrine.

We do not reflect soberly if we think that a moral life, baptism in infancy, or adult age, church membership, charities; good services to others, will merit salvation, when we do not accept Christ as our only means of reconciliation, and are not willing in all things to obey the word which is to be our judge. If His word speaks us free we are free. If it condemns us we can hope for no favor. John 2: 1, 3. How can we escape. Heb. 2: 1, 3. We conclude a Christian is one that unconditionally accepts Christ as his only means of salvation. Love in return will effect faithful obedience to all His counsels.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. K.

### THE FOUNDATION

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His, And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Tim. 2: 19.

If a man contemplates building a house, he first considers the foundation. He makes a thorough search for a good

foundation, and if necessary digs deep to get to rock, then feels secure to proceed with his building, believing it will stand the test of the different elements to which it is exposed, namely heat and cold, wind, rain and storms. This is a consideration for comfort and protection while in this temporal state. We use the wisdom with which God has endowed us, to do what is to our greatest advantage. These things decay, for the greatest structures that can be designed by science will all come to naught, for this world is doomed to destruction.

There is a spiritual consideration which should occupy our mind, in basing our spiritual house on a sure foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3: 11. Jesus declared that He came into the world to seek that which was lost, and to reveal the last will and counsel of the Heavenly Father. It is written: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy mind, with all thy soul and with all thy strength and thy neighbor as thyself." Love then is the fulfillment of the Scriptures. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Our Savior clearly reveals the Father's will, in His Sermon on the Mount. He outlines the foundation and the principles of His doctrine. He says, "Of old time it hath been said: Thou shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths, but I say unto you swear not at all; but let your communication be Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay; whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. . . . It hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: But whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also." "It hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy;

but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that persecute you." Matt. 5: 43. Herein is revealed the Father's will; that the nature of His kingdom is defenseless and peaceable. The prevailing element is love; "If ye love me keep my commandments." It is natural to think and we may often hear it expressed, that it is not practical to live by such a doctrine. The Pharisees took exception to His defenseless doctrine, and after the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead, they held a council and said, "if we let this man go all men will believe on Him and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation."

Our Savior's remarks in the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, "who-soever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock; . . . and he that heareth and doeth them not, He likens unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. When the winds blew, and the rain descended, and the floods beat upon it, it fell, and great was the fall thereof!" The Savior here illustrates the two classes of people; those that obey and have a promise, and those that do not obey and are without a promise. We might reason, and conclude that it is not necessary to live so circumspcctly. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure." How sad would it be should we fail to build our spiritual house on the rock! The testimony is: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever."

Humberstone, Ont.

J. A.

Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God, from the heart. Eph. 6: 6.

## OUR AGED FRIENDS

There's something about the aged,  
Though we meet them every day;  
A rising of better feelings  
When e'er they cross our way.

We meet them in crowded cities  
Their faltering steps we see;  
Their faces like well written pages,  
Oft tell what used to be.

They've born their share of burdens,  
Had sorrows we little know;  
Should we stand in their places,  
We too'd have tales of woe.

To some it is kindly given  
As fruits that mellow by frost,  
Are sweetest in days of autumn  
Grow dear'er when tempest tost.

In youth our pathway paving,  
A choise 'tween tinsel or gold;  
The seeds we sow in the springtime  
May fruit a hundred fold.

If we cherish in thought and action,  
What only is good and pure,  
'T will strengthen with growth of manhood  
And a calm old age insure.

For the old we have kindly greetings,  
Let us love them while we may;  
They may not long stay with us—  
We follow the self same way.

There's something about the aged,  
Let us smooth their weary way;  
May they enter the gates of heaven  
When from earth they pass away.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

## SPIRITUAL VISION

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: . . . for the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 4: 18.

How can we look not at the things which are seen? How can we look at the things which are not seen? If we search the Word what may we safely conclude?

Let us note some reasons why we should look at the things which are seen. Every thing God makes is worth looking at. God made us to look at them, when He made the eye. Nature is



never, and nowhere silent. If we do not look, we will be summoned to look. The birds call from the tree tops, the flowers look up appealingly from the way-side. The sunrise and sunset command our attention. Even these things which have no speech nor language, whose voice is not heard, make their appeal, reaching out to all the world.

Probably the best reason why we should look at the things that are seen is that they may help us to form an idea of the unseen. Our conception of the eternal is derived from the temporal. All visible things are emblems. Truly God warns us forcibly not to love the temporal. We may appreciate the beauties of nature, but we dare not stop there. We must look through them and beyond to God. May we see in the temporal the shadow of the eternal God.

Let us count our blessings and let us pray for faith that as we look upon the things seen we may have a vision of the unseen. To see the Divinity in temporal things is true spirituality. Jesus calls our special attention to the lily, with the hope that we may recognize in the temporal the eternal.

The materialist is utterly blind to the eternal, the mystic is apparently blind to the temporal. Let us try to appreciate all the blessings we have and *know* that our capacity for enjoyment depends on our faith in Jesus, who taught so emphatically the eternal value of the temporal.

To some the thought of passing from life to death is depressing. However it should spur us on to renew our hope, our faith in the Infinite Power back of all things temporal. Let us pray for light and life, so that when our own temporal frame has been dissolved, the eternal part of us may be free to enter into that rest prepared for all those who love God above all passing things.

Lancaster, Pa.

M. H. B.

## THE HIDDEN WISDOM

Jesus answered and said "I thank Thee, Oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Matt. 11: 25.

Preceding these words, it is recorded that the Savior upbraided the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done because they repented not. He evidently found little or no response to His teachings among those people who were self-satisfied and self-opinionated, ambitious to instruct rather than to receive instructions from others. To Chorazin and Bethsaida the Savior said, "If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you." To Capernaum He pronounced the same woeful and calamitous end: "And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell." Then follows our text:—

Had the Savior reversed these words and said, these things are revealed only to the wise and prudent, it would seem more reasonable to the natural mind. The Scribes and Pharisees, who instructed the people of those cities in the law, might have been encouraged, so also those men of our time who advocate long courses of training in theological seminaries to acquire spiritual knowledge, might have reason to be encouraged, were it not for the fact that Jesus thanked the Father because these things were hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes. We are persuaded Christ wanted to be understood that salvation is not attained by anything we can do but that the power to save is altogether outside of ourselves. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of

God; not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2: 8, 9.

