

GOOD TIDINGS

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PURPOSE OF DISSEMINATING SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

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EDITORIAL

By observation, "The Song Of Solomon" is timely, "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land."

We have an instructive lesson from the seasons as they come and go. They remind us of fleeting time and of nearing eternity.

Our time in this life is estimated in days, months and years, yet in the extremity the Apostle defines our probationary existence by asking a question and answering it; "For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." David says, "Behold, Thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth and mine age is as nothing before Thee; verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity."

As we pass through the short span of life, giving attention to the duties as they come before us day by day, we are brought in touch with many conditions as they exist in the world; By observation and reflection upon some of them, it appears that many people apply their utmost effort and exhaust their energies to accomplish cherished results, not

mindful of the thought, that we have the promise of life only for to-day. It is amazing to observe what unrelenting effort is exerted in acquiring the greatest amount of comfort, pleasure and possessions obtainable, all standing out boldly and conspicuously, not concealing, but evincing in appearance as though their endurance is to remain forever.

When the mind is directed to God's plan and way of life; what little significance and value is attached to all earthly possessions, when the salvation of a soul is of an inestimable value. "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

How humiliating to mortal man to be robbed of his achievements and apprised of the fact that "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," and that "every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above." Recognizing this as we should, we cannot help but realize that we owe all gratitude, honor and appreciation to the Giver for the means whereby He has imparted grace; all the more so when impressed with the importance of the words of our Saviour, "Without Me ye can do nothing."

Easter is held in commemoration of Christ's resurrection from the dead, it also marks the change of seasons from winter to spring, the time when there is a natural awakening of nature's forces, a springing into life and verdure. May the natural surroundings be to us an awakening of the soul from a dead state into a new life with Christ.

We receive many encouraging letters from patrons of "Good Tidings" with wishes for Divine blessings and a continuance of its publication.

Recently we have received a number of new subscriptions from persons who incidentally happened to have opportunities to read our little journal, and who much enjoyed its instructive messages.

We again extend thanks to contributors for their writings, and we ask for 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 of Redemption.

We have been informed that the cost of material and printing has advanced, and also that the postage for mailing second-class matter will advance in the near future. Unless our subscriptions increase quite materially, the direct expenses will exceed the income. We do not wish to advance the price but would invite patrons to send us new subscriptions, not only to meet expenses, but to help spread the Truth.

THE PARABLE OF SPRING

Again we welcome the joyous spring-time. The earth for so many months barren and desolate is now awaking, and we note the emerging of life everywhere about us. From the loosening sod we see the forthcoming blade which gives promise of nature's beautiful robe of green. We note the swelling bud on tree and plant unfolding into leaf and flower.

How marvelous are the mysterious movements and renewing of nature's forces! Awake to the beauty of the Creator's handiwork our hearts cry out in gladness, "Lo, the winter is past . . . the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds has come." We welcome the sweet-voiced songsters who by their happy song tend to draw our hearts to sing the Maker's praise.

"O Lord, how manifold are Thy works!" The order of seed time and harvest, summer and winter is unchanged. God's goodness everywhere abounds. With the passing of Winter there is a dawn of a new life, a quickening, an awaking of nature. We see a similarity of nature's resurrection to

the spiritual resurrection in the souls of mankind.

An all-wise Creator has used natural symbols, or parables, to draw man's mind to spiritual truths. Winter may represent the lifeless, barren state of the soul when under sin. All the children of Adam who attain to years of understanding are dead in sin. God so loved the world that he gave His Son a ransom for us. Christ came to earth and fulfilled God's holy will.

The mission of His lowly birth, His life and death in obedience to God's will, ended in everlasting triumph through His resurrection from the dead. Through Christ's victory over death and over "him who held the power of death" He became our Redeemer. What love is bestowed upon us that we shall be called the sons of God through Christ "who bear our sins in His own body on the tree of the cross, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness!"

Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, has risen. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death upon them hath the light shined."

We are created free agents. We can accept or reject the gift of eternal life. The Sun of Righteousness is risen to illumine every heart. He seeks entrance into every heart and has appeared unto every soul to give light to all who come into the world. "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in." He will not enter without permission, nor come where He is not wanted. His tender calling is repeated. He longs to bring springtime where Winter reigns. "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep."

Through convicting grace and the warmth of His love He continues to seek entrance to the soul. "Awake thou that

sleepest, arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." When a soul opens the door to the light, there is a quickening, an awaking, a newness of life in Christ. "With loving kindness have I drawn thee." In the awakened soul "old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." Once naked and destitute, the soul now awakened will rejoice. "My soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation."

In the wisdom and economy of an all-wise Creator life and growth bring forth fruit. We anticipate a natural fruitage.

Spiritually where there is newness of life, growth continues and the fruit does not fail. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, rooted and grounded in love. If Christ's Spirit be in you and abound "ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful." The fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, meekness, temperance, faith. The admonition is, "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ," that we may show forth the praises of Him who called us "out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Hagerstown, Md.

E. S. L.

GOD GLORIFIED IN HIS WORKS

Millions, in our Northern States, looked with awe upon that solemn spectacle, as the sun was hidden for a brief period behind the moon. As daylight faded to a pale twilight, it must have left an impression on all, of the great power which controls the universe and guides the mighty orbs in their course through space.

Here was a manifestation of such sublime power that even those whose hearts are set deep in the affairs of life, must have been impressed with a sense of how poor and trivial all human activity is when compared with the mighty power and works of the great Creator.

And it was aptly said: Who, realizing from this tremendous and beautiful demonstration of the great celestial bodies being governed by fixed and immutable laws, can believe that what we call human life, ends with death? but that it must be carried on into the Great Beyond, to which we are passing.

What is conveyed to us in this beautiful demonstration is only that which should impress us every day, as was expressed by the Psalmist: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."

Under this demonstration which has been witnessed, we question whether there was one among the millions who beheld it, who was not impressed that God is glorified in His works, and also with a sense of responsibility in having a trust committed to us, requiring that we, so highly endowed, and in the image of our Maker, may glorify Him in the life which He has given us to live.

The question properly might be, what manner of living is required, whereby our Creator is glorified? And it has already found an answer within ourselves, by the grace of God which hath appeared to all men, teaching us that "we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly, in this present world."

Is it not a fact that the material creation, wherein God is glorified, man alone, privileged to make his choice of good or evil, does not glorify his Creator, to whom he is indebted for every good and perfect gift, when he does violence to the teaching of God's grace, and refuses to live his life according to the counsel and purpose of his Creator? Should we not be impressed with a sense of the condemnation we are bringing upon our-

selves when in our daily life we dishonor Him to whom we are so highly indebted? Should we not question what our condition will finally be if God's grace is fully withdrawn? If we refuse to live in such a manner that God is glorified in our life, shall we not surely fail to be glorified by Him, with that heavenly glory which was prepared before the world was, and will continue to all who are qualified, through a happy eternity?

However much we have hardened our hearts to the appeals of God's grace, our choice of good or evil is still graciously open today. A loving appeal to us is made through incidents and object lessons, in the heavens, on the earth,—in the whole creation; in our lives, the lives of others, and finally when near and dear ones pass over the Great Divide, and we can behold their faces no more.

If it is through any or all of these that the appeal to us becomes effective, shall we not behold, still more, how wonderful are God's works, wherein He is glorified? And when we realize that Infinite Love reaches out to us, so unworthy, what an incentive we have to glorify God by doing His will and not our own, and living our life in accord with his purpose! When it becomes our purpose in life to do His will, we can then glorify Him more highly still than He is glorified in His material works which accomplish His purpose involuntarily. Then our effort to fittingly glorify Him will require the endless ages of eternity! for the effort can never be fully expressed in an earthly life, nor in the language of mortals.

Doylestown, Ohio.

C. W.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! were not this a lovely world
 Were but man's heart aright,
 Each object that surrounds our view
 Would charm, and give delight.

The verdant vales, and flowery meads,
The forests rich and rare,
The balmy breeze, the rippling streams,
The fragrant laden air.

The feathered songsters of the grove,
The sunlight's radiant ray,
The mellow moon-beams of the night,
The close, the dawn of day.

The starry firmament on high,
The fruitful earth below,
The ocean's heaving, billowy foam
God's wondrous power show.

We see those things so wonderful,
They claim a heavenly birth,
And, O! were but man's heart aright,
How beautiful were earth!

Lancaster, Pa.

C. N. H.

THE CERTAINTY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain." 1 Cor. 15: 17.

Probably at no time since the ascension of Christ in A.D. 30, has the Church been entirely free from the assaults of those who try to undermine the foundation of our faith: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." In these days of spiritual unrest, the words of our Saviour are very appropriate, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

At the time Paul made his notable address to the men of Athens on Mar's Hill, when he found an altar bearing this inscription, "To the Unknown God," he told them that God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter."

In fact, in so short a time afterward as A.D. 54 the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, when referring to Hymenaeus and Philetus, who fell from grace, as follows: "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." We therefore marvel little that the apostles, in choosing a successor to Judas Iscariot, deemed it necessary that "one must be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection," and the lot fell upon Matthias.

In the writings of the Apostles one chapter (1 Cor. 15) is most conclusive proof of the fact of the resurrection of Christ. How true Paul's statement, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." His final decision clears away all doubt in his previous course of reasoning, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." May we therefore endeavor to "run with patience the race that is set before us," that we may be able to "continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel?"

We read that, "He shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." A certain writer has said: "The authenticity of His resurrection does not depend upon the many or the few who saw him. Under the law two witnesses were quite sufficient evidence to substantiate the validity of a declaration, but what shall we say when we have above five hundred witnesses to substantiate the declaration of the living Christ that He was alive?"

The death and resurrection of Christ was prophesied by David, as Peter, when addressing the people on the day of Pentecost, said, "He seeing this before

spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

Again when Peter and John went together into the temple at the hour of prayer they saw a certain lame man being carried to the gate, which is called Beautiful, where he asked alms of the people. Peter commanded him in the name of Jesus Christ, to rise up and walk. This was another opportunity accorded him to speak of the promises of the Gospel. But the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees were grieved that they taught the people, and "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead," and therefore "put them in hold unto the next day." The next day they were brought before the rulers, elders and scribes. Peter was very bold when he said, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." The rulers wondered at their fearlessness and "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

When writing to the strangers scattered abroad, Peter first praised God who "through his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Paul informs the Hebrews that "Christ was not made a priest after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." Faith in the resurrection of Christ inspires us with hope for our future well-being. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

In reading the Epistle to the Philip-

pians, we learn that Paul's most earnest desire was that he "may win Christ" and "know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

The Romans were taught by Paul that Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Also, "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

If all these testimonies are not sufficient, all about us Nature teaches: "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, . . . but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him." Thus we are inspired with the thought that "this mortal shall put on immortality," and we shall then be worthy to have part in the second resurrection.

Waynesboro, Pa.

B. F. M.

THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

"There was a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods, and he called him, and said unto him: How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be steward no longer, etc." Luke 16: 1-10.

Primarily this parable may refer to the Scribes and Pharisees as leaders and teachers of the Jews. They filled the office of steward, they sat in Moses' seat, but they said and did not. They bound heavy burdens and laid them upon the shoulders of the people, but themselves did not move them with one of their

fingers. They interpreted portions of the law to serve the selfish purposes, and by this means corrupted the people. When Christ came and called them to an account for their unfaithfulness in the administration of their stewardship, they were convicted in their conscience, but were unwilling to accept the terms of reconciliation offered them. The confession, "to dig I cannot," meaning I cannot be saved by obedience to the law, "to beg, I am ashamed," implying an unwillingness to lose their own righteousness and accept Salvation as a free, unmerited gift by faith in Christ. In their position they could not stand neutral, so they entered into a conspiracy with carnal reason, and with all the forces of evil, to defraud the Lord of his just dues. Many of the parables spoken by Christ have a two-fold meaning; primarily they apply to the Jews as then existing; Spiritually they apply to us.

The parable as applicable to us, can be explained as follows: God is the rich man who is sole proprietor of all things. The steward may represent every intelligent responsible creature. That is, every man and every woman endowed with a sound mind has entrusted to him a treasure, by the Lord, for the proper use of which he is responsible. In the text, we infer the guilt of the steward from the fact that he made no defense. The charge was criminal neglect of wasting goods which he was in honor bound to guard against being wasted and lost to his master. He may have spent it, upon the aggrandizement of his family or himself, or he may have used it carelessly and without good judgment.

Spiritually man is responsible, because he has consciousness of right and wrong, he knows how to do good; if he neglects to do justly he is reproved by his conscience. Man is appointed by the Lord as steward over every faculty of his body and mind, such as speech, health, prop-

erty and character. In another sense, the steward represents a minister of the church of Christ; for they are stewards of the Mysteries of God as revealed in the Gospel. "Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Their stewardship is a very responsible trust; to them is committed the heavenly manna, the true riches, even the keys (The Gospel), of the kingdom of heaven. "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel."

The steward of the text, realizing the loss of his office, that it meant penury and want to him, because he was not accustomed to hard work, and to beg was too humiliating for him; he acted wisely in devising a scheme that made his lord's debtors equally guilty with himself. He formed a plan to change their bills; in one instance a debtor owed his lord one hundred measures of oil, which the steward had him change to fifty measures; another owed one hundred measures of wheat, which was changed to eighty measures. These two instances are named as examples of the steward in fixing the accounts of the lord's debtors.

The arrangement with the lord's debtors made them the steward's debtors. Through the arrangement he had a claim on them for a home and support, when he is put out of his stewardship. The lord (his employer) commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely, that is, the plan was far-reaching, his debtors were in the conspiracy, and to perpetuate their safety from exposure they were bound to care for the steward. This lord did not commend his iniquity, but his wise policy.

The antitype of the lord in the Parable, the Lord Almighty, proprietor of all things, counsels, saying, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." The meaning of mammon is riches, or worldly acquisitions of all

kinds. From the injunction of the Lord, we are impressed with accountability for all natural possessions, and that if we are not faithful in them, the true riches will not be entrusted to us. If we have worldly means we are a steward over them; recognizing the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, we should adopt the policy of the unjust steward. If we have opportunity to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and minister to the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and we fail to do so, we are unfaithful stewards. It is our duty to do good to all men, according to our ability, especially to the household of faith. The language is very plain, "Make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations." That is when death removes us.

It is very manifest in the Gospel that good works are not meritorious. There is but one only ground of merit, that is, the righteousness wrought by the death of Christ. We have no other righteousness that is acceptable to God, but faith in Christ; but faith is active in those of us who have it, and it will lead to making friends with every endowment of which we are possessed.

Our conduct toward our fellow creatures will influence them either for or against the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus. If we keep back the wages of those who reap our harvest for us, their cries will ascend in the ears of the Lord. If we oppress the widow and close our hands against the needy, they will witness against us. On the other hand, if we do to others as we would have them do to us, their good wishes and, even in some instances, their prayers may ascend in our behalf. If we share in sentiment, "For to me to live is Christ," we will surely make friends of the unrighteous mammon. It is not to be understood that our good works will save us, but it

is to be understood that they are inseparable from a saved state, and are therefore the effect of love, and are of an evangelical spirit.

I call to mind the circumstance of a wayward, friendless youth, who felt forsaken and without anything to live for. A pious lady invited him to partake of a warm meal with her and her children; while eating she instructed him as to life's opportunities and designs; her kindness and discourse was an inspiration to him. It changed his life's actions. He later became a devoted follower of Christ, and never ceased to pray for his benefactress. He was not a stranger to the lady when she showed him kindness.

In the text the Lord cited the fact that the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, having as an example the shrewdness of the unjust steward. This is a severe, yet merited reflection upon the children of light. The prudent, discreet and cautious people of the world are careful of their investments; diligent and unremitting in their attention to business, so as to let no opportunity pass unimproved. They seek the best methods to attain success, whether in financial lines, or in literary pursuits, notwithstanding the fact that the reward is limited to this brief life; while the children of light are often drawn away from their real interests by looking too much upon the things that are seen. Many opportunities of doing good are left slip, the affections are often cold and the efforts for doing good are weak, with the full knowledge of their redemption and the price paid for it, as also of their high calling, to be the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, and if faithful unto the end they have the assurance of the unfading crown.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

HE IS RISEN

The stone o'er His grave hath been rolled away,
The Saviour is risen, is risen today;
Death's bars He hath broken,—the captives
release,—

And dwelleth in glory which never shall cease.

At dawning of day when the loved ones drew
near,

The sight they beheld brought sorrow and fear,
Removed was the stone, and the tomb was laid
bare,

And Christ, whom they sought, no longer was
there.

An angel they saw, clad in garments of white,
Was standing near by, with countenance bright;
They heard these blest words, "Oh! fear not,"
said he,

For Jesus hath risen, and Him ye shall see.

Straightway go ye forth, His disciples to tell,
Again He will meet them, and with them will
dwell,

How joyful they felt as they hastened away,
Proclaiming that "Jesus has risen today."

Fulfilled is the promise to prophets foretold,
By them 'twas proclaimed, in the ages of old;
The blessed Messiah, God's own precious Son,
Hath finished His mission,—the victory won.

Fayetteville, Pa.

C. J. M.

ADORATION

"Lift up your eyes on high and behold who
has created these things."

The fortieth chapter of Isaiah, of which our text is a part, should interest all Bible readers, because it foretells the coming of Christ, the Saviour of the world, and of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who taught repentance. The prophet here by Divine inspiration imparted to his people in the most beautiful and comprehensive language the glad tidings, that the time of their deliverance was at hand, when Christ would open the way to salvation, which for centuries had been closed to mankind by Adam's transgression.

Although this prophecy was written over seven hundred years prior to Christ's coming, the prophet refers to the notable event as though it had al-

ready taken place, thus signifying his implicit faith in God's ability to fulfill the promise which he at various times made to the fathers.

It is clearly manifest by the language of the prophet, concerning Christ's mission, that by faith God's people rejoiced then, in the glorious prospect of Christ's coming to liberate their souls from the bondage of sin, with the same degree of assurance as the believer today rejoices in that He has come and wrought this deliverance.