Our text encourages us to turn away from ourselves, cutting off the desires that tend to exalt. It implies condescension and directs us to that level where the Spirit of Christ can enter the heart. It teaches us to come to Him in the spirit of a helpless and dependent babe. "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." Luke 18: 17.

The names, "babes" and "children," given to Christ's followers, and mentioned repeatedly in the New Testament are suggestive, and should convey to every thoughtful mind that the life of a true Christian must be lived in simplicity and humility, and that his deportment should reflect dependence and reliance upon the Head, Jesus Christ, for spiritual support and sustenance.

The wisdom by which Christ's teachings were established was a hidden wisdom to the Scribes and Pharisees, and we fear it is a hidden wisdom to many dear people in our day, because of their unwillingness to condescend to that degree of lowliness and self-abasement where divine wisdom might enter their hearts. The Scribes and Pharisees were exalted by their knowledge of the letter of the law that they lost sight of the spirit, and we might say, in consequence of their much learning, were more hindered in comprehending Christ's simple doctrines than many others. We learn from the scriptural records that they were not in possession of Divine wisdom as they professed, and that their knowledge of the letter of the law was no advantage to them. It is manifest by their deeply seated evil designs that they were only worldly wise.

Worldly wisdom and prudence have their chief concern about those things

which advance our temporal interests, while Divine wisdom is based upon a principle that is heaven-born, and works for our permanent and eternal well-being. Worldly wisdom has its bounds wherein to do its works, whereas Divine wisdom is boundless. The Apostle Paul confirmed this when he exclaimed, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" It is clearly brought out by the words of our text that God's ways of grace shall not be found by worldly wisdom and prudence, but they shall be revealed by the Spirit to the humble and contrite souls that seek them by faith and prayer.

The Scribes and Pharisees, and the people of those cities whom the Savior addressed, were evidently not conscious of the fact that they were so fallen and sin-stricken as to need the change of heart, that is implied in our text. This danger exists today. We are inclined to look away from ourselves to notice failings in others of which we ourselves may be guilty. We passively accept that the Scribes and Pharisees were a hypocritical and self-righteous people, and hard to convince of the deceptive and erroneous views which they held. Do we consider that by nature we possess the same evil tendencies? We may comfort ourselves that these scriptures apply more particularly to them, forgetting that since we are of "like passions with them" they are written also for our profit.

Lancaster, Pa.

F. E. E.

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Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves, Jas. 1: 22.

## ARE WE HAPPY?—IF NOT, WHY?

“Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.” Psalm 144: 15.

The Psalmist portrays the condition which characterizes the people of God. This people have been redeemed from their fallen state, their sins have been remitted by Jesus shedding His precious blood upon the cross. They were “strangers and foreigners but are now fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God.” Eph. 2: 19. They have become “heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ” for the eternal inheritance. Amidst these earthly scenes of change and decay, which show the frailty and uncertainty of human life, they look steadfastly to the things which are enduring. “While we look not at things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Cor. 4: 18. The Apostle says, “For all things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.” 1 Cor. 3: 22, 23. A people with such character and such promise surely should be happy, and their happiness should continue through life.

There are, however, opposing and conflicting influences which disturb and mar this happy condition. This treasure of eternal life they have in an “earthen vessel,” subject to temptation, affliction and death. The Apostle defines the contention: “The flesh is against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, these two are contrary to each other.” This opposition manifests itself in various ways. Some are weak in one trait of character and some in another, but all have a besetting sin in the flesh to contend with.

Satan, the Arch Enemy of the soul, knows our weak points and assails us by his devices. If we yield to his suggestions, we become unhappy, for the spirit whereby we are “sealed unto the day of redemption,” is grieved, love grows cold, our spiritual vision becomes clouded by doubt, and hope is blighted. There are many avenues that lead off the narrow way of life when the flesh is given liberty. Some may have a besetting sin to enjoy the world; some lustful practices which through long indulgence had gained a stronghold in their flesh before conversion, may again assert themselves. Some may again become too selfish or covetous, too unmerciful or too uncharitable. Some whom God blessed with riches may become too penurious, and forget the poor and needy, and thus become unfaithful stewards, by not extending aid to relieve the necessities and burdens, the cares and anxieties of the poor. Some who are in moderate circumstances may be tempted to envy those in better circumstances and may also fail in giving to the poor according to their means. The poor widow who gave her two mites, was commended by Christ, because she gave all that she had. Luke 12: 42.

Some may shirk their duty in reminding a brother of an offence committed, and not fulfil the gospel rule. Some may fail to separate entirely from secret sin, and connive too much at outward sin. They may mingle too much with the world, engage in foolish talking and jesting, gossiping and backbiting and thus obscure the light, “hiding it under a bushel.” Some may be tempted to evade the cross and not observe the kiss of peace and not uphold or defend the self-denying doctrines of Christ, thus failing to “give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” 1 Peter 3: 15.

Some who have riches may become extravagant in their way of living, in adorning their homes, in their equipments, forgetting too much the words of the Apostle: "Use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." 1 Cor. 7: 31. Some may not show an example of meekness and moderation to their poorer members and to others. Some when sorely afflicted may become tempted when comparing their condition with those more favored, and may murmur and complain, forgetting the words of the Apostle: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. 4: 17.