The accuracy of the prophecy pertaining to the nature of Christ's suffering and death, the correct manner in which the prophet foretells of Christ's defenseless doctrine of peace, should be a powerful incentive to strengthen our faith in God, and to accept that His promises both to the godly and ungodly declared by His Son Jesus Christ and the holy apostles in the New Testament, will most assuredly be fulfilled. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life. But unto them who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, . . . But glory, honor and peace, to every man that worketh good." Rom. 2: 7, 8, 9, 10.

The precision and certainty by which these prophecies have been and are being fulfilled, should persuade every doubting mind that God's word is sure and cannot fail, that with Him there can be no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The thought, therefore, of escaping His judgments should not be entertained by those who reject Christ's commands and counsels. "For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth (meaning Moses), much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven."

“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who has created these things.” God’s people in Isaiah’s time were not in possession of that heaven-born principle which Christ imparts to His followers. They were not moved by the power of Christ’s Spirit as God’s people are now, because they were not in Christ. Prior to Christ’s coming there were no regenerated nor converted people, none who had received the new birth, consequently there were no Christians. Israel being a literal people, one means of awakening in them an interest in their salvation was, by continually attracting their attention to the wonders of God displayed in the visible creation. He appeals to their understanding by enlarging on God’s infinite power and unsearchable wisdom, in the following beautiful language: “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counselor had taught Him? . . . To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? . . . To whom then will ye liken Me or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.” On the other hand, the prophet calls the attention of his people to the frailty of man and the vanity of glorying in anything that we can do, in the following appropriate words: “All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field—the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of God endureth forever.”

Contrasting God’s omnipotence, His purity and holiness, with man’s frailty and depravity as is set forth by the prophet in this notable chapter, should it not awaken in us a disposition to “lift up our eyes on high” and acknowledge

with the prophet that we are undone, utterly helpless and dependent upon Him for both natural and spiritual support. Should not the reasoning of the prophet in this chapter persuade us that the all-wise God who called the worlds into existence, who brought order out of chaos in the visible creation, will also bring order out of chaos in the hearts of all who “by prayer and supplication let their requests be made known unto Him?” The love and goodness granted us through the pleasant and beautiful surroundings which we witness should incite a desire in us to come to the feet of Jesus and implore Him for a new heart, that we may get into harmony with the great God who has created these things. When we lift up our eyes on high and behold the heavens, the sun, moon and stars, as we gaze into the boundless area, called space, the effect is like a voice calling us to peace, order, contentment and rest; inviting us to come away from the hard taskmaster, satan, the author of confusion and unrest, to put on Jesus Christ, the author of peace.

The natural tendency of mankind ever has been to glory in their achievements, and to idolize the things made by their own hands, thus manifesting their one great failing of taking undue honor to themselves, forgetting that all praise and honor belongs to God from whom all wisdom and understanding emanates.

The prophet’s appeal to his people: “Lift up your eyes on high and behold who has created these things,” is a timely and appropriate admonition to us in these latter days, when apparently all classes have opportunity to gratify the flesh by indulging in almost every conceivable pastime and amusement. What vanity to look upon the temporal, man-made things, to glory in them, since we are God’s workmanship, and “in Him

we live and move and have our being." It is true we are the crowning part of God's creation, and it is written that "Man is fearfully and wonderfully made," and that to him is given dominion over all other creatures. He is capable of accomplishing great and marvelous things, as is noticeable in the rapid progress made in science, industry and invention; but if the wisdom and knowledge given us for our natural good and well-being exalts us, and if these material and temporal things become the all-absorbing part of our lives, and our dependence upon God, our Creator, is forgotten, then our souls become an easy prey for Satan to enslave, devour and destroy.

Let us heed the wise counsel of the prophet: "Lift up your eyes on high and behold who has created these things."

Lancaster, Pa.

F. E. E.

YOUTH

"Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord with a pure heart." 2 Tim. 2: 22.

"Rejoice, O Young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Eccl. 11: 9.

Those of us who have come to mature years, who have passed the meridian of life, upon reflection, cannot fail to have a concern for the young. Our experience fully confirms that the young are exposed to many youthful dangers. Present-day literature contains little encouragement for the young to flee youthful folly, but much is written to gratify their worldly desires. Any young person who has the courage to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, in the manner suggested by the text, will of necessity flee youthful lusts. This requires a strong will and a perfect desire to forsake sin with all its attendant evils

in order to stand against the prevailing current.

Parents owe a duty to their children to warn them of the many dangers to which they are exposed. They should instruct them to hearken to the still small voice that visits them, teaching them that all is not well. Effort should be made to acquaint young people with the Word of God, especially with the New Testament, which is the last will of God to us. They should be taught that there is no profit in saying Lord, Lord, or in making a profession of religion, unless they flee from evil, and follow faith with those that call on the Lord with a pure heart. Unless Christian parents give evidence to their children and all young people that *they* are willing to live a life consistent with New Testament teachings, and thus subdue all evil, how will they prove themselves to be Christians? They may attend religious services, have family worship in their homes, and speak much of Christ and His Word, but if they consent to follow the desires of their flesh, and are not examples to the young, how can they instruct *them* to flee the life of sin.

In the present age great effort is made to get the young into the church. Many popular churches throw out inducements by introducing church fairs, card parties, bowling alleys, and dancing parties as a means to interest the young. The argument is used that these things are necessary to keep them from going with the world, and as they appeal to the young mind they answer their purpose well, and are in keeping with the forepart of our second text, "Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and walk in the way of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." All these things the Lord will permit if we desire them, but He will not fail to impress the young with the sinfulness of a course that gratifies only the carnal mind.

Dear young people, do not comfort yourselves because you belong to a church, or because you profess Christianity, while you continue to live in the pleasures of sin: It is your privilege "to walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." This is a powerful check given to these vanities and pleasures, which in effect says: know for a certainty if thou dost take such liberties it will be thy everlasting ruin. Thou hast to do with a God who will not let sin go unpunished. When called before the Great Judge, it will be in vain to shelter ourselves under a cloak of religion, or to excuse ourselves because others assured us that all will be well. If we would escape the judgments of God, let us bring ourselves into judgment every day by the unerring rule of God's Word.

We might flee youthful lusts, live commendable lives, be kind and courteous to everyone, and still not follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, etc. To follow these virtues, signifies a life in direct opposition to that which is generally lived by unconverted people. All unconverted people, whether young or old, who are outside of Christ, follow a course that is not in accord with New Testament teachings. All converted people, young or old, who are in Christ follow after the virtues expressed in the text, with them who call on the Lord with a pure heart and who live in full accord with New Testament teachings. We should keep in mind two distinct ways, and always try to observe whether our companions, associates, brethren, friends, or whatever we may term them, have spiritual minds and have in view spiritual ends. When convinced of this fact, we will have little trouble to discover that there is agreement among them.

If we believe that we are in Christ and that Christ is the Way, we should

also accept all those that are in the Way with us, as fellow-travelers. No matter how varied the dispositions, how illiterate or how learned, how wealthy or how poor, whether young or old, master or servant, there will be an adaptation one to another, and there will be some evidence of a life consecrated to God found in everyone.

"This is the Way, walk ye in it." Isaiah 30: 21.

There is another way referred to in God's Word, as recorded Prov. 14: 12. "There is a way which seemeth right unto man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."

The tendency of the times is for the learned and influential teachers to encourage the young along lines that we have reason to fear may lead them to the way that seemeth right unto man but is not right with God. We earnestly appeal to all young people, beware! God is not mocked. You are either traveling on the way that leads to eternal glory, in the company of those who have repented of their sins and with humble, contrite spirits endeavor to walk in the way prescribed by the Lord; or you are traveling on the way that leads to eternal death in the company of sinners, who refuse to hear the gentle appeal of the Saviour, and give no evidence of contrition of heart or a willingness to deny self and obey God. Consider well on which way you are traveling. Your journey may not be long.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. L. K.

WE NEED GOD'S HELP

There is none that doeth good, no, not one. Psalm 14: 3.

The Bible is replete with evidence that mankind, after the fall, were not capable of doing good. The Psalmist is one of those who realized through his own failings and imperfections that a marked

change had taken place from the image in which he was created, and what he then was. This revealed to him the grand design of the image through which he was to represent God's purity and holiness in this life. Under this influence no evil could invade the Garden of Eden to allure him from the path of virtue. He knew no evil before the fall from this pure and perfect state. The Psalmist fully realized the necessity of a closer walk with God that through His aid he could curb his vain desires and keep from indulging his evil passions, and enable him to make restitution for all his wrong doings, which made him a "man after God's own heart." He firmly believed that the bondage caused by Adam's transgression would be removed at the appointed time through the Redeemer, and that the image thus lost would be restored to prepare the human heart to become a temple wherein God could dwell, and that the influence of this union would make us passive as lambs and as clay in the potter's hands. This change takes all power from us of doing good unaided, and leaves us void of self-praise. Every thought, act or deed of the believer that reflects spiritual virtue must emanate from God. No one has power of doing good without God's aid. We have no authority in His Word, to praise or eulogize anyone for doing good. God intrusts the talents with which we are endowed to our care and keeping, according to our several ability, which makes us responsible for their development. We sometimes hear, through the "press" or periodicals, of theologians who are praised for their wonderful good works, and even monuments are erected to their memory. Our Saviour said to the young man, why callest thou me good, there is none good but one, that is God. Matt. 19: 17.