All the temptations and transgressions which we have cited cause unhappiness. The Holy Spirit, which is ever a faithful monitor, may be grieved, may be disobeyed. Peace and rest in the soul may be disturbed, and cause sorrow. If not persisted in too long, the heart is not hardened and God's grace is allowed to enter, the way is always open to return to the blessed and happy state. By exercising faith in Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and appealing to Him in humility of heart for forgiveness, happiness can again be restored. "If we believe in God, believe also in me." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2: 1, 2. If, however, we should despair by giving way to unbelief, thinking we have gone too far and there is no more grace for us, we would continue to be unhappy and would be in danger of drawing back to perdition.

There are many scriptures to confirm and demonstrate the power of faith. Christ said, "All things are possible to him that believeth." Before He restored

sight to the blind man, He said, "According to thy faith be it unto thee." It is also according to our faith or willingness that we are enabled to overcome and be sustained in the holy calling. To be happy we must exercise faith, and we must not forget that we are "saved by grace *through faith*, it is a gift of God." Above all, says the Apostle, "taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Eph. 6: 16.

To be happy we must live for a day, not resurrect phantoms of the past, sins and failings atoned for, and no more remembered by God, not entertain forebodings of the future, imagining we will meet lions on our pathway. The Savior said, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." We should follow the example of the Apostle Paul: "But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3: 13, 14. If the people of God are unhappy it is because they have given way to temptation, have not overcome by grace through faith. "Blessed is the man that *endureth* temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." Jas. 1: 12.

By faith in God and obedience to His word, eternal life is preserved and happiness is assured. Hope which is the anchor of the soul, comforts and cheers the pilgrim on his way and even robs death of its terror and the grave of its gloom, for it unfolds to his spiritual vision the bright prospect of glory and happiness in the world to come!

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

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Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. 2 Cor. 13: 5.

## FAITH AND HOPE

While the pilgrim makes his Journey,  
During night as well as day;  
Faith and hope are dear companions,  
Cheering him upon the way:  
Hope, a source of constant comfort,  
Does at times become most dear,  
When the arm of faith is lacking—  
Blessing us with wholesome cheer.

Even in the Ark of safety  
Faith and hope are aids we need,  
To support us in our contest,  
'Gainst a wily foe indeed;  
Who will ever seek to hinder,  
And disturb our peace divine;  
But the Lord will by His Spirit  
Hope within our hearts enshrine.

In the blessed hope press forward,  
On the path of righteousness,  
Passing through the straits of Jordan,  
To the peaceful blessedness:  
Resting there in silent slumber,  
In the arms of love divine;  
Faith and hope their constant comfort,  
Till they shall in glory shine.

Waiting there will not be tedious—  
Soon shall Christ the Shepherd come,  
Bringing hosts of angels with Him  
Calling His dear children home:  
Where no faith and hope is needed,  
While they there shall realize  
The anticipated kingdom,  
In the heavenly Paradise.

Lancaster, Pa.

S. C.

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## THE WORK OF FAITH

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Heb. 11: 6.

This text finds its fulfillment in every instance of worship recorded in the Bible, beginning with Cain and Abel and ending with the testimony of the Revelations of St. John. In the first instance, Cain brought of the fruits of the ground and Abel of the firstlings of his flock, an offering unto the Lord. Each brought of the best in his line of pursuit. The offerings were equal in

value so far as they are in themselves concerned, yet Cain's offering was rejected and Abel's was accepted, because it was offered in faith. This primitive occurrence is the key to acceptable worship, just as the meat offerings under the law were not acceptable without salt, so no spiritual service is approved of God without faith.

The faith of our text is not only an historical or intellectual faith, but it is a faith born of God. “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, even our faith.” There are two forms of faith. The first is a result of conviction of sin, wrought by the grace of God, which begets the fear of the Lord and leads to repentance; but the faith of our text is born in regeneration; it humbles, justifies, renews and translates into the kingdom of God. The first inspires fear, the second begets love. These two forms of faith are recognized by the Apostle when he writes of the power of the Gospel as follows: “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”

The Bible reveals God as infinite, in wisdom, power and goodness. Faith thus accepts God, and accepts His testimony concerning His Son, expressed as follows: “This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him.”

True faith gives full assent to the doctrine taught by Christ and His apostles, it has discovered to its possessor the reality and efficacy of the atonement, that it is indispensable to salvation. It secures to its possessor the internal evidences of the truth of the Gospel.

Faith works by love and manifests its existence, not only by a verbal acceptance of the New Testament teaching, but also by obedience thereto, not from fear of punishment, but from love, to Jesus, the author of salvation. Faith accepts every doctrine of Christ; to reject any



part of the revelation is to impugn the wisdom of God, as much as to say, God has enjoined duties upon us that are unnecessary. It is not our privilege to accept one portion of the Gospel and reject another portion of it.

Faith humbles its possessor. Abraham, while interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah, said, "I am but dust and ashes," Job in the presence of God said, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Isaiah exclaimed, "Woe is me; for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." Moses and David give similar evidences of the effect of faith in God. In the case of Nebuchadnezzar and Herod we have an illustration of pride and self exaltation and of the truth of revelation that "God resisteth the proud."

Under the Gospel dispensation we have many testimonies in confirmation of the consoling promise that God gives grace to the humble. Grace is indispensable to salvation, and since humility is a requisite to the obtaining of grace it is of interest to consider what constitutes humility. It is freely conceded that outward appearances are not a safe criterion to determine the state of a man's heart.

The test of humility is the spirit manifested. Our Lord Jesus, the great exemplar, was meek and lowly of heart; when He was reviled He reviled not again, and when he suffered He threatened not. Humility is characterized by gentleness, meekness, patience and love. In brief, no one is truly humble but he who has the spirit of Christ, and every one assents, that such do not indulge in vain display.

We will cite a few of the many instances recorded in the Gospel in evidence that faith causes true heart-felt humility. When Peter witnessed the great draught of fishes his faith grew so strong that he fell down at Jesus' knees

and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." The centurion said, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed." A woman of Canaan besought Jesus to have mercy on her and heal her afflicted daughter. As Jesus' first service was to recover the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he answered her accordingly, but she having faith continued to plead, saying, "Lord help me." The Lord answered her, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs," to which she replied, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Both these latter obtained assurance of help, as they petitioned with humble hearts. Since faith regulates the conscience, it is of the utmost importance that our faith is a creation of God and not only our opinion. Paul (while he was Saul of Tarsus) had an approving conscience when he persecuted the Christians. He says, "I was alive without the law once," that is without a knowledge of the spirituality of the law. His faith at that time did not lead him beyond the requirement of the letter of the law. Thus it was with the young ruler who could say, "All these have I kept from my youth;" also the Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray, and this was the faith of the Jews in general and of the Pharisees in particular.

The Jews were right in their belief in the one only true God; but they erred in not attaining a knowledge of the design of the law, which was to impress them with the need of the atonement of which the sacrifices under the law were only a shadow. The moral law was designed to reveal to them through the keeping of the letter of the law, as it required perfect obedience. These people demonstrate the importance of a well founded faith. Sound faith and an en-

lightened conscience go together; both are indispensable. As evidence that faith and conscience go hand in hand, we cite the testimony of Jesus, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you." The foregoing emphasizes the danger of legalism, of building upon an insecure foundation and of self exaltation.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God." Faith effects a union of the soul with Christ, without which there is no power to overcome evil. We have contended that faith humbles, for further witness of which we cite the worship of angels, when they praise God they veil their faces with their wings and cast their crowns at His feet.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

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### TRANSGRESSION CAUSES PENALTY

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou also shall be cut off." Rom. 11: 22.

The goodness of God is reflected in all His works. Man is familiar with the law that like begets like, and as God is love, that principle accompanies all His dispensations, whether comprehended or not. The Psalmist in reviewing God's wisdom concludes, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." Psalm 139: 6. Yet His love and goodness exceed all. The goodness of God is manifest in the creation of mankind and the knowledge which is imparted to them. Adam did not fall into transgression blindly; the inheritance he gave his posterity, and all that

followed it, is the effect of the loss of the Divine Life. Whilst the text may indicate severity on God's part it is only a natural consequence of disobedience and does not militate against His love and goodness.

Stoning transgressors to death under the law to preserve the purity of God's people, while it was very severe punishment, was adapted to their fallen condition, for they were a carnal people. The punishment was not more severe for them than the discipline is for God's regenerated people. God has always provided such laws and commands as were best adapted to man's condition and happiness. The services required of God's people under the Law, with the punishment inflicted upon the disobedient, typify the services and discipline in the Church of Christ. It was the one nation of which God required strict obedience under the law. He had chosen this nation to carry out His design. If any other nation would have rendered such services or offered sacrifices as God required of His chosen people, He would not have regarded them. So any service in the Christian era which is not commanded, He will not regard. Every transgression received a just recompense of reward, giving evidence that God did not respect the person of man, and as He is the same yesterday, today and forever, He continues to demand obedience.

On them which fell, severity: they fell because of unbelief, and the severe punishment of separation from God's people followed. But toward "thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." To continue in His goodness, implies obedience to all that is commanded. As the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, we are apt to fail in the most important of our

duties of love, that of making an effort to restore erring members. When a member errs in word or deed, the peace and harmony of the church is disturbed. If the error is not corrected, confusion will follow, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." James 3: 16.

The church will always labor for peace and love as the unction of the Holy Spirit is ever with God's people and they will examine themselves whether they are in the faith. "Prove your own selves; Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." 2 Cor. 13: 5. If Christ is in us then are we heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, and we will have the mind of Christ. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. 2: 5. Having the mind of Christ we will do the work of the Father as He did. That work is to love God and our neighbor as ourself. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." Eph. 5: 29. Christ was without sin, and as the church is the fruit of His love, then unrepentent sinners must be separated from the church.

Camp Hill, Pa.

J. I. M.

### TRUST IN THE LORD

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matt. 14: 31.

We may learn many beautiful lessons from a few words falling from the holy lips of our blessed Master, "He who spake as never man spake, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." 1 Peter 2: 22, 23.

An impressive circumstance preceded the utterance of the words quoted above.

The storm at sea, and the appearance of the Savior walking on the turbulent waters, caused anxious apprehensions in the disciples' minds lest He might be a spirit. He comforted them with the words of assurance: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Yet Peter was not quite satisfied; doubting, he sought greater evidence and said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water," and He said, "Come." Peter started, but when he heard the boisterous wind and thought of the depths of water, no doubt he still feared it was not the Master, and instead of trusting in Him he was overcome by human frailty and weakness, and beginning to sink he cried, "Lord, save me." Immediately the arm of love was stretched forth and raised him up with the gentle rebuke: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

We marvel at Peter's faithlessness, yet how many times these words apply to us! We have had abundant evidence of the Savior's love and care for us; He has guided, comforted, rebuked and strengthened us many times since we have set out on our journey Zionward. Yet we, sometimes like Peter, doubt and think, "He hath forgotten us," when the clouds around us gather, the night is dark, the way seems closed and we seem to be far from home. Can we not trust in Him and believe that even the chastening rod is sent in mercy, and while "for the present it seemeth not to be joyous, but grievous, it afterward yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Heb. 12: 11. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."

"While the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," we have to contend with a fallen nature, and as we go on in the conflict with self and sin, we meet with many discouragements and trials to our faith. We are humbled and brought to the feet

of Jesus, where we plead, "Lord, save us." "Increase our faith," St. Luke 17: 5, and "help thou our unbelief." St. Mark 9: 24. In mercy He heareth our plea, and tells us "He will never leave nor forsake us." His arm of love is stretched out still, and sufficient grace will be given for our every need, if we come unto Him with purpose of heart, making unconditional surrender of our will, submitting ourselves unto the will of the Master, who came to fulfill His Father's will, that we might have life, and "have it more abundantly."