We have a fearful example of God's judgment visited upon King Herod. On a set day, arrayed in royal apparel, he

sat upon his throne and made an oration, and the people gave a shout, saying, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." Acts 12: 21, 22. Between the fall and restoration by Christ we have abundant evidence that God, through His prophets and faithful men, wrought signs and wonders, and yet they, as recorded in Hebrews 11: 27, 40, did not receive the promise, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." God does not require any special work on our part to commend us to His favor; He simply requires a perfect resignation of our will to Him. He will then "work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure." This leaves no alternative: obedience makes us good, not of ourselves, but through God's infinite grace, which is in harmony with the prayer of Christ to His heavenly Father, "that all may be one as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." John 17: 21.

What an important trust the true followers of Christ hold, that even though they are not able to do good of themselves, they are, if faithful, the medium through which the world shall be judged, for their lives, as a light in the world, will testify to the truthfulness of God's just, righteous and holy law, which will end in their final condemnation if they fail to come to Christ.

The apostle Paul was much impressed, and exercised with his unworthiness, and the severe trials of his weak flesh caused him to implore the Lord to remove the thorn in his flesh. The reply was: "My grace is sufficient for thee." Paul certainly realized that there was no good in him, that is, in his flesh. The summary of the whole matter is, that the divided sentiment relative to the requirements necessary to qualify for heaven is due to the efforts made by people to please God by being good, rather than

striving for that union of hearts which obedience to His will should accomplish. This condition is causing a breach so great that all who are truly faithful can readily see that God's will becomes a secondary instead of a primary object.

According to the Lord's prophecies the closing scene may not be far off. May we all choose to seek that wisdom which is from above, that we may hear that welcome plaudit, "Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord!"

Lancaster, Pa.

B. F. M.

PRAYER

"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Luke 6: 12.

We have record of our Savior praying on different occasions. At the grave of Lazarus He prayed, and wept over the unbelief of those who conspired against His life. The night when He was apprehended He prayed for the safety and unity of His disciples, that they may share His glory with the Father in the world to come. In His agony in Gethsemane He prayed that He "sweat as it were great drops of blood." On the cross He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The thought comes to us, why did Jesus need to pray when He was one with the Father, "by whom also He made the worlds?" God's answer is, because He was in the flesh as we are; only sin had no control over Him as He was specially empowered. He acknowledged—"the Father that dwelleth in me he doeth the works." John 14: 10. His dependence caused Him to pray. Our dependence should cause us "always to pray." But God regards not the form of prayer; He wants the desire of the heart, the "groanings which cannot be uttered."

"Ask and it shall be given you," is a promise to those who ask from willing

hearts to accept what God wishes to give them. They confide in His knowledge of their wants. The call to the unwilling is: "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts ye double minded; be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." The prophet Samuel said to his people: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." The Lord said to Solomon: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin, and will heal their land." David says: "Evening, and morning, and noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice." The Savior says, "We shall pray to our Father in secret and He shall reward us openly; that men ought always to pray and not to faint." The apostle "Peter went up upon the housetop to pray." Paul says: "We do not cease to pray for you; . . . Brethren pray for us." James says: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another." Peter and John prayed for the disciples that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

The believers, at first, "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Paul instructs Timothy: "I exhort you therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." Persons of kindred natures love to associate, they receive and extend comfort, they gain advancement, assurance, steadfastness by association. Those who love God are closely akin to Him in being His temple, occupied by His spirit, sanctified to Him in desire, near Him in affection, communing with the Author of the Universe, which deeply abases us by a sense of our sinfulness!

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

WORSHIP

Since the creation of mankind God has rendered a service by way of natural blessings and promises by which they could enjoy comforts. Though man's relation to God was changed by his disobedience, yet, being created in the image of God, he did not entirely lose the disposition to worship, but as he was created that he could be deceived his worship was not always as God commanded.

Since the transgression we find two classes of people,—believers and unbelievers. The service that God required of believers in earlier ages was outward, giving expression that they believed God, and this service varied according to the different periods in which it was required.

From Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to Christ, from Christ to the end of the world, are periods in which God ordained different customs regarding the outward service of His people, and He also varied the signs, seals and ceremonies. Before the transgression worship had no reference to Christ, but their salvation depended on their own obedience to the command not to eat of the forbidden fruit. After the transgression, worship had respect to Christ, since God promised His Son and represented Him by types and figures.

The external mode of worship varied much. From Adam to Noah there was no ceremonial service except Abel's offering, but they seemed to follow the law of conscience or mind.

The command of God prohibiting the eating of blood, and the shedding of human blood, continued from the time of Noah to Abraham. God made a covenant with Noah that He would no more destroy the world with a flood of waters,

and a bow was set in the clouds as a token of the covenant.

God also made a covenant with Abraham on account of his faithfulness, giving him promise of an innumerable posterity, and introduced circumcision among His people, which served as a mark of distinction between His people or nation, and all other nations.

From the days of Moses to Christ, God gave, besides circumcision, many laws and commandments to be observed by His people; these consisted of numerous sacrifices, washings and purifications, for the performance of which holy days were set apart, as Easter, Pentecost, Feast of Tabernacles, New-Moons, Feast days, etc. Likewise, sacred places were appointed for worship, as the tabernacle of Moses, Solomon's temple, Shilo, Mizpa, Moriah, etc. From the time of Christ to the end of the world, God removed through Christ the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and the confirmatory types of the same; and teaches us to learn the grace in Christ, and has commanded the observance of other ceremonies and signs, as baptism, communion, feet washing, etc. These outward commandments, together with faith, and true reformation of life, as being the foundation of spiritual and moral virtue, are strictly enjoined upon all members of the Church of Christ.

In these different epochs God provided teachers among His people or believers. Enos (Adam's grandson) began to preach the name of the Lord. Enoch (the seventh from Adam) preached concerning the judgment and the great day of vengeance of the Lord. Noah preached the destruction of the world by a flood of waters. Abraham preached the name of the eternal God. Moses preached concerning the faithfulness, goodness and righteousness of God; and His doctrine dropped as the rain, and

His words distilled as the dew. David preached the righteousness of God in the congregation, and he was not overcome by the gainsayers. Afterwards all the holy prophets,—Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc., preached the law, threatenings and promises of God, and prophesied of the coming of the Messiah.

Following these, John the Baptist preached repentance. Christ preached repentance, the kingdom of heaven, the approach of the end of the world, and of belief in the Gospel.

The apostles followed the example and command of Christ in publishing the will of God: and not only that, but in view of their departure they appointed others in their stead.

As God in the past provided teachers and ministers for His people, we have reason to believe that He will provide for them to the end of time.

Under the law, God was specific as to the service that He required of His people, stating the time, place and how often. He never required any service of unbelievers, and if they followed the example of the believers He did not regard their service.

Since by Christ's atoning sacrifice man's relation to God is changed, He recognizes only such service as is in strict accord with what He has commanded, and only those who are truly born again can render such service.

All that left Egypt had equal opportunity of entering the land of Canaan, but all except Joshua and Caleb failed to enter because of unbelief. Exercising faith in God, in all ages, produced obedience to God's commands, and a blessing followed.

The apostle Paul, in referring to the faithful ones, says—"And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having promised some better thing for us, that

they without us should not be made perfect."

They who believed received not the promise which their faith especially embraced; they did not live to see the accomplishment of the promise concerning the Messiah, in whom all nations should be blessed, which was the promise to Abraham, though they were saved by the anticipated efficacy of the promise. It seems that in God's wisdom He had some better thing for the believers in the Gospel dispensation. They enjoy the fulfillment of what the prophet foresaw when he said—"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him." Isaiah 64: 4.

In Christ all the promises, types and figures center, and except we hear Him, our worship is in vain.

Some of the fruits of acceptable worship are, separation from the world and false worship, walking in love toward all men, observing the ordinances as Christ commanded, and as the apostles taught and practiced and withdrawing from every brother that walketh disorderly.

Camp Hill, Pa.

J. I. M.

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH

"And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16: 18.

From the foregoing it is evident that the Church was not yet built, but was to be built at some future time. The Church was the outcome of the meeting on the day of Pentecost, when the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, they walked by the same rule and minded the same thing, and as the love of God was shed

abroad in their hearts they loved one another with a pure heart fervently. We are saved alone through the atonement; the Church does not bring salvation, but is helpful in the preservation of the spiritual life obtained through the atonement. Believers have many advantages by being associated with the visible church. It gives us an opportunity to encourage one another in the cause of salvation, and as we are weak and sinful by nature we need assistance from others. It is the design of our Maker that we should be willing to aid one another. The Church affords this opportunity; we may fail or come short at times and may not always see where we failed, but others seeing it, will remind us, and we will be thankful for the kindness shown, inasmuch as we desire to do well at all times. Truly, God's plan of salvation is wonderful, for if at any time, while associated with the church, we should fail or step out of the way, we have confidence that some member of the church, out of love will kindly warn us of the danger we are in. Thus we see how we are benefited by being associated with the Church.