He stands at the door of every heart and knocks, but only for those who open unto Him will He enter and be their guest. When we possess a perfect desire for holiness of life and a will resigned to all of God's ways, then, and then only, can we "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let our requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil. 4: 6, 7. Precious promises are given those who "have faith and doubt not"; though we may have to wait upon the Lord for the perfecting of His design in us.

The prophet Isaiah has very beautifully portrayed His providential care for us: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40. May we take new

courage day by day and trust in Him who has said, "O thou of little faith wherefore didst thou doubt?" "Let not your heart be troubled, . . . If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." St. John 14: 3.

Lancaster, Pa.

M. M. W.

### OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE WILL

The true standard of life is revealed in Christ's teachings. It covers every line of thought, whether good or evil, bringing forcibly to every thoughtful mind the need of a higher control. As man is a free agent and has knowledge of good and evil he has the liberty to choose his own course in life. He may choose the standard Christ has set or he may make his own; if he makes choice of the former his course is clear, if he chooses the latter it will lead him into confusion.

In Christ's teachings a fixed standard is formulated; a positive guide is given to bring under control every thought that militates against a state of order. Evil is opposed to good. To do that which is good, evil must be overcome, and it involves a conflict. No one of his own volition or power can reach the required standard upon which unity and true fellowship is based. We must make an unconditional surrender of our wills to God's, so that the eyes of the understanding may be opened, and we may receive the previous gift which Christ, God's only Son, came to give.

The will of God is revealed in His word. It is the only standard of life, to which true obedience can be rendered. The light of life is clear, all promptings to sin must be opposed. The promised power will qualify and fit every one for the conflict, so that not a single command

is broken, and constant obedience is sought. The new life and power rests upon possessing the Holy Spirit, God's love, and a living faith.

Divine love is the foundation upon which the christian life and practice rest. Christ set the example in His life and work. No carnal mind can follow it for the natural or carnal mind cannot receive the things of the Spirit, neither can it know them. Then, to follow Christ as the true Shepherd, the carnal life must be put off and a new life, symbolized in a little child, and the innocent and harmless disposition of the sheep, must be put on. It must be changed from a wolf's nature, the natural state of man, to that of a sheep or dove or a little child. Surely such are truly converted, and for all such souls Christ has prepared a kingdom, a place of refuge, a home for the redeemed, where perfect peace and joy in the Holy Ghost prevail. The word is the constitution given for its government, and all truly converted souls have made a vow to be loyal to it. Their hearts are filled with Divine love. Christ as the Head, who through love, delivered them from the bondage of sin, and who translated them into the glorious liberty of the Gospel, has given them the power to taste the good word of God and the power of the world to come.

The tongue has no words to express the deep feelings of gratitude for the wonderful work God has wrought through His only Son in man's behalf. The world and its work sinks out of sight when they are compared with the life and work of the Redeemer. We can become children in the family and household of God, where perfect peace and sweet fellowship abide. Well could the Savior say: "Ye are not of the world, for I have chosen you out of the world."

Medway, Ohio.

C. A. H.

## WATCHFULNESS

"And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Mark 13: 37.

The Savior spoke these words to four of His disciples who had asked Him privately, Mark 13: 3, when the things He had spoken of should come to pass. He warns them to take heed to themselves and above all to "watch."

There are many ways of watching. We are so constituted that we are inclined to watch for failings in our fellow-beings. Great efforts are made to subdue evil by watching for opportunity to punish those who violate what is generally called good.

Evidently, the watching referred to in our text has reference to inward watching over our selfish natures, which is necessary if we would be ready to meet the Lord. If it is our sincere desire to follow the instructions of our Savior the effect will be a prayerful effort to subdue pride, sensitiveness, anger, suspicion, envy, and every thought at variance with the peaceable nature of Christ. All are afflicted with temptations but it is only when we fail to be guarded that we yield to them. Yielding to temptation is sin, but if we are awake and watching we will never justify sin in ourselves nor in others. We cannot watch when we are asleep, therefore it is all important that we should be awake to the dangers that are ever present, whether they come through our senses or the worldly influences to which we are susceptible.

It is not an uncommon experience to hear persons reflect on the weaknesses of others possibly doing them great injustice, when they have imperfect knowledge of existing circumstances. Families often have painful experiences owing to failure in observing the real motive of the action or word of one of the loved ones in the home. Watchfulness will direct every one to use great



care in commending or reproving others. Individuals, sometimes families blessed with dispositions naturally agreeable can live correct lives, and without apparent effort receive the commendation of all who know them. Others struggle along making sincere efforts to be kind and neighborly, but nevertheless are reflected upon because of their inability to fully overcome their unfavorable dispositions.

The admonition in the text is to be observed by all God's children and as all are convinced that no one can attain to perfection in this world it is necessary for them to be constantly guarded, no matter how much praise or blame they may receive from others. Perhaps those who are gifted with a disposition admired by all are in greater danger than those not so blessed. Naturally we are proud, and to be well spoken of feeds pride as we learn from Luke 6: 26. There may be a tendency with those of an unfavorable disposition to justify themselves on this account. We are so fallible and our judgment so imperfect that it is a comfort to the believer that God's judgment is not according to human eyes, but as the promise is "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open unto their prayers;" therefore courage can be renewed, with the consciousness that the Lord will ever bless an earnest effort, from a pure heart, no matter what the besetments may be.

The Church of Christ being a body of believers called to unity, and controlled by love, is directed by the Word to appoint brethren to watch over the flock. Paul, in his admonition to Titus, Titus 2: 7, 8, directs him first to watch over himself and then to guard the doctrine, all to be done with gravity and sincerity. When all the members of the body continue to watch over themselves little labor will be required to maintain unity in the fold. Those who labor for the ex-

tension and preservation of Christ's kingdom must be awake to watch constantly over the flock, as we read in 1 Thes. 5: 6; Ezekiel 3: 17; Isaiah 62: 6, and other scriptures. Sometimes a believer becomes weary of the cross of Christ and begins to grow cold. Such an one should be warned and labored with until he gives evidence of being penitent, and willing to return to the true way, or until he gives evidence of spiritual death. Another form of watching is here required on the part of the one who labors, and this is to watch closely the spirit of his own mind, that all may be done in the fear of the Lord, without partiality. Patience, kindness, forbearance and firmness, will characterize a faithful laborer, and nothing will hinder him from laboring for the restoration of the erring one as long as there is any evidence of spiritual life.

May the Good Shepherd ever watch over His redeemed, and call through the Holy Spirit faithful watchmen to guard the flock!

Lancaster, Pa.

J. L. K.

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### BRIEF NOTES

The declaration of the Lord, by the Prophet, was, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Every true follower of the Savior will manifest this spirit and disposition to "forgive and forget."

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The Savior's answer to Peter, as to how many times he should forgive his brother, shows that the spirit of forgiveness in Christ's followers is inexhaustible, reaching out to brother, friend or foe. It is the manifestation of a heavenly principle ruling in the heart and subordinating every selfish consideration.

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The observation of the poet was, that "Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers."

We see it verified in many of those who live a worldly life. How true that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Christ's instructions to His disciples in sending them forth into the world, was, to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

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Self-knowledge—a realization that "In me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing," also impresses the fact that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." In the sincere endeavor to do the will of the heavenly Father, and in the performance of the duties that it enjoins upon us, we render a more acceptable acknowledgment of these gifts, and a fuller expression of gratitude for them than by oral expressions which have little meaning and no merit by themselves.

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Under much so-called evangelization many who are "weary and heavy laden" under the burden of their sins, are said to "come to Christ," who apparently experience a change of heart and by penitence believe that they obtain pardon: such then are said to be "saved," and are comforted with a hope of salvation, though their lives do not testify that they have become willing to learn of Christ, to be "meek and lowly of heart," and to "take upon you my yoke," which is the qualification that will bring "rest unto your souls," and will result in a consistent profession and practice, as in apostolic times, on which alone a sure hope of salvation may be based.

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Because Christ taught a peaceable, non-resistant doctrine, he was rejected; for "If we let Him thus alone all men will believe on Him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." Would it be different now if Christ came personally to popular professors of His doctrine who identify

themselves with, and countenance warfare, and in practice wholly reject His peaceable doctrine? The editor of one of the leading dailies, in a recent editorial, thinks that if Christ came and personally taught now what He did teach, He would be rejected just as He had been, while many of His professed followers and teachers "would applaud, even as the Scribes and Pharisees did, when judgment of crucifixion was pronounced before the court of Pontius Pilate."

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Under a sense of agony and suffering that often follows when peace is broken we appreciate the blessedness of the condition in having peace with God, peace with our fellow-men and peace within ourselves. The Savior's mission was to bring peace. It was so proclaimed by the herald-angels at His birth, and finally declared a last legacy to His disciples. Followers of the Savior will ever endeavor to "follow peace with all men." That is the prompting of divine love when it possesses the heart. It constrains us to make sacrifices in self-denials, and to bear injustice and contumely. Resentment may present itself, but we can not cherish that feeling or yield to its promptings without doing violence to that Divine principle which we should cherish in the heart. Full happiness can be attained only by full obedience to God, who is the unalloyed Source of all that is good.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What is meant by—"Speaking with tongues?" 1 Cor. 14: 5.

A. Tongues mean languages, for it is said: Greater is he that prophesieth, than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edification. To interpret means to explain.

Q. What is meant by: "Him, being

delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God?" Acts 2: 23.

A. In Eden the plan was told that for the transgression the Woman's Seed should suffer.

Q. Can an unregenerated person consistently utter the Lord's prayer?

A. No, because God is not his Father by the spiritual birth.

Q. What is sinning against the Holy Ghost?

A. Wilfully and persistently deriding what we know to be truth.

Q. What are the "many mansions" mentioned in John 14?

A. It is said, "I will dwell in them," 2 Cor. 6: 16. A mansion is an abode. The church is called "the house of God," 1 Tim. 3: 15. Every true member is an abode, or one of the "many mansions," in whom God by His Spirit dwells. Behold, the lofty state of the child of God!

Q. What does the Savior mean in saying: "For judgment I am come into the world, that they which see not might see, and they which see might be made blind?"

A. The circumstances which brought this comment from the Savior was the quibbling of the Pharisees about the blind man whom He made to see. They closed their eyes to undoubted evidence, and such are left to their wilful delusion, while honest seekers receive true light. Christ passes judgment on either class according to their works, John 9: 39.

Q. What is meant by, "Ye blind guides which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel?" Matt. 23: 24.

A. This is one of many denunciations against those who formulated their own traditions and "omitted the weightier matters of the law." It is a warning to those who are zealous in their own commandments, set up against God's commandments—it is straining about little

matters, and committing gross violations.

Q. What is meant by, "A bruised reed shall he not break and smoking flax shall he not quench until he send forth judgment unto victory?"

A. This is a prophecy quoted from Isaiah foretelling the mercy of the Savior to bruised souls who feel the wounds of sin; for, in relating His acts of healing, the Evangelist uses this prophecy to prove the Savior's mission of good-will; but in His final coming judgment will be unto victory over sin—not mercy any more—then shall they wail who had their treasure in the gratifications of this life.

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### LIFE

Passing through the shadows  
That obscure my way,  
Hoping for the dawning  
Of a brighter day.

Sorrows 'round me gather  
Fill me with dismay,  
But like all earth's trials  
They too, will pass away.

Passing through the shadows  
Hearing words of cheer,  
'Tis the voice of Jesus  
"Cast on Me your fear."

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

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### THE BEATITUDES

The Beatitudes are a part of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, by which He pronounces blessings on certain virtues.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of heaven is a precious gift to us. Often in our reflections at night, on the errors of the preceding day, committed in weakness, we feel poor in spirit, and come to the Fountain of Light to confess how poor we are, and what joy we receive through the promises—a foretaste of the kingdom of

heaven; for it is said, "Behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." How comforting to a sad soul are the words: "My grace is sufficient for thee, . . . Fear not; for I am with thee, . . . I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness!" The promises to the believer are a heavenly comfort.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." When mourning over natural losses friends may console us. When mourning over our spiritual failings the Spiritual Comforter cheers us with the words: "Peace I leave with you."