Paul says, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Heb. 10: 25. We are in dangerous times, and are fast approaching the day that the apostle Paul here speaks of. Therefore it becomes us to be diligent in keeping the counsel of our Saviour, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Mark 14: 38. It was customary, at the time of the apostles, for the ministry to visit the churches, in the different localities, to strengthen and encourage them in the faith. The ministry of today also visit the churches, wherever they are located, for the same purpose. Whether we be many or few, where two or three

are assembled together in His name Jesus has promised to be in their midst. As we are encouraged by fellowship to walk in love we conclude that we receive many benefits by being associated with the Church. There are, no doubt, many sincere and saved souls in different parts of the world who do not have the opportunity of uniting with the visible Church.

The Lord is able to save all that come to Him in the appointed way, but all those that reside in the vicinity of the visible Church will associate themselves with it. Jesus says, "But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4: 14. Here Jesus uses the water as an emblem of the Holy Spirit, which He is willing to give unto those who ask for it. As water flows together, so also will those led by the Holy Spirit seek the company of those who are one with them in spirit, for "the love of God constraineth us" to seek those of like mind; and loving Him that begets we will also love those that are begotten of Him. Oh! the many blessings obtained by being associated with the visible Church, who love Jesus, and do not disregard His will! Through observing the ordinances we are strengthened and encouraged to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is therefore our highest duty to labor together to keep the church pure without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Fresno, Calif.

I. H.

HUMAN JUDGMENT INSUFFICIENT

The counsel of the Lord endureth, and shall be our judge in the last day. It is in many ways adverse to human judgment, seemingly inconsistent with human thought. Persons are inclined to respect their own views in worshipping

God which results in many divided ideas causing the different organizations of worshipers, contrary to the design of God. He through His dear Son inspired the apostles with His Spirit which was to lead them into all truth.

The first church was organized;—a true brotherhood, who were of one mind,—the mind of Christ. By conversion, by a change of heart, they obeyed the Lord's commands as a fruit of love to Him. Instructions are given in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew to preserve the unity of the church, or brotherhood to which end Christ came. "To gather in one the children of God." John 11: 52, 17: 22. It is painful to see the manifest disregard for this plain gospel teaching, in the divided views, presented by the varied organizations professing Christianity; although seemingly honest in their opinions, they give evidence in practice of life to this departure which must indeed grieve the Lord and tend to confuse the minds of many. Divisions encourage skepticism, and indifference toward the word of God. Christ came to bring unity, He teaches His followers to love their enemies, to return good for evil, and to resist not evil, but rather to suffer wrong. Such fruit must characterize every member of the church of Christ. Love prompts obedience to God. Having received the mind of Christ it will constrain them to take no part in levity, frivolity, idle pastime, mirth, dancing, etc. For the same reason they will not fellowship in worship with those who are not in unity with the word of His counsel. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." 2 Cor. 6: 14. Worshiping not with them is reproof in love; this act is often criticized by many who say that they teach from the same Scriptures, but the life practiced is the

witness. "By the fruits ye shall know them." The teaching may be correct, but if it is not practiced God cannot accept such professors. Nor can His people bid them Godspeed. The Church shall be kept pure. If any continue not to walk in love and obedience to gospel teachings they shall be separated and held as the Jews held the heathen and publicans. Matt. 18. They were to have no dealings with them, not to eat with such, as the Jews refused to do, to impress them with their sad fall but still in love, they shall admonish them, to reclaim them from their fall. This, too, is rejected by human reason, viewing it as entering into judgment. Christ demands it to preserve church purity and fellowship. "If we have fellowship one with another, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1: 7. What hope is there for such that are not in fellowship? Christ demands it. Otherwise the bread and cup which signify unity and fellowship could not be used consistently in communion. It would be an act, as Paul says, to our own damnation instead of comfort to our souls and an honor to God. 1 Cor. 11: 18. Withdrawing from worship that is not in agreement with the plain teaching of Christ is a duty and of vital importance as a witness from the true people of God, reminding those whom they shun of their error. This should arouse them to prove their hope by the word of the Lord. If not in agreement with the word of God, we cannot hope to receive the crown of righteousness. It is written that many spirits and false prophets are gone out into the world, and that we shall try the spirits, whether they are of God. If not in agreement with the word they are not of God. There are persons who admit that there are known sinners retained in their church, yet console themselves by concluding that each mem-

ber must give an account individually. This view cannot be supported by the word which teaches "come out from among them . . . and touch not the unclean thing." 2 Cor. 6: 17, Eph. 5: 11. Such church is unclean and no true child of God can find comfort there, but will be constrained to withdraw. Moses said, If we worship in sinful Egypt we worship the abomination of the Egyptians. It is better to worship without a church than to worship where disorder exists, and where true fellowship is not found. Isa. 1: 13. Because they departed from the counsel of God and chose their own way to worship, God forsook them. Salvation is alone in Christ. Baptism and observing of ordinances are only witnesses to the change of heart and to having been born of God. Love will, by this change, create an anxious interest in knowing and doing all things to the honor of God. "If ye love me keep My commandments."

Lancaster, Pa.

J. K.

SPIRITUAL HOPE

"Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1: 27.

We can glory with Christ in us. It is, however, necessary to prove ourselves that we be not deceived in the very important matter of our hope of eternal life. Deception has been from the earliest age. Example: "And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: And the God that answers by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken." 1 King 18: 24. The prophets of Baal prepared a bullock first, then called on the name of Baal from morning till night without receiving any answer. Then Elijah prepared a bullock and called on the name of the Lord, and fire fell down and consumed his sacrifice, which when the people saw, they

fell on their faces and said, "The Lord he is God." In this we have conclusive evidence that the followers of Baal had a false hope. Elijah said, take all the prophets, let none escape, and he took them to the brook of Kishon, and slew them there.

We are called upon to do the same spiritually to the spirit of deception in us that we may be "purged from dead works to serve the living God." We are to crucify the flesh with its lusts and desires, that we may have the glorious hope of God accepting our prayers and services. We are in danger of entertaining a false hope with the worshippers of Baal. But we can prove ourselves by the Gospel whether we have passed from darkness into God's marvelous light, whether we have forsaken all to obey Him. This change gives us the hope that our prayers and services are pleasing to God. In our natural labors we sow and plant in the hope of a reward, in business we hope for success, when we travel we hope to attain our aim, and are careful to be in the right way. Much greater is the importance of directing our spiritual life safely to have a hope of the eternal inheritance of glory!

Whitehouse, Ohio.

H. B.

THE GAIN EXCEEDS THE COST

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." Luke 14: 28, 30.

The Saviour in calling attention to natural circumstances, by parables, no doubt intended to remind us that we are twofold creatures.

Natural things we may readily comprehend, but the Spirit of Truth may be hidden from us, that it may be fulfilled

what is spoken by the prophet, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables. I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Matt. 13: 35.

The Lord inquired whether every man did not calculate the expense before beginning to build a tower. This would be prudent, for, in case of failure, criticism and mockery would be provoked. Thus, if anyone profess to be a follower of Christ without considering what losses, trials, self-denials or sufferings it might expose him to, or how he might be enabled to endure them, his constancy might fail and all that he had given up or endured would be in vain.

The Saviour opened the way by saying, "Come." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. . . . And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22: 17.

The grace of God teaches us that we are without God, and without hope in this world; this moves us to call on the Lord. We realize that all our good works will not bring salvation. The cost is the sacrifice of our selfish life, to surrender for Christ and His Gospel; otherwise we cannot be His disciples.

Christ is the foundation. When we accept Him in faith, a foundation is laid. We are instructed to take heed how we build thereon. All souls are called wise builders who hear the sayings of Jesus, and do them. They who build on the rock in faith, working by love, their souls are upheld by the power and grace of the Redeemer; they are supported in the temptations, tribulations and persecutions of life. Satan presents many suggestions that seem reasonable. We may give him encouragement, and gradually lose faith and confidence, and finally say I began to build and am not able to finish.

There may be a builder who professes to build on the rock, but, for want of care and pains, he lays his foundation aside of it on the sand; on this he erects an edifice resembling the other, and which the superficial observer thinks equally stable, and perhaps it may have even a fairer exterior, but when it is assailed by storms and floods, it falls, and its ruin is great—the loss of the soul! Paul says, "According to the grace of God given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." 1 Cor. 3: 10.

Paul, in writing to the Corinthian church, which he founded at Corinth, after he left it, was apprised of some irregularities and disputes to which he calls attention. We are informed that other teachers came there who made pretensions to eloquence, wisdom and knowledge, and undermined his influence.

This disturbance should appeal to us all to take heed how easily we can be carried away by delusions (worldly wisdom and carnal reason), building on our own ideas and the suggestions of others. We have evidence that many souls are deceived by influence, and led away from the true source, not taking the word of God for their guide. Paul said to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine." May we continue in the true doctrine.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. J. T.

VICTORIES

In the annals of human history there are two outstanding victories, the resulting influences from these victories have been and are of the utmost importance to mankind as a whole, and to each person individually, for no victories upon earth concern mankind so greatly, collectively or individually.

The first victory is found recorded in the third chapter of Genesis, which relates of Adam and Eve yielding to the tempter or adversary, eating of the forbidden fruit, transgressing the command of God, falling under condemnation, and becoming servants of satan.