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." When our souls rule over our carnal nature through the power of the Spirit, then we have inherited the earth, for we control what is earthly, as we control an inheritance. "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way; . . . He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." We often feel hunger for righteousness that our souls may be fed. We ask Him, who said, "I am the Bread of Life," and our souls feed gladly on His word, our hearts are filled, and we feel as our Savior said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." The souls that have come into the kingdom of heaven through trials and sorrows can always remember God's infinite mercy shown them, and are prepared to show mercy toward others who are in distress of mind or needy in body. When the first tables of the law were broken the proclamation was: "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." Exodus 34: 6, 7.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." When our hearts are purified from sin we see God as a loving Father, who calls us sons and daughters, controls our destiny and we gladly obey His Spirit, which "leads us into the green pastures, by the still waters!"

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." They are obedient children to the will of the Father who teaches them love and peace.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The three Israelites were protected in the fiery furnace, because they reprov'd false worship, and the Lord made the hungry lions harmless when Daniel was thrown among them for not ceasing to worship his Maker, but his enemies for their treachery were devoured by them. The martyrs sang praises as they went to the stake, rejoicing that they were worthy to suffer with Him who suffered for them. Persecution was in many periods an experience of those who accepted the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake." If evil is spoken against us falsely for Christ's sake, because we try strictly to follow His teachings, then we can rejoice, since "the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than He that sent Him." The faithful seek not so much what is here as that which is to come, for they love to follow here that path which ends in the unfading crown!

Arkona, Ontario.

S. D.

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There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. Heb. 4: 9.

## FUNDAMENTAL POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

We sometimes are deeply pained by unjust and severe criticisms from our friends who differ from us in their religious views. We hear remarks like these: The Mennonites are industrious, worthy citizens, charitably inclined, and law abiding, but they are a small community, not progressive, they are bigoted and narrow-minded, and refuse from conscientious reasons to unite in any form of religious worship, other than their own; they will not vote to put the best men into office, nor take part in other worldly affairs.

As to the first four of these characteristics ascribed to the Mennonites, we are thankful for so much favorable comment, but they are such as characterize a Christian; as to the latter, and what may seem to be unfavorable in their character, we reply, the people of God in all ages have been in the minority; from the days of Noah such has been the case. All are called, but few are willing. Note the repetition of these words, "Ye will not." "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

If progressiveness means advancement in art, science, human philosophy, or worldly wisdom, then the Mennonites cannot be called progressive. Neither do they aim to devote their lives to these pursuits. They use the world, but do not abuse it, and are more like strangers here, seeking a better, a more enduring home, a heavenly city.

As to being bigoted and narrow-minded, we hope our friends will be charitable enough to allow us to explain why we hold to the commands as given by Christ, in preference to what the natural mind might deem more desirable.

The name Christian implies a follower of Christ, one who has become sensible of his sinfulness and repentant has come to Christ, willing to follow His commandments. Christ receives him and gives him a new spirit, the new birth. We read of Nicodemus coming to Christ by night, and of that important saying of Christ, "Marvel not, that I said unto thee, ye must be born again," He does not say, "ye may, or ye can be born again," but he makes it emphatic and imperative, "Ye must be born again."

Can we know what it implies to become a new creature, to be changed and transformed, for old things to pass away and all things to become new? New desires, new interests are awakened in the soul. They clothe the new creature in Christ. Converted souls receive and obey the commands of Christ, and they constitute His church on earth. By the power of the new birth they are led by one spirit into a spiritual body of believers all having the same experience, all desiring the same life, all speaking the same thing, making a company of united believers. To all such the commands of Christ are the controlling influence that governs their lives. They have come out from the world, have left its kingdom, have enlisted under the banner and leadership of Christ, and henceforth they are no more of the world, even as Christ said, "I am not of the world."

It is not from a self-righteous spirit, or a feeling of superiority, that they stand aloof from every religious form of worship that does not in word or practice bear the test: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

We leave every candid reader to judge whether it does not require moral courage, and what is still greater, Divine power to enable weak, mortal men and women to stem the tide, holding aloft the standard of God's truth, going against the current of popular religion.



If it is a conscientious belief, and if the Mennonite faith is in accordance with the revealed will of God, why should it be opposed or held up to ridicule? Rather let it be an incentive to all who see the fruits of obedience, to search the Scriptures and find out if these things be true. Any belief that has the support of God's word should not be cast aside.

In regard to the last objection of not participating in worldly government, not even voting, let us remember Christ has called His followers out of the worldly kingdom into that of His dear Son. Note the contrast, the former is controlled by the sword, the latter by love. We live under a beneficent government and greatly esteem the privileges it gives us. The liberty of serving God according to the dictates of our conscience is a wonderful blessing. To its rule we are subject except when it demands a service contrary to what God asks, then we must "Obey God rather than men."

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

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### THE STORY OF GIDEON

After the death of Deborah the people of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and the Lord left them to suffer for their sins. The Midianites and other tribes came in great numbers with their herds of cattle and robbed the people of Israel of their food and sustenance. Even the people themselves were compelled to hide in dens and caves, to get away from their enemies. If they raised any food they had to hide it for fear of its being taken from them. The people were greatly burdened and cried to the Lord for help, knowing that help must come alone from Him.

Their cry was heard and a prophet was sent to remind the Israelites of what God had done for them in the past, and that their disobedience was the cause of all their suffering. Gideon, the son of

Joash, was chosen to deliver them. He was secretly threshing wheat by the wine press when an angel of the Lord appeared to him, sitting under an oak that grew nearby. The angel said, "The Lord be with thee, thou mighty man of valor."

Gideon replied, "If the Lord be with us, why hath He delivered us into the hands of the Midianites?"

The angel again said, "Go, in this thy might and thou shalt save Israel from their power." But Gideon said, "My family is poor and I am the least in my father's house." The angel then said, "Surely I will be with thee and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

Gideon asked if he had found grace in his sight, that a sign be given to prove the angel's power to qualify him for so great an undertaking. He desired the angel to tarry until he brought him a present.

Gideon prepared a kid and some unleavened cakes and brought them to his visitor. He was directed by the angel to place his gift upon a rock and he obeyed. The angel touched it with the end of his staff, and fire arose out of the rock and consumed the food. The angel then disappeared. Gideon was afraid when he found he had been speaking to an angel, but the Lord said, "Peace be unto thee, fear not."

Gideon was told to destroy the altar of Baal and free the people of idol worship, before he could free them from the Midianites. He did as he was commanded. He destroyed the altar of Baal which his father Joash had built, and he built an altar unto the Lord and offered sacrifice unto the God of Israel. When the people saw what was done, they were angry and would have put Gideon to death. They came to Joash to complain but Joash said, "Why do ye plead for Baal? if he be a god, let him plead for himself."

Gideon wished for a sign that the Lord would surely help and lead him. He proposed putting a fleece of wool on the ground and if the dew should fall on the fleece alone and the ground be dry, then he would know that Israel would be saved by his own hand. When he arose in the morning, the ground was dry and he was able to wring a bowl full of water out of the fleece. He then asked that the next night the fleece be dry, and the dew fall only upon the ground. He found it to be so in the morning, and Gideon was then satisfied and doubted no longer.

He called his men together and they came in great numbers to war against the Midianites. The Lord told Gideon, "There are too many men in thine army, they may feel they were saved by their own strength."

He told Gideon to send home all that were fearful, and twenty-two thousand returned to their homes. The Lord said, "There are yet too many," and He told Gideon the men should come down to a stream of water and he should see how they drank. Those who got down on their knees to drink out of the stream were put to one side, and only those who dipped water in their hands and lapped it, were to be chosen by Gideon. They numbered three hundred. The Lord said unto Gideon, "By these three hundred men will I save you and deliver the Midianites into thine hand."

Gideon was told to go down to the camp of the enemy and he would hear something to give him encouragement. He went and overheard one man tell another a dream. The dreamer saw a loaf of barley bread roll down from a hill into the camp of the Midianites, where it overthrew the first tent to which it came. The other man said, "This is none other than the sword of Gideon, into whose hands the Lord will deliver the Midianites."

When Gideon heard this dream, he understood and accepted the sign. He at once took his three hundred men, for his unusual plan did not require a large army. Each man was provided with a trumpet in one hand, and in the other hand a pitcher containing a lighted lamp. The men were divided into three companies and in the stillness and darkness, were placed at different points outside the enemy's camp. At a signal given by Gideon, each man blew his trumpet, threw down his pitcher and exposed his lamp, crying, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The sudden blast of the trumpets, the crash of the breaking pitchers and the glare of three hundred lamps confused the Midianites who were only half awake, and they fled in confusion killing one another.

Gideon obtained a great victory and the men of Israel seemed dazzled by his success. They wished to make him their king or ruler, and have the kingdom descend to his son and his son's son. But Gideon replied, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you, the Lord is your Ruler." It seemed as though the people of Israel would have turned to Gideon and forsaken the Lord, had not Gideon reproved them. If all the people of Israel would have had the faith and courage of Gideon, there would have been no more idol worship. Gideon lived to be an old man, but even before his death the people returned to their idols.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

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## A CHILD'S STORY

### THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

My dear little children.

I have told you of the birth of Jesus, and how the Shepherds were told of it, and where and how they would find the Babe.

According to the custom of those days, the parents of Jesus took Him to the temple in Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord, and also to offer a sacrifice. There a pious man named Simeon met them. It had been revealed to him that he would not see death until he had seen the Christ. We read that Simeon took Jesus up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation."

And there was at the same place an aged woman Anna, a prophetess, who lived there, and served God night and day, and who came in at that time. She also gave thanks to God, and said this was the Christ, who came to redeem the whole world.

After this we read, "They returned to their own city Nazareth and the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him."

The father of Jesus was a carpenter. It was a custom highly approved, for a son to follow the trade of his father, learning it at home. It was no reproach to Jesus that He was a carpenter. I have read that it was a well known saying among learned men that, "Who ever does not teach his son a trade, is as if he brought him up to be a robber." Even the boy who intended spending his life in writing and studying, learned a trade. While the home of Jesus was of the humbler kind, yet we do not think of it as a home of poverty nor that of elegance or wealth. They were careful to teach their children the law of Moses, and Josephus, a Jewish writer, says, "The people knew the statutes of the law, better than their own names." At that time boys of six years were sent to free primary schools usually attached to the churches or synagogues as they were

called. We suppose that Jesus attended the village school of Nazareth, at least we know that He had learned to read, but we do not suppose that He attended higher schools from this remark, made concerning Him, "How knoweth this Man letters, having never learned."

We do not read very much about the boyhood of Jesus, only this, "That He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." When He was twelve years old He with His parents went to Jerusalem to attend a feast as was the custom. When on the way home, His parents in company with many of their friends, discovered that Jesus was not with them but that He had tarried behind. They turned back and after three days found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the learned men, both hearing them and asking them questions, and all were astonished at His understanding and His answers. His mother said, "Son why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." Jesus then told them these wonderful words, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business"? They could not understand what He meant, "but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart." He returned with them to Nazareth, and was a most faithful, obedient son. When He was thirty years old He began to preach the gospel of repentance.

There is something wonderfully beautiful and sublime in all this account of Jesus. His humble birth, born as He was in a stable, His choosing poor lowly fishermen to be His disciples and followers, His simple humble life, His special blessing given to the meek and lowly in heart, and all the while He was God's own dear Son, and our Redeemer.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.