Through this victory mankind lost the Divine life, became dead in trespasses and sins, their relation to God was changed, their relation to one another changed, their nature changed, their desires changed, their existence changed, and their habitation changed, behold what a victory!

In their first estate, their love to God was supreme, it controlled their life, their relation to God and to one another, controlled also their nature and desires, their existence was with God in the garden which He had planted for their especial benefit.

The victory caused them to fear God, to distrust one another, to do their own will, caused God to make coats of skins to clothe them, caused the Lord to curse the ground for man's sake: "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Also caused the Lord to send man forth from the garden of Eden, and place cherubims and a flaming sword to keep man from the tree of life.

Further results of this victory were early manifest. Adam's first son became a murderer, a fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth; selfishness, emulation, greed, strife, hatred, malice, and every evil work were its fruits.

The consequence of this victory in the world is evident, from this time nation

has risen against nation, destruction and death are everywhere, and the conditions described in Romans 3: 10-19: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes." A sad and pitiful condition of man, the chief of God's creation, but God still loved and gave him a hope, in the promise of a Redeemer.

The history of the world has been a repetition of war upon war, each succeeding one being more terrible in destructiveness of life and property, until mankind stand aghast with horror at the terrible havoc; then their minds turn to peace, and they begin to cast about for means to bring a lasting peace to the nations of the earth.

The world's most influential characters gather to formulate a plan by which lasting world peace may be established; in this gathering; Is peace manifest? Is each one assembled desirous for the good and peace of all others? Is there no self-interest manifest? No ill feeling toward any one? No desire to gain special privileges for their nation at the expense of the others? Is each nation willing to submit to disarmament to a degree found to be in keeping with the principles of peace? When a nation refuses to carry out the findings of this council, is not the sword the final means used by the other nations to compel it to submit? Is not the fundamental principle of

peace still unattainable by the methods at their command?

Satan, the adversary of God, the tempter and seducer of mankind, the tempter of Jesus Christ, has ever striven to alienate the love of man from God; in so doing his subtlety has caused man to rush upon the field of battle, in the name of the Lord, enduring the utmost suffering in trying to inflict more suffering upon his enemy. The Apostle's admonition was, "If thine enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst give him drink."

He causes mankind to unite in different forms of worship, in different denominations, which are separated, as they say,—“only by non-essentials.” Who is to judge what is essential to salvation, and what is non-essential? Well may we think of the Apostle's words to the Corinthians: “Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?” If we judge to be essential that which the Lord does not command, are we not likened unto the foolish man who built his house upon the sand, and the shifting sands of man's sophistry will not save the soul.

The adversary causes his subjects to accuse the followers of Christ that they are unkind, uncharitable, feeling themselves above others, and too good to join with others in worship, when they are only heeding the word of the Lord: “Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

The second victory is by far the greatest, the most wonderful, the most far-reaching, the most enduring, and consequently the one which should appeal most to our hearts.

This victory is one of love, made possible by love alone, love of God the

Father, love of Christ the Son: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.”

The Son was willing to leave the courts of heaven, and came upon earth to do the will of the Father, to make it known to the sons of men, to take upon Himself the nature of man, yet without sin, to speak as never man spake, to perform miracles, to suffer and die, that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

The Son rebuked those who were under the power of the adversary, arrayed against the will of God; He thus incurred their hatred and antagonism, and they sought means to destroy Him, by bringing accusations against Him before their Roman rulers to have Him crucified.

How bitterly they accused Him, how falsely they testified against Him, and how loudly and vehemently they cried that He be crucified, until Pilate yielded to their demands, as recorded in the Scriptures; also how they mistreated the Lord of glory, and how He, taking upon His sinless soul the sins of the whole world, “Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.” He died for our sins. Oh! terrible suffering, the just for the unjust, suffering on the cross until He cried out, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” and “Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit:” and gave up the ghost. He finished the work the Father had given Him to do, and died much sooner than the thieves one on either side who were crucified with Him; His body was laid in a new tomb in which never man was laid, thus in death he was still undefiled,

separate from sinners and saw no corruption.

Now the adversary, through the rulers of the Jews, felt they had gained another victory and had destroyed Him whom they despised, but behold! the power which God had given unto His beloved Son, in whom "I am well pleased."

The promise which the Saviour had made to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," is fulfilled, the most wonderful triumph upon earth is gained! There is no roar of cannon, no march of triumphant armies, no cheering of soldiers and signing of treaty, but the earth reverberates as the angel of God descends and rolls back the stone from the sepulchre; "the keepers did shake and become as dead men," the women and two disciples see the angels, who ask, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen." Thus the Lord Jesus, the Saviour, the Redeemer of our souls gained the victory over the adversary.

Most wonderful! Immanuel, "God with us," triumphing over death, thereby destroying him who had power of death, that is, the devil. This victory is still fruitful, after the lapse of centuries. Jesus is still able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

Wonderful victory to change our estate, to recreate within us a oneness with the Father, as the Lord Jesus prayed before He suffered, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; That they all may be one, as Thou Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have giv-

en them; that they may be one, even as We are one."

When this oneness, this unity is not found among professors, they cannot be followers of the Lord; their profession is vain, they are yet in their sins and under the adversary, therefore have no part in the wonderful victory of Jesus.

Where the heart is written upon by the Spirit of the living God, there is victory. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

The victory of Jesus is liberty to love God with all our powers and our neighbor as ourselves. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me shall never die;" the fruit of this victory is eternal life.

Glen Elder, Kan.

E. F. S.

HYMN

8:7

"It Is I, Be Not Afraid."

Oh, the cheering words of Jesus
 "It is I, be not afraid."
 Threatening billows may engulf us
 At His word the storm is stay'd.

Strengthen Thou our faith, dear Jesus,
 Help us cast on Thee our fear,
 Holding fast Thy promise gracious
 That Thy help is ever near.

Oh, those blessed words of Jesus
 Driving all our fears away;
 All through life He will sustain us,
 And in death will be our stay.

Soul inspiring words of Jesus
 "It is I, be not afraid."
 "Come ye Blessed," words so precious
 Yours, the joys that ne'er shall fade.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

REST IN THE LORD

"In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Isaiah 30: 15.

Since we see and hear much of enthusiasm and zeal, is the above text not fitting to cause the question to be asked, Is it possible that the above Christian attributes might precede spiritual knowledge?

When the Jews were so ardently engaged in selling and buying sacrifices to be offered to God, it displeased our Saviour that He made a scourge of small cords and drove them out of the temple, saying: "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." John 2: 16. As to worship we are told: "Bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. 4: 8.

Do we not need a firm and quiet assurance when we pray? Even in our supplications it is needful to "Rest in the Lord." Would it be a good thing for many of us to say less and listen more? "I will hear what God the Lord will speak."

Listening might bring rest; while much speech might disquiet us. Selah, which occurs seventy-one times in the Psalms, is by some believed to be a direction for silence, or a meditative pause, in the musical performance of the song. When the Lord told Elijah to stand before Him upon Mount Horeb the Lord passed by, but before the Lord there was a mighty wind which rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks; after that an earthquake; after the earthquake, a fire; but the Lord was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire; but in quietness the Lord spake in a still small voice, and it was so, when Elijah heard it he wrapped his face in his mantle. 1 Kings 19: 13.

Our Saviour said, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4: 24. Scripture does not countenance that God is a visible, tangible Being. He is an invisible, incomprehensible spiritual Essence appearing to all mankind.

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Titus 2: 11, 12. To whom hath the Lord not appeared, often in the quietness of the night?

Who hath seen the Lord,

Neither I nor you;

But when to the soul his Grace appears

The Lord is passing through.

Who hath seen the Lord,

Neither you nor I;

When with childlike hearts we Him receive

He will not pass us by.

Stevensville, Ont.

R. S. B.

A THREE DAYS' JOURNEY

Let us go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God. Ex. 5: 3.

In the account of the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage the words of our text are so foreign to what appears to be the principal part of the events narrated, that they seem to attract no attention. We are impressed, however, that they are full of meaning and are intended to teach a great lesson in God's plan for the salvation of mankind.

The first step, in God's plan, for the restoration of man after he had fallen, was His promise to Adam and Eve that the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head. In this promise, in which they hoped to escape the consequence of

their disobedience and finally be restored to the lost image, Adam and Eve were comforted. Men began to call on the name of the Lord, and the flood of waters came over the earth. After this God began, through Abraham, to prepare the way for fulfilling His promise, and by types and figures indicated and portrayed to man the nature and character of Christ's Kingdom, setting forth by many prophecies and natural figures the spiritual life of those who would enter that Kingdom. It was also foretold by the prophets how those redeemed from the bondage of sin would be brought back to that happy relation which Adam and Eve enjoyed before the fall.

Up to the date of our text we find nothing that in any way indicates that restoration had been accomplished, but, on the other hand, continued promises of future blessings. Consequently, we must look on these words as typifying that which was to take place in the fulfillment of God's promises wherein man would have opportunity to be restored to the lost image. The three days' journey represents a very similar work to be accomplished in the spirit. It will be readily accepted by all that the bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt represents the bondage of the soul in sin or to satan. Since satan is opposite to God it is readily comprehended that while under satan's power we can do nothing that will please God. Many people by sacrificing to Him, mean to please Him, but it is very plain to the truly enlightened that to serve God acceptably we must come entirely out of the service of satan. Everything that pertains to satan's kingdom must be left behind. To argue that the good we do overbalances the evil, will not answer. What would the rulers of United States and England think of the man who was continually changing his allegiance, one

day to the United States, the next to England, as suited his caprice?

The three days' journey may represent the three conditions, conviction, repentance and regeneration, which every soul must pass through before it can be restored to the lost image and life in Christ. The children of Israel lived several hundred years in Egypt, apparently without oppression, but when burdens were pressed on them, their state was made more and more grievous. So the sinner may live year after year in sin seemingly unconscious of or indifferent to the terrible fate before him; but let him be touched with the conviction of sin, and let sin become more and more sinful, and its consequences unbearable, as did the yoke of Egypt, which made the Israelites groan, this knowledge of sin brings misery, and if the sinner allows himself to become hardened therein, this knowledge is of no benefit to him, but if he heeds its light, it will bring him to the second day's journey—repentance. Then he grieves and laments over his misdeeds. He may, however, repent with much sorrow and many tears, but if he stops with repentance his life will still be the same as before; the lost image will not be restored. The most important day's journey is still before us. The one that completes the work that has gone before; and the one that finally brings us to the desert or wilderness, where we can truly sacrifice to the Lord. Here we come to a full knowledge of sin, and to a firm resolve to forever forsake it that we may be free from its fearful end! We here come to realize our inability to overcome sin of ourselves and learn that the merits of Christ alone will save us. We become willing to follow and obey all His teachings to the end that He may bear our sins, and be our Saviour. Sin becomes so exceedingly sinful to us, that we have no more pleas-

ure in the works of the flesh, but strive to avoid them as we would deadly poison. The sinner is now changed, old things have passed away. His delight now is in knowing the will of God and doing it. He has regained the lost image, his pleasure is in God and godly things, he enjoys His presence and loves His attributes: such as love, peace, joy and harmony. Having been delivered from the bondage of sin, he is willing for Christ's sake to make every sacrifice and to consecrate all to the service of his God.

The desert or wilderness to which the children of Israel wished to go is a type of this world. Though the world is wicked and much evil fruit is brought forth, it is still a place where good fruit may be produced. Though wicked, it is not bound in the bondage of satan, for his power is broken and all are free to turn to God. In the world none are bound, but all are free to choose whom they will serve, whether God or satan. The power of God is here brought to bear upon the sinner, to induce him to forsake the ways of sin and elect to serve God. The way of life is open before him: all that will, may sacrifice to God; no power of satan can prevent him from doing so.

"The Spirit and the Bride say come: and, let him that is athirst come:" "for lo, the winter is passed, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. . . . Arise, my love, my fair one and come away."

Fayette, Ohio.

A. B. S.

BRIEF NOTES

We observe that all of God's works, material and spiritual, in the visible as they must be in the invisible creation, are based on a principle which is characterized by consistency, unity and har-

mony in operation. When we find our lives out of harmony with this eternal principle, can it be otherwise than because we have wandered from the happy sphere for which and in which we have been created?

* * * *

The principle in real Christianity, as the Rock of Ages, is definite and unalterable, as Christ himself said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Upon this principle, "Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever," Christian living must necessarily bring the same results in peace, unity and fellowship, in every age and condition in this Christian Era.

* * * *

It has been said that there can be no fine expression of a great truth without engaging the mind in deep reflection. The first commandment taught by Christ includes the requirement of loving "the Lord, thy God, with all thy mind." In the Christian life there are never-tiring themes to engage the mind,—themes reaching out into infinity and eternity! God is glorified, and those who render love and service to Him are edified and comforted by engaging the mind in contemplation and reflection on all that is lovely, pure and good.

* * * *

In this springtime of the year, as God through nature again opens the storehouse of rich provisions for our enjoyment and sustenance in this life, we are impressed with the beauty manifest in the material creation. But beauty is not only in nature. The Psalmist's repeated entreaty was, to "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Holiness, justice, truth, wisdom, goodness and mercy are ever beautiful. They are attributes of God, and are more beautiful and worthy of greater admiration than the

flowers of the earth, the colors of the rainbow, the starry heavens, or anything in the material creation. When these attributes grace our lives as a result of submission to God's will, and service to Him in meekness and humility, then it may well be said, "The beauty of the Lord, our God, be upon us!"

* * * *

Reference has been made to the great material wealth, the inventions and developments characteristic of our times, which bring wonderful opportunities for man to better his condition in life; and yet "the world groans under its hard yoke and heavy burden; crimes increase and destitution spreads; while science has made war more cruel and destructive."

Relief from this hard yoke and heavy burden can only come individually to all who yield to the Saviour's entreaty: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." It is only when we have learned of the Saviour's meekness and lowliness of heart, that we can really manifest in our lives a fitting appreciation of all material blessings constantly conferred upon us, by which our comfort and well-being is enhanced. In this condition we will be restrained from following our selfish desires in detriment to others, and there will be removed within ourselves occasion for contention, divorce, litigation and war.

* * * *

The horrors of war, and the suffering following in its wake, has brought forward many proposals for the supposed assurance of world peace. It is expected by many that conditions will finally evolve from such proposals, that the nations "shall learn war no more."

The awful heartache, and the agony that has been witnessed; the destruction and waste; and all the attendant evils

have been so shocking and great that scarcely anyone could fail to see the inconsistency in professing Christians and so-called Christian nations being thus arrayed against each other and their fellow men, and trying to make the art of war yet more deadly and destructive.

Real Christian living is the only basis for enduring peace; for it is based,—not on outward forms, but on Christian desires, motives and promptings in the heart dominating the outward acts. To cherish a feeling of revenge is war in its incipient stage; and is inconsistent with Christian living, and a sin before God as truly as to engage in mortal combat on the battlefield.

In the common desire for enduring peace, is there not then a responsibility resting upon ourselves, which should persuade us to conform our lives to the principle on which this peace is based? Must not real peace ever be an unattainable ideal unless we each, individually, conform our lives to this divine, heavenly and eternal principle?

When divine love in the heart,—love to God and love to our neighbor as unto ourself, becomes the controlling influence in our life, and prompts and dominates our outward acts and conduct, there will be no inconsistencies in our profession and practice; and there will be that enduring peace which accords with the peace proclaimed by the angels at the birth of Christ, and which He finally proclaimed as a last legacy to His disciples and followers only, to the end of time, in declaring, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What is meant by "whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall save it?" Matt. 16: 25.

A. The scriptures define carnal and

spiritual life in us as opposites. If we let either one of the two kinds of life control us the other one is subdued, or loses its control.

Q. Did Christ intend that the ordinance of the washing of the saint's feet should be perpetuated in the church?

A. At the close of His life He commanded the ordinances of the bread and cup, the washing of feet, and baptism, and they all stand as firmly as His other commands.

Q. Can a Christian consistently marry one who is not a Christian.

A. The spirit of the Gospel separates light from darkness. By this principle a believer will choose a believer for a companion. It is said the widow who will marry shall marry "only in the Lord." This forbids the choice of one who is not living in the Lord. 1 Cor. 7: 39.

Q. What is the objection to instrumental music as part of religious worship?

A. Paul to the Ephesians 5: 19 admonishes believers to speak to themselves "in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." There is nothing recorded to indicate that the apostles or their followers used instrumental music as a part of their worship. We believe it is more in keeping with the simple worship taught and practiced by Christ and the apostles to sing praise to His name without the aid of instrumental music. Simplicity in worship corresponds with Christian humility and lowliness.

Q. Is there a scripture mode of water baptism?

A. Baptism on faith is commanded but we are not taught how it is to be administered. Pouring is in keeping with the idea of the Holy Spirit descending upon believers. Persons who are fit

subjects for baptism will not contend about the mode, but will accept the adopted mode used by the church. To penitent souls desiring baptism the anxious thought is, am I qualified for the ordinance, and am I in agreement with those with whom I am about to unite? Our Saviour very wisely taught no mode.

Q. How shall we understand Romans 9: 18? Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.

A. All are included under sin that He may have mercy on all. It is only those that continue to disobey God that He will harden.

FOR THE AGED

Shades of night are closing o'er us,
While life's bark is speeding on,
To the realms of the departed
Never, never to return.

There to rest until awakened
By the trumpet call of God.
Then account we'll have to render
Of our service to the Lord.

God of Mercy! Heavenly Father!
Bide with us in darkest hour,
For Thy grace alone doth save us
By Thy love, and mighty power.

Though in weakness we adore Thee,
Praising Thee, Thou God of love.
Language fails to be expressive
Of Thy goodness, gracious Lord.

Arkona, Ont.

S. M.

LIFE'S MYSTERIES

There are so many mysteries around us that we cannot explain, neither can we comprehend or understand them. Our birth, our life, our death are all one great mystery. We come into the world with no choice of our own; we live here a longer or a shorter period of time, and then in the same mysterious way we pass out.

Once, at the bedside of a dying man sat an old minister. With tear-dimmed eyes he watched the changing features of a well-known and beloved friend, to whom he could no longer offer the consolations of religion. On the other side of the bed sat an aged physician, who had exhausted all known remedies to avert the coming dissolution. After an impressive silence the doctor said, "This is the mystery of death, a mystery none can unravel."

In the natural world there are great discoveries and still greater mysteries. The scientist can produce a most remarkable imitation of nature, even to a small seed, so much like the real seed that it could not be distinguished, but he cannot give the germ of life, nor can he make it grow when put into the ground. In this we see that man has no life-giving power, and there is a limit to all human knowledge or ability. Man can destroy or take life, but only God can give it.

In our progressive age of the world, we stand amazed at the wonderful discoveries and achievements that man is making in solving and overcoming the mysteries in the natural world around us.

Perhaps nothing at the present time is more widely known and talked of than the radio. We are impressed with the mystery that the human voice can be distinctly heard, and carried thousands of miles across a continent, by certain ethereal waves that are carried into a receiving set at the home. This is one of the discoveries and mysteries with which human ingenuity is laboring with earnestness to understand, and to perfect more fully; but the fact still remains that it is God who gives the ability and wisdom to do the work; it is God working through mankind, showing the contrast between God-given talent, and the mysterious and unlimited power of the Infinite One.

In the spiritual life we find just as great mysteries. Children are pure and sinless: the Saviour has blessed them and said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." From the child's stage of innocency the change is into one of accountability, and at a remarkably early period of life messages come, almost unknowingly, from some higher mysterious source, chiding when the child does wrong, and giving an approving conscience to efforts for right. In this is shown the truth of the words, "The grace of God appears to all men;" and he can choose the path he will walk upon. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Upon this choice rests the weal or woe of an endless eternity!

If happily he makes the wise choice of giving his heart, soul and mind unreservedly to God, he realizes in a greater or less degree, "That peace of God that passeth all understanding," and has revealed to him the beauties and the wonderful mysteries of God. Sinful beings attuned to the chords of the Infinite Maker!

However weak the efforts of the Christian may be, even though he knows that he fails daily in showing forth the Christ-Spirit to a sinful world, and in contrition often needs to plead for forgiveness for known and unknown sins, and is lead to pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner," yet not withstanding all this he retires with a feeling; "At peace with all the world;" and he experiences this mysterious power, a message from a higher source, inspiring worthy impulses, comforting him as no mortal could comfort, sustaining the God-given life in his soul. At such times the Christian can exclaim, "Great are the mysteries of godliness;" and, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

To the Christian God transmits without human agency His messages: mysteriously yet powerfully they come, often in the still and quiet hour of the night, assuring him that if he continues to be faithful, the many mysteries that baffle him now will be made clear in God's own time, "When we shall see Him as He is."

Since the above was written, the writer has met with one of those unexpected, sudden, as well as mysterious, almost fatal accidents, which are daily being experienced by some one. It has given a most vivid realization of the truthfulness of the words, "There is but a step betwixt me and death."

A feeling of thankfulness to God wells up in my heart, for prolonged life, as well as for a happy sense of resignation, had it been otherwise. Perhaps the experience is but another one of God's mysterious ways to afford time for serious thought and reflection.

The healing of broken bones tells of long, painful, wearisome days, and wakeful, seemingly endless nights, and gives a more perfect appreciation and realization of the benefits and efficiency of our well-equipped modern hospitals, as well as the skill, care and kindness of the nurses.

Life's mysteries surround us, and dangers all unseen;

One moment of transition may close the earthly scene.

But Oh, the blessed comfort whatever may betide

We're safe in Jesus' keeping if we in Him confide.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Gal. 6: 8.

THE ARK OF GOD AMONG THE PHILISTINES

When the Ark of God was carried away by the Philistines it was taken to Ashdod, one of their chief cities, and placed in the temple beside Dagon, one of their idols. In the morning when they entered the temple Dagon had fallen upon his face before the Ark of God. They set Dagon up in place, and the next morning they found him again lying on the ground with his head and also both the palms of his hands broken off. On account of Dagon being disfigured the temple was deserted by the Philistines and none of Dagon's priests, nor his worshipers, would ever again tread the threshold of his temple. It seemed to have been ordered by Divine providence that a religious custom of their own only helped prove the folly and insufficiency of their worship and the superiority of the God of Israel.

The people of Ashdod became afflicted with sickness and were dismayed, believing it was caused by their having the Ark of God. They then sent it to Gath, another of their cities. The people of Gath also became afflicted and were afraid.

The Ark was then sent to Ekron, another city, but the people of Ekron refused it, saying, "We will not have the Ark of God among us, send it back to its own land or we will all die." The Ark had been in the land of the Philistines seven months.

After consulting with the priests they decided to send it home to the Israelites. They placed the Ark upon a new cart or wagon, and two cows were yoked together to pull the cart. The calves belonging to the cows were tied at home, but the cows took the road leading away from their calves, into the land of Israel, lowing as they went but not looking toward the right nor the left.

The Philistines followed and watched the cows as they went with the Ark. They must have seen it was a supernatural influence that would lead the cows to go away from their calves and from known pastures, and take an unknown road into a strange country.

The Ark was taken to the people of Bathshemish who rejoiced to see its return. They broke up the cart for wood with which to build the fire, and killed the cows, which they offered as a sacrifice to the Lord.

Some of the people of Bathshemish touched the Ark and looked into it, which was contrary to God's commands, as no one but the High Priest was allowed to touch the Ark. A plague was sent upon them and many of them died. They were filled with fear and sent for the people of Kerjath-jearim to come and take the Ark away.

The men of Kerjath-jearim after receiving the message probably consulted with Samuel. He encouraged them to go and bring it, lest the same destruction overtake them as had overtaken the Bathshemites.

The Ark was then brought to the house of Abinadab, where it remained for twenty years. It is not known why it was sent there instead of being taken back to Shiloh. It is very probable that Shiloh had been destroyed by the Philistines at the time when the Ark was taken, since it was never again taken back to Shiloh.

The people grieved that they no longer had a house for the Ark of God. In times of trouble they went to Ramah where Samuel dwelt, and with whom "was the counsel of the Lord." We read nothing of Samuel from the time he served in the Tabernacle when young, excepting that he grew and the Lord was with him. He was now a prophet, and as there had been no Judge for a num-

ber of years the Philistines ruled over them and robbed them of cattle and their harvests.

In their distress they came to Samuel. He told the Israelites to repent of their evil and to put away their strange gods and he would pray to the Lord in their behalf. He asked them to come to Mizpah, and he offered a lamb as an offering, and prayed in their behalf and the Lord heard him.

The Philistines seeing them gathered at Mizpah came to attack them, but the Lord caused it to thunder so greatly that they were discomfited and fled, and the men of Israel gained a great victory. Such storms were unusual in that land and the Philistines were terror-stricken. By this victory their power was broken, and they lost their rule over Israel. Samuel set up a stone in commemoration and called it Ebenezer, or the "Stone of Help."

Perhaps a more signal victory was never gained by Israel. The Lord had brought them low, almost to extermination, and now by miraculous interference they were lifted up and their oppressors were humbled. The Philistines came no more to disturb them while Samuel lived.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

THE STORY OF ST. JOHN

My dear little children: We have now come to St. John, the last one of the four Evangelists. St. John was the son of Zebedee and Salome.

Before Jesus called him he was a fisherman, on the sea of Galilee. His father and brother, James, with Simon Peter and Andrew, all were fishermen, and they were partners.

St. John was a most lovable man, and we can notice in all his writings that he shows more affection, and says more

about loving God, and about men being kind to one another, than any of the other apostles do in their writings. We read quite often that he is spoken of as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

We see him pictured, and read of him leaning on Jesus' breast. His affectionate disposition no doubt may have endeared him to the Saviour, and may have been the reason why he had more confidential talks with his Master than the others had.

St. John tells many of the doings and sayings of Jesus that the others also told, but you will notice there is something strikingly kind and loving in his manner of relating them. I think the 14th, 16th and 17th chapters of St. John are the kindest and most comforting of all. He speaks to all those who want to follow Christ as if he were living in our times, and tells us, in relating that beautiful prayer of Jesus, how we of today should love one another, as a proof that we are Christians. In some places he addresses them as "Little children."

He lived to be nearly one hundred years old, and is supposed to have died a natural death, but the time of his death is unknown. He was banished to the Isle of Patmos, and it is thought he wrote the Book of Revelations at that time.

When Jesus was crucified, and just before His death, His mother stood by weeping. Jesus looked at her, and then

at St. John, and committed her to the care of that disciple, and we read that, "From that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." From these few words we can see how Jesus in all His great suffering thought of His sorrowing mother, and how He regarded the love and affection of St. John.

In this incident, as well as in the whole life and example of St. John, there is much to admire and to try to imitate, but even today there can be no greater compliment paid a boy, or man, than if it can truthfully be said; He is kind to his mother, or to some one's mother.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

A CHILD'S VISION OF SPRING

Joyful spring you're coming near,
Happiest time of all the year;
All the earth seems fresh and new,
How we love and welcome you.

Everywhere we chance to look,
Sunny bank or shady nook;
Something beautiful we see
Springing up, as if set free.

Listen to the red bird's song,
Call and whistle clear and strong;
Bluebird, robin, wren so sweet,
Making all our joy complete.

Watching for the budding tree,
Crocus, snowdrop now we see.
Oh! the joyful spring is here,
Happiest time of all the year.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